

A photograph of a large crowd of people at a concert or event, with a man in the foreground raising his hand. The image is overlaid with a purple gradient and contains text.

Content and strategy:

NET NATIVES

*How to stand out in
a crowded market*

July 2018

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NET NATIVES

How to stand out in a crowded market

By reading this guide you will:

- Gain a solid understanding of the current advertising climate, and how this impacts the education sector
- Learn how your marketing strategy and planning should look to maximise the best advertising results
- Best practice tips and expertise on how to activate your advertising strategy

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OVERVIEW OF THE DIGITAL MARKETPLACE

The advertising space is developing at an astonishing rate. For consumers, this change brings:

- More choice
- More content
- More channels

With digital consumption increasing, users now have the freedom to cherry pick and interact with advertising options that matter to them and that best suit their lifestyle. Advertising expenditure is increasing, meaning that the average person now sees an estimate of 5,000 adverts per day.

This means that you are not only competing against other universities but also bigger brands.

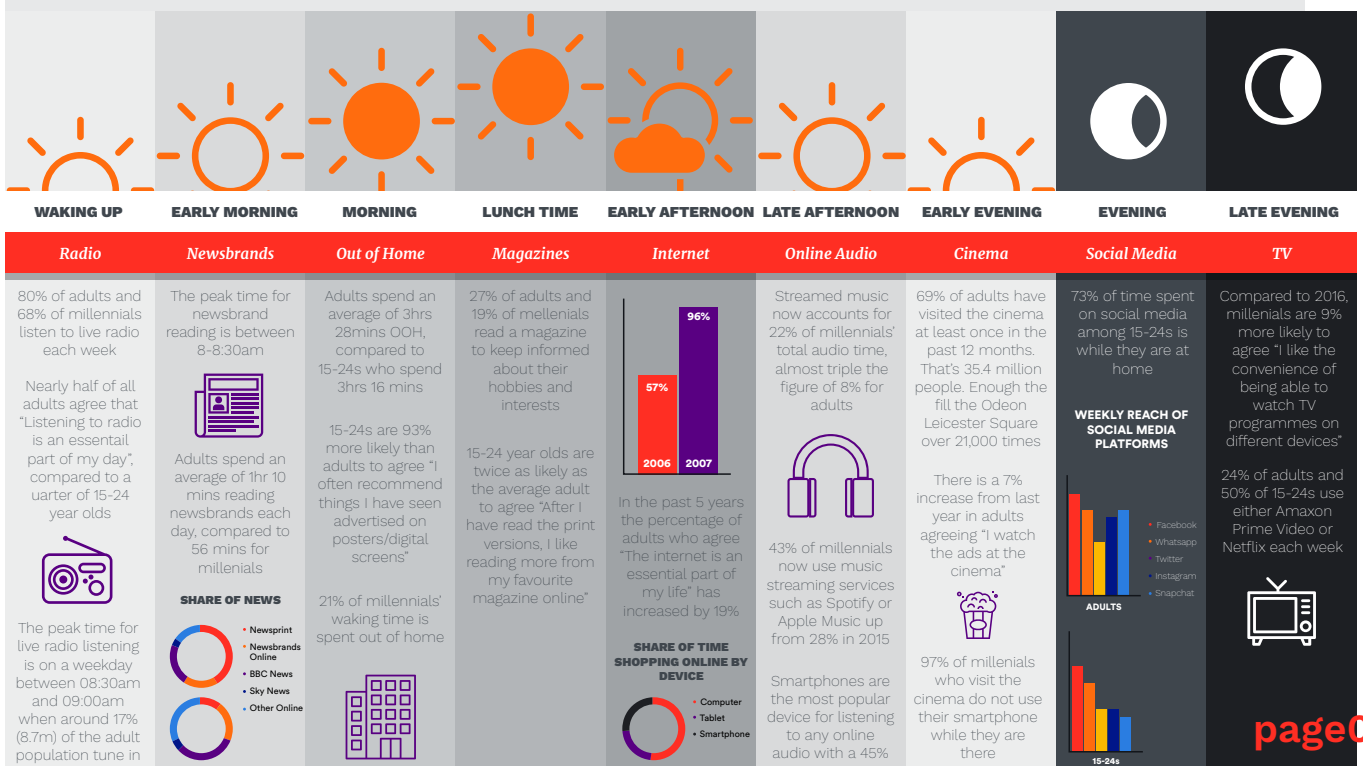


OVERVIEW OF THE DIGITAL MARKETPLACE

With the volume of adverts increasing, comes the rise of ad blockers. This means it's even more important than ever to reach your audience in the right way, in order to achieve results.

amount consumed by just one person, on a daily basis, is exceptionally high. This means it's super important that your institution's advertising appears in the the right way to your target market. If you're not being seen, then you may as well as be invisible.

