

Marketing Insights

By AK Insights Ltd.

Special Issue

What's Important To You

Welcome to our first Special Issue!

We've dedicated our special issues to providing you with information related to data-base management and direct marketing but that is of *unique interest to your industry*.

We certainly hope that you'll find it relevant or interesting at the least.

*Sincerely,
The Team at AK Insights*

Three Cheers For Personalization

By: John Kador—Oct/Nov 2000

Few organizations have better information about their target audience than a college alumni office. Building on its email marketing efforts, the University of Dayton leverages this knowledge for all it's worth.

Like all universities, the University of Dayton depends on the generosity of alumni who want to remain part of a very intimate community. Personalization holds the key to achieving that goal. The University of Dayton has very precise and measurable objectives for its personalized e-magazine and alumni Web site: to increase alumni pride, to promote participation in fundraising campaigns and to create a sustainable gifts program.

The University of Dayton knows that the relationship between a university and its alumni is permanent, relatively static and decidedly personal. Like all businesses--and a crucial factor in its success was to acknowledge that higher education is a business--the University of Dayton took into consideration the rich information it had about its target audience.

More than most businesses, the University of Dayton knows a lot about its customers. It knows when everyone graduated, what their majors were, what sports they support, where they work, in which areas they have donated and much more. In its database, the University of Dayton had all the information to create a richly personalized communications vehicle, so it did not even have to ask alumni to complete a profile.

The University of Dayton understood that its traditional one-size-fits-all alumni magazine was woefully inadequate. According to a magazine survey the university conducted, more than 40% of its alumni said they wanted to enhance their relationship with their alma mater.

Richness with Reach

The University of Dayton moved fast. The university launched a richly personalized electronic magazine that allows it to deliver content so highly targeted that it can give each subscriber unique content. Actually, about half the content in a typical University of Dayton alumni magazine goes to

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AK Insights Ltd.

*Data, Knowledge,
Insights!*

In This Issue:

Customized Event
Invitations Help Sell More
Ford SUVs

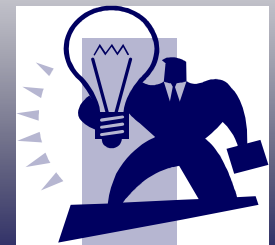
Driving E-Shoppers Into
Customers

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**Is Your Business
Equipped To Outsmart
The Competition?**



**"If you have
foresight, you
are blessed, but
if you have
insight, you are
a thousand
times blessed."**

- Old Chinese Proverb

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everyone. The other half is dictated by a subscriber's profile, which is determined by data mining across university databases, including those for the athletic department, theater subscription, library concert series and registrar's office, among others.

For example, season ticket holders to University of Dayton athletics receive a magazine heavy on sports coverage, while former engineering majors get more engineering stories. A recent University of Dayton e-magazine story about a religious art exhibit in one part of the country went to just 25 of the total 8,000 subscribers.

The University of Dayton staff takes gathering content for the magazine seriously. As they cull stories from newspapers, magazines, Web sites and other sources, the staff codes the items in a number of ways--geographic area, alumni chapter, graduation year, area of giving, donor level and even birth date.

Then, using customized filtering and sorting software, the University of Dayton assembles the magazine for the 8,000 registered readers.

Liquid Matrix, a NY-based design firm, developed various components of the alumni system, including the newsletter, using a variety of technologies. The implementation timetable was four months, and the budget was about \$100,000.

Mailings go out every two weeks by email to those subscribers who elect to receive the magazine electronically. The university expects circulation to reach 20,000 readers by the end of 2001. While there is a non-customized print version of the alumni magazine, it is being phased out since more alumni now have Web access.

This level of personalization encourages increased loyalty,

leading to more investment in the form of increased donations and sales of school paraphernalia. Non-monetary savings are another benefit. "Personalization gives us richness with reach without the tradeoffs of either," says Carl Brown, e-technology manager at the university.

Feedback is Key

The University of Dayton has a vested interest in its feedback loop. In fact, the very concept of the alumni Web site and personalized e-magazine was suggested by a group of Internet-savvy recent grads. Feedback drives functionality, Brown says, determining such issues as how people sign in, privacy and specific content.

In the case of the alumni magazine, some readers suggested a feature on the status of the off-campus housing they once occupied. The result was one of the most popular features in the magazine's history.

On a lighter note, users suggested through email surveys that a University of Dayton screen saver would be fun. Following an opt-in model for email, only alumni who indicated an interest in a screen saver received one. Everyone else received an offer for one.

