Sharpening Your Graduate Enrollment Strategy in the Wake Of COVID-19
Introductions

TODAY’S SPEAKERS

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Today’s Agenda

- Context and Research Findings: The Impact of COVID-19 on Prospective Adult Learners
- Best Practices for Reaching Prospective Adult Learners
- Q & A
- Additional Resources from Eduventures Research
Recent Findings
ARE PRIOR PERIODS OF RECESSIONARY ENROLLMENT GROWTH ACCURATE PREDICTORS OF 2020–2021?

Source: Eduventures analysis of IPEDS and National Student Clearinghouse data. Growth: 1.00 = zero, 1.01 means 1% growth and 0.99 means 1% decline.
EVEN WITHOUT PUBLIC HEALTH AND ECONOMIC CRISES, THE AVAILABLE POOL OF GRAD PROSPECTS WILL DECLINE

U.S. Age Cohorts 2019 (thousands)

15% cohort decline over next 25 years

The cohort aged 25-29, the best source of graduate enrollment, is currently larger than at any time in U.S. history. Future cohorts aged 25-29 will be steadily smaller.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Age and Sex Composition in the United States, 2019.
Eduventures Research—Prospective Adult Learners

2019-2020

• Continuation of ongoing research since 2010 into prospective adult learners

• 2019 Adult Prospect Survey
  • 22 and older
  • 76% of sample plan to continue or complete their education within 3 years
  • 4000+ nationally representative sample

• 2020 COVID-19 Impact Survey
  • June 2020—Complete / October, 2020 – launching
  • 22 and older
  • 74% of sample will continue or complete their education within next 3 years
  • COVID-19 impact questions for comparison to 2019 benchmark
  • ~ 5,000 nationally representative sample by October 2020
Unpacking Adult Learner Demand: Commitment, Hesitancy and Skepticism

2019 / 2020 APS RESPONDENTS SEGMENTED BY VARYING LEVELS OF INTEREST IN POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT

Committed Adult Prospects: Will definitely or probably enroll

Hesitant Adult Prospects: Extremely or very Interested if time/money were no object

Skeptical Adult Prospects: Somewhat or slightly Interested if time/money were no object
Steady Demand, But Declining Levels of Commitment

“TIME AND MONEY” CONCERNS ARE ON THE RISE

Levels of Postsecondary Interest, 2019 - 2020

- Committed: 25% Summer 2019, 16% June, 2020
- Hesitant: 39% Summer 2019, 39% June, 2020
- Skeptical: 36% Summer 2019, 45% June, 2020

“TIME AND MONEY” CONCERNS ARE ON THE RISE

- Total % “Interested” Prospects, '19 - '20
WHILE INTEREST IN MASTER’S DEGREES IS STEADY, INCREASES IN NON-CREDIT CERTIFICATES AND VOC/TECH TRAINING SIGNAL GREATER FOCUS ON EMPLOYABILITY, UP/RE-SKILLING AND COST.

Changes in Demand for Desired Credentials, 2019 - 2020

- Master's degree: 24% (2019), 25% (2020)
- Non-degree, non-credit courses or certificates: 14% (2019), 18% (2020)
- Bachelor's degree: 13% (2019), 15% (2020)
- Voc. / technical training: 12% (2019), 15% (2020)
- Associate's degree: 12% (2019), 13% (2020)
- PhD / Prof. degrees (e.g., MD, JD, EdD): 8% (2020)
- Grad / Undergrad certificates: 7% (2020)

Grad Prospects: Why Would They Enroll?

COMPARISONS BETWEEN GRAD PROSPECTS AND OTHERS WITH FEWER POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

Career Goals, 2020
(Top 5 outside of “earn more money”)

- Get a better job in the same industry or profession
  - Lower than BA: 17%
  - Bachelor’s degree: 33%

- Build a solid foundation for my entire career
  - Lower than BA: 27%
  - Bachelor’s degree: 31%

- Switch careers
  - Lower than BA: 23%
  - Bachelor’s degree: 25%

- Improve my current job performance
  - Lower than BA: 16%
  - Bachelor’s degree: 22%

- Get a better job with my current employer
  - Lower than BA: 12%
  - Bachelor’s degree: 18%

Non-Career Goals, 2020

- Satisfy my intellectual curiosity
  - Lower than BA: 52%
  - Bachelor’s degree: 61%

- Develop a practical talent or interest
  - Lower than BA: 49%
  - Bachelor’s degree: 51%

- Use my talents to improve society
  - Lower than BA: 34%
  - Bachelor’s degree: 41%

- Foster my creativity
  - Lower than BA: 28%
  - Bachelor’s degree: 31%

- Provide an example to my family
  - Lower than BA: 31%
  - Bachelor’s degree: 24%

During COVID-19 n = 2250; data collected June, 2020.
Grad Prospects: What Will They Want?

