



MARKETING PLAN FOR RECRUITING ONLINE STUDENTS

VERSION 1.0
APRIL 13, 2017

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Nearly 80 percent of CCC students receive their education in full or in part via distance learning modalities. This constituency has been the historic focus of the college, and is still a critically important market. At the same time, peers and competitors are increasingly offering online/distance learning courses that have the potential to impact Coastline's presence in the marketplace.

To ensure Coastline remains competitive, we need to increase awareness of the college in general, grow perceptions of the college as a well-recognized provider of academically strong and fully accredited online courses, improve the student enrollment experience, and enhance the level of customer service provided to online students.

OBJECTIVES

Our objectives with this campaign are three-fold.

- First, the campaign must generate measurable increases in the volume of inquiries seeking information about online learning through Coastline Community College. Tangentially, the goal is to translate these inquiries into enrolled students, but the steps and processes that occur between "inquiry" and "enrolled" are not funded or controlled by this marketing plan.
- Second, the campaign must generate positive perceptions about Coastline Community College among the target audience. While this step understandably must occur before an inquiry occurs (i.e., people do not seek additional information about a product for which they have negative feelings), it is nevertheless a secondary objective to the primary focus of generating inquiries.
- Third, the campaign will serve as a test of (1) marketing opportunities external to the Coast Community College District, and (2) marketing tactics not previously tracked and measured by Coastline.

TARGET MARKETS

PROFILE

Based on existing student populations for distance learning (excluding incarcerated students), we know that our target customer:

- Is older than traditional site-based college students. (Most online Coastline students range in age from 25 to 40.)
- Has little or no college experience/education.
- Has started thinking that a college education might benefit him/her economically (and perhaps socially).
- Is currently working within or outside the home, or faces other time constraints, and needs flexibility in pursuing a college education.
- Is more likely to view him/herself as "ready now" for a college experience – more so than in their late teen years.
- Is seeking a college education that is outside the norms of a more traditional on-site experience.
- Is equally divided between female/male genders.
- Is more likely to be goal-oriented and adept at time management/personal planning.

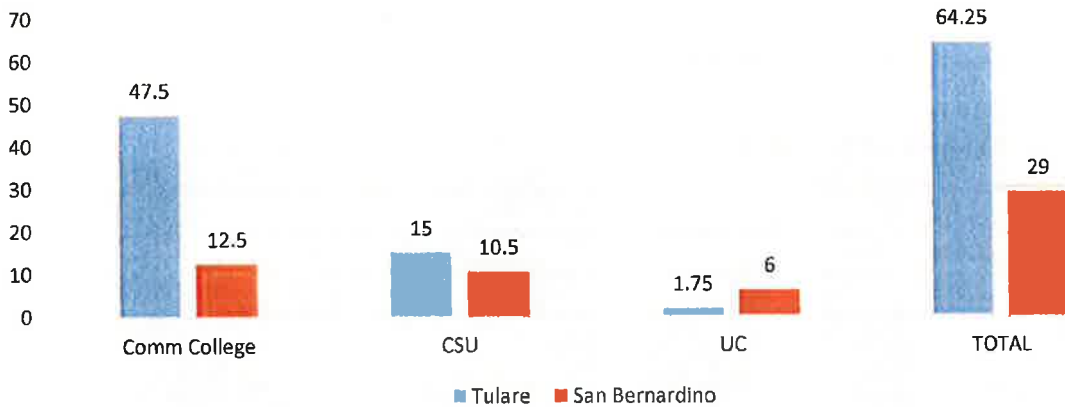
This profile is not the only descriptor of distance learning students at Coastline. The Facebook “Audience Insights” generator suggests other indicators can be added to develop a more targeted audience. We’ll use both the profile above and the additional indicators to reach an audience more likely to respond to our message.

LOCATION

More than 60 percent of Coastline’s online student body comes from locations outside of the CCCD. This campaign is deliberately designed to test marketing tactics in areas external to our primary base yet close enough to Orange County to be familiar with our locale, with the goal of determining our ability to generate increased volumes of students from throughout California.

This campaign proposes targeting prospects in Tulare and San Bernardino counties. These two locales offer an interesting comparative opportunity.

Recent High School Graduate Enrollments



This suggests that Tulare residents are comfortable with the concept of community college education, and are more likely to pursue higher education (at the community college level and in general) than their San Bernardino neighbors. Are we more likely to generate enrollments from communities with that profile? Or do residents in San Bernardino perceive themselves as educationally underserved and would view Coastline’s online offerings as a valuable resource?

