

CAREER COLLEGE CENTRAL

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► The Definitive Voice of the Career College Sector of Higher Education

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Achievements in Advertising

Optimize and track advertising
response rates with a direct-
response tool

► Laura S. Noonan | 800response

College enrollment is expected to continue setting new records throughout the current economic environment as people look to change careers or further their educations and start their own businesses.

With more than 6,000 institutions of higher education in the United States, there is no question how tough the competition is in reaching potential students and enrolling them in your institution. So, what is the best way to reach these individuals and what will make them respond to your advertising?



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For Texas Barber Colleges and Hairstyling Schools, the answer was advertising with a memorable direct-response contact number, 1-800-NEW-CAREER. The school had a goal to increase leads and enrollment by 10 percent in 2008. They also wanted a surefire way to track the response to their advertising campaigns. The Director of Marketing and Admissions, Esty Merlo, decided to try listing a vanity 800 number in his ad campaigns with the thought that the “word” phone number would be easier for people to remember.

After activating the vanity phone number, Texas Barber Colleges and Hairstyling Schools saw a 23 percent growth in leads from 2007 to 2008. Merlo said, “The results have been phenomenal. We’ve doubled the goals we set for ourselves once we made the move to using multiple vanity numbers and a call center.”

To get results like Texas Barber Colleges and Hairstyling Schools, just follow the advertising tips below:

1

Use a Phone Number as the Direct-Response Tool in Your Ads

Recent research shows that survey respondents have a 45 percent higher recall rate of vanity phone numbers like 1-800-NEW-CAREER than they do of Web addresses. By offering a phone number along with your URL, you are providing people with a one-on-one experience, giving prospective students a direct route to your admission specialists. Getting a prospective student to call and speak with an admissions representative brings you one step closer to enrollment.

2

Feature an Easy-to-Remember Direct-Response Tool in all Marketing Materials

A phone number will not be much help if folks cannot remember it. Get a vanity 800 number like Esty Merlo did. A vanity 800 number that relates to your school’s student mission, like 1-800-NEW-JOBS or 1-800-NEW-CAREER, will assist in reinforcing your brand image, deliver a consistent message, and give people the ability to contact you immediately. Another benefit of a vanity number comes out when people hear or see your ad with a memorable phone number but are not ready right then to go back to school. But, if they find themselves

three months later in pursuit of a career change, they will remember your vanity 800 number from the advertising campaign and call you before they call another school in your area. You’ll stand out from competing schools.

3

Prominent Placement of the Direct-Response Tool

Don’t bury the contact method in your ads. Feature your phone number prominently in all of your advertising and marketing materials. For example, mention it at least three times in a radio ad, make it the focal point of a print ad, and display the number on screen throughout a television ad. Make sure it is easily heard and understood, clearly visible, and easy to read. Your ads will pull higher response rates than ever before.

4

Test and Track Your Advertising Campaigns

Finally, when developing a new ad campaign, create two separate ads using the same creative elements and switch up a toll-free phone number for a vanity 800 number in one of the ads. Track the response you get from each ad. You’ll see that vanity 800 numbers will generate 30 percent to 60 percent better response rates than numeric phone numbers.

Merlo said his advertising efforts with the vanity 800 numbers are paying off. “In this economy, more and more people are thinking about a new career and making changes to become their own boss,” he said “Our advertising is reaching more of those people, drawing in more leads, and our enrollment levels are increasing every month.”

When using a phone number as a direct-response tool, there is no question that true vanity 800 phone numbers are easier to remember and produce higher response rates. Just ask Esty Merlo. ■



Laura Noonan has 15 years of experience in the vanity 800 number and telecommunications services industry. She coaches hundreds of clients each year on using toll-free vanity 800 phone numbers as direct marketing tools to increase advertising response rates. Noonan can be reached at Inoonan@800response.com or by calling 800.NEW.SALES.