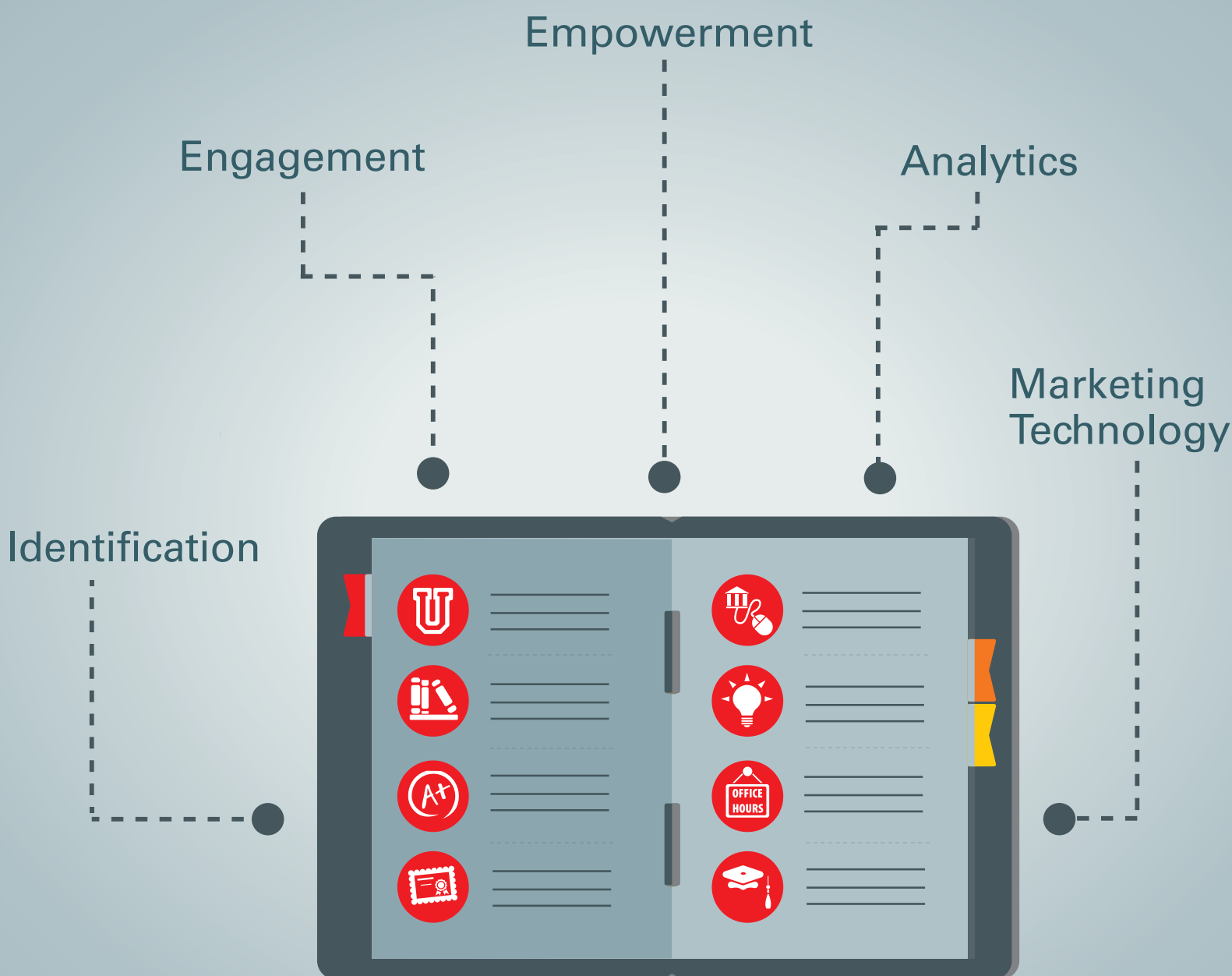


Modern Marketing for the Modern Campus

BEST PRACTICES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



A New Age of Student Engagement

The Five Tenets of Modern Marketing for the Modern Campus.