The graph below shows how people are now living and consuming their media. The



PLANNING

Your planning process should be made up of these five principles.

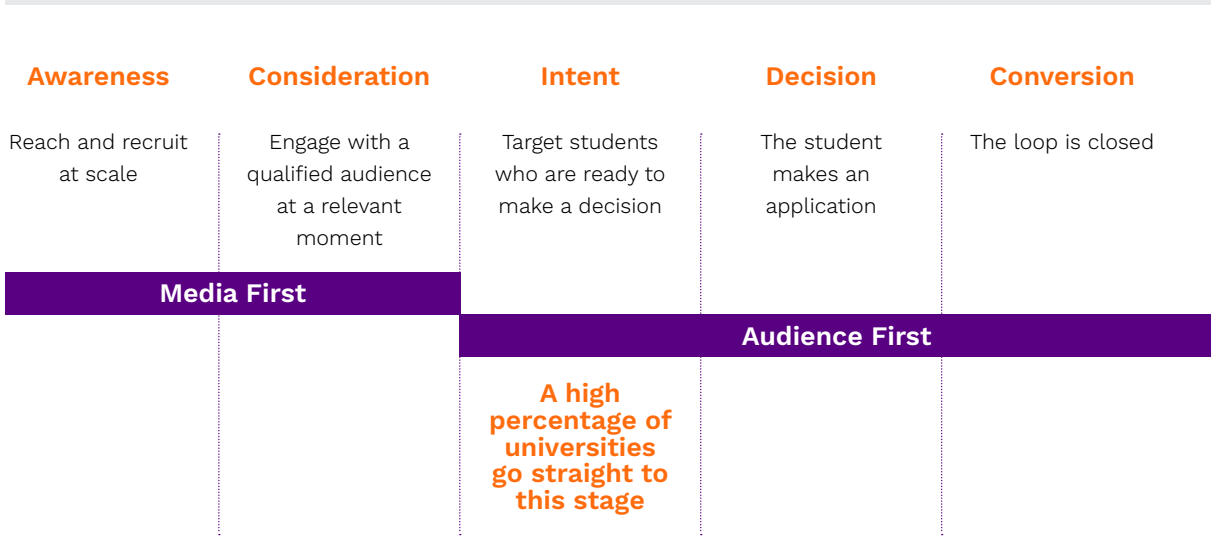
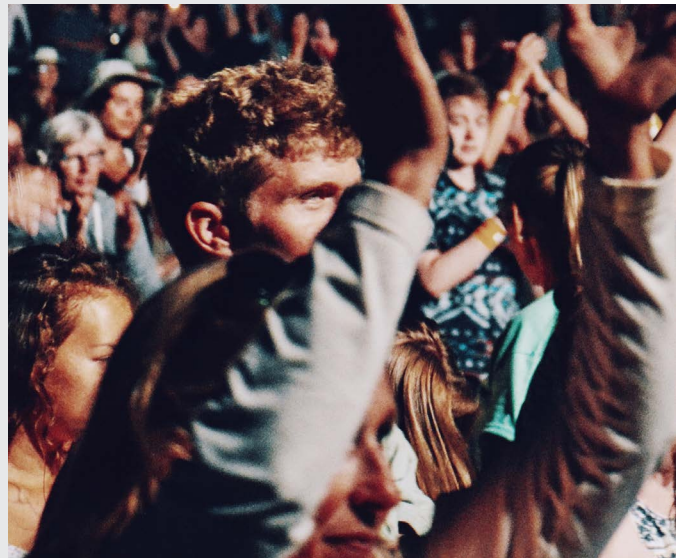
- **Data** - Use data to learn about your student audience, which will form an integral part of your strategy.
- **Search Volumes** - Looking at search volume is a great way to understand the demand across different locations and the popularity of each course. It will give you an idea of what course you might want to allocate budget to and the type of wording to use in your advertising.
- **Analytics** - If your institution is recruiting international students, assess the top locations for referral traffic, to learn which countries are engaging with your advertising. You can also see which traffic sources bring the highest numbers of visits to your website.
- **Social Listening** - Social listening data tools, such as NetBase, will let you see how students perceive your brand. This is particularly important in new international markets.



WHAT? WHEN? PAID STRATEGY

The paid social media strategy is broken down into five separate pillars, stretching across two separate stages. Education marketers should look to create a seamless, consistent journey, right from when students first find out about your institution, through to when they enrol.

Too many universities are going straight to the intent stage. This is going to impact your conversion figures; how can you expect a prospective student to enquire if this is the first time you are engaging with them?



