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Recruitment and Marketing for Challenge Course Areas

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(England & Wales) and SC050285
(Scotland)

Session Outcomes

1. Understand how to research and track the performance of courses.
1. Manage conversations and relationships with key internal stakeholders.
1. Consider practical marketing, recruitment and conversion strategies for challenge courses.
1. Monitor and track performance and success of initiatives.
1. Confidence to create an action plan for challenge courses.

ACTIVITY 1

1. What do you currently identify as the most challenging subject areas in your institution?
 - Use your phone to scan the QR code. Voting code is 2673 0585.
 - Select 3 subject areas.

You have 5 minutes.

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Identifying challenge courses

Research and review course performance to understand the scale and nature of the challenge.

Research and review course performance.

Is this a market share problem or a demand pool problem?

- Use HESA and UCAS data to see the size of the pool, whether it is growing or declining over at least the last five years, and at what pace (ten years ideally). TRENDS rarely change.
- From this and your own data, work out your market share. Above 1% for a large university is a decent performance
- If you already have upwards of 20% market share, increasing this will be tough
- Use this data to set realistic expectations and bust any myths that exist

Research and review course performance.



Managing conversations with key stakeholders.

Managing conversations and relationships with key stakeholders on recruitment and conversion to underperforming courses can be challenging!

- Go into discussions with relevant data to support your recommendations.
- Be realistic with the interventions and activities. Concentrate on those that will provide the greatest return on investment.
- Listen to stakeholder's feedback. Negotiate and compromise, you want to ensure they are on board to support.
- Be confident in your approach and your suggestions. YOU ARE THE EXPERTS.

Planning your approach

Practical marketing, recruitment and conversion strategies to include in your action plan.

What to consider in your action plan...

- **Stage in the recruitment cycle/funnel**
 - Recruitment, lead generation and applications.
 - Conversion from application to firm accept to enrolment.
- **Level and semester of study**
 - Undergraduate or postgraduate
 - Semester 1 (September) or Semester 2 (January onwards)
- **Area of delivery and team responsibility.**
 - Marketing; comms; course enquiry handling; internal & external events; school & college engagement; nurturing.
- **Activity and additional uplift**
- **Progress and monitoring**



Marketing activity

- Invest in Pay Per Click channels so you don't waste precious budget, only paying for traffic that have some interest in your course
- Work with your web team or media agency to track beyond click throughs to look at the quality of each web visit
- Further refine your advertising spend in line with this info
- Ensure you are sending web traffic to optimal place and that you have engaging content and calls to action to drive people further down the sales funnel
- Use digital re-marketing to convert interested individuals

Nurturing Activity

Aim of nurturing activity is to keep in regular contact with enquirers and applicants to support their decision making to application, firm accept or enrolment stage in their application journey.

- Use student ambassadors on nurturing hotlines to call enquirers and applicants.
 - Ensure that you always have a clear 'Call to Action' e.g. sign up to open day/internal subject event, offer general IAG or course specific information, support with application process (interviews/DBS/OH).
 - Segment call campaigns: UG or PG, SEM 1 or SEM 2, Enquirer v Applicant, Course/subject specific campaigns, traditional v mature learners.
 - Good representation of highly trained student ambassadors.
- Create 'Call back form' for website and comms – academic colleagues call enquirers who request a call back.
- Timely and personalised comms to data leads captured at internal and external events.

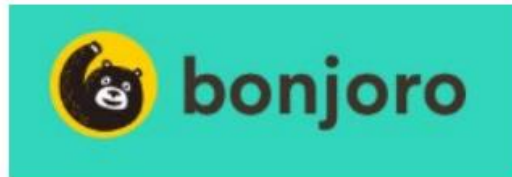
Nurturing Activity

University of Wolverhampton Case Study: Bonjoro for Semester 2 enquirers and applicants

Bonjoro is an app that allows personalised video messages to be recorded and sent directly to prospective applicants.

- Identified several UG and PG courses with a Semester 2 January 2023 start that required additional activity to boost applications or support conversion ahead of the application deadline.
- Recruited course leaders to record short, individual videos to UK/Home enquirers and applicants in our CRM interested in or had applied to SEM 2 2022 start with a subject interest linked to their course.
- Call to action: Visit our course webpage; instructions on how to apply; how to choose us as a firm choice; support with transition events.