You know you want to do things differently. Your students are approaching the campus experience in new ways, and you need fresh strategies that will help you keep up. You want to be a Modern Marketer, taking advantage of new tools and student insight to determine the right outreach, retention, and engagement strategies from initial inquiry through to alumni development. But how do you go about it? How do you engage and intervene with your constituents in today's environment?

Looking to find out exactly that, BtoB Research Services and Crain Communications surveyed hundreds of marketers to define the Modern Marketer and find out what new capabilities they need to succeed in today's digital setting. Their findings, outlined in the paper *Defining the Modern Marketer: From Real to Ideal*, identified five tenets of Modern Marketing: targeting, engagement, conversion, analytics, and marketing technology.

These five tenets can be customized for the Modern Campus, creating Modern Marketing best practices that set the tone for your new marketing efforts, while maximizing your website, social media, and marketing technology. Applied to the higher education environment, the original five tenets of Modern Marketing shift slightly, becoming: identification, engagement, empowerment, analytics, and marketing technology. Together, these will help you move away from manual processes to improve the output of your marketing department and measure that output to ensure future success—all with the ultimate aim of recruiting the right students, engaging them throughout the student lifecycle, and keeping them on track to achieve their goals. You can also enhance the relationships you develop with your students, reporting marketing Return On Investment (ROI) to campus leaders along the way.

Tenet 1: Identification

Identification, the first tenet of Modern Marketing for the Modern Campus, means developing a clear picture of your students: knowing which prospects will be successful at your institution, and once they get there, which students you need to intervene with to keep them on track. It involves using dynamic profiling to properly align the students you identify with the changing higher education environment, and creating the proper strategies for data collection and management. This will all help you gather information that goes far beyond traditional demographics.

Know Who You're Targeting

For a Modern Campus, the first step in identification is determining *whom* it is you're trying to target. Some colleges and universities may be looking to create relationships with new potential students, but others will be aiming to retain the students already enrolled. Still others may want to engage (or re-engage) alumni. Your unique campus values will fuel your marketing message. Once you identify your audience, the next step is to understand how they prefer to hear from you, as well as their preferred contact information. The more you know, the better you'll be able to reach them with your message.

Get to Know Their Digital Body Language

Digital Body Language™ will provide you with advanced information on your students as they work their way through the student lifecycle, measuring their habits as they interact with the digital information on your website: seeking, receiving, using, and responding to it. Modern Marketers can use Digital Body Language to better see what prospects, students, or alumni are looking for, ascertaining their viability, and determining where they are in the lifecycle, in order to anticipate their needs and determine when, where, and how to best approach them.

Put a Plan of Action in Place

Whether you're targeting prospective students, those already enrolled at your institution, or others who graduated years ago, you should have a plan of action in place to help them interact with your campus. Put together strategies that will let you better use all of the tools at your disposal, including social media, email, and your website. Create a timeline that will engage students and help them gather the details they need and build on the information they collect to fuel their interest further. If you've identified multiple, separate groups—engaging potential first-year students, for instance, as well as targeting existing, at-risk students directly—you should break those down and approach them at different stages with the right campus resources. Remember, relevance is key.

Tenet 2: Engagement

Modern students want to see more value in their interactions with their educational institution, and it's up to those institutions to provide it. After all, engagement is about reaching the right people at the right time in order to improve involvement and interactions. But it's more than that too—it's also about reaching them in the right way. To do that, marketers need to deliver the proper content via the right medium, using an appropriate mix of activities and channels to do so, including PR, websites, social media, blogging, events, and other campus resources.

Learn How to Use Social Media

Learning how to best use social media—including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and more—will help Modern Marketers in higher education find the most useful ways to reach the audience of their choice. And they'll have the right new tools to do so. Today's students are social in their personal and academic lives, actively using these sites as part of their day-to-day existence. This new form of interaction has created a trickle-down effect, changing the way they want to engage and how they want to interact with the institutions they attend or hope to attend. That means that social media is an important tool when it comes to keeping up the conversation in today's world, even for those colleges and universities that were slow to accept it at first.