LONGER TERM THINKING

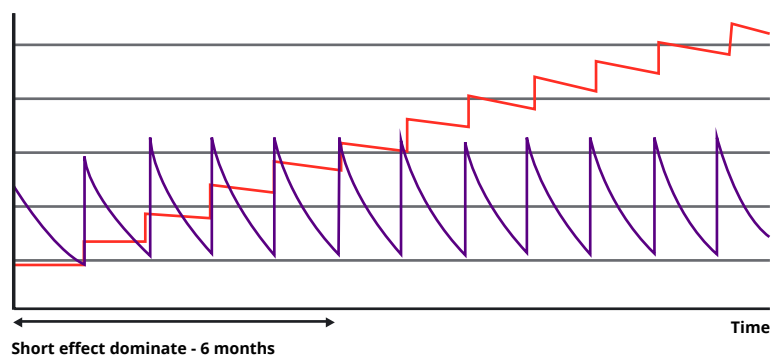
Investment in brand building is absolutely crucial. It increases awareness, generates trust, creates loyalty and helps you to stand out in an increasingly crowded and complex market. Take Coca Cola for example, an obvious one, but since it first begun in 1886, it's advertising has always been about building the brand up and never about direct sales.

In fact, how many of the world's biggest brands do you see doing advertising for direct sales? The brand building is what has led to the sales, and universities can take inspiration from this. Make sure you look outside the education sector for inspiration.



- Sales activation/
short-term sales
uplifts
- Brand-building/
long-term sales
growth

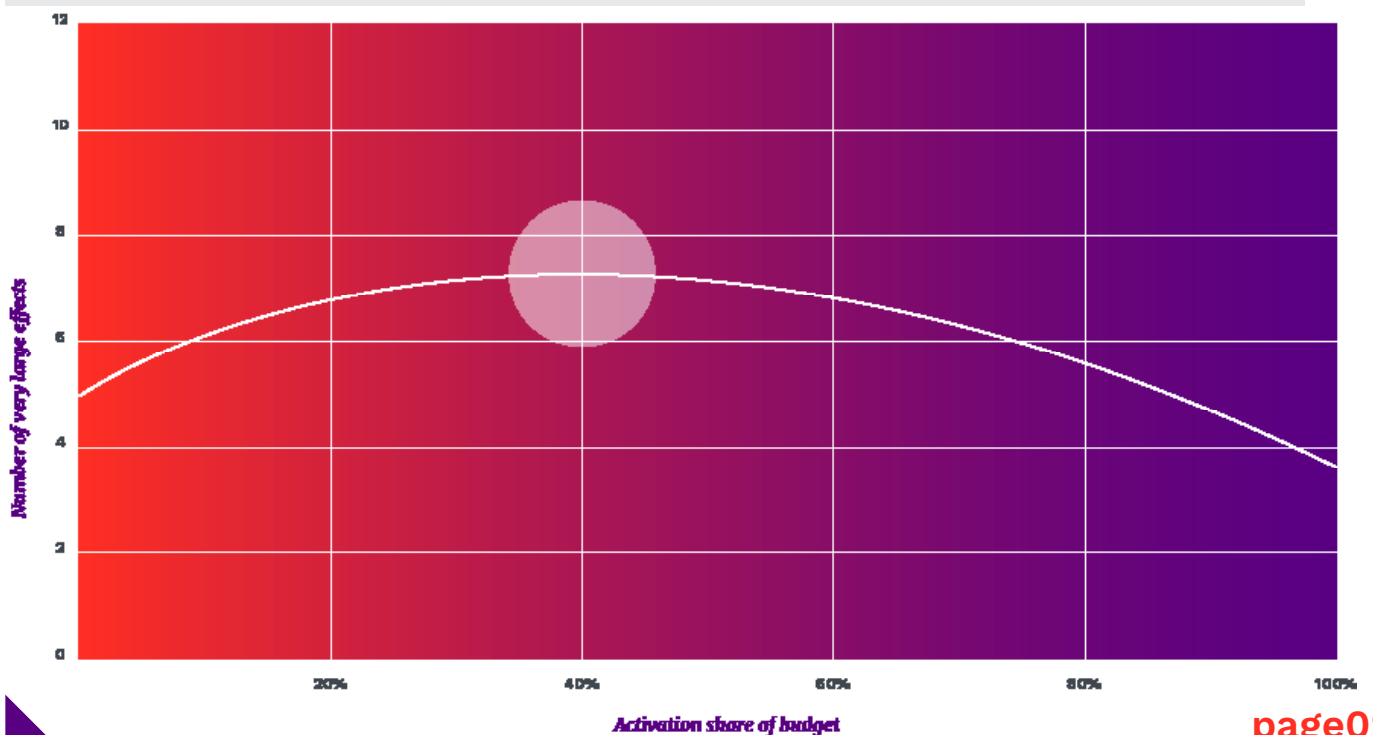
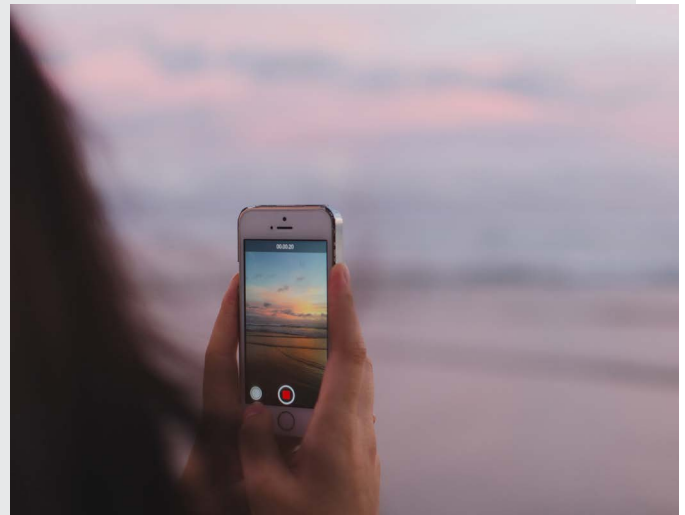
Sales uplift
over base



