XM PIE

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XMPie Cross-Media Campaign Boosts College Admissions for Maryland Institution

Customer

Echo Communicate Inc., founded in 1977 and based in Baltimore, Md., provides print and marketing services. Their client, Capitol College, is a private institution in Laurel, Md. with programs in engineering, computer sciences, information technologies and business.

Challenge

Echo Communicate's strategic focus for growing its business is with the many colleges, universities and non-profit organizations in its region. After cold-calling on Capitol College's admissions department, Echo discovered that Capitol's traditional student recruitment direct marketing consisted of static direct mail pieces with response cards sent to geographically segmented lists from the CollegeBound Network and the College Board, and contacts from college fairs and inquiries. This "spray and pray" approach wasn't garnering the results they desired, and Capitol was looking to increase inquiries, response rates, campus visits, meaningful engagement and enrollment, while lowering or maintaining their direct marketing costs.

Solution

To show prospective students what Capitol College has to offer, and motivate them to apply for enrollment, Echo developed and executed a relevant, interactive 1:1 marketing campaign. Approximately 19,000 student contacts from purchased lists, and 1,800 from other sources, received a personalized direct mailer, paired with an email, inviting them to visit a personalized URL (PURL). Each piece was personalized to reflect not only the recipient's name and gender, but also his or her hometown and academic interests through variable text, images, maps, and pre-populated response cards. A static version of the mailer was also used at college fairs with a general URL (GURL), which led the interested student to a static website where they could enter their information to create their own personalized website. At their exclusive website, a prospective student could view a personalized campus tour video, apply for financial
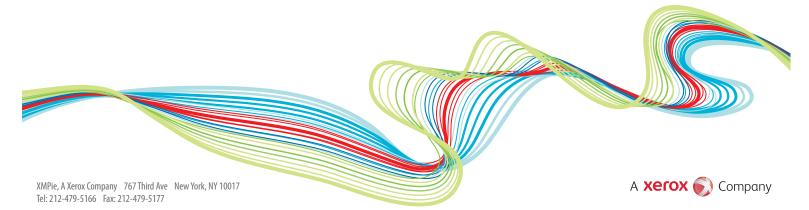
aid and/or enrollment, sign up for SMS text updates on admissions deadlines, and register for an Open House with just one click. Depending upon their responses, any of 20 unique follow-ups were possible. Reaching that many students on an individual basis across that many communications channels, and tracking each of their actions and reactions for timely, personalized follow-up, was uniquely enabled by XMPie PersonalEffect®.

Results

The dynamic admissions campaign exceeded Capitol College's expectations, helping to quadruple applications and double enrollment over the previous year. An impressive 29 percent of recipients visited their PURLs, including 75 percent of those from college fairs and social media. Capitol also raised the quality of its student body by garnering a deeper pool of applicants to select from, and freed up more counseling time for admissions counselors by having Echo's automated system handle many administrative tasks. And the campaign cost 10 percent less than the traditional, static campaign from the previous year.

For Echo, the success led to additional business with Capitol. The latest admissions campaign that they are implementing for the college is enhanced with XMPie-generated QR codes that permit prospective students to access relevant information from smartphones. With XMPie, personalized QR codes are imaged and coded in the same step, using the same data and logic that is used for every other campaign component. "As far as I'm concerned, XMPie is the only game in town because it's a single solution that gives you peace of mind with consistency across all of the campaign's media channels and touch points," said Robert Blakely, vice president of Business Development, Echo Communicate Inc. "Getting Capitol College to embrace 1:1 marketing, and move away from conventional segment marketing, was the key to reaching their goals, and XMPie makes it practical."

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