

HEL Field Study Development Guide
61-657 INTRODUCTION TO INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

MARKETING TECHNIQUES AND RECRUITING EFFECTIVENESS AT A
PUBLIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine what recruiting strategies are effective in recruiting students to higher education. Because the staff sizes of the marketing and admissions departments at this particular institution are both very small, they need to work together to determine the best methods for reaching out to potential students and thus positively impacting future enrollment. The results of this study will aid both departments as they make short and long-term plans in regards to budget, travel and staff responsibilities all the while working with limited resources. Literature was reviewed focusing on four primary concepts: the Millennial generation, the role of the marketing department, the social media phenomenon and the materials used during the admissions/recruiting process. Jerome McCarthy's 4Ps paradigm for marketing was applied. Self-reported data was obtained from the institution studied.

Chi Square analyses were completed to determine if there a difference in social media preference according to gender in addition to if there a difference in the sources of information that influenced the decision to attend the institution according to hometown size (rural, suburban or urban). Descriptive statistics were utilized to determine social media usage, advertising effectiveness and the influence of the high school counselor and the campus visit experience. In addition, statistics on students' preferred recruiting method as well as a gender comparison on sources of information that influenced the decision to attend the institution were also determined.

The findings of this study suggest that this institution needs to continue to use a mixed method when it comes to recruiting prospective students. Traditional forms of communication, such as phone calls and printed materials should be used in combination with technological tools, such as email and social media. Because of the overwhelmingly positive influence of the campus visit, the admissions office, scholarship sponsors, faculty, etc. should encourage all students to take part in this experience.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background, Issues and Concerns

Deciding if and where to attend college is the first life-changing decision many young adults will make. For most, it is the first opportunity to live independently, develop new relationships, accrue debt and make decisions that will affect their short and long-term personal and professional goals (Pampaloni, 2010). Some students will follow their parents' footsteps by selecting the parent's alma mater. Others will look to venture as far from home as possible, seeking true independence. Knowing how to reach and ultimately connect with prospective students is a primary responsibility of marketing and admission departments at all institutions of higher education. There is an opportunity to learn how to better connect with today's student, whether that be through implementation of new technology or improved use of current methods. This study will explore recruiting methods in comparison with how students desire to be recruited.

The Millennial generation of today is overwhelmingly well-versed in technology, which is changing the way admission and marketing departments operate. Recruiting and enrolling students is "rapidly moving from paper-based to technology based operation" (Furbeck, Harding, Wohlgemuth & Bousquet, 2003). Millennials are taking advantage of technological tools, such as online applications, that institutions have provided. As such, it seems that increasing efforts to recruit students through technological methods would make sense. However, the argument stands that many forms of technological communication infringe upon a student's right to privacy and as a result, are frowned upon by students themselves.

Social media allows users to search for friends, share information and content, instant message, leave comments and share digital and audio files. Social media has taken higher

education, particularly enrollment management, by storm (Hayes, Ruschman, & Walker, 2009). Using social networking websites allows an institution to "post up-to-the-minute news stories about campus or its alumni successes" and "create and invite participants to events." Yet the concern remains as to whether or not admission departments are benefitting from the social media frenzy. While students provide favorable ratings on the use of social media in recruitment strategies, a 2009 survey of 36 admission offices performed by Lindbeck and Fodrey indicated "a perceived low return on investment (ROI) on time and energy in all of the technologies used throughout the admissions process." Even so, institutions feel pressured to increase and improve their social media presence as they compete with other like institutions that may be doing more virtual communication.

Due to tightening budgets and increased scrutiny, marketing departments must be able to justify that every dollar spent will yield a high return on investment (Ancil, 2008c). As a result, institutions must be certain they understand the wants and needs of prospective students and how to get their attention. In order to make improvements and move forward, institutions must understand the current generation of prospective students, learn from previous experience, use gut instincts from time to time and be willing to improve (Lindbeck & Fodrey, 2010). Institutions must overcome barriers to innovation and improvement, which includes re-evaluating current institutional processes, becoming more comfortable with newer technologies, having the ability to think outside the box and better utilizing available time and resources. The bottom line is making decisions that will best serve students.

Practice under Investigation and/or Policy to be Informed by Study

The admissions office at this institution utilizes a variety of resources in the recruitment of students. Five admissions representatives in addition to one administrative assistant share the responsibilities. Currently, the admissions office primarily uses the following strategies for the recruitment of prospective students: college planning conferences (CPCs), high school visits, career fairs, campus visits and email campaigns in addition to general phone and e-mail communication/follow-up. They have recently incorporated social media into their recruiting practice, primarily through the use of Facebook and Twitter. They are curious as to whether or not a text messaging program would be worthwhile as well. Overall, this institution would like to know where to gear their recruiting efforts in order to best utilize staff time, energy and resources.

This institution relies heavily on the use of email campaigns to communicate with prospective students, as it is a free resource. Moreover, having the capability to contact a large number of students with one message is highly efficient. This piece is critical to an already understaffed department. Because school websites and email were rated the most useful by students in a recent survey conducted at two universities in the Midwest, this institution is better able to justify their continued efforts to use email campaigns (Lindbeck & Fodrey, 2010).

The majority of the admissions budget at this institution is spent on travel. But, the admissions field in general has long questioned the effectiveness of high school visits and CPCs, which are the primary sources of travel. This institution has contemplated the idea of foregoing traditional high school visits and attendance at CPCs in exchange for an increased presence in social media outlets, including the use of Facebook, Twitter and Skype. This practice would also allow a significant amount of money to be spent in more effective ways.

The marketing department at this institution is comprised of the executive assistant to the president, an administrative assistant and a few student workers. They are responsible for all printed materials, advertising and media communication. While the marketing and admissions departments function separately, there has been an increased effort to work collaboratively. The results of this study will help both offices make short and long-term decisions in order to positively impact the recruitment of students and ultimately, enrollment figures.

Conceptual Underpinning

The business of marketing should be responsive, innovative and a part of every institution's educational mission. "Good marketing is well researched, highly coordinated and professionally delivered" (Anctil, 2008c). Krachenberg (1972) is credited for much of the research that is available on the marketing of higher education. Marketing "deals with the concept of uncovering specific needs, satisfying those needs by the development of appropriate good and services, letting people know of their availability and offering them at appropriate prices, at the right time and place" (Anctil, 2008c). Marketing requires intense research in order to better understand what makes one institution unique from another, as they all compete for the same faculty, students and monetary gifts.

Jerome McCarthy is credited for popularizing the marketing mix in his 1960 publication *Basic Marketing: A Managerial Approach*, where he introduced the 4Ps paradigm: Product, Price, Promotion and Place (Anderson & Taylor, 1995). The most cited and most frequently used classification system for the marketing mix, all four criteria of the 4Ps paradigm should be considered by marketing managers during the decision making process, where the customer is the focal point.

Product refers to the process of determining whether the product or service meets the needs of consumers. Further, is the product or service of high enough quality to withstand in a highly competitive market? Functionality, quality, packaging and appearance serve as focal points. Pricing strategy is another critical factor in the marketing mix. Determining the amount that customers are willing to pay is part of any business or organization. Thoughts about the worthwhileness of discounts or special offers should also be considered. Promotion is the process of informing and educating the target audience about the organization and its products/services. Promotion is believed to be the most critical piece of the paradigm and includes many areas: advertising, selling, public relations, etc. Place refers to the availability of products or services at the right time, place and in the right quantity. Location and logistics are key players in the place component of McCarthy's paradigm. It is important to remember that order does not play a significant role in the 4Ps paradigm. All four criteria may function independently, but superiority results when they work harmoniously.

While the idea of marketing obviously applies to all businesses who are selling a product, institutions of higher education also benefit from the 4Ps model (Anderson & Taylor, 1995; Van Waterschoot & Van den Bulte, 1992). Colleges and universities search for prospective students, develop products (courses, on-campus living), price them (tuition and fees), distribute them (announce time and place) and promote them (brochures, viewbooks). This concept has since been widely used as a pedagogical tool in both the business and academic realms. Although a continual target of critics, the 4Ps have flourished and proven to be valuable, effective and time-tested in contemporary marketing applications.

Successful strategic and marketing plans know their audience and how to get their attention (Anctil, 2008c). An institution must understand their product, price structure and

consumer appeal. In addition, care should be given to incorporate a marketing plan that aligns with the institution's strategic plan. Everyone should clearly understand the institution's goals, values and be able to communicate them consistently. Marketing plans must be re-evaluated on a regular basis, all the while recognizing the need to stay current with the times (Ancitil, 2008c). In a market with changing needs and expectations, adaptability is crucial. The need for marketing reformation has recently become reality as enrollments are declining, state support is decreasing, costs are rising and competition amongst like institutions is intensifying.