INVESTING

The 60/40 split

Research shows that brands should look to spend at least 60% of their brand budget on building activity and 40% on activation.



EMOTION

“After a presentation, 63% of attendees remember stories. Only 5% remember statistics.”

Ironically this is a statistic about statistics not being strong. However, it does signify the importance of showcasing compelling stories.

What do you want your students to feel, and what is the emotion you want to instill? Emotion drives: search, word of mouth, sales and repeat viewing.

There has been a dramatic shift in what consumers and prospects want from advertising, from information on products and costs, to entertainment, value and truth. Prospective students have so much information readily available to them, your advertising needs to add value and tell them something that they may not already know.

This starts with storytelling, and identifying the story of your brand to bring authenticity and truth. This video received over four million views and went global. This type of content is what we would call ever-green as it's not time sensitive, and people can engage with it at all times of the year.

[Click here to view the video](#)



ACTIVATION

- Awareness
- Consideration
- Intent
- Decision
- Conversion (enrolment)

AWARENESS

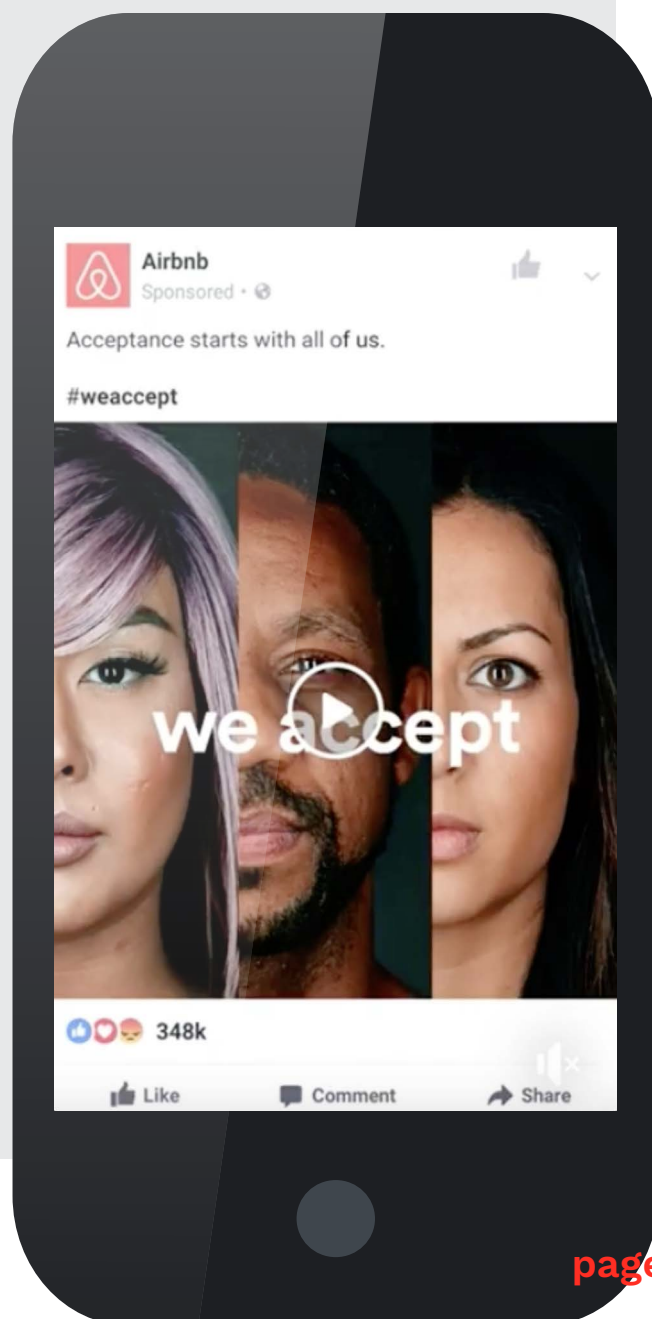
These are just a handful of recommendations for what your institution can do in the digital space to raise awareness. This can range from platform, advertising type, content and audience perspective.