Comparisons between Grad Prospects and Others with Fewer Postsecondary Credentials

**Preferred Learning Experiences, 2020**

- Interacting with faculty in my field of interest: 49% Grad Prospects vs. 36% Others
- Rigorous academic coursework: 36% vs. 28%
- Obtaining an internship/practicum or other work experience: 32% vs. 26%
- Interacting with students with different life experiences: 27% vs. 23%
- Participating in social and cultural events: 23% vs. 29%

**Desired Program Features, 2020**

- Programs and courses customized to my needs & goals: 37% vs. 29%
- Evidence of program quality: 36% vs. 30%
- Options to work at my own pace: 29% vs. 27%
- Financial aid and/or student debt forgiveness options: 21% vs. 18%
- Receive credit for life and work experiences: 18% vs. 23%

# Preferences for Online, Blended, and On-Campus

**PROSPECTS EXPECT AN ONLINE “PIVOT” BOTH SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM**

## Preferred Modality by Desired Credential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Covid</th>
<th>A Few Months from Now</th>
<th>6+ Months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graduate certificates and degrees (MBA, Phd, MD)</strong></td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate degrees (2/4 year)</strong></td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-degree, non-credit courses and certificates incl Voc/Tech training</strong></td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Predominately online learning with some on-campus
- An even mix between on-campus and online courses
- Predominately on-campus with some online

During COVID-19 n = 2250; data collected June, 2020.
The Committed, the Hesitant & the Skeptical & Best Practices to Reach Them
Committed Adults

A SMART SEARCH STRATEGY PUTS YOU IN FRONT OF ACTIVE DEGREE ‘SHOPPERS’

Committed Cohorts
- Active Shoppers
- Gathering information online
- Capable of making a decision in 0-3 months

Digital Best Practices
- Search Engine Marketing
- YouTube Interest Based Marketing
- Next Gen Custom Audience Targeting for Inquiries
Hesitant & Skeptical Cohorts

- Stealth shoppers
- Take longer to do their research
- Greater incubation period of 4 to 6 months
- Requires high frequency
- Need a motivation & a reason (New Year’s & Tax Time)

Digital Best Practices

- Next Gen Custom Audience for Prospects
- YouTube Interest Based Marketing
- Over the Top Television
- Programmatic Audio
- Mobile*
87% of Adult Prospects Use a Search Engine

CONNECT WITH ADULTS ACTIVELY SEEKING TO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION

• 87% of adult prospects used a search engine during their search\(^1\)
• 92% of all searches start with Google\(^2\)
• YouTube is the 2\(^{nd}\) Most Used Search Engine in the World
• SEM is the highest performing media and your first go to for Grad and Adult
• SEM requires time

Source: Eduventures, 2019 Adult Prospect Survey
Hubspot, State of Marketing Report 2020
What is Smart SEM?

CONNECT WITH ADULTS ACTIVELY SEEKING TO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION

Winthrop MSW Online - CSWE Accredited
No social work background required. Field placement assistance. No GRE required. No GRE/MAT Required. 60-Credit Traditional. 39-Credit Advanced Option.

4 Online Program Options
Ranked among the South’s Top Public Universities. Click to Learn More!

GMAT Waiver Available
Earn an AACSB-accredited online MBA and Advance Your Career. Apply Now!

Special Ed Intervention
Earn an MEd in SPED Intervention & Become an Intervention Specialist

MA in Arts Administration
Gain a Solid Toolkit to Advance Further in the Arts. Learn More!
What is Smart SEM?

SMART USE OF SITE LINKS PUSH YOUR COMPETITORS DOWN THE PAGE.
What is Smart SEM?

CONNECT WITH ADULTS ACTIVELY SEEKING TO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION

Fordham's Online MSW Program - Top-Ranked School of SW


Field Education · Student Experience · Financial FAQs · Academic Experience
SEM REQUIRES YOU WORK YOUR PLAN OR YOU MISS OPPORTUNITIES TO SHINE

Master of Social Work - Our Lady of the Lake University
Sep 4, 2020 - Whether already working in the field or have a desire to join it, OLLU's MSW can help students achieve their goals of helping society and fighting...
# Keyword Best Practices