Be Proactive

Engaging with your students once they're enrolled is critical to improving outcomes for your institution. And in today's environment where outcomes often drive funding, it's more important than ever before to provide your students with the personalized experience they expect. To do this, you must think in terms of both reactive and proactive engagement. Reactive engagement is simple: use data to identify students who are clearly struggling, and intervene with the resources and support they need to get back on track. To be proactive, on the other hand, use data to identify the cohorts of students with characteristics that could put them at risk. For example, you might know that first-time, first-generation students who live off campus often struggle to balance school, work, and family life. With this data in hand, you can create an engagement program that points these students to resources that will help them as they begin their academic journey, and continues to nurture them as they move through the student lifecycle. This proactive engagement not only shows students that you care about their success, but could also reduce the need for reactive engagement in the future.

Avoid Over-Engagement

When recruiting and engagement channels are splintered, and each recruiter or staff member is working with a different list of contacts, there's the danger that a single inquiry will show up in more than one contact list. Where problems emerge is when the same student is inundated with multiple emails from different people across departments and offices on your campus. The result can be exhausting and annoying for the student in question. They don't feel that your institution knows who they are and what they need to succeed. And it's this type of fragmented engagement that often results in lower student satisfaction. Keeping a tight rein on your students, to ensure that engagement is clearly contained, will help keep them happy and on track to reaching their goals.

Tenet 3: Empowerment

In today's higher education environment, it's common for students to attend multiple institutions on their way to graduation. In fact, the 2014 study *Four-Year Myth*, by Complete College America—a national nonprofit dedicated to student success—reports that 60 percent of bachelor's degree recipients change colleges. Converting a potential student into an enrolled student is only half the battle, then. Once they arrive at your institution, you need to engage and retain them so that they stay on track, stay enrolled at your institution, and become an active member of your alumni community. When students leave, so does their tuition revenue. And the cost of replacing them is high. In today's education environment, where institutions are judged based on outcomes, keeping your students enrolled and getting them across the finish line is critical to your success. This means that devising a strong, omni-channel student engagement strategy is imperative to recruiting—and retaining—your students.

Understand the Student's Journey

What are the steps your potential students take on the path to enrollment? And how do they want to interact with you once they arrive physically or virtually on your campus? Do they visit your website first, and if so what pages do they look at? Do they use the contact information provided to find out more, or do they hop over to social media to crowd source an answer to their question? Knowing the steps each inquiring student takes on their journey will give you the knowledge you need to make that process run more smoothly. If your website is integral, does it have the information they'll need to stay engaged, or will it leave them frustrated and still unclear, running to your competitors instead? If they're looking for contact information, is that information easy to find and will it provide them with the results they want: a single person who's easy to get in touch with, whom they can ask their questions of, instead of frustrating runarounds that send them from one person to another, or a bombardment of emails from different departments within your institution? Having the right process in place to engage your students at each point in their journey is more important than ever for Modern Marketers in the higher education arena. And it's this type of engagement that empowers your students to be successful.

Integrate Across Your Campus

Any strategy that leads a student smoothly through the entire student lifecycle—from first contact to becoming an enrolled student, to joining the alumni community—will need to involve multiple departments across campus. In some institutions, though, each department acts independently, and this results in a fragmented experience for students. This behavior puts a huge chasm in the middle of the student experience and leaves students to wonder if their institution really knows who they are and what they need to succeed. When departments across campus work together, though, the flow from inquiry to enrolled student and beyond becomes more streamlined. Instead of acting as competition, with overlapping roles, they act cohesively, towards the same objectives: finding the right students, keeping them on track, and helping them reach their goals.

Tenet 4: Analytics

Data analytics and reporting have as much a place in Modern Marketing as events and campaigns. In fact, measuring the results of the marketing process is one of the most important differentiators of the Modern Marketer. Understanding your return on marketing investment, and measuring marketing's contribution to outcomes as a whole, will help solidify marketing's part in the big picture, and give you the knowledge you need to determine which actions are successful and which are not.

Pinpoint Your Efforts

Throw enough things at the wall and something will surely stick—but think of all the resources you'll have wasted in the process. In today's higher education environment, where resources are scarce and budgets are tight, that's not the best strategy for success. Knowing which actions have been successful and which have not—and having the tools to measure that success—will allow for more educated efforts in the future, leading to incremental changes that fuel your engagement efforts and create a path of repeatable performance improvement. Relationship scoring, meanwhile, helps hone the list of students you'll want to approach next. For example, rather than tackling a list of 1,000 potential students, and calling them all, you'll be able to rate each of those relationships to determine which are most likely to enroll—and succeed—at your institution, for a more solid and effective starting point.