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External and Internal Events

External Events

- Send academic colleagues from challenge course areas to external exhibitions.
- Ensure representation of student ambassadors from challenge course areas at external exhibitions.
- Link academic colleague attendance to large scale CAT A events or exhibitions in regions where recruitment to your institution is strong or is an area where you wish to grow.
- Identify alternative large scale subject exhibitions
- Represent challenge course areas in stand design and marketing materials. Could you deliver a talk?
- Ensure personalised follow-up activity with data leads.

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External and Internal Events

Internal Events

Events aren't always the answer! Consider the following before deciding whether an event is an appropriate recruitment or conversion activity...

- Size of your enquirer or applicant pool – do you have the numbers?
- Stage in the recruitment cycle/funnel – is it the right time in the calendar to deliver an event?
- Planning and lead time – do you have adequate time to plan, market, organise and deliver an event?
- Costs and resources – do you have the additional budget?
- On-campus v Virtual
- Are you already delivering events that could be adapted to include challenge courses?

External and Internal Events

Internal Events

- Enhance presence of challenge courses at existing events or activities.
- Subject specific campus tours for course areas with key facilities.
- Keynote webinars – on topical issues or research within a subject area.
- Additional Q&A sessions for applicants in challenge course areas with academic and students.
- Bringing applicants and course leaders/personal tutors together ahead of enrolment e.g. community groups on social media platforms, on-site events, webinars.

School and College Engagement

- If a demand problem - Group with more popular courses to deliver subject-related activities
- If a market-share problem – Review what key messages need bringing out to beat the competition and increase understanding of your audience (different demographic to your ‘bread and butter’ student?)
- Is there a way you can offer CPD to school staff which provide a springboard to promote your course?
- Can you offer a unique experience/opportunity to pupils to provide a hook for engagement?
- Use topics of interest to your target audience to draw them in to discovering the subject (example right)
- Targeted approach – concentrate activity to top feeder schools for subject area.
- It's not all about recruitment! Can you offer support to applicants e.g. drop-in sessions/stand, interviews.

Blog

**Sustainable cities:
Are women's needs
being ignored?**



By Dr Karen Horwood



Driving more demand...

- Can your course be reshaped in line with changing preferences?
- Can your course be offered as a combined honours with a more popular subject?
- Could you offer a scholarship for UK students?
- Is there an international market for your course? If so, scholarships targeted at specific countries can quickly generate applications

Leeds Beckett University Case Study

Public Relations

- Course team offered free PR advice to leadership teams in key schools and colleges
- Sessions included within wider business and management outreach activities
- Currently planning international student targeting
- Combining with much more popular subject of Marketing to offer 'Marketing and PR'

BA (Hons)

Marketing and Public Relations BA (Hons)

ATTENDANCE

Full-Time

DURATION

3 Years



Monitoring impact and success

- Have measurable outcomes and benchmarks for your activities.
- Regular sprint meetings with key stakeholders to monitor activity progress.
- RAG rating to visualise performance and identify any key challenge areas. .
- Evaluate the activity – could it be done differently to increase impact going forward.
- Review application, firm accept and enrolment data on a regular basis.
 - Impact of individual activities and how many attendees went on to apply and enrol.



ACTIVITY 2

1. You have 15 minutes to use the template on the table to create a mini action plan for the subject area at the top of the plan.

Think of recruitment and conversion activities and initiatives for;

- Marketing
- Nurturing
- Events
- School and Colleges

Consider how you would monitor the progress and success of your initiatives.

Summary of the session

1. Research and reviewing course performance is key to identifying underperforming subject areas. Use a variety of external and internal data and intel to finalise your list.
1. Ensure buy in from key stakeholders for additional activity – recommend activities that you can realistically deliver within the timeframe and resources available.
1. Devise an action plan with relevant activities to target enquirers and applicants at each stage of the recruitment cycle/funnel.
1. Set measurable outcomes for each activity. Ensure all stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities and monitor success regularly.

QUESTIONS?