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HIGHER EDUCATION CHEAT SHEET

Top 3 Admission Engagement Challenges & How to Tackle Them

Top 3 Admission Challenges & How to Tackle Them

Admissions departments face a challenge to attract students to their university or college at the best of times.

Now, however, this challenge may seem overwhelming when you take a look at the latest higher education enrollment figures.

From Spring 2020 to 2022, U.S. post-secondary enrollment dropped by 7.4%. The numbers are even worse for international student enrollment, down 22.7% across the same time period.

With enrollment down, higher education institutions are fighting for the attention and money of a smaller number of potential students. To help overcome this, this guide will take a look at the top 3 engagement issues that admissions departments are facing, and how they can tackle each to raise intake at their school.

-462,000
Spring '21 to Spring '22
Fewer female students

-7.4%
Spring '20 to Spring '22
Decline in U.S. post-secondary enrollment

-22.7%
2019 to 2021
Drop in international student enrollment in U.S. universities

The 3 Key Admission Challenges

There are three key factors that are universally affecting university and college admissions today. Here are each of these factors and how they are impacting student admissions today:

1. Declining enrollment

Enrollment numbers are down and have been for over 2 years. With 9.4% less undergraduates enrolled in US colleges today compared to 2020, the same number of schools are fighting over a reduced pool of prospective students.

2. Expectation for immediate support

Grown up surrounded by the instant gratification of technology, today's students demand fast support from their higher education institution. 72% of Gen Z expect to interact with someone immediately when they reach out. Admissions departments must meet Gen Z's need for speed or lose students to competing institutions.

3. Student "melt"

Student melt refers to students enrolling in college but failing to attend when classes begin. This figure can be as high as 40%. To keep students on track during the summer months, admissions teams need to make information easily accessible to prospective students and keep communication lines open.

Remove barriers to engagement with live chat

To maximize engagement with prospective students, colleges must make it as easy as possible for students to connect with them and have their questions answered. However, with a reliance on phone and email, many colleges are not providing this experience.

Today's students want support that is convenient, fast, and personalized. 71% of 16 to 24-year-olds believe that customer service can be drastically improved by a quick response, while 74% of Gen Z agree that "convenience is more important than brand". Phone and email simply cannot meet these expectations, but live chat can. This real-time channel provides students with the experience they want, and so removes a key barrier to engagement with both domestic and international students.

61%

Under 24 years old that actively avoid phone calls from customer support

Find out how Thompson Rivers University admissions department boosted enrollment with Comm100 Live Chat

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THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY

Offer 24/7 support with chatbots

Gen Z rank 24/7 customer service highest among factors that would make them feel positive about a brand. Students actively look for and value around-the-clock support, providing admissions departments with a great opportunity to impress prospective students, as well as increase engagement.

The only cost-effective way to offer 24/7 support is through chatbot automation. Admissions departments can automate all their most common student requests, providing support at any hour or day of the week – all without hiring any additional staff. This also helps to increase engagement with international students in different time zones.

Chatbots don't just operate out of hours though. During standard office hours, AI chatbots can also be used to automate the repetitive and simple inquiries, allowing agents to devote more of their time to queries that require more time or attention.

Find out how Cambrian College's admissions department boosted recruitment with Comm100 AI Chatbot

CAMBRIAN COLLEGE

Grab their attention with SMS

Today's students are inundated with information as brands clamor to get their attention. For admissions teams to get a slice of this attention, SMS is key. SMS is the most effective channel for reaching students as text messages have an open rate of 98%.

Through Comm100 Outreach, admissions departments can send bulk and personalized SMS messages to prospective students to keep them engaged and avoid student melt. Targeted SMS campaigns can include invitations to on-campus events, admissions reminders, or links to new marketing materials.

Moreover, Comm100 Outreach enables two-way messaging so students can respond to these texts and further foster the connection with the school. Compared to email, SMS messages are more than four times as likely to receive a reply.
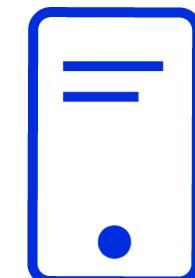
90%

Text messages read within just 3 minutes

Deliver personalization with omnichannel engagement

While it's vital to offer students a variety of digital channels to reach out for support, admissions department only truly benefit from this by connecting every channel together. With an <u>omnichannel student engagement platform</u>, each channel is tied together in a unified console, improving both the agent and student experience.

Rather than juggle systems and conversations, omnichannel platforms allow agents to view student communications as unified conversation threads. This gives the agent complete visibility into the student, empowering them to provide more helpful and personal support.

By showing prospective students that they understand their needs and treat them as individuals, admissions agents can build stronger, more personal connections with prospective students.

Gen Z that feel like "companies treat me as a unique individual":

32%

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To remain competitive, admissions departments must connect with students where, how, and when they want.

With Comm100 Omnichannel, colleges can do just this.

Comm100 Omnichannel integrates every key digital channel into one unified agent console, powered by zero downtime, the highest standards in security, and AI automation.

Join top institutions like Stanford University, McMaster University, The Open University, and Thompson Rivers University who are using Comm100 and providing their students with the support they expect.

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