Worth noting: Unemployment rates (Feb. 2017) in Tulare County reached 12.1 percent, among the highest in California; San Bernardino County was roughly half that at 5.2 percent. Data suggests that during periods of high unemployment, people are more likely to return to college for additional education. Will this prove true when unemployment is localized?

And one more factor to consider: Tulare County’s population is projected at just 460,435, while San Bernardino’s population is nearly five times that volume at 2,140,095. That means the quantity of potential respondents is 4.75 times greater in San Bernardino; however, I recommend investing nearly the same amount in media buys in each locale to determine if purchase points is a determining factor in generating inquiries.

MESSAGE SUMMARY

Coastline Community College offers you an affordable, convenient, and personalized way to pursue your college education online. Options range from lifelong learning opportunities, to CSU/UC transfer-ready courses, to fully online certificate and college degree programs. Education provided by Coastline will help improve your life.

CALL TO ACTION

- Discover your future with online education from Coastline Community College.
- A better future starts with online classes from Coastline Community College.
- A world of possibilities. Online courses from Coastline Community College.

Facebook static ads are always delivered from top to bottom, so our message needs to unfold in that order. In other words, viewers consistently see the top line of the ad first, followed by an image, then a headline, and a line or two of text. To maximize ad effectiveness, I recommend the top line always be in the form of a question, and the headline always answer the question. Possible examples follow (photos are FPO):

Coastline Community College Like Page

Are you ready to create a more successful future?



Start with an online class this summer and discover the brighter, better future waiting for you. Learn More now.
No matter where you are in life, Coastline is ready to help you succeed. More than 130 affordable courses are available online, just waiting for you.

Learn More

21 Comments 520 Shares

Like Comment Share

Coastline Community College Like Page

Missing credits? Need a class to complete your coursework?



Coastline offers hundreds of fully accredited and transferable classes online. Register now for summer!
No matter where you are in life, Coastline is ready to help you succeed. Online courses let you pick up that extra class you need, without the hassle of travel.

Learn More

21 Comments 520 Shares

Like Comment Share

TACTICS

SOCIAL MEDIA

This campaign proposes using Facebook as its primary media platform. Facebook is inexpensive, highly measurable, allows for extraordinary targeting, and accommodates almost instantaneous revisions if we want to explore some A/B testing. Additionally, Facebook's audience is skewing older, is more likely

to share content, and is slightly more susceptible to remarketing. (Note that Facebook also enables us to advertise on Instagram. It's not an optimal choice for us, but might be worth exploring this time.)

TIMELINE

There is a desire to conduct the campaign so that it addresses Fall registration, which begins June 12. I'm recommending the campaign begin May 15 and conclude June 23. This provides ample advance time for prospective students to hear the message, ponder the message, and decide whether or not to act on the message prior to the start of the second session of summer. Note that for an online campaign, this is a very compressed timeline. Depending on initial success, the college could extend the campaign (using FY17-18 budget) through August 25, with a focus on fall enrollment.

BUDGET

The total proposed budget for this six-week campaign is \$4,000, assigned as follows:

San Bernardino area = \$2,000

Based on the proposed audience profile, our potential reach per day is 11,800 with a potential link click rate ranging from 63 to 250 per day. The suggested bid is \$2.31, but I would propose a lower bid at \$1.55 per link click. If necessary, we can raise the bid or accelerate the postings if we're not seeing the results we want in the first weeks.

Tulare area = \$1,500

Based on the proposed audience profile, our potential reach per day is 9,750 with a potential link click rate ranging from 59 to 250 per day. The suggested bid is \$1.96, but I would propose a lower bid at \$1.30 per link click. If necessary, we can raise the bid or accelerate the postings if we're not seeing the results we want in the first weeks.

Facebook does allow us the ability to increase our budget if we see strong positive results from the campaign. For that reason, I am recommending a \$500 contingency be approved as part of the campaign budget.

CAVEATS

There are steps that should be taken prior to launching this campaign in order to maximize its effectiveness. A better landing page, for example, would make engagement and recruitment easier. A comm flow specific to online students would also help differentiate Coastline and build recognition for its offers. Adding support media – transit ads, radio spots, or targeted email marketing, for example— would increase efficacy. However, the tight time line identified above makes it unlikely that these improvements can be implemented prior to the start of the campaign.

APPROVAL

	Comments	Date
President Adrian		
VP Vince Rodriguez		
Associate Dean Bob Nash		