**How do you find the best keywords for your SEM campaigns?**

**Things to Remember**

- Mobile and voice search needs to be taken into consideration. Long tail keywords are good for this purpose.
- The keywords you launch with need to be optimized on a regular basis to maintain success.
- Keyword Tools are available to help create the initial list of keywords. It is important the Landing page you direct your users too also has these keywords on them.
- Remember that Close Variance is in play so having multiple keywords with the similar versions is not always necessary.
“We added the new Ph.D. in Leadership program this year and when we started marketing it, our President said, ‘If we can get 20 students enrolled, that will be a success.’ At last count we were at 59 enrolled. This is a $35,000 a year program. That’s $2 Million in revenue.”
YouTube is the One to Watch

ADULTS USE YOUTUBE TO LEARN, ENGAGE, UNWIND & RESEARCH EDUCATION OPTIONS

• On mobile devices alone, YouTube reaches more adults aged 18-49 during prime time than any cable network does in an average week\(^2\)

Source: Neilsen, Prime-time average weekly audience for YouTube Mobile, 2016
YouTube Identifies & Attracts Your Best Prospects

We target Adults 21-44 in your target markets who are actively searching on Google using phrases like “Continuing Adult Education” or “Best Online Degrees”.

We target any Adult in your target markets using YouTube to look up things like “In Demand Degrees” or “Best Online Degrees”.

We find adults who “look like” other adults who subscribe to YouTube channels related to career changers, professional organizations, etc. that align with you and your degrees.
Large Public Institution in Midwest

**Target:**
Grad Student Prospects for Engineering Masters Program

**Media:**
YouTube

**Results Over 1 Week**
9,000 Viewed the Video
39.6% Viewed the entire :30 second video
Target: Grad Student Prospects for Various Programs including MBA, EMBA, MS Accounting, MS Business Analytics, MS Marketing and MS Cybersecurity,

Media: YouTube

Results Over 1 Week
91,762 Viewed the Video
39.6% Viewed the entire :30 second video
Now is the time to re-engage all of the students who:

- Applied UG but who were not accepted 4-10 years ago
- Accepted UG but who did not enroll 4-10 years ago
- Enrolled UG but stopped out 3-10 years ago
- Graduated UG but did not attend Grad 1-10 years ago
- Did not attend but donated 1-3 years ago

Your old data is new again!
Small Faith Based Institution in the Northeast

**Target:**
Grad Student Prospects for MSW Program

**Media:**
Next Gen Custom Audience

**Results Over 5 Weeks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>METRICS</th>
<th>MSW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMPRESSIONS SCHEDULED</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPRESSIONS RAN</td>
<td>300,856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLICKS</td>
<td>639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTR</td>
<td>0.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL VERIFIED VISITS</td>
<td>1,834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERIFIED VISITS TO HOME PAGE</td>
<td>799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERIFIED VISITS TO MSW LANDING PAGE</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERIFIED VISITS TO MSW PROGRAM PAGE</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERIFIED VISITS TO MSW APPLY PAGE</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERIFIED VISITS TO MSW APPLICATION</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERIFIED VISITS TO MSW THAN YOU FOR APPLY</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COST PER CLICK</td>
<td>$7.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COST PER VERIFIED ACTION</td>
<td>$2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COST PER APPLICATION</td>
<td>$409</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is your best first move to capture the grad cohorts actively shopping and ready to make a commitment.

• Smart SEM takes time and expertise to make it pay off.

• SEM and should be looked at as an evergreen endeavor as new cohorts are always coming into the market.

• You’ll need a program to cultivate and nurture hesitant and skeptical cohorts.

• Use your undergrad data to re-establish relationships with people who liked your brand when they were 17-21. Special matching technology helps find their current LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook accounts, their mobile device ID and their current IP address.
Additional Resources
Digital Marketing Solutions for the Evolving Enrollment Office

Reach your prospective students wherever they go.

You’re working harder. Why shouldn’t your media budget work harder for you?

We’ve designed and managed innovative digital campaigns for hundreds of institutions. Clients appreciate our creative approach to digital enrollment marketing for undergrad, transfer, grad and adult students.

Learn more:

encoura.org/digital-solutions
We are pleased to announce the first Eduventures Virtual Research Forum (VRF), an exclusive one-day reinvention of Summit online on Thursday, November 12.

Questions around your ability to register or access codes? Please contact summit@nrccua.org.
Eduventures® Research Wake-Up Calls

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Here Today, Online Tomorrow? Adult Learners and Post-Pandemic Learning

By Howard Levine, Eduventures Principal Analyst at ACT (March 2, 2020) Adult learner demand, COVID-19

2020 will long be remembered as the year of learning differently. Whether you’re enrolled in first grade or graduate school, online learning has become an unavoidable fact of life.

Eduventures' most recent Adult Learner Research, however, reveals varying...

The Wake-Up Call is a weekly analysis of higher education research, news and survey data, as well as industry events, and insider perspectives – delivered to your inbox every Tuesday morning.

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