Statement of the Problem

As higher education in general continues to take a hit from federal and state funding, marketing and admissions departments feel increased pressure to grow enrollment, while working with fewer resources. Going straight to the source, in this case prospective students, will allow the institution to determine effective recruiting methods in order to make better use of valuable time, money and energy. Are traditional methods, such as high school visits and print material archaic approaches to recruiting or do students continue to find them valuable? At what level, if any, should higher education be utilizing social media in recruitment efforts? More information is needed from students to determine what products and services are worth the investment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine what strategies are most effective in recruiting students to higher education. Because the staff sizes of the marketing and admissions departments at this particular institution are both very small, they need to work together to determine the best methods to reach potential students and positively impact enrollment. The results of this study will aid both departments in strategic planning.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the demographics of the study group?

RQ2: What are the summary statistics of the study?

- a) What percentage of students use Facebook and/or Twitter? Are these resources influential in the college decision making process?
- b) Are high school counselors serving as a significant source of influence in the college decision making process?
- c) Is the campus visit experience a highly influential recruiting method?
- d) Should admissions representatives continue to attend college planning conferences (CPCs) and make high school visits?
- e) Are billboard, newspaper and radio advertisements effective?

RQ3: Is there a difference in social media preference according to gender?

RQ4: What contact method is preferred amongst students during the recruiting process?

RQ5: How do males and females compare in their preference for sources of information that influenced their decision to attend the institution?

RQ6: Is there a difference in the sources of information that influenced the decision to attend the institution according to hometown size (rural, suburban or urban)?

Null hypotheses

HO3: There is no difference in social media preference according to gender.

HO6: There is no difference between hometown size and sources of information that influenced the decision to attend the institution.

Anticipated Benefits of the Study

Understanding the impact that marketing strategies have on the recruitment of students will allow both the marketing and admissions departments to work smarter, not harder. Knowing where

to invest time, money and energy will aid in the assignment of regular tasks as well as short and long-term planning efforts. The use of appealing recruiting practices will result in a more satisfied prospective student. As staff members see students become more engaged in the process, increased employee satisfaction may result.

Limitations and Delimitations

The primary limitation for this project is the validity of self-reported data from the freshman class. The length of the survey is longer than desired; however, staff members felt compelled to ask all 67 questions pertaining to a variety of subjects, including data on student demographics/geography, social media, marketing and admissions. For the purpose of this study, only a few of the survey questions were used to determine the solutions to the research questions/null hypotheses.

Due to the length of the survey, students could have lost interest as they progressed through the survey in its entirety. Additionally, due to the large number of potential respondents, bubble sheets were used to collect the data as opposed to hand calculating hundreds of individual forms. Directions and questions for the survey were handed out separately. Students with reading, comprehension and/or attention disabilities may have struggled with this particular format.

Surveying the incoming freshman class only serves as a delimitation for this particular study. Because they were the most recent group of students to experience the recruiting process, it seemed their responses would most accurately reflect the thoughts and feelings of the typical college student that admissions offices are targeting. Although this institution is a community college and serves the majority of students for two years, the survey was not administered to non-freshmen. Because all freshmen are required to attend a one-day orientation session, this survey was administered at that time. This practice seemed more feasible than conducting the

survey numerous times in classrooms, campus housing, the cafeteria, etc. In addition, the vast majority of students completing this survey were Midwestern; therefore, these results cannot be assumed to be representative of student perceptions nationwide.

Definition of Terms

Admissions and marketing departments have unique and specialized terminology in their field. These terms, which are mentioned throughout this report, are defined below.

High School Visit-The process of a college admissions representative visiting a high school and meeting with prospective juniors and seniors. This is an opportunity for the representative to communicate what his/her institution has to offer and to answer questions students may have.

Email Campaign- The process for an organization to develop and deploy multiple-channel marketing campaigns to target groups or individuals and track the effect of those campaigns, by customer segment, over time (<http://www.bitpipe.com/tlist/Campaign-Management.html>).

Social Media-Internet-based software and interfaces that allow individuals to interact with one another, exchanging details about their lives such as biographical data, professional information, personal photos and up-to-the-minute thoughts (<http://www.answers.com/topic/social-media-technology>).

Millennial-Classification of individuals born between the mid-1970s to the early 2000s.

College Planning Conference (CPC)-An event where admission representatives from numerous colleges and universities are available to showcase materials and answer questions of prospective students and/or parents regarding his/her represented institution. Also known as a college fair.

Marketing Mix-Conceptual framework that identifies the decision making principles that managers use when deciding how to best meet consumers' needs.

Summary

Increased use of online communication and social media has challenged admissions offices to review recruiting practices. It seems there is need for change in the recruiting process as there is less of a reliance on traditional forms of media. However, recent survey data does not support the idea to banish traditional methods altogether. The importance of a combination of resources is supported by a 2007 Eduventures Inc. study titled "College Search and the Millennial Generation" in which 84% of students indicated that they use the university website the most to learn about the school followed by personal recommendations (75%), campus visits (64%) and viewbooks (64%) (Anctil, 2008a; Hayes et al., 2009). Less than ten percent of students reported using forms of digital engagement in their college search process.

In conclusion, each piece of the recruiting puzzle must work together. They must work together to capture the attention of prospective students. Compelling print pieces, engaging on-campus visit experiences, personalized relationships with admissions personnel and scholarship sponsors in addition to a social media presence are vital to enrollment management's success.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Managing enrollment is a significant part of the strategic plan at every college/university. While many units are involved in this process, it is the ultimate responsibility of the marketing department to create a recognizable, strong and positive image while the admissions department contacts and connects with potential individuals interested in the institution. Using advantageous marketing/admission techniques aids institutions in the pursuit of today's prospective students who are well versed in technology, very attached to their families and socially centered. This chapter will discuss the characteristics of the Millennial generation, marketing and admission specific research as well as the background of social media and its impact in both higher education and society in general.

Millenials

Born in 1982 through 2000, Hagevik (1999) believes the Millennial generation "values choice and is menu-driven" (Lindbeck & Fodrey, 2010). Lancaster and Stillman (2002) classify the Millennial generation as a collection of smart, practical and techno-savvy people who are characterized by shared common life experiences that will ultimately influence how they impact the world for many years to come. Howe and Strauss (2007) go on to say that Millennials, having grown up in fairly prosperous times, have an "enhanced sense of confidence and need for a challenge" but are committed to "stability, equality and a well-balanced life" (Lindbeck & Fodrey, 2010). Millennials have a "constant need to be connected to their social pipelines, have access to digital information and collaborate with their peers."

Millenials expect personalized attention, expect to be entertained, are interested in personal benefits and are very connected to their families (Furbeck et al, 2003). "Demographic

changes working to the advantage of the Millennial generation include older parents, smaller families, more firstborns, more parental education and slowing of family break-up." Having lived through the terrorist attacks of September 2001, the Columbine shootings and recent economic strife, parents of the Millennial generation are thought of as being overprotective. They expect to be included in the recruiting process and have high expectations of their children. A recent survey asked students to rank what sources of information influenced their decision to enroll at a particular university. Not surprising, mother and father ranked second and fourth (out of fifteen), respectively (Johnston, 2010). The results of this survey are consistent with the available research on Millennials and their connectedness to their families. It appears that Millennials are influenced by both peers and parents alike, which is something that admission and marketing departments must remember when establishing strategies to connect with prospective students.

Marketing

"Creating and maintaining a favorable image in the minds of prospective students and parents should be the number one priority of every marketing department" (Furbeck et al, 2003). Care should be taken to ensure that the product or service delivers a message that "reinforces brand identity, encourages repeat viewings and drives prospective students to the institution's website." Millennials are "not willing to give a second chance at a first impression" (Lindbeck & Fodrey, 2010); therefore, careful attention should be given to the portrayal of the institution's image, as students are also influenced by reputation and word-of-mouth recommendations (Pampaloni, 2010). "Good integrated marketing is much more about engaging customers as opposed to pushing out our message," explains Anne Sroka of Holyoke Community College (Gross, 2010).

According to the article “Staying on Message”, colleges and universities should consider three implications when establishing a marketing plan (Gross, 2010). First, an institution must react to the demands of their local environment. After all, a small, private Midwestern college will employ different strategies than a large, public east coast university because their target audience is different. Secondly, institutions should strive for originality, keeping in mind that what works for one campus might not work on another. Thirdly, dedicated professionals must work to develop a successful communications plan, which may take a considerable amount of effort. All three strategies are vital components of a successful marketing plan.

