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Session 2.4 Schools targeting and Outreach data

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The aim of this session is to write a draft of the strategy

* If you know what your goal is, you’ll know how to achieve it
* Focus what you need to do and make the most of your time
* Key objectives and ways to measure them
* It is your plan – if a new idea comes in, something else has to give
* Cam help if you’re on a short term contract – can help you plan for your 1 year contract for example, and also plan for beyond if you won’t be there after the contract ends

There is no such thing as a perfect plan

* There are lots of models and terminology, but there is no right or wrong way
* Plans should be evidence based
* Must involve others
* Should be strategic – where? Where are you going and how do you get there?

PEST Tool

* A tool that takes all the information and ensures that nothing is missed e.g. an appendix
* Macro environmental stuff happening around your team. Could be political e,g, immigration policy, exchange rate
* Social: demographic – population changes
* Tech -online degrees?
* High school – boom in environmental courses? Eg are prospectuses a good idea in this environment?

SWOT

Sussex case study

This is a transitional year with lots of change happening:

12 working groups across the team, featuring Head of WP, Recruitment, programme delivery officers and data officer, looking at the following:

* Reviewing Pre and Post 16
* Remote working
* School
* HEAT
* Evaluation
* Changing school targeting strategy has been the focus

There are increasing number applying to HE al over the country , how does this work for Sussex?

Things we considered

* It’s very easy to be activity level at the review stage, so it’s bene important to focus on goals
* Used a 5 year data set – we decided on this as 2 years’ worth of data might have anomalies you might not spot e.g. good applications from WO students, but not converting them
* Profile of the students – WP/ not WP/ courses/ age
* Radii mapping: broken down into 0 – 25 miles , 25- 50 miles, 50 – 75 miles and found this very useful – considering ‘Hub regions’
* Comparison of the data with current partner schools
* Looked at data banks inc. HEAT/ UCAS data, and looking at market penetration

Q: did you consider the levels of engagement with schools?  
A: we did consider looking at this, but it made the data too subjective so we just looked at the data we had as there were so many variables.

Strategy

* In a lot of cases a university strategy might already be written
* In Sussex, our new APP targets and Sussex strategic framework run concurrently between 2020 – 2025.
* Most might not run like this and might need short term goals/ strategic objectives.

Mission: create more diverse student body

Goals: APP defines decides what we mean by ‘diverse’. Sussex IMD, BAME, POLAR 1 students

Objectives

* Sub goals/ mini goals
* Need to be SMART – to ensure you have done them
* Should include lots of doing words
* If you have lots of ideas consider ‘if this thing is going to help me do that’. If no – day goodbye to it!

Strategy and tactics

Sussex: Looking at the Schools matrix, we ranked by most appropriate to work with

* We gave each area had a rank e.g BAME, POLAR. POLAR Q1 scored high and POLAR Q1 was negatively scored, as we want to increase Q1 students
* We found that we have a low number of existing partners on HEAT
* We want to provide a service to these providers that they might not already be working with
* We looked at attainment data to see the % of students going to HE, to see the potential market at the FEI
* Considering different tactic of working with different location groups e.g. intense work with 1 – 25 miles group, and less intensive work with ones further away

Q: Many of the areas you’re looking at on the matrix are closely linked – could this distort the pattern?

A: Yes, there are lots of caveats to this matrix. E.g. London, the POLAR data is questionable.

But it works us as the POLAR data for the South is quite reliable.

* There will also be some subjectivity involved
* Doing it this way allows us to narrow our focus, rom all of the potential

Q: Where do you find the POLAS 1 and IMD data for a school?

A: There are datasets on HEAT, data on UCAS (not that easy to find, but it is there)

DFE ‘Compare schools’ website

Q: What was the timeframe/ no. of people working on this?

A: Within the uni we have a Data and planning officer. They used to be a WP officer so has really good knowledge and was able to produce this quickly.

They started in September and it took about 2 weeks.

We did compare the matrix with our knowledge of school are there were a few errors in deciding the rankings so they had to be changed a little bit. For example, at one point we scored some schools for having a 6th form but it skewed the data towards 6th form colleges.

It took three attempts to get the version we have now.

Q: Was it done for each region?

A: Yes, we broke it down by a 25 mile radius, 25 -50 mile radius and 50 – 75 mile radius

A participant suggested that for team without access to a Data and Planning officer, it would be a good project for a research student to complete as it’s around data analysis/ profiling.

It’s important to note that KPI’s can be qualitative or quantitive.

Remember that people are also very important to this work!

Top tips and planning

* You can do this from the top down, bottom up, but it’s a good idea to get a middle ground and involve the people who will be involved in delivering the plan
* It’s a working, living document
* Should feed into PDR’s and appraisals, and make it easy for you to show your Manager what you’ve achieved/ working towards

What the data can’t tell us

* School closure/ mergers
* Putting the strategy against others e.g Into University, Local Authority
* What school swill think of the plan – Sussex are commissioning Schools consultation groups to gauge interest. This is being led by an Academic and Sussex will go out to the schools
* Local infrastructure – There may be a pocket of schools who look good on paper but geographically might not be easy to get to

Q: Matrix: did you consider the average applications and willingness of those students to apply?

No, it was too subjective as it could be considered a positive if there were say 200 applications, but if not many enrolled, then it could be a bad thing as there’s no progression route.