Client Case Studies - Education

Colleges and Universities
Northeast State, Calvin College, University of Michigan, Bethel College, Grand Valley State, Harrison College, University of the Pacific School of Law

Primary Education
Army & Navy Academy, Forrest Ridge

Executive Summary
The VDP Web® cross media marketing platform has been deployed by public and private educational institutions of every size to deliver outstanding results. Successful projects have been launched by organizations as diverse in size and mission such as The University of Michigan and Northeast State Technical Community College to regional Christian institutions such as Calvin College and Grace Bible College. Not-For-Profit institutions such as Harrison College and various secondary schools have also used the system for admissions, alumni relations, fund raising and planned giving. Integrated campaigns have been cost effectively run for multiple departments without the need for internal technical assistance or support.

Challenge for Educators
There are common challenges faced by the academic institutions detailed in this case study. The goals of all the campaigns that follow were to decrease budget, lower man hours required for follow up and fulfillment, increase response rate and add personalization to generate leads. Each of these projects was executed by one decision maker and did not require the support of other departments. The cases examined assume that additional budget expenditures for new projects is unlikely, IT and other internal technical support is not available, and that the department does not have additional manpower resources to dedicate to a new project. If any of these assumptions are not true, so much the better.

Getting Started
It is possible to implement a basic cross media marketing strategy without any major changes to the current marketing mix. Unique landing pages, QR Codes, new 800 numbers, and SMS Text can be added to any existing marketing channel to add new data collection mechanisms and start a two way conversation with prospects, students, alumni and donors.

Personas & Segments
A key factor in improving response rates across all educational cross media marketing campaigns is to develop the personas of the target audience. Either by using existing data or by starting a two way conversation with prospective students (or their parents) institutions can speak to each prospect or alumni in a highly relevant and personalized way. Just because someone graduated from the College of Engineering does not mean their passion (and their donations) may not be targeted at the school’s archeological collection.

Northeast State (Public)
Admissions, Financial Aid, Events
Northeast State Technical Community College is located in Tennessee and required a systematic way to contact potential students on an ongoing basis. The process needed to automate the initial contact, immediate follow up, and registration process in

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order to decrease staff hours. The original focus of the campaign was to promote a regional scholarship program used to attract new prospects. After a successful pilot, the program was expanded to promote open houses and other events.

Northeast State began their cross media marketing with a direct mail marketing piece for the admissions department to encourage local students to apply for an available scholarship program.

**Reporting & Results**

The results of the campaign were improved efficiency, decreased cost, improved attendance and matriculation. Additionally, the school was able to measure results on a campaign by campaign basis for the first time.

**Calvin College (Private Christian)**

Admissions, Events

Calvin College is a Christian liberal arts college located in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The campaign for this school featured multiple touches and various designs for direct mail, email, and static landing pages.

**Direct Mail**

Various formats of direct mail postcards and self-mailers were used to capture the attention of parents and students to attend an exploration night or other admissions event. All direct marketing touches featured Personalized URLs as the main call to action to RSVP for the event. The initial touches were postcards and emails. Subsequent communications to non-responders featured a business reply card that had the prospect’s information prepopulated to lessen the burden of a reply. The campaign was successful because of the low risk to respond via online or by mail with the potential student never having to speak to an admission representative.

No manual action was required by Calvin College staff to accomplish the registration and provide the initial follow up. All opt-ins received an immediate email confirmation for the event and an email alert was sent to the appropriate college personnel.
Calvin College utilized both email and direct mail as part of their PURL campaigns. Direct mail was sent as postcards and folded pieces with pre-populated business reply cards. The ink was light enough to be easily overwritten in case of a change or if the card was passed along to someone other than the original recipient.

The campaign resulted in increased attendance at “Exploration Night” events with less cost to Calvin. Fewer man hours were required to register and reply to attendees. The improvement in efficiency more than paid for the increased cost of production of variable data over static.

**University of Michigan (State) Admissions**

The University of Michigan was looking for a way to get recent academic test takers to apply for admission. Direct mail and email communications drove potential students to a landing page where links were tracked and the opportunity to either apply or attend admissions events was presented.
Client Case Studies - Education

University of the Pacific Law School
Alumni, Donations

The University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law used email with PURLs to solicit Alumni donations and referrals in annual fundraising campaigns. The email message directed recipients to a video which detailed the case for starting or continuing contributions based on the positive effect of the prior year’s efforts.