Market differentiation in higher education is the communication of how an institution best suits consumers' needs and why they are the best choice of available options (Anctil, 2008b). In other words, market differentiation is simply standing out in a crowd by having a product that is both different and better than the competition. Literature on market differentiation emphasizes the need to provide a variety of differences from competitors including: a better product, better service, a better value, a better price, convenient access, personalized solutions to costumers' needs and the ability to be exclusively available.

Putting market differentiation into practice in higher education is a complicated and complex task that requires leadership, vision and patience (Anctil, 2008b). However, knowing what sets an institution apart from the competition is valuable information that will positively affect enrollment management, retention/persistence in addition to an improved marketing plan. While market differentiation is of utmost importance in the grand scheme of higher education advertising, it is not the sole focus of this study; however, it was necessary to include some background information about this concept and its affect on higher education.

Nonprofit higher education spends less than five percent of their annual budget on marketing-related activities, though figures vary at every institution (Ancil, 2008c). Most institutions have specific marketing departments led by professionals with training in that area; however, many colleges and universities also employ the use of outside firms to conduct market analyses, develop materials and implement new marketing and advertising campaigns. Outside companies may have fresher ideas, be more educated on what students want in addition to being more technologically savvy. In a 2002 article from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Iowa State University associate professor of film studies, Thomas Doherty, warns that prospective students "may be growing tired of less than state-of-the-art delivery methods used by institutions promising to prepare them for the future" (Furbeck et al., 2003). Paying for services from external sources is often times money well spent, especially when traditional marketing methods such as newspaper, print and radio have seemingly lost their allure to the Millennial generation.

Social Media

According to Coyle and Vaughn (2008), a social network is a "configuration of people connected to one another through interpersonal means such as friendship, common interests or ideas" (Hayes et al., 2009). Social networks long existed before the introduction of the Internet; however, the concept of social networking, or the online development of communities, has certainly enhanced communication on both the personal and professional levels. Alch (2000) believes that social media has the power to transform business, education, health care, entertainment, government and every other institution in our society.

Ridings and Gefen site four principle reasons for the publics' participation in online communities in their 2004 study, "Virtual Community Attraction: Why People Hang Out Online" (Hayes et al., 2009). First and foremost, online communities enable users to exchange

information in a quick, convenient manner. Secondly, online communities allow for social support exchange, which is the "degree to which a person's basic social needs are gratified through interaction with others." Thirdly, users have the ability to establish and continue friendships by way of online communities. Finally, the Internet provides a form of recreation, which includes the use of online gaming. Social media provides "an opportunity for fans, friends and followers to get information and establish camaraderie" according to Sarah Hannes, e-recruiting specialist at Laramie County Community College in Wyoming (Neibling, 2010).

Nielsen Online, an analytics firm that tracks time spent online at various web sites, reports that "email is how you communicate with elders in formal situations, while social networks are the preferred method of communication among peers" (Hayes et al., 2009). Perhaps that is why from May 2008 to May 2009, Facebook grew 97% while Twitter expanded by an astounding 2,681%. A 2009 survey conducted by Noel-Levitz reported that 98% of college students participated in social networking. Based on this data alone, it seems obvious that higher education would jump at the idea to incorporate social media into their recruiting practices.

Vander Schee (2007) states that colleges and universities have at least four options for responding to the social networking phenomenon: distancing oneself, monitoring conversations, setting up one's own user group and creating a companion website (Hayes et al., 2009). Although social media is quickly gaining popularity in higher education, many institutions purposely avoid this tool, referred to as "distancing oneself." They do not want the responsibility of policing comments being made nor do they want to be connected to students that use poor judgment in making general statements that affiliate the student with their institution. Monitoring conversations is not a financial burden, but does require a significant

amount of time. Tools such as Google or Yahoo Alert are available to aid in this practice. It is wise for an institution to realize that when using social networking websites, you must be willing to give up some level of control. Setting up one's own user group "joins students where they are" and allows the institution to "create positive messages and invite students" to participate in conversations.

Companion websites, more commonly referred to as microsites, designed by the institution to mimic popular social networking sites, can be costly, but well worth the investment to "create student buzz, engage the prospect and increase the likelihood of matriculation." Tomassi and Troy (2007) believe that customized social networking systems provide an institution with the ability to create an automated email alert system, to survey students, to provide electronic mentoring systems and to allow professors to set up their own learning communities (Hayes et al., 2009). Xavier University created a website in 2005-2006 with a strategy to "create the ability to better engage accepted students through interactive and peer-to-peer marketing." As a result, they are better able to control their enrollment management by way of their social networking site. They have determined that there is a significant relationship between those who logged in to their website and the likelihood of attending the institution. They also determined that students who do not log into their website within a few days of being invited are significantly less likely to enroll. As a result, focusing resources and efforts to convince students to utilize the site is pivotal. In 2009, Xavier University received the Grand Gold award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) for their exemplary website.

Most personnel in the higher education world would agree that they have "mastered basic tools of the digital environment (e-mail, Internet browsing, text messaging)" (Neibling, 2010);

however, while social media is familiar to younger generations, older generations still find it to be a bit intimidating. Learning to embrace the social media phenomenon rather than oppose it is probably good advice. According to John Hansen, director of recruitment and retention at Clovis Community College in New Mexico, "Using social networking allows us to connect, reach out, and build relationships, all of which are vitally important to recruiting and retaining students" (Neibling, 2010).

Social media presents an opportunity to connect with a target audience and provides a means of "finding out more about students and communities" (Neibling, 2010). It is true that incorporating the use of social media into a marketing/admissions plan seems like a worthwhile cause; however, it should be implemented with care. First of all, caution should be given to not invade an individual's personal space when using social media. Farrell (2007) indicates a "delicate balance must be struck in order to successfully navigate the rocky terrain of college admission practices, technology and personal boundaries" (Lindbeck & Fodrey, 2010). Secondly, it is important to remember that your social media presence is about them, not you. Thirdly, an institution should strive to have a personality, inspire conversations and build a community. Finally, institutions should "save the traditional marketing and development content" for your website and print materials (Hayes et al., 2009).

There is also reason to believe that social networking is more useful for "engaging those students who have already expressed an interest in a school" as opposed to "creating interest in the first place" (Hayes et al., 2009). This is an important idea for admissions personnel to consider, especially when an increased social media presence means that workers will be expected to absorb extra responsibilities on many campuses, as tight budgets do not allow for the hiring of extra employees (Gross, 2010). While social media has the potential to contribute to

time and money woes at varying degrees, what content should be posted can also be an obstacle. To combat this issue, Central New Mexico Community College employs an "80-20" rule (Neibling, 2010). Their Facebook page is 80% entertainment based and 20% information based. Knowing that Millennials like the entertainment factor, this rule can be easily justified.

Admission/Recruiting Materials

Engaging and connecting with prospective students is the job of the admissions department at every institution, regardless of their size, type or affiliation. While there are many available methods and options for communicating with prospective students, knowing exactly what students want, expect and prefer is a difficult question to answer. A 2009 survey conducted at Kellogg Community College in Battle Creek, Michigan determined that high school visits (33 percent) and work/job encouragement (33 percent) were the most productive recruiting tools (Gross, 2010). Social media came in third at 18 percent. According to Hussar and Bailey (2007), an increase of 26 percent in bachelor's degrees is expected by the 2016-17 academic year, which means that admission personnel have a great opportunity ahead of them (Lindbeck & Fodrey, 2010).

Admission materials should be accurate, complete and provide a genuine reflection of intellectual and social offerings the institution boasts (Anctil, 2008b). Information about academic offerings, housing, dining, services and financial aid should be simple, easy to understand and easy to find. The use of photographs, bright colors and unique shapes is also desirable to prospective students. While viewbooks are intended to showcase the uniqueness of each institution, a recent content analysis of 91 randomly selected universities showed that both the elements and messages are lacking originality (Furbeck et al, 2003). If promotional materials will continue to be designed to convince students that his/her experience on that particular

campus will be personal and unique, then the recruiting process needs to do the same (Vander Schee, 2010). As a result, the desire to distinguish oneself from competing institutions has increased.

While hard copy materials, such as viewbooks, are desirable by many, "digital products offer great flexibility for distribution, great range for information dissemination and the ability to continually edit and revise" (Anctil, 2008b). Many potential students form a first impression of an institution based on their website; therefore, care should be taken to make it easy to use, informative, accurate and aesthetically pleasing. A 2009 survey conducted by Noel Levitz found that "88 percent of college-bound prospective students would be disappointed or possibly eliminate a school from consideration if the institution's website did not meet their expectations" (Lindbeck & Fodrey, 2010). Furthermore, both the hard copy and electronic materials should send the same message and create the same face to the institution.