Video

Video is now the fastest-growing advertising format and is expected to make up 82% of internet traffic over the next three years.

Best practice tips:

- Captivate audiences in the **first three seconds**.
- **Show** and **inspire**, don't tell.
- Showcase a **compelling** story.
- Use **real-life** people, both students and academics.
- **Consider** video with and without



AWARENESS



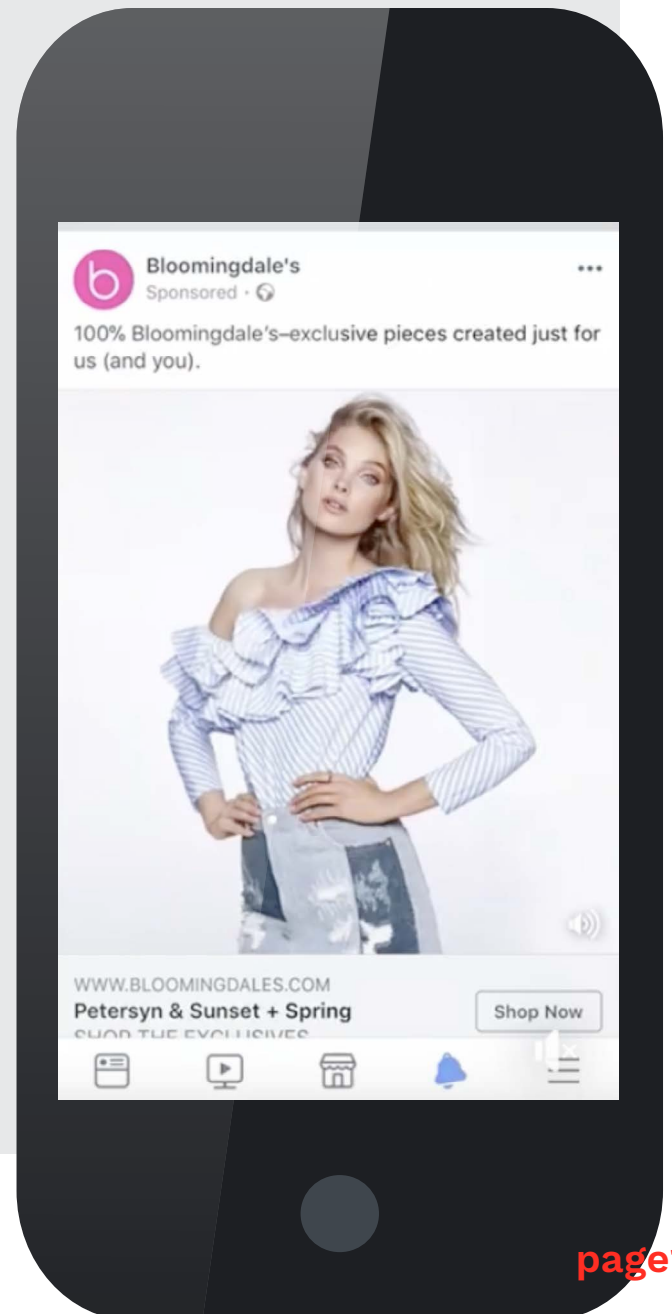
Image

There is still great power in using images. It can fit into any stage of the student recruitment journey, but it is important that the visuals used compliment the stage. Image content can fit into any of the stages, and is great for captivating audiences and getting prospects through to your website to learn more.

Remember, just because it is an image, doesn't mean it can't move.

Best practice tips:

- Keep it **short** and **to the point**
- **Striking, thumb stopping** imagery
- Keep it **relevant**
- Provide **value**
- **Test** different creative



AWARENESS



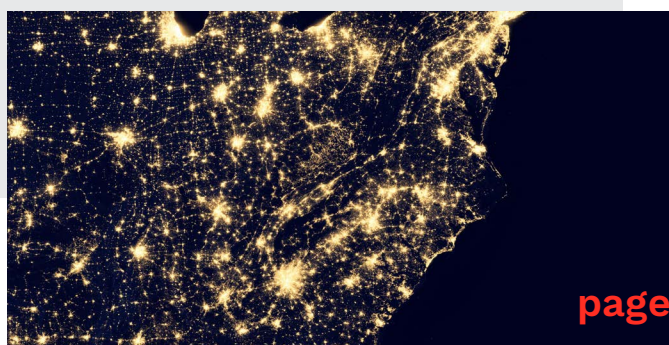
Programmatic

Programmatic is a great format for raising awareness, as you can reach your audience wherever they are on the internet, without your adverts being contained within a specific search engine or social media platform. Take this example from KIA, rather than taking their audience through to the KIA website, they took them through to their YouTube channel. This is a far more engaging and experiential way to connect, in comparison to a website where they may bounce.

