

Catching the E-Train: Enhancing Recruitment Strategies with Electronic Communications

Electronic Communications Tip Sheet

General References:

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Email marketing best practices and quick tips. (n.d.). Retrieved June 20, 2005 from EmailLabs Website: http://www.emaillabs.com/resources_bestpractices.html.

Johnson, R. (2004). *Everything you say: Integrating your website, mail, and print communications.* Retrieved June 20, 2005 from Creative Communication of America Website: http://www.hawkeyecca.com/PC/what_we_do/Presentation_pdfs/IntegratedCommunicatios.pdf.

Roberts, S., Feit, M., Bly, R.W. (2001). *Internet direct mail: The complete guide to successful e-mail marketing campaigns.* Chicago: NTC Business Books.

Stamats quick takes. (n.d.) Retrieved June 20, 2005 from <http://www.stamats.com/quicktakes/default.asp>.

Helpful Websites:

Marketing Sherpa – www.marketingsherpa.com. Subscribe to newsletters to stay on top of marketing trends. Lots of email marketing data available.

MarketingProfs.com – www.marketingprofs.com. Marketing articles written by marketing professionals and professors. You don't have to become a paying member to receive great information.

Council for Advancement and Support of Education – www.case.org. Contains among other topics, marketing and communication information geared toward higher education.

Journal of Marketing for Higher Education - www.haworthpressinc.com/web/JMHE/. Access select PDF articles or subscribe to the journal from this site.

Timing of communications:

- A good rule of thumb is to email no more than once every other week unless a more frequent schedule is mutually agreed upon.
- Tuesday through Thursday mornings are traditionally the best times to send emails. Mondays can also be good days. Test your audience to gauge what works best.
- Sending messages late at night or very early in the morning can increase your risk of having the message flagged as spam.

Email Bounces and Spam:

- Easy ways to comply with CAN-SPAM legislation include providing an opt-out mechanism for recipients, including a physical postal address with each communication, and honoring all opt-out requests within 10 business days of their receipt.
- A “hard bounce” is a message that has been returned to the sender and is permanently undeliverable. Causes include invalid addresses or the recipient’s mail server has blocked your server. A “soft bounce” message gets to the recipient’s mail server but is undeliverable because the mailbox is full, the recipient’s server is swamped, the message is too large, or because the mailbox is abandoned.
- Encourage recipients to add your email address to their address book/whitelist. This can be done at the top of your email message with a short sentence.
- Wondering if your email will be viewed as spam? Visit www.SiteSell.com and scroll down to SpamCheck for quick way to gauge your spam score.

Writing and Design:

- Personalize your email communication. Avoid subject lines or salutations that contain the words “Dear prospective student” and the like.
- Always proofread and pay special attention to your subject lines.
- Flashy designs and overuse of “bells and whistles” should not be substitutes for solid copy/content.
- Try to blend HTML and plain text into your emails. Use HTML to present your institutional brand or logo in the header and plain text for the bulk of the copy to get your message across.
- Think in terms of what your audience wants/needs to know. Don’t spend time on explaining your history or mission when application or scholarship information would be more useful to the student.
- Write so that key points can be absorbed in a hurry.
- Always test your messages and provide a mechanism for feedback. Create an online survey to gather data on what users find useful and not so useful about your messages.

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