Clifford Adelman, a senior associate at the Institute for Higher Education Policy, believes that labels for "prospective students," future students," and "new students" must be easily identified on an institution's website. He further recommends a "contact us" button as well as a "search" box. Information about application procedures, deadlines, tuition and fees, financial aid and paying for college should also be easy to find. A website that is easy to navigate and find answers to frequently asked questions might also alleviate the amount of phone traffic an admission office receives. In support of that idea, a September 2007 issue of *Campus Technology* reports that "72% of surveyed college bound students prefer to interact with admissions departments online and via instant messaging" (Hayes et al., 2009). All in all, a strong website is a must.

Despite a high level of student activity in the social media world, a recent survey revealed that website, email and cell phone communication was most useful to students during the recruiting process (Lindbeck & Fodrey, 2010). Perhaps that is because admission personnel need to have a better understanding of how to use social media in a more impactful way. Or maybe students are indicating they would prefer to keep their social media communication on a personal level? Regardless, just because an institution has an online presence does not mean the work is done. Admission offices must find a way to blend marketing initiatives and technology, especially when the Millennial generation expects personalization. Technology should not be the sole driver of policies and practices, though that is often the reality when leaders are under constant pressure to keep up with competitors. Striking a balance between an institution's recruiting expectations with an increased use of technology is the key.

The use of social media to recruit students to higher education is on the rise. A 2009 study conducted by Mattson & Barnes found that the vast majority (85%) of colleges reported using social media in recruiting in 2008, compared to 51% in 2007 (Johnston, 2010). But, that does not mean more traditional forms of communicating should be left behind. A 2009 study of admission directors conducted by Lindbeck and Fodrey determined that website, email and cell phone were the primary technologies used by admission offices. The results of this study will help this particular institution decide what methods are most worthwhile: traditional (high school visits, campus visits, phone calls), technological (website, email, social media) or both.

Summary

While decreasing budgets are a source of frustration, making do with less does have an advantage: learning to make the most of what you have. Financial woes present opportunities to re-evaluate current policies and practices, establish strengths and weaknesses and develop a clear

mission. In addition, "competition brings a greater awareness of the need to create, disseminate and maintain a rather distinctive image as a means to maintaining a competitive advantage" (Anctil, 2008c). Needless to say, a strong marketing plan, varied communication methods from the admissions office and a social media presence are all major players in the recruitment of prospective students from the Millennial generation.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Problem and Purposes Overview

This study will aid the marketing and admissions departments at the institution studied in their strategic planning efforts. The study will inform the institution how much of an impact social media has in influencing students to enroll, what recruiting methods are most preferred by prospective students and what type of advertising is most effective. Knowing where to spend time, to relinquish money and to gear efforts to positively influence enrollment management is the ultimate goal of this study.

Research Design

This is a one shot non-experimental study. The survey was conducted in August of 2011 by the admissions office at the institution studied.

Variables used in the study.

The independent variable used in this study is the variety of marketing and recruiting strategies while the dependent variable is student preference for each method. The dependent variable is broken down into hometown size and gender preferences.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the demographics of the study group?

RQ2: What are the summary statistics of the study?

- a) What percentage of students use Facebook and/or Twitter? Are these resources influential in the college decision making process?
- b) Are high school counselors serving as a significant source of influence in the college decision making process?
- c) Is the campus visit experience a highly influential recruiting method?

- d) Should admissions representatives continue to attend college planning conferences (CPCs) and make high school visits?
- e) Are billboard, newspaper and radio advertisements effective?

RQ3: Is there a difference in social media preference according to gender?

RQ4: What contact method is preferred amongst students during the recruiting process?

RQ5: How do males and females compare in their preference for sources of information that influenced their decision to attend the institution?

RQ6: Is there a difference in the sources of information that influenced the decision to attend the institution according to hometown size (rural, suburban or urban)?

Null hypotheses

HO3: There is no difference in social media preference according to gender.

HO6: There is no difference between hometown size and sources of information that influenced the decision to attend the institution.

Study Group

This study group consisted of 291 entering freshman at the institution studied, who completed the survey at freshman orientation.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

The data was collected in August of 2011 at the institution studied. All entering freshmen at this institution are required to attend a one day orientation, which is conducted in the gymnasium. Students were given handouts that contained the questions and directions and bubble sheets were used to collect the data. The admissions office was responsible for the instrumentation of this survey.

Data Analysis Strategies

Using SPSS software, a Chi Square analysis will be completed to determine the effectiveness of various marketing techniques as sorted out by gender and hometown size. A significance level equal to or less than 0.05 is established. Descriptive statistics will be utilized to describe basic components of the study such as number of students who use social media, the significance of high school counselors in the college decision making process, the influence of the campus visit experience, the importance of high school visits by admissions representatives and the effectiveness of advertisement methods.

Summary

Determining which recruiting methods are effective in recruiting students to higher education was the primary focus of this study. Anonymous surveys were completed by 291 freshmen students at the institution studied. The data were compiled and reviewed through the framework of six research questions and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Chi Square analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Review of Research Design

The primary purpose of this study was to determine what marketing techniques are effective in recruiting students to an institution of higher education. Surveys were completed by 291 freshmen during freshmen orientation. Descriptive statistics along with Chi-Square tests were completed to answer the research questions asked in the study.

Presentation of Data Analysis, Findings & Interpretations

RQ1: What are the demographics of the study group?

The gender, age, residency and hometown classifications can be seen in Figures 1-4. Of the 291 survey respondents, 180 were female and 111 were male. Nearly all survey respondents (90%) were between the ages of 18-19. Because only the freshman class was surveyed, this statistic seems very realistic. An overwhelming majority of students reside in Kansas (74%). The hometown classification was less disproportionate, as 54% identified his/her hometown to be rural (less than 2,500), 28% were suburban (between 2,500-50,000) and 18% were urban (more than 50,000).

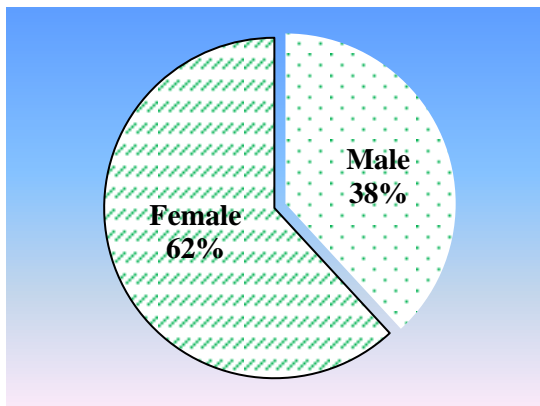


Figure 1. Gender classification

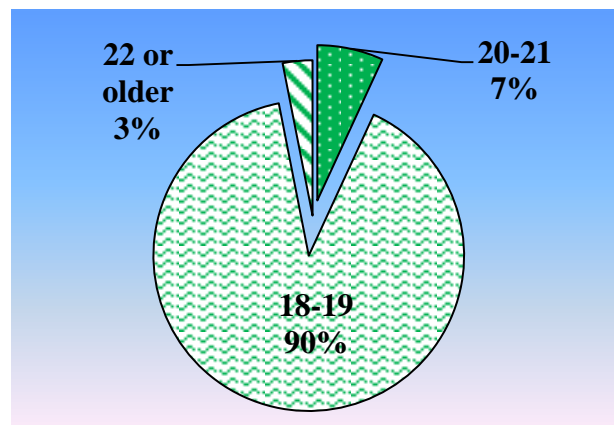


Figure 2. Age classification

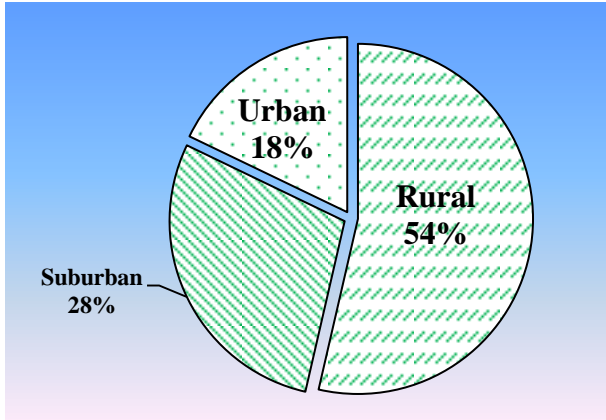


Figure 3. Hometown classification

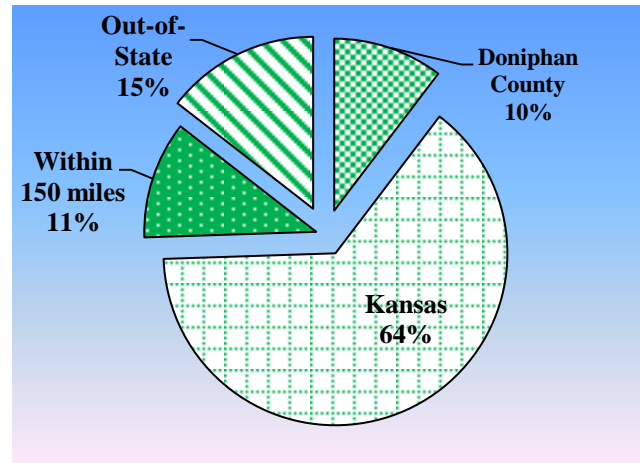


Figure 4. Residency classification

RQ2: What are the summary statistics of the study?

