MARKETING TRENDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: UNIVERSITIES’ TOOLBOX

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Abstract

In the contemporary era of tough competition among universities both at the national and international levels, marketing has been acquiring a growing importance, with institutional branding being among its most important components and strong institutional brands being one of the ultimate targets and simultaneously one of the most efficient marketing tools.

The authors, academics, researchers and universities’ administration representatives are involved in their universities’ marketing and finding its most efficient tools in order to attract a larger number of non-traditional, adult learners and international students, comprising an important element of universities’ internationalization.

According to a recent survey carried out by the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, almost every US university uses social media to a larger or narrower extent as part of their marketing strategies, with intuitive and effective websites perceived as universities’ ultimate brand statements.

However, despite the increasing importance of digital marketing tools, universities’ most effective marketing strategies involve direct interaction with potential students and are based on universities’ marketing events [1].

Marketing tools also include online and technology-enhanced course delivery, including “flipped classrooms” and gamification, are showing promising student outcomes [2].

The ten higher education marketing trends include (1) social influencers to share school moments, (2) video marketing to create emotive stories, (3) user generated content for social proof and reach, (4) creative social media campaigns, (5) mobile-first marketing, (6) augmented reality to create unique experiences, (7) live streaming to build connections in-the-moment, (8) email marketing segmentation for more personalized experiences, (9) measuring analytics and building on results, (10) micro-blogging to answer key questions [3].

The current challenges faced by universities include the problem of generating traffic and leads, proving the ROI of their marketing activities, securing enough budget for marketing, managing universities’ websites, identifying the right technologies for universities’ needs, targeting content for international audiences, training universities’ marketing teams, hiring top talents, and finding executive sponsors.

The undertaken research pursued two targets – first, it was aimed at identifying the most effective marketing tools in the opinion of Russian universities’ students of management and marketing, second, it was supposed to reveal the most effective marketing tools in the opinion of Russian universities’ marketers and decision makers. The results of the researches proved to be quite unexpected and inconsistent and the authors offer them to the conference participants’ attention.

References:

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