Set Goals

Measuring what works and what doesn't can do more than help create efficiencies. With the results of your efforts clear to see, they also make it easier to create goals for your next engagement endeavor. Whether you want to improve your enrollment by five percent in the next academic year, or retain 10 more students that semester, having accurate analytics can give you the momentum you need to create those goals, and the ammunition you'll want when it comes time to defend them. Having a closer view of your website—knowing who downloaded what, when—will also help make those goals clearer, as you learn what content works and what doesn't, and what kind of information each of your students is looking for.

Tenet 5: Marketing Technology

The final piece of the puzzle for Modern Marketers is the right marketing technology: solutions that integrate with your Modern Campus ecosystem to provide multiple marketing functions, including workflow and marketing automation, social monitoring, and business intelligence (BI). The right marketing technology will make it easier to navigate through each step of the engagement cycle, keep up with compliance needs, and integrate the other four tenets of Modern Marketing completely.

Understand That One Size Does Not Fit All

Higher education institutions are specific in their needs, with unique challenges to consider. As such, you need a tool that is customized specifically to your requirements, with email blueprints, best practices, and other specialized functionality. With the right Modern Marketing solution in place, your institution can use best-in-class marketing technology to address challenges specific to higher education. For example, modern students are digital natives: they constantly tweet, update their status on Facebook, and post pictures on Instagram. And chances are, they're posting about their experiences with your institution too—both the good and the bad. With social marketing solutions, you can listen to and engage with your students in the channels they prefer. And by using the information you collect, you can personalize their experiences on campus by delivering them targeted information, when and where they need it most.

Know What You Need

Most colleges and universities introducing new marketing technology know exactly what they want from it: they want success, and they want to be able to measure that success so that it continues. Oracle Marketing Cloud for Student Engagement helps Modern Marketers achieve that, optimizing their branding and student communications, and allowing institutions to interact with students throughout their journey. This allows you to engage students across channels, meet enrollment goals, and personalize retention efforts—all while measuring your results for increased visibility, and maintaining best practices along the way. The result is more successful marketing campaigns designed for today's modern students, as well as improved ROI that's easy to prove.

Conclusion

The five tenets of Modern Marketing for the Modern Campus were created based on today's marketing environment in the higher education landscape, where students are self-educated, with a clearer idea of what they want to achieve from their engagement with your institution. Campuses stuck doing things the way they've always done them will find that their old campaigns and processes don't work the same as they always have and that new tools and more efficient strategies are needed instead. Modern Marketing best practices surrounding the five tenets deliver the modern experience students expect, and keep them on track to achieving their goals.

TAKEAWAYS

1. Potential students are approaching higher education differently than ever before. Knowing the five tenets of Modern Marketing, and adjusting them to the Modern Campus landscape, can help institutions align marketing execution with those new student behaviors, to better reach them in today's digital age.
2. Identification, the first tenet of Modern Marketing for the Modern Campus, means developing a clear picture of students: knowing which prospects will be successful at the higher education institution in question and—once they get there—which students require intervention to keep them on track.
3. Knowing the proper route to engagement can help create real connections with the right students. This means reaching students where they naturally gather, and being proactive in providing them with the personalized experience they expect—while at the same time being careful not to over-engage with too much content all at once.
4. Inspiring a potential student to enroll is only the first step—institutions need to find ways to retain those students through to graduation and beyond. This means understanding the student lifecycle journey and each student's needs along the way.
5. Analytics help Modern Marketers determine what's working in their student engagement efforts—and what's not. This can give them the information they need to fuel future plans, determine their goals, and decide where to dedicate their resources going forward.

About Oracle Marketing Cloud

Modern Marketers choose Oracle Marketing Cloud solutions to create ideal customers and increase revenue. Integrated information from cross-channel, content, and social marketing with data management and dozens of AppCloud apps enables these businesses to target, engage, convert, analyze, and use award-winning marketing technology and expertise to deliver personalized customer experiences.

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