- a) What percentage of students use Facebook and/or Twitter? Are these resources influential in the college decision making process?

As shown in Figure 5, almost all students (97%) have a Facebook account while a smaller percentage indicates they have a Twitter account (31%). According to survey question 13, 70% of survey respondents indicate the institution should use more social media during the recruiting process. However, in survey questions 42-52, students were asked to identify his/her top five choices that were influential in the decision making process. Only 69 out of 291 students (24%) identified Facebook/Twitter as one of their top five choices. In addition, only 10.6% of students indicated that HCC's presence on Facebook/Twitter partially influenced his/her decision to select HCC as his/her college choice. All things considered, this emerging technology is not statistically significant at this particular point in time.

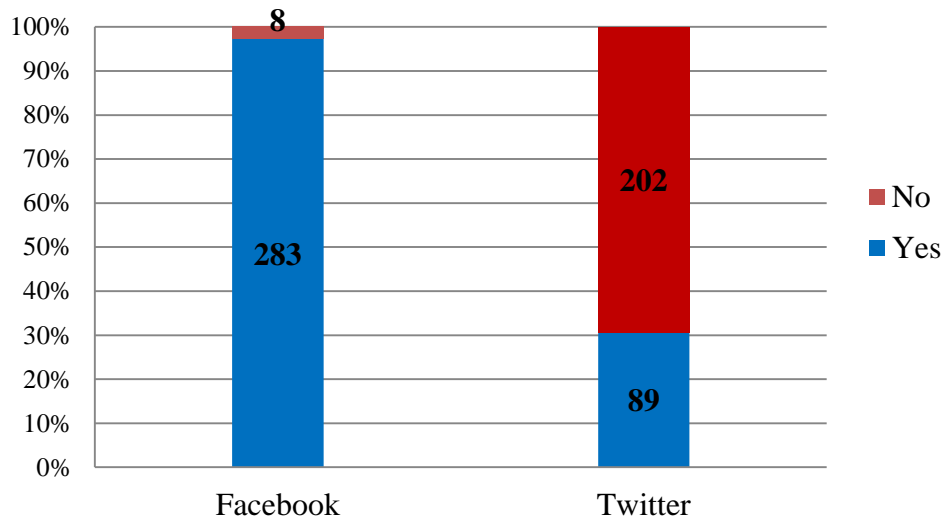


Figure 5. Percent of students with Facebook/Twitter accounts

b) Are high school counselors serving as a significant source of influence in the college decision making process?

In survey questions 42-52, students were asked to identify his/her top five choices that were influential in the decision making process. Approximately one-third (34.6%) of students identified his/her high school counselor as one of their top five choices. Just 18.5% of students agreed that his/her counselor encouraged them to consider a community college as a top college choice in survey question 15. More alarmingly, 30% disagreed with the same question.

According to this study, while high school counselors may not be encouraging students to attend a community college, it is apparent that a small percentage of students do utilize high school counselors for information about college.

c) Is the campus visit experience a highly influential recruiting method?

Two questions on the survey addressed the campus visit experience. Question 27 asked the student if his/her campus visit experience highly influenced his/her decision to attend the institution. Nearly half of survey respondents (48%) indicated that the campus visit experience

highly influenced his/her decision to attend the institution. Students disagreeing (8%) with the statement or signifying neutrality (22%) made up for a combined 30%. A pie graph of the results is shown in Figure 6.

In survey questions 42-52, students were asked to identify his/her top five choices that were influential in the decision making process. Just over two-thirds (67%) of students identified the campus visit experience as one of their top five choices for sources of information. When thinking about this statistic in combination with the 22% of students that did not experience a campus visit at all and therefore could not rate its effectiveness, it can be determined that the campus visit experience is a worthwhile and meaningful recruiting method.

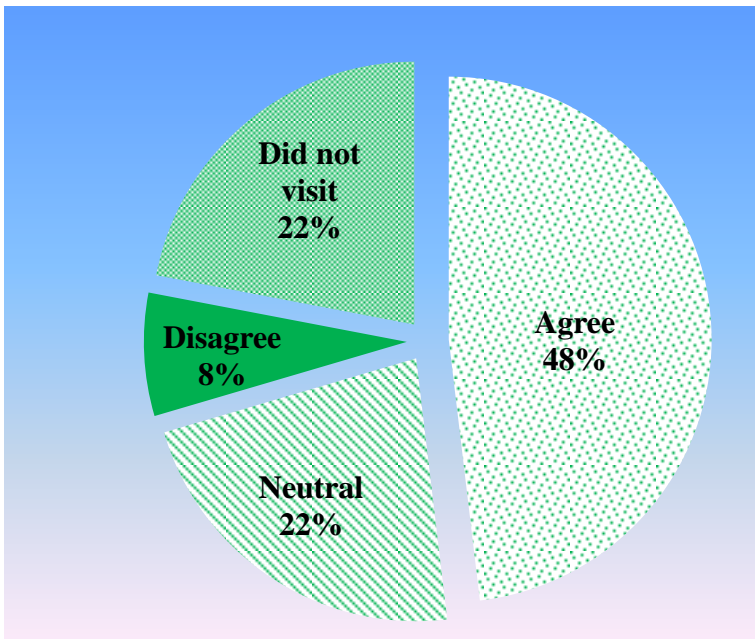


Figure 6. The campus visit was highly influential

- d) Should admissions representatives continue to attend college planning conferences (CPCs) and make high school visits?

Question 28 on the survey provides the most telling information in regards to this research question. When asked if admissions representatives should continue to visit high

schools, as they are productive and helpful to juniors and seniors, 74% of students agreed with this statement. Survey question 26 provides an interesting insight to follow up with the issue of high school visits, considering 31% of respondents indicated they were not aware when the admissions representative was visiting. When looking at the results of survey question 28 alone, admissions representatives should absolutely continue to make high school visits. College planning conferences (CPCs) appear to be less influential. Just 29% of respondents marked this source of information as a top 5 choice of influence.

e) Are billboard, newspaper and radio advertisements effective?

Figure 7 provides a detailed look at the various advertisement methods being utilized by the institution. Social media appears to be the most effective means of advertisement at the present time, as 39% of students indicated they had seen or heard an advertisement about the institution in the past year. Billboards (16%), high school newspapers (26%), local newspapers (22%) and radio advertisements (21%) yielded low positive responses.

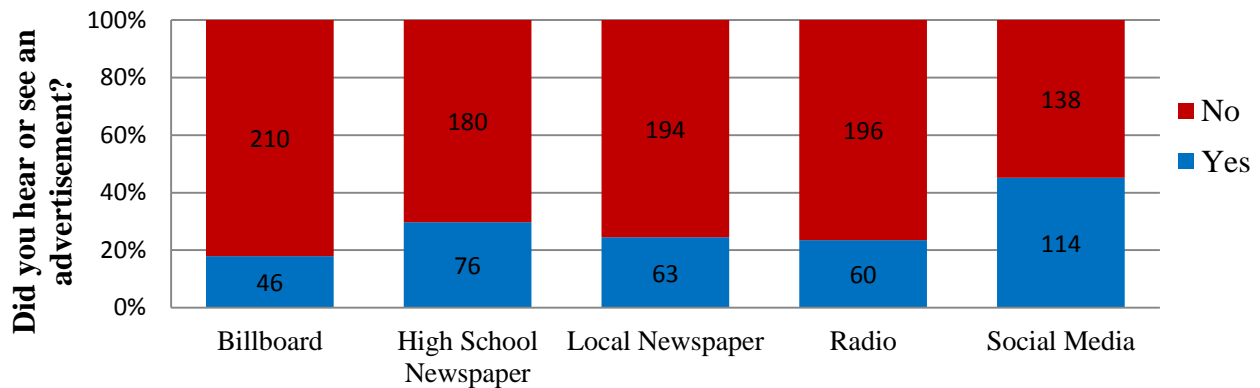


Figure 7. Advertising effectiveness

RQ3: Is there a difference in social media preference according to gender?