It allows you to be in the right place, at the right time and with the right message. Our experts at the Student Trading Exchange will use a quality, brand-safe inventory across a portfolio of whitelists, targeting your audience at scale with maximum efficiency.

Best practice tips:

- **Short, concise** and to the **point**.
- **Engaging** visuals.
- **Clear** CTA.
- **Branded**.
- **Test** out different formats.
- **Whitelists & blacklists**.



AWARENESS

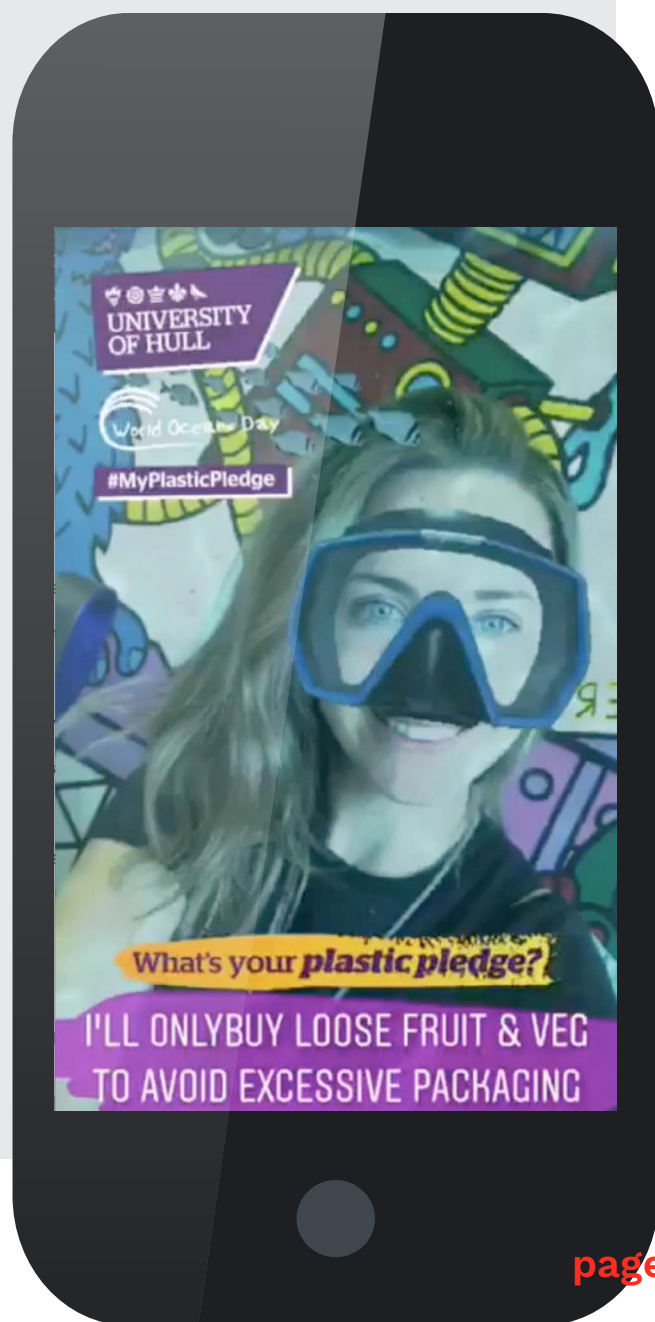


Lenses

Lenses are a step up from Snapchat's filters, with the content being even more playful and creating a top-level buzz.

Best practice tips:

- Face Lenses are always **bespoke**, so best practices can differ. But the usual creative checklist applies.
- Keep it **relevant, simple** and **shareable**.



CONSIDERATION

Once a prospective student is aware of your institution, you now want to get them interacting and engaging with your content.



