

'Great Idea – Here's the Budget!'

Using data to secure buy-in to student
recruitment strategies

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Content

- Working with university leadership to secure funding for data-driven recruitment
- Incorporating the use of data into marketing campaigns to ensure they are rooted in evidence
- Embedding diversity and inclusion into marketing to create inclusive materials
- Key tips for collecting data from students to understand what they look for when choosing a university

Working with university leadership to secure buy-in for data-driven recruitment

WHY DO WE NEED BUY IN?

Academic leadership and Professional services leadership

- Secure time/resource investment
- Establish shared goals
- Build understanding and trust in our expertise
- Develop shared understanding of SR position – **single source of truth**
- Agree on which challenges we are facing
- Open communication channels
- Shared understanding of what success looks like
- Agree investment/ budget commitment

Case study: Co-developing SR strategies

Objective: Identify challenges and priorities and develop 2-year action plans to support recruitment ambitions in response to Faculty student number plans

Outcome: Co-developed subject-level student recruitment strategies, with clear measurable objectives and performance metrics.

Steps:

1. Analyse and understand each subject area's challenges & aspirations
2. Identify and engage with stakeholders on priorities & actions to address key challenges
3. Develop action plans to outline delivery of support with objectives, milestones, KPIs
4. Frequent review & evaluation of action plans

Important: this was a collaborative project led by our policy, strategy and insight colleagues, with input from admissions, the IO, and many others!

Step 1

Analyse and understand each subject area's challenges & aspirations.

Why?

To diagnose the challenge so that we can recommend actions which would support achieving plan.

Question we are answering:

What key recruitment challenges are being faced, from which segment of the market and due to what cause.

Data sources:

- Student number plans (Internal)
- Market forecast (External- HESA, consultancy)
- Rankings (NSS, PTES, QS, Guardian, CUG, Times)
- Apps, Accepts, Conversion (Internal)
- Market Diversity (Internal)
- Tariff (internal and external)

Key takeaway: use as many data sources as appropriate to build a rounded view of the bigger picture

Step 2

Identify and engage with stakeholders on priorities & actions to address key challenges

Professional services (admissions, IO, recruitment, events)

Faculty – Deans, heads of school, faculty operations, finance, international leads

Why?

To ensure correct interpretation of the data

Get a rounded view of the challenges

Ensure the picture hasn't changed

Agree priorities for focus

Question we are answering:

Is there anything we've missed? What should we focus on - short and long term?

Step 3

Develop action plans to outline delivery of activity with objectives, dependencies, milestones, KPIs

Use performance data from previous campaigns to benchmark how activity is expected to perform, and what impact we expect to see.

Why?

To ensure delivery stays on track, focused on mutual goals.

Offer transparency on resource commitment (time and budget) and dependencies.

Regular reviews to allow colleagues to flag if priorities, market conditions, or timescales change, and provide an early warning signal if activity isn't delivering the intended impact.

Question we are answering:

Does everyone understand what they need to do?

Is the investment level right? (budget and resource)

Is the timeline achievable?

Is there any other data we want to gather/cross reference?

Later: is everything on track? What are we learning? What do we need to change?

Embedding diversity and inclusion into data-driven marketing

The challenge

Targeting

Widening participation and social mobility

Campaign geo-targeting overlapping with areas where:

- we WPSM initiatives are active
- we have WPSM schools and colleges
- travelling distance to campus(es) or post-16 events
- we know we recruit mature students from

Tactics

Developing appropriate IAG (formats and content)

Inclusive online experience (UX, WCAG2.AA, user journeys)

Inclusive SR event experiences

- quiet spaces
- information formats
- event design eg breaks between activities
- inclusive language
- 'relaxed' performances/talks

The challenge

Creative/ assets which are inclusive by design

Working with Digital User Experience (DUX) team, and Widening Participation teams to understand content needs for our prospective students

DUX team are working to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2, gathering data through extensive user testing

Campaign assets also need to meet those needs.

Key takeaway- Fully accessible content is better/ easier to navigate for all, whether they have a disability or not.

An example a tool we use to support asset creation:

Accessibility matrix for our brand colour palette, working with the Digital Learning Team (who provide teaching support to our curriculum- consistency)

Ensuring that text and graphics have enough contrast to background colours.

Lists brand colour combinations, and shows pairings have the required level of contrast for different uses such as:

- graphics and user interface elements
- text and images of text

Accessibility Matrix for UG Campaign Brand Colour Palette

Colours when used together.

		White	Plain Black	Rich Black	Prussian	Horizon 1	Horizon 4	Horizon 5	Marine 4	Marine 5
		#FFFFFF	#231F20	#00131D	#002E3B	#FCBC00	#D5007F	#8D3970	#B3DBD2	#4BB694
#FFFFFF		F	AAA	AAA	AAA	F	AA	AAA	F	F
#231F20		AAA	F	F	F	AAA	G	F	AAA	AA
#00131D		AAA	F	F	F	AAA	G	F	AAA	AAA
#002E3B		AAA	F	F	F	AAA	F	F	AAA	AA
#FCBC00		F	AAA	AAA	AAA	F	F	G	F	F
#D5007F		AA	G	G	F	F	F	F	G	F
#8D3970		AAA	F	F	F	G	F	F	AA	F
#B3DBD2		F	AAA	AAA	AAA	F	G	AA	F	F
#4BB694		F	AA	AAA	AA	F	F	F	F	F

Key tips for collecting data from students to understand what they look for when choosing a university

Understanding what students are looking for

- Listen (at open days, in the library, during welcome week)
- Network- get on mailing lists, go to conferences, get to know others in the sector – share insight!
- External insight- free – seminars, webinars, reports, updates
- Internal insight (surveys, focus groups, interviews)
- External insight- worth the investment if you want to know something specific!

Key takeaway- make sure you use the insight you gain in your campaign activity!

Ask me anything!