Chi Square analysis was computed for three separate survey questions (13, 19, 52) in comparison to gender, none of which showed a statistically significant difference. As shown in

Table 1, no significant difference (Chi Square=1.215 (2), p-value=.545) between gender and use of social media during the recruiting process was found; therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. Approximately 73% of males and 68% of females agree that the institution should use more social media during the recruiting process.

Table 1

Summary of Chi Square Results for Gender and Social Media Use in Recruiting

The institution should use more social media	Males	Females	Chi Square	df	p-value
Yes	73% (81)	68.3% (123)			
No	27% (30)	31.7% (57)	1.215	2	0.545

Sign. = or < .05

As shown in Table 2, no significant difference (Chi Square=4.747 (2), p-value=.093) between gender and preference for wanting to be recruited on Facebook/Twitter was found; therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. Approximately 41% of males and 32% of females wanted to be contacted on Facebook/Twitter during the recruiting process.

Table 2

Summary of Chi Square Results for Gender and Facebook/Twitter Recruiting Preference

Wanted to be contacted on Facebook/Twitter	Males	Females	Chi Square	df	p-value
Yes	41.4% (46)	31.1% (56)			
No	58.6% (65)	67.2% (121)			
No Response	0	1.7% (3)	4.747	2	0.093

Sign. = or < .05

As shown in Table 3, no significant difference (Chi Square=.149 (2), p-value=.928) between gender and Facebook/Twitter as a top five source of information that influenced the decision to attend the institution was found; therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. Approximately 23% of males and 24% of females identified Facebook/Twitter as one of their top five sources of information. Based on this survey data, there is not a difference between males

and females and their social media preference, as defined by these three survey questions (13, 19, 52).

Table 3

Summary of Chi Square Results for Gender and Facebook/Twitter as a Source of Information

Facebook/Twitter was a top 5 choice for sources of information	Males	Females	Chi Square	df	p-value
Yes	23% (26)	24% (43)			
No	77% (85)	76% (137)	0.149	2	0.928

Sign. = or < .05

RQ4: What contact method is preferred amongst students during the recruiting process?

Figure 8 shows five recruiting methods and the percentage of students indicating a preference for each method. (Students were able to mark as many methods as they preferred.) Email received the highest marks, with 81% of students indicating they preferred this contact method. Phone calls (73%) and printed material (76%) are more traditional recruiting methods, yet students specified a substantial preference for each. Technological recruiting methods, such as text messaging (61%) and Facebook/Twitter (36%) are less desirable.

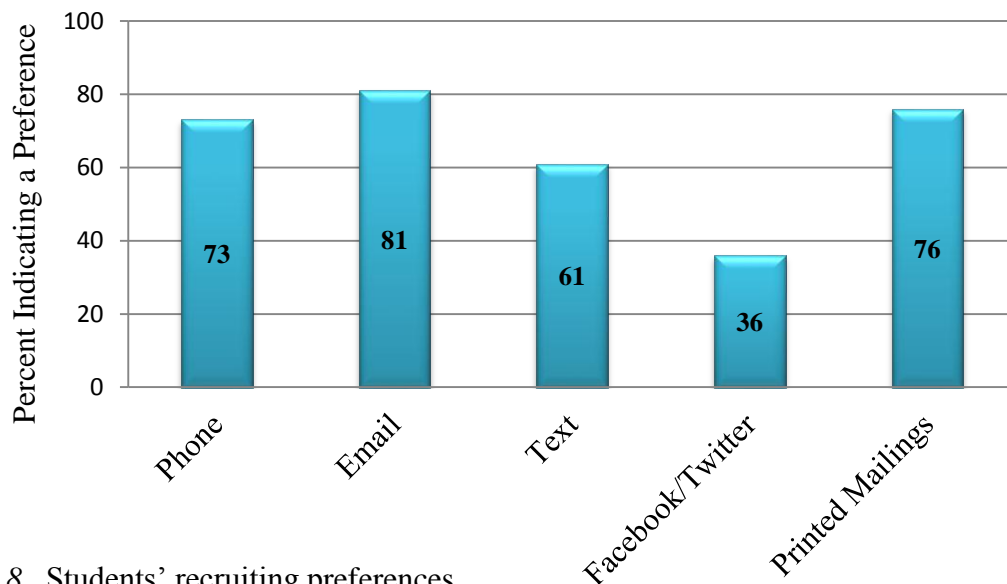


Figure 8. Students' recruiting preferences

RQ5: How do males and females compare in their preference for sources of information that influenced their decision to attend the institution?

As shown in Figure 9, males and females have similar preferences for sources of information on the whole. The females ranked campus visit, printed materials, coach/sponsor, friends and parents as their top five sources of information. The males identified campus visit, printed materials, friends and coach/sponsor in their top five as well. Unlike the females who recognized parents as an influential source, the males included the institutional website to complete their top five choices. When looking at the graph overall, the females have a noticeable preference for face to face and relationship building communication methods, considering counselor, college fair and admissions representative also received higher scores compared to the males.

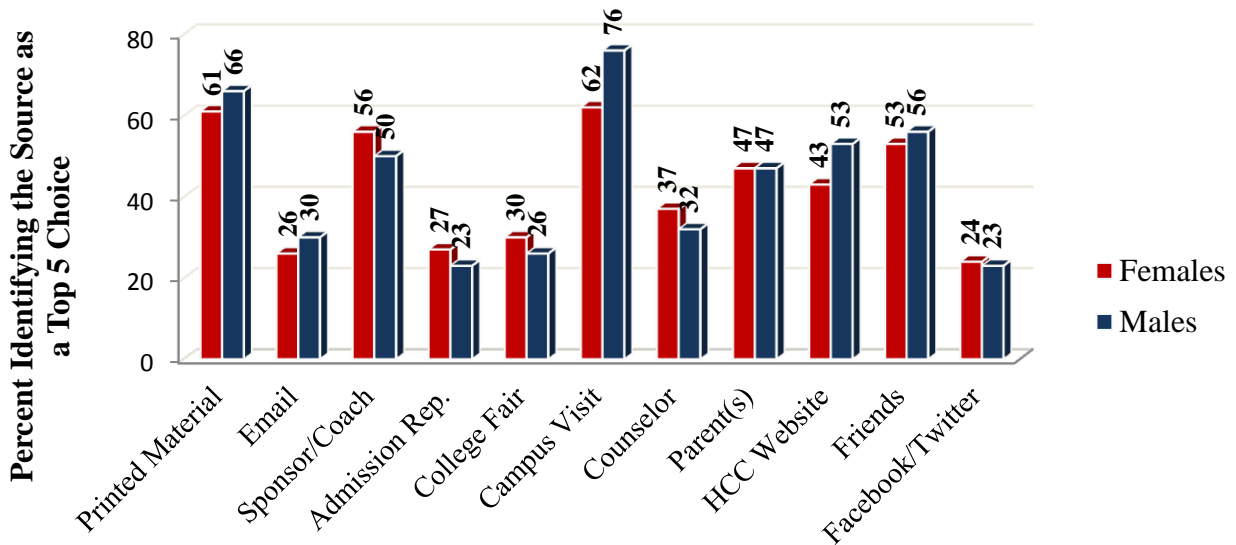


Figure 9. Gender comparison of the top five choices for information that influenced the student to attend the institution

RQ6: Is there a difference in the sources of information that influenced the decision to attend the institution according to hometown size (rural, suburban or urban)?

Chi Square analysis was computed for all dependent variables. Only two were statistically significant-the influence of friends and the campus visit experience. Figure 10 shows the comparison of hometown size and the sources of information that were influential in the decision making process.

As shown in table 4, Chi Square test revealed there is a significant difference between hometown size and the influence of friends (Chi Square=11.021 (2), p-value=.004). Approximately 60% of rural students marked the influence of friends as a top five source in the decision making process though suburban (46%) and urban (40%) students were less influenced by this source. Because this institution is located in a rural setting and the vast majority of students attending this institution live within 150 miles of the campus, it makes sense that friends would play such an influential role. Students from area rural communities that were friends in high school often end up on the same athletic team, in the same classes even in the same residential facility. Students from suburban and urban settings have friends that are less familiar with the institution and therefore not as likely to encourage his/her friends to attend the institution.