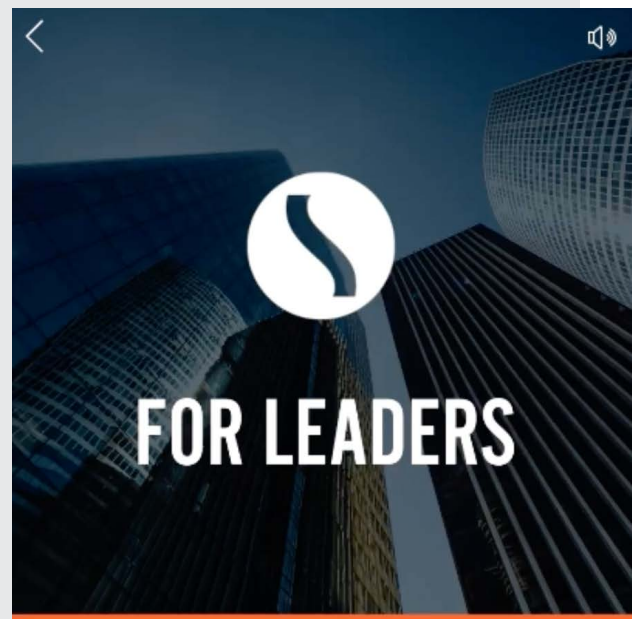
Interactive

Interactive content is typically used in the consideration stage, as a qualified audience are more likely to engage and then select more relevant information. Users are more in control than ever in terms of their internet experience. Interactive advert

formats facilitate this, and allow prospects to interact with your brand and select the path which they feel is most relevant to them.

Best practice tips:

- The first frame must **grab attention**, and make people want to see more.
- All components must **come together** visually to relay your message, and tell a staged story.
- Divide the content into **specific interests**, so the audience can choose the CTA most relevant to them.



We are the International School of Management (ISM) – a specialized business school based in Paris, France, with partner institutions on five different continents.

ACCREDITED BUSINESS DEGREES

INTENT

So, by this stage your prospective students are now aware of your institution and they've interacted with your brand. Regardless of whether this is with your ads, or on your website, you now want them to complete an action. This could be for an open day or downloading a brochure.



Lead Generation

With an increasingly crowded space and so much choice available, users want to be able to engage with your brand at a fast pace. Lead gen provides a seamless, fast experience, which takes a prospect straight from an advert through to a lead generation form with their details pre-populated.

This format is available on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Best practice tips:

- Use **engaging** and **informative** content to make them want to enquire
- Utilise **thumb stopping** creative (that will stop you scrolling)
- **Tell** people what they are signing up for
- Demonstrate **brand identity**
- **Form length** matters
- Run during times you can quickly **follow-up**



INTENT



Click-to-Message

Click-to-message formats encourage your audience to interact personally with you and is great for driving conversations. It is a genuine way to generate leads and provides a mutual benefit as the audience can have their questions answered and receive a positive experience with your brand.

The format is available via Facebook click-to-messenger, and Google Search click-to-text.

Best practice tips:

- Don't be **too spammy**
- Plan conversations that are useful and easily discussed
- Decide what you **want people to do**
- Plan how you'll **evolve**
- **Tone of voice** consistency



In-mail

In-mail is a great way to engage with prospects, particularly at a postgraduate level as it allows you to be highly targeted with the audience you want to reach. The format reaches the inbox of your most relevant prospects, and allows you to include more text than other advertising

Best practice tips:

- Make the message **personalised** and **tailored**
- Create a **compelling** subject line
- Start a **conversation**
- Make it **about them**
- **Clearly formatted**
- **Clear** CTA



INTENT



Programmatic Dynamic Retargeting

Dynamic Retargeting allows you to tailor your messaging to your audience depending on what they have already shown an interest in.

Best practice tips:

- Keep the message **short, concise** and **to the point**
- Use **engaging** visuals
- Include a **clear CTA**
- Make sure it's on **brand**
- **Personalised** and **tailored**

Kingston
University
London

Interested in studying

CourseName?

Kingston
University
London



Kingston
University
London

You'll be part of an
innovative and
enterprising community

DECISION

They've considered you, made an enquiry and perhaps even attended an open day, you now want that prospective student to apply.



Google Search

Google Search allows you to reach those actively searching, therefore increasing the quality of audiences.

Although a fairly simple format, it has developed over the past year, including features such as an additional headline and site link extensions to ensure that the content is tailored to the prospect and their needs.

Best practice tips:

- Strong on **USPs**
- **Short, concise** and **to the point**
- Include your **most important messages** in the **headline**
- **Test** different variations
- **Include a clear CTA**
- Make use of the **advert extensions** available



DECISION



Programmatic Retargeting

At the decision stage, programmatic can be used to close the loop and encourage prospects to make the decision to apply at your institution.

Best practice tips:

- Be **short, concise** and to the **point**.
- Use **engaging visuals**.
- Include clear, **strong CTA**.



Custom Audiences

Custom audience campaigns allow you to engage directly with those that have shown an interest in studying with you. The capabilities for this are vast, from targeting via hashed email addresses, to website traffic and engagement.

Best practice tips:

- Highly **relevant** and tailored to the prospect
- Add **value** beyond what they already know
- Use **testimonials**
- **Strong** call-to-action

Anglia Ruskin University

You're determined.

We have a range of Nursing courses available for a **January 2018** start

APPLY NOW.