"We give alumni what they want in order to get what we want out of the system," says Brown. "Alumni might wonder why we keep birthdays in our database, but when we send them an e-birthday greeting, they stop asking why. In fact, we get people who say, 'Why didn't you send me an email on my birthday?' We want to delight our alumni with the use of technology rather than scare them."

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Data Makes The Grade

By Lynn Russ - Jul/Aug 2004

In higher education, database management is playing a vital role in every aspect of student relationship management. Colleges and universities analyze everything from academic records, to retention and graduation rates, to how students' expectations change year after year. The data provides important details that help schools attract the best students, keep them through to graduation, give them the tools they need while they're there, and offer them a great college experience. At the same time, it builds the school's brand, to keep the cycle going.

Capitalizing on surveys

Some data, such as grades and retention rates, comes from research conducted by organizations such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Institute, the University of California (UCLA) Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) and the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA). All of the data has a direct effect on curricula, services, facilities and even faculty.

NSSE research showed Clarkson University in Potsdam, N.Y., that there wasn't enough attention given to ethics and professionalism. As a result, "Several individual courses have added segments on ethical issues," says Stephen Camp, dean of students and institutional assessment.

An annual freshman survey distributed by the UCLA HERI showed Northern Illinois University that its cultural makeup is diverse. The university now uses data to attract more ethnic students. As a result, the university built cultural centers for Latinos and other groups, according to associate provost Gip Seaver.

The UCLA HERI national study of incoming college students asks about their academic backgrounds, demographics, expectations for

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The University of Dayton scrutinizes the metrics from its mailings. Absolute click-through rates are important, but the differentiating of who clicks on what is also captured. Early results indicate that a narrowly targeted story, such as one that goes only to graduates of a particular school within the university, will get click-through rates that are eight to 20 times higher than those for more general stories.

Eyes on the Prize

The lesson is to keep your eyes on the retention prize, which in the University of Dayton's case is alumni participation in the college as represented by increases in donations, visits and applications for admission from children of alumni.

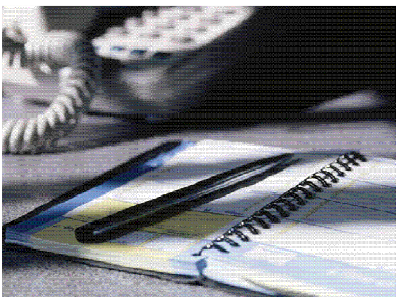
"Our site is not just fluff," says Brown. "We have invested [approximately \$50,000] in it because it allows us to stay in touch with our alumni in ways standard print can't. If we lose focus on the end result, it ends up being just a hobby."

The University of Dayton cannot yet correlate an increase in donations to the personalization afforded by the alumni Web site and e-magazine. For now, it's too soon for anything but anecdotal evidence, such as the \$5,000 from an alumnus whose whereabouts were unknown to the University of Dayton until the long-lost alumnus used the Web site to identify himself and offer the gift.

It is clear, however, that the University of Dayton Web site generates gifts the university would otherwise not have received. More easily measured is the \$18,000 in printing and postage expense that the university avoids by allowing alumni to update their own profiles. ❖

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college, life goals, attitude, career choice and intended majors, explains Linda Sax, who oversees the study. And Northern Illinois University has used comparative statistics on athletics salaries distributed by the NCAA to help make a case for additional staff. "We added personnel in athletic training and in our strength and conditioning area, by looking at what other institutions are doing," says Dee Abrahamson, associate athletic director for the university. Student athletes now benefit from better personal attention and extended weight-room hours.

Another study by the NCAA looks at the number of athletes that graduate within six years. (Six years is the national graduation benchmark.) The NCAA runs a series of prediction models to come up with a profile of an ideal athlete graduate vs. the profile of an athlete who is at risk of not graduating, according to Todd Petr, managing director of research for the NCAA. Universities are setting stricter grade requirements for athletes, and are using the new model to identify players at risk and get them the help they need before it's too late. ❖

AK INSIGHTS' SERVICES

Cost-effective, innovative, additional routes to your customers.

AK Insights provides full service expertise in the areas of Database Management, Direct Marketing and Small/Micro Business Marketing.

DATA MANAGEMENT

Data gathering (e.g. member data, general surveys, retail surveys, audits, etc.), data entry and ongoing database management.

DIRECT MARKETING

Postal & email marketing; Loyalty/ membership programs; Newsletters; Mini web-sites; Database surveys, etc.

SMALL/MICRO BUSINESS MARKETING

Development and implementation of marketing plans & strategies that focus on non-traditional marketing methods (a.k.a. "mini-media") and are affordable, creative, unique and effective.



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