Table 4

Summary of Chi Square Results for Hometown Size and Influence of Friends

Influence of friends was a top 5 source of information	Rural	Suburban	Urban	Chi Square	df	p-value
Yes	62.8 % (98)	45.8% (38)	40.4% (21)			
No	37.2 % (58)	54.2% (45)	59.6% (31)	11.021	2	0.004

Sign. = or < .05

As shown in table 5, Chi Square test revealed there is a significant difference between hometown size and the influence of the campus visit experience (Chi Square=11.720 (2), p-

value-.003). Over three-quarters of the rural respondents (76%) identified the campus visit experience as a top five influential source of information. Fewer suburban (59%) and urban (54%) students feel the same way. Over 53% of students attending this institution are from rural communities and nearly 88% of students live within 300 miles of the campus; thus, it is more feasible for this population to make a campus visit. Students from suburban and urban settings may not be as likely to complete a campus visit due to time, transportation or monetary limitations. Urban students are more often than not athletes that make a commitment to the coach/institution sight unseen; therefore, the campus visit experience would not have an impact on the decision making process.

Table 5
Summary of Chi Square Results for Hometown Size and Campus Visit

Campus visit was a top 5 source of information	Rural	Suburban	Urban	Chi Square	df	p-value
Yes	75.6% (118)	59% (49)	53.8% (28)			
No	24.4% (38)	41% (34)	46.2% (24)	11.720	2	0.003

Sign. = or < .05

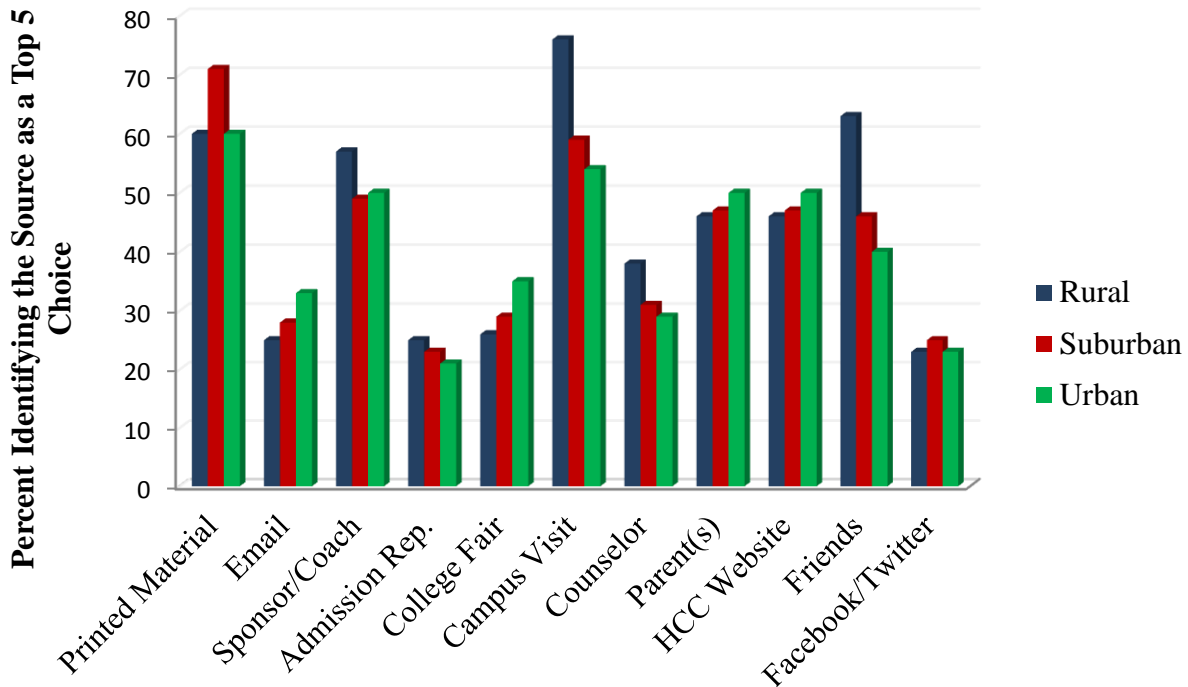


Figure 10. Hometown size comparison of the top five choices for information that influenced the student to attend the institution

Summary

This chapter analyzed the social media preferences, recruiting method preferences and sources of information that were influential during the college decision making process according to the freshman class at this institution. In addition, the effectiveness of the campus visit experience, of college fair attendance, of high school visits and of various advertising efforts were addressed. Students indicated a preference for traditional recruiting methods (email, phone, printed materials) as opposed to more current, technological methods (social media, texting). Chi Square analysis found no significant difference between males and females and their social media preferences, yet did show that hometown size does have an effect on the influence of friends and the campus visit experience.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND NEW LEARNING

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine what marketing techniques and recruiting methods are both effective and desired by today's generation. Six research questions and two hypotheses were used to facilitate the study. A variety of issues were addressed, including social media, communication methods, advertising effectiveness and influential sources of information.

The study group consisted of 291 freshmen who attended a mandatory orientation day where the survey was administered. Using SPSS software, Chi Square analyses were completed to determine influential sources of information based on hometown size in addition to social media preference according to gender. A significance level equal to or less than 0.05 was established. Descriptive statistics were utilized to describe basic components of the study such as the demographics of the study group, percentage of students that use social media and student perception of admissions activities, such as high school visits and college fair attendance.

Discussion of Findings

A 2009 survey conducted by Noel-Levitz concluded that 98% of college students used social networking websites. Two years later, the results from this survey are nearly identical, as 97% of students at this institution indicated they had a Facebook account. Though just 36% of respondents indicated they wanted to be contacted via social networking outlets, 70% agreed that the institution should use more social media during the recruiting process. Less than one fourth of the survey respondents marked that social media served as a top five source of information during the college decision making process; however, this statistic does not mean that social media efforts should be relinquished. Rather, perhaps social media could be used as a communication and entertainment instrument as opposed to a prime recruitment tool.

According to this survey, the campus visit experience, print material, relationship with a scholarship sponsor/coach, and the influence of friends were identified as the top four sources of information that persuaded students to attend the institution. Parents and the institutional website came in at number five and six (out of 11) on the list. The results of this survey are consistent with a 2007 Eduventures Inc. study titled "College Search and the Millennial Generation" which reported the university website, personal recommendations, campus visits and viewbooks (Anctil, 2008a; Hayes et al., 2009) as the most influential. When comparing these surveys, it can be said that today's students are still utilizing the same sources of information in the college decision making process that they did four years ago.

When looking at Figure 7, it appears that various efforts to advertise the institution are going somewhat unnoticed. Outside of social media at 39%, students indicating they had seen or heard an advertisement about the institution within the past year were very low in number. Much improvement can be made with regards to radio (21%), billboard (16%), local newspaper (22%) and high school newspaper (26%) advertisement effectiveness.

Figure 8 graphically demonstrates students' preferences when it comes to contact method during the recruitment process. Email was the top vote getter with 81% of respondents indicating a preference for this form of communication. Printed materials (76%) and phone (73%) followed closely behind. This group of Millennials surprisingly did not indicate a preference for more current and technological forms of recruiting, as texting (61%) and Facebook/Twitter (36%) were the least favored.

Conclusions and Implications/New Learning/Implications for Practitioners

This institution needs to continue to use a mixed method when it comes to recruiting prospective students. Traditional forms of communication, such as phone calls and printed

materials, should be used in combination with technological tools, such as email and social media. Admissions representatives should continue to make high school visits, build relationships with high school counselors and attend college planning conferences, though the effectiveness of each activity varies from student to student. An increased use of social media may be desired by students; however, it may not serve as a primary agent for persuading the student to attend the institution. Considering that "email is how you communicate with elders in formal situations, while social networks are the preferred method of communication among peers" (Hayes et al., 2009), perhaps current students could generate ideas and monitor the social media efforts.

Because of the overwhelmingly positive influence of the campus visit, the admissions office, scholarship sponsors, faculty, etc. should encourage all students to take part in this experience. In addition, all personnel involved with the campus visit experience should be made well aware of the impact they have on a student, especially as the student makes a decision about whether or not they will attend the institution.

Overall, it appears there is a need for marketing reformation. More specifically, the promotion aspect of McCarthy's 4Ps paradigm could use some improvement. Knowing that the Millennial generation is highly technological and socially driven, the results of the advertising effectiveness from this study are not surprising. The institution may very well be doing an overall successful job of placing ads in local and high school newspapers and recording segments for the radio. The problem may lie in the fact that students are not paying attention to these outlets. The need for flexibility and adaptability in combination with knowing what students want, need and expect is a critical piece for enrollment management success. Because social media efforts are the most effective at the present time, more advertising should be done through

this outlet. In addition, existing newspaper, radio and billboard advertising efforts need to be readdressed, revamped or eliminated altogether.