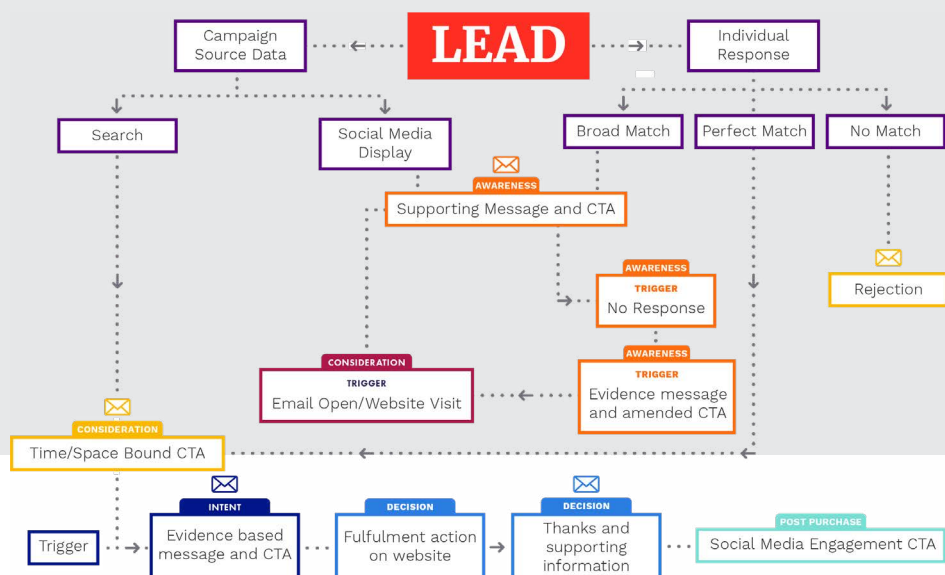
CONVERSION

Even though a student has applied, it's important not to neglect them as they may have applied to other institutions. So, what are you going to do to make sure they convert into an enrolment?

One of the most significant challenges, faced by education marketers, is keeping your leads warm - from an application, all the way through to enrolment. A solid conversion strategy, which nurtures leads through a long recruitment journey, is vital for any university or college marketing department.

You want to see where people are in the process and how likely they are to convert. The diagram below shows the different routes people might take, depending on who they are and where they've come from. For example, someone could come in from a Google Search campaign, where you could hit them straight away with a loud call to action. Or, perhaps they are from a social media source, where you're nurturing time might be a little longer? Fundamentally, what you need to do is connect all touchpoints up through an email nurture strategy.

For information on long term lead conversion, why not [download our **whitepaper**: How to nurture and convert prospective students with long lead times.](#)



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The market is becoming more complex and crowded
- Know your audience
- Think long-term
- Focus attentions on brand building
- Look outside of the sector for inspiration
- Take a funnel approach and provide a seamless, consistent user journey

ABOUT NATIVES GROUP

Who are we?

We are a collection of specialist brands who can either solve individual problems or work collectively as partners to our clients.



NATIVES GLOBAL
CONSULTING

Akero



edurank

CEREBRO™

THE
NATIVE



your objectives. Then we add knowledge, expertise and superlative execution. And we make something amazing.

We deliver a range of creative solutions that will make your college stand out from the crowd, including; digital and print advertising, email template and microsite design, video production, photography, experiential and animation. We pioneer the use of the latest innovative creative formats for the education sector.

What is the secret to a successful advertising campaign? Combining your data with inspiring creative and copy. We believe in the importance of collecting and using your audience data to inform our targeting and messaging.

Who are Net Natives?

We are **creatives, thinkers, makers, planners and doers** - tenacious, talented and together, more than the sum of our parts. We know great campaigns all start with one thing: understanding. So that's where we begin - with you, your audience, your ambitions and

Contact Us

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hello@netnatives.com



@netnatives



/netnatives

SERVICES:

Here are just some of the services our team of experts can work with your institution on:

Advertising

- Direct media planning and buying
- Biddable media (search, social & programmatic)
- Attribution tracking
- End to end reporting

Creative

- Video and photography
- Creative concepts
- Graphic design
- HTML5 displays ads
- Copywriting

Analytics and Insight

- Desk and field-based market research
- Analytics
- Business intelligence
- SEO Training
- Conversion strategies
- Strategic content development
- Lead generation and nurturing
- Competitive analysis
- Performance analysis

Student Engagement

- Student audience panel
- Brand advertising
- Lead generation campaigns
- Community management

International Expertise

- Chinese social platform management
- China digital advertising
- Local website and microsite development

Social Media

- Social media and social content strategy
- Social media training

Strategic Marketing

- Reputation and SEO management
- Consulting and project management

Marketing Software

- Marketing performance software
- Data visualisation software
- Social media content performance software