



Increasing, Personalizing, and Measuring Communications Leads to Rise in Applications and Deposited Students

By leveraging the functionality within Ellucian Recruiter, Becker College has greatly increased its number of touches with prospects and made the contacts more personalized, leading to measurable gains.

The college experienced a 2 percent increase in inquiries and 25 percent more applications from the previous year when it was not using the solution. Also, the college gained a 21 percent increase in accepted and deposited students.

“Leveraging Recruiter’s functionality has positively impacted the college’s overall numbers this recruiting cycle,” said Dr. Robert Johnson, PhD, president. “The solution has allowed Becker to communicate more effectively with our

prospective students and improve the prospect experience, leading to a rise in applications.”

Increasing prospect touches

The college’s unique class options and hands-on, professional approach to higher education have earned Becker a national reputation, particularly in the fields of computer game development, veterinary science, business, education, and nursing. For the past three consecutive years, The Princeton Review has named Becker among the top 10 colleges in the U.S. and Canada for video game design, and in 2012 Becker was listed in the 2013 edition of Princeton Review’s annual college guide, “The Best 377 Colleges”.

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Profile:

- Worcester, MA
- Enrollment: 1,800
- www.becker.edu

Challenge:

- Engaging with large prospect base with limited staff

Solutions:

- Colleague® by Ellucian®
- Ellucian Recruiter™

Results:

- Gained 21% increase in accepted and deposited students year to date
- Gained 2% increase in inquiries and 25% more applications year to date
- Saving \$300,000 per year by bringing in house proactive prospect outreach
- Saving more than 200 hours per year of manual report generation

Although the institution is very attractive to prospects, the college wanted the advantages of providing a better prospect experience and of automating manual tasks that are enabled by recruitment software. Becker College had been using an enrollment solution before implementing Ellucian Recruiter, but it did not provide as much flexibility and automated communications, nor did it integrate to the college's student information system, Colleague by Ellucian.

In the past, admissions staff typically sent a prospect two to three letters via mail and then followed up with a few phone calls. Now they leverage Ellucian Recruiter to send an email first, followed by a letter, and then a phone call from a counselor. The cycle continues until the prospect has responded.

"By leveraging the automated processes in Ellucian Recruiter, we are able to substantially increase the volume and quality of communications," said Patty Patria, CIO at Becker College. "We've gone from having five touchpoints with a prospect to 15 or 20, without adding staff."

Using the workflows and email templates in Ellucian Recruiter in conjunction with other software, Becker sent more than 1,200,000 targeted communications to prospects in the 2012/13 recruiting season in 145 separate broadcast email campaigns. The functionality includes the ability to dynamically send email blasts to 50,000 prospects sourced from purchased lists, a communication process that was outsourced to a vendor in the past. Becker worked with Ellucian to include this "push" technology in Recruiter. By bringing the proactive prospect outreach in house, the college is saving more than \$300,000 per year.

"We are replicating in house the outreach that was done before by a third party. We are saving costs and we have more control of the communications," said Mike Perron, director of admissions at Becker College.

The email blast includes personalized links to the prospect website, inviting the recipient to create an account and apply online. Through the website, admissions staff can push out dynamic content, such as spotlighting a prospect's area of interest through copy, photographs, and links. The website also makes it easy for applicants to update key contact information, begin or continue an application.

The college tracked the number of prospects who opened messages, and how many clicked through the message to the desired result. This allowed

Becker to see which campaigns were working and to make adjustments as needed.

Improving the prospect experience

To improve the prospect experience further, the college streamlined some of its administrative processes. For example, they reduced the application form from five pages to two.

"We were able to make the change and have it live in 24 hours," said Patria. "We could not have accomplished that with the previous system."

"The robust workflow and configuration features also provide added benefits," continued Patria. "We have built functionality that calculates award information automatically and then sends this personalized information to the prospect. The process was entirely manual before."

Making outreach more strategic

The integration of Ellucian Recruiter to Colleague by Ellucian makes it possible for staff to separate prospects from suspects, a process that before required staff to maintain a list of suspects on a separate spreadsheet. In the future, Becker College plans to pull in financial aid data associated with each student so that enrollment managers have a more complete picture.

"The software prioritizes for counselors the groups of prospects who need their attention each day, and helps them with applicant follow up," explained Kevin Mayne, vice president of enrollment management at Becker College. "The prioritization and automation also assists our counselors in sending out more personalized emails to their prospects."

The department expects that additional functionality available in the most recent version of the software will provide more flexibility and automation, all adding up to more time for counselors to interact with applicants personally. "We are just starting to explore the new functionality but we believe the tools will not only make their jobs easier, but will also help the counselors be more strategic," added Mayne.

The department also is eager to leverage new reporting capabilities, like creating customized reports. "We will be able to run a report and see how many people who attended a specific event applied, and then how many of them were accepted," said Perron. "And we could use the data to consider ways to improve the event."



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By generating stage and funnel reports automatically through Recruiter and other software, the college is already saving more than 200 hours per year that were previously spent on manual report generation. Whether it is tracking the effectiveness of outreach or enabling more personalized communications, the processes and information that are critical to recruitment are all centralized and largely automated through Ellucian Recruiter.

“We have eliminated many, many manual processes, and are becoming more data driven,” emphasized Mayne. “And we still have a lot of new functionality to explore.”

“The cost and time savings alone enabled by Ellucian Recruiter are substantial,” added Mayne. “But even more important is the ability to reach more prospects and improve the prospect experience without adding additional staff.”

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Kevin Mayne, Vice President of Enrollment Management

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