Recommendations for Future Research

As social media continues to be a growing phenomenon, I would recommend that future research be conducted on the effectiveness, prevalence and usefulness of social media as it relates to prospective students and the recruitment process. The same can be said of the effectiveness of paying for advertisements on social media sites. Before an institution makes critical changes in their recruitment strategies and methods, I would recommend they conduct or seek out a more detailed study on social media. While an increasingly popular communication channel at the present time, things could very easily change in the near future. It is important that admissions and marketing teams stay current on ways in which to reach out and connect with the current generation as they make short and long-term plans, goals and decisions.

Because the majority of students in this study group were from rural, Midwestern communities, I would recommend that a similar study be conducted with a larger and more heterogeneous group of students. I would also recommend conducting a similar study several years from now for comparison. It would be interesting to see if social media and texting become more prevalent, if traditional forms of recruitment remain steady, or if a new, more desirable form of communication will emerge.

I would also recommend a deeper exploration of email effectiveness. Though email was the most popular recruiting preference in this survey, there is a need to know if students are actually opening/reading those messages, forwarding them to their parents, ignoring them, etc. Email may not necessarily be the most effective source for communicating with students; however, it is the least intrusive. Perhaps that is the primary reason for its popularity. Future

research would enable admissions and marketing personnel to determine how much communication should take place through this free resource.

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APPENDIX



**Institutional
Review Board**

Terry Long, Chair
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860.562.1706 Office
860.562.1493 Fax
tlong@nwmissouri.edu

Celebrating Northwest: 100 years of traditions and transitions

**Northwest Missouri State University
Institutional Review Board
Decision Form**

Proposal # 1112-10-01

Date: 10/6/2011

Proposal Author(s): Andrea Keller

Proposal Title: Marketing techniques and recruiting effectiveness at a public community college.

The Institutional Review Board has accepted/approved your proposal.

You may begin your study. Please review the following information in regard to the conditions of your approval.

- Your project is approved for a period of one year from the date noted above. If your project requires additional time, please contact the current IRB chair.
- If you have any changes to methodology throughout the course of your project or any unforeseen negative incidents pertaining to human participants, please contact the current IRB chair to file a status report within 10 days.
- Upon completion of the project or by one year from the date noted above, please return to the IRB website and file a Status Report on your project.

Thank you for your interest in research at Northwest Missouri State University,

Terry Long, Committee Chair
Associate Professor – HPERD Department
NIH Office of Extramural Research Certificate # 247520

You have been asked to participate in a study to better understand what marketing techniques are effective in recruiting students to higher education. There are no known risks to you from taking part in this research study and your responses are kept completely confidential. Please understand your participation is voluntary and that you must be at least 18 years of age. Your current or future status at Highland Community College will not be jeopardized if you choose not to participate.

If you agree to participate, please complete this survey in its entirety and provide your signature below. Thank you very much for your time and consideration in helping HCC best meet the needs of current and future students!

Signature

Date

DEMOGRAPHIC/GEOGRAPHIC DATA

1. I am:
 - a) Male
 - b) Female

2. Please indicate your age:
 - a) 17-19
 - b) 20-21
 - c) 22 or older

3. My primary residence is:
 - a) Doniphan County
 - b) Kansas resident
 - c) Border (within 150 miles of Highland)
 - d) Out-of-State

4. How many miles away is your hometown?
 - a) 0-20
 - b) 21-50
 - c) 51-150
 - d) 151-300
 - e) More than 300

5. I consider my hometown to be:
- a) Rural
 - b) Suburban
 - c) Urban
6. I am Hispanic or Latino
- a) Yes
 - b) No
7. Ethnic Origin (select all that apply):
- a) American Indian or Alaska Native
 - b) Asian
 - c) Black or African American
 - d) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - e) White

SOCIAL MEDIA

8. I have a Twitter account?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
9. I follow HCC on Twitter?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
10. I have a Facebook account?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
11. I pay attention to “Highland Scotties” posts on Facebook?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) I am not friends with “Highland Scotties”
 - d) I don’t have a Facebook account
12. HCC’s presence on Facebook and/or Twitter at least partially influenced my decision to select HCC as my college choice?
- a) Strongly Disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly Agree

13. HCC should use more social media during the recruiting process?
- a) Strongly Disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly Agree
14. I used YouTube to get more information about colleges that I was interested in attending?
- a) Strongly Disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly Agree

ADMISSIONS DATA

15. My high school counselor encouraged me to consider HCC as a top college choice?
- a) Strongly Disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly Agree

Use this scale to answer questions 16-20.

- a) Strongly Disagree b) Disagree c) Neutral d) Agree e) Strongly Agree

During the recruiting process, I wanted to be contacted in the following ways:

- 16. Phone Call
- 17. Email
- 18. Text Message
- 19. Facebook/Twitter
- 20. Printed Mailings

Use this scale to answer questions 21-25.

Please rank how easily you understood the process for each of the following ?

- a) Very Difficult b) Difficult c) Neutral d) Easy e) Very Easy
- 21. Admissions process
 - 22. Enrollment process
 - 23. Housing
 - 24. Financial Aid Paperwork
 - 25. Scholarship paperwork

26. After visiting with the HCC admissions representative at my high school (select one):
- a) I felt more inclined to schedule a campus visit
 - b) I learned more information about HCC, but still was not sure it was the right place for me
 - c) I was unable to meet with him/her because of another conflict
 - d) I chose not to visit with the HCC representative at that time
 - e) I was not aware when the admissions representative was coming
27. My campus visit experience (not including Junior/Senior Day) highly influenced my decision to attend HCC.
- a) Agree
 - b) Neutral
 - c) Disagree
 - d) I did not schedule a campus visit
28. Admissions representatives should continue to visit high schools, as they are productive and helpful to juniors and seniors:
- a) Agree
 - b) Neutral
 - c) Disagree
29. I opened everything that HCC mailed to me?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
30. I opened emails sent to me by the HCC admissions office/admissions representative in a timely manner?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) I do not have an email address
31. How did you first hear about HCC?
- a) Friend
 - b) Coach
 - c) College Fair/High School Counselor
 - d) Newspaper
 - e) Twitter/Facebook

Use this scale to answer questions 32-42.

- a) Strongly Disagree b) Disagree c) Neutral d) Agree e) Strongly Agree

I chose to attend HCC for the following reasons?

- 32. Cost
- 33. Scholarship Offer
- 34. Location
- 35. Athletics
- 36. Academic Offerings
- 37. Parents played a significant role in my decision to attend HCC

38. During the recruiting process, the HCC admissions office.....
- a) Should have contacted me more.
 - b) Should have contacted me less.
 - c) Contacted me just the right amount.
39. It was easy to line up my academic scholarship and/or contact my sponsor when needed?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) I am not on an academic scholarship.
40. Please indicate which HCC scholarship you have received:
- a) Academic
 - b) Athletic
 - c) Scottie Scholarship
 - d) Foundation Scholar
 - e) Not on a scholarship
41. I logged on to MyHCC this summer in order to...(select all that apply)?
- a) View my schedule
 - b) View my bill
 - c) Pay my bill
 - d) I did not log on to MyHCC this summer.

Of the following 11 options, please indicate your top 5 choices for sources of information that influenced your decision to attend HCC.

- 42. Printed Materials (brochure, letters)
- 43. Email Campaigns
- 44. Communication with academic scholarship sponsor and/or coach
- 45. Relationship with HCC admissions representative
- 46. HCC's attendance at a college fair
- 47. Campus Visit
- 48. High School Counselor
- 49. Parent(s)
- 50. HCC Website
- 51. I have friends that presently attend or will be attending HCC
- 52. Facebook/Twitter

MARKETING DATA

53. My first impression of the HCC website was positive?
- a) Strongly Disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly Agree

Use this scale to answer questions 54-61.

- a) Strongly Disagree b) Disagree c) Neutral d) Agree e) Strongly Agree

HCC provides enough information about the following departments on its website:

- 54. Admissions Process
- 55. Financial Aid
- 56. Cost
- 57. Degree Programs
- 58. Housing
- 59. Student Activities
- 60. Academics
- 61. Athletics

62. When you visit the HCC website, where do you go to find the information you are looking for?

(Select all that apply)

- a) Current Students
- b) Future Students
- c) Alumni and Friends
- d) Tabs across the top of the screen (Admissions, Academics, Athletics, etc.)

For questions 63-67, use a) Yes and b) No

I have seen or heard the following advertisements about HCC in the past year:

- 63. Billboard advertisement
- 64. High school newspaper advertisement
- 65. Local newspaper advertisement
- 66. Radio advertisement
- 67. Social Media (Facebook/Twitter)