Email - With PURLs as link

Results

Absolute response rates, the number of donors, and the amount of donation both online and via traditional channels increased as a result of the personalized and variable data techniques employed. Additionally, University officials were able to identify...
which prospects visited the landing page but took no further action. These recipients could then be targeted with a follow-up communication to solicit a donation.

Landing Page

Grand Valley State (Private)
New Alumni Engagement & Donations

Grand Valley State University used a static URL to drive new graduates to a landing page in order to engage them early in their post college life. The campaign successfully added direct mail and email contacts to the fundraising database in addition to generating revenue.

Direct Mail

Harrison College (For Profit)
Admissions, Financial Aid

Harrison College is a multi-campus business and trade institution in Indiana offering a variety of degrees and certifications. The school has a diverse student population and needs to draw students from various non-traditional backgrounds. In order to stand out in a crowded marketplace, Harrison employed direct mail, PURLs and static landing pages on many of their marketing materials.

The Harrison College campaign featured personas that were each targeted with specialized offers, copy, and art work.
The Army and Navy Academy used direct mail to target parents in order to schedule calls for admissions councilors. In order to generate interest in the school’s target market, multiple direct mail touches and formats were sent to parents with children of the correct age. Postcards and folded and tabbed pieces that opened into a letter from the Commandant were used. The folded piece combined the ability to grab attention with the detailed appeal of a letter. Both featured a unique 800 number.

This campaign used variable data to create dozens of unique messages.
Forrest Ridge School (Catholic)
Admissions for Secondary School

Forrest Ridge School is a girl’s Catholic high school that was seeking to expand enrollment in 9th through 12th grade classes. The school conducted a radius mailing to all households with the correct age of children within reasonable commuting distance of the campus.

Landing Page

Email Reporting

Reporting & Results

Institutions using VDP Web had access to detailed reporting information that allowed all channels used to be accurately tracked in one dashboard. Both direct marketing and advertising medium could be measured to generate accurate calculations on return. Just a small sampling of the metrics returned included:

- Number of visitors
- Pages and videos viewed
- Link clicks
- Surveys taken
- Downloads made

Keys to Success

The institutions that have successfully implemented cross media techniques have used the following ideas:

- Start simple to reduce complexity and build into cross media - landing pages (GURLs) are a good first step
- Make sure one decision maker has the ability to say “yes” for the entire project
- Leverage existing collaterals and artwork
- Reuse content across all channels to keep design cost and time to produce low
Client Case Studies - Education

Reporting Dashboard

Best Practices
The Institutions that have had the most success with their cross media campaigns have used the following tenants:

- Use PURLs on email in order to continue prospect tracking outside of the inbox
- Target both students and parents, as they tend to be major influencers on college choices
- Use multiple touches to capture attention and motivate action
- Keep landing page content simple and make the opt-in process as easy as possible
- Start a two way conversation to learn more about the prospect or alumni to present relevant content and improve response

Conclusion
Cross media marketing processes are possible for any size institution and any department therein with minimal budget and internal support. Without changing the marketing mix, a landing page can be added to any marketing channel to identify leads, collect opt-ins and email addresses, and produce a warm lead list. Variable data direct marketing with both direct mail and email that use PURLs and personalized content can improve response rates and reduce follow up costs.

About VDP Web® & JFM Concepts
JFM Concepts is a full service cross media marketing technology firm featuring the VDP Web® cross media marketing platform. JFM specializes in creating variable data cross media marketing technologies with Personalized URLs, Email, SMS Text, QR Codes, Phone Tracking, Video and more for commercial printers, agencies, and marketing departments of all sizes. The firm knows that technology development and marketing should come together to document both improved response rates and improving return on investment (ROI).

Sample Website Links
University of Michigan
www.umichigan.vdpconcepts.com/JohnSample

Bethel College
www.bethel.purluser.com/JohnSample
www.bethel.purluser.com/JaneSmith

Calvin College
www.calvin.purluser.com/JohnSample
www.calvin.purluser.com/JaneSmith

Forest Ridge
www.forestridge.purluser.com/JohnSample
www.forestridge.purluser.com/JaneSmith
Client Case Studies - Education

Harrison College

Online Studies
www.harrison.purluser.com/JohnSample

General Studies
www.harrison.purluser.com/JaneSmith

Medical
www.harrison.purluser.com/TristanStriker

Criminal Justice
www.harrison.purluser.com/KyleJacobson

Business
www.harrison.purluser.com/SarahMiller

Vet Tech
www.harrison.purluser.com/MichelleGrain

Information Technology
www.harrison.purluser.com/RichardBaker

Unknown Responder
www.harrison.purluser.com/NicoleWaverly