



Electronic Media Recruitment

Recently, AACRAO conducted a survey to determine how technological changes have affected institutions' use of different types of recruitment media. The survey included questions concerning the adoption, production, and observed effectiveness of different media. 234 institutions responded.

Use of Traditional Media

Respondents were asked about their use over the last five years, and their current and expected future use of traditional printed media.

Brochures

Brochures, including tri-fold, postcard, and fold-over type printings, are the standard medium for recruiting new students, with 98% of responding institutions reporting that they used them in the last five years (for years 1997-98 through 2002-3). 94% of them used brochures for recruitment for the 2003-4 academic year and/or planned on using them for the 2004-5 academic year.

Viewbooks

86% of respondents reported using multiple-page viewbooks in the last five years. 83% used viewbooks to recruit for the 2003-4 academic year and/or planned on using them for the 2004-5 academic year.

Motivations for Adopting New Media

Institutions were asked to rate how important they consider specific factors in evaluating new marketing tools. Not surprisingly, cost is the most important of those we named in the survey: 83% responded that they consider it very important, 16% moderately important, 1% somewhat important and 0 irrelevant. Other specifically named factors were: reaching the largest number of prospects (44% consider this very important, 38% moderately important); reaching a new target market (35% very important, 45% moderately important); in-house staff capabilities (40% consider these very important, 43% moderately important); in-house equipment capabilities (37% very important, 42% moderately important); what the competition is doing (23% very important, 53% moderately important); and being on the technological edge (32% very important, 43% moderately important). Asked to name other factors that went into a decision to adopt a new medium, responses included focus group evaluations and a medium's fit with an institution's desired overall image (as being technology driven, nurturing, etc.).

Electronic Media

Respondents were asked about their use and production of electronic media, and about the perceived effectiveness of these media.

VHS Video

ADOPTION: VHS video tape use, while employed by a majority (53%) of institutions at some time in the last five years, has dropped off considerably. Only 21% used it to recruit for 2003-4 and/or planned to use it for 2004-5.

CHARACTERISTICS: The average video content for VHS video was 12 minutes and about 64% of institutions reported that their VHS contained a significant amount (more than two-thirds) of content that was developed exclusively for this medium.

PRODUCTION: 66% of institutions outsourced every aspect of VHS production and 21% produced their videos entirely in-house. The remaining 13% employed a mix of outsourcing and in-house production.

EFFECTIVENESS: Only 2% of the institutions who used it kept separate statistics for yield/response rate for VHS, but 13% reported they believe that providing a VHS video tape led to a significant increase.

DVD

ADOPTION: DVDs, used only by approximately 5% of institutions in the past five years, were used or planned for use by 13% of responding institutions for recruitment in 2003-4 and/or 2004-5. This still would make it the least-employed medium of those in the survey.

CHARACTERISTICS: The average video content for DVDs was 11 minutes and about 25% of institutions reported that their DVDs contained a significant amount (more than two-thirds) of content that was developed exclusively for this medium.

PRODUCTION: 93% of institutions outsourced every aspect of DVD production and 4% produced their videos entirely in-house. The remaining 3% employed some mix of outsourcing and in-house production.

EFFECTIVENESS: 10% of the institutions that used DVDs kept separate statistics for yield/response rate, but 18% reported they believe that providing a DVD led to a significant increase.

CD-ROM

ADOPTION: 101 institutions (43%) reported using CD-ROMs in the past five years, with only 83 (36%) having done so for the 2002-2003 academic year. However, 51% of responding institutions reported they were using or planning to use CD-ROMs for recruitment for the 2003-4 and/or 2004-5 academic years. Perhaps this is because in-house production methods (CD-burning) have become less expensive and more efficient.

CHARACTERISTICS: The average video content for CD-ROMs was 14 minutes and about 58% of institutions reported that their CD-ROMs contained a significant amount (more than two-thirds) of content that was developed specifically for this medium.

PRODUCTION: 65% of institutions outsourced every aspect of CD-ROM production and 11% produced their videos entirely in-house. The rest employed some mix of outsourcing and in-house production.

EFFECTIVENESS: 36% of institutions, whether or not they kept statistics, reported they believed that providing a CD-ROM led to a significant increase in their yield/response rates. 18% of the institutions that used CD-ROMs reported keeping separate statistics.

Streaming Video / Web-Casts

ADOPTION: While approximately 15% of responding institutions reported using streaming video/web-casts in the past, as broadband internet access becomes ubiquitous more than double (32%) reported using or planning on using it for the 2003-4 and/or 2004-5 academic years.

CHARACTERISTICS: The average length of streaming video content was 9 minutes.

PRODUCTION: 69% of institutions outsourced every aspect of streaming video/web cast production and 22% produced their videos entirely in-house. The rest employed a mix of outsourcing and in-house production.

EFFECTIVENESS: While 14% of institutions reported they actually kept statistics on the effectiveness of their use of streaming video/web-casts, 34% of those that used it reported they believed it led to significant increases in yield/response rates.

Notes and Methodology

The survey, called Electronic Media Usage for Student Recruitment, was conducted by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers over a two-month period beginning on February 26th 2003 and ending April 30th 2003. It was sent to AACRAO members only and institutions were asked to coordinate their responses in order to submit only one response per institution. For questions, please contact Cody Brumfield at brumfieldc@aacrao.org.