



Case Study //
MARKETING

Seton Hall Leverages Coremetrics for Better Allocation of Marketing Spend

Seton Hall University is a major Catholic university located in South Orange, New Jersey. In a diverse and collaborative environment, it focuses on academic and ethical development. Seton Hall students are prepared to be leaders in their professional and community lives in a global society and are challenged by outstanding faculty, an evolving and technologically advanced setting, and values-centered curricula.



Challenge

Recruitment cycles for institutions of higher education such as Seton Hall are long and complex, and can range from 18 to 36 months. Seton Hall combines online and offline activities to lead potential students from initial inquiry through the relationship-building and application processes to enrollment. With such a long conversion cycle, it is crucial to understand the interrelationships among marketing activities and how, over time, each activity contributes to conversion.

The university uses numerous lead-acquisition channels, including online and offline advertising such as web site promotions, affiliates, paid and natural search, email, direct mail, and college fairs. University marketers wanted to gain insight into the role of each channel in acquiring leads and converting those leads to enrolled students. In particular, they wanted to answer two questions:

- Within a campaign phase, which mix of elements leads to engagement and enrollment?
- For the overall recruitment cycle, which activities contribute to enrollment and revenue?

These questions imply that conversion happens after engaging with a prospect for some period of time. Traditional analytics solutions, which attribute a single click to a single conversion, cannot answer such questions.

Solution

With Coremetrics, Seton Hall has a flexible attribution management system. Coremetrics captures complete, precise behavioral data and accurately attributes conversion to any or all campaign influences, enabling Seton Hall marketers to make informed decisions on how to best invest their marketing dollars.

Getting the Answers: Fall Open House

In the fall of each year, Seton Hall invites qualified prospects to an open house to meet faculty and administrators and learn about university programs. Marketers believed that a combination of direct mail and digital promotion would deliver optimum results. However, direct mail is costly, so marketers wanted to measure the impact to see if direct mail was worth the investment.

To get the insight they needed, marketers ran two test cases. The first combined print and digital promotion. University marketers mailed a postcard invitation containing a unique, trackable URL to prospective students. They followed up with an email message timed to arrive at about the same time as the postcard. The campaign also included site promotions. The second case used only digital promotions, including email and site promotions.

A comparison of results for the two cases showed that registrations for the group receiving both the postcard and email message was 376% compared with 76% for the digital-

“Coremetrics gives us one place to go to get all the data we need and look at our marketing efforts from a holistic perspective. It helps us understand the complete process for acquiring new students, so we can determine the best way to allocate our marketing spend.”

*—Senior Director
of Strategic Marketing
Seton Hall University*

only promotion. The huge impact that direct mail played in driving registrations made it clear that the investment was worthwhile.

Getting the Answers: Conversion by Channel

The application process for Seton Hall typically takes prospective students 18 to 36 months to complete. Just during the time period when applications are submitted, the average number of overall site visits for applicants is 4.5. To determine the impact of each channel, the staff analyzed applications based on which channel brought the applicant in, which channel resulted in conversion, and which channels the applicant used each time he or she returned to the site to continue the application process.

In some areas the analysis yielded the anticipated results. In several key areas, however, the results were surprising. In particular, marketers expected that new visitors would use a variety of means to get to the site, including paid and organic search, direct load, referrals, and email campaigns. They also expected, however, that once a visitor began the application process, direct load would be a predominant means of returning to the site.

With Coremetrics data and reporting, marketers learned that deep into the application process applicants continued to use natural search as a convenient navigation tool to return to www.shu.edu. As a result of this finding, Seton Hall marketers are adapting and refining their site design and their paid and natural search strategy.

For example, prior to conducting the analysis, the site design was such that visitors had to create a login account to view the application form. Visitors can now view it without creating an account. The Seton Hall team says this approach aligns more closely with the offline application process, in which an applicant can look at any part of the application before beginning to fill it in.

The staff is also rethinking its search strategy, which viewed paid search as a visitor acquisition tool. The strong role that natural search plays throughout the application process suggests that using paid search to bring people back to various parts of the application might reduce the number of clicks required to complete the application process. Fewer clicks might translate into fewer opportunities for drop-off, thereby increasing conversion rates.

The richness of the Coremetrics data and the depth and breadth of the solution's analytics and reporting capabilities are providing insights into many other areas as well. Seton Hall marketers are continuing to leverage the Coremetrics solution to enhance their understanding of the diverse business models represented in their site, including online and offline campaigns for visitor acquisition, parent and alumni engagement, and fundraising and other monetary transactions.

To learn more about Coremetrics or to schedule a demo, please contact your account representative. Call 1.866.493.2673 or visit coremetrics.com



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