

Marketing Your Brand: Effective Marketing Strategies for Continuing Education Programs

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Part I: Framework



- Higher Education Landscape
 - **Nature** of the Higher Education Environment
 - **What** is the Product (Product Profile)
 - **Who** are the Customers (Student Profile)
- Relationship Marketing Paradigm
 - **What**: is Relationship Marketing
 - **Why**: do we need Relationship Marketing
 - **Who**: is involved with Relationship Marketing
 - Relationship Marketing Misconceptions

Nature of Higher Education Environment

Competitive Marketplace

- traditional site-based and thriving online institutions
- public, private, and now the emerging dot.coms
- dot.coms positioning as low cost alternatives
- higher education market is getting crowded
- convergence between face-to-face and online courses
- consortium model - students can take courses from multiple institutions to earn a degree

Internet has Empowered Students

- institutions are less in control
- students have a choice of institutions and programs
- competitors are just one click away

Shaik, N. (Summer 2005). Marketing Distance Learning Programs & Courses: A Relationship Marketing Strategy. [Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration](#), 8(2).

Product Profile:

Education: Core & Supporting Services

Core Service: Teaching and learning that occurs in a(n) (un)structured virtual / traditional class is the core component.

Supporting Services: Services critical to student learning experience include information about courses, advising, registrations, student account, orientation, help-desk, complaint handling, feedback and placement.

Shaik, N. (Summer 2005). Marketing Distance Learning Programs & Courses: A Relationship Marketing Strategy. [Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration](#), 8(2).

Who: are the Customers (Student Profile)

- Traditional students
- Non-traditional students
 - a sizable presence on campus
 - those with a degree enroll to update skills
 - enroll part-time, temporarily stop-out, and transfer between institutions
- Students are becoming smart shoppers.
- Students expect and even demand:
 - quality learning experiences.
 - quality services at all levels for the duration of their program of study.

Shaik, N. (Summer 2005). Marketing Distance Learning Programs & Courses: A Relationship Marketing Strategy. [Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration](#), 8(2).

What: Relationship Marketing

All marketing activities, directed to establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational exchanges.

- **Purpose:** attract, maintain and enhance student relationships.
- **Goal:** is to transform indifferent students into loyal alumni.
- **Strategy:** balanced emphasis on student recruitment and retention strategies.

Shaik, N. (2005). Marketing Distance Learning Programs & Courses: A Relationship Marketing Strategy. Distance Learning Administration 2005 Conference, Georgia.

Why: Relationship Marketing?

- **Competitive Advantage**
 - competitors cannot replicate value-added services that are unique to the institution.
- **Revenue from Retention**
 - satisfied students complete the program and generate a steady stream of revenue.
 - additional cost of marketing is zero to the institution.
- **Revenue from Enrollments**
 - loyal alumni generate revenue through referrals.
 - cost of viral marketing is zero to the institution.

Urban, G. (Winter 2004). The Emerging Era of Customer Advocacy. MIT Sloan Management Review.

Shaik, N. (2005). Marketing Distance Learning Programs & Courses: A Relationship Marketing Strategy. Distance Learning Administration 2005 Conference, Georgia.

Who: Relationship Marketing

Full-time marketers (limited contact with students)

Marketing Department

Recruitment Staff

Part-time marketers (frequent contacts with students)

Mid-level Management

Admissions Staff

Registration & Student Accounts Staff

Orientation & Advising Staff

Faculty & Instructional Support Staff

Help-desk Staff

Overcoming Marketing Misconceptions

Why do I need to be a marketer?

- My job is to assist with the registration - enrolling students to courses.
- Student orientation has nothing to do with marketing.
- Student advising and marketing are two very different activities and processes.
- I am hired to teach students.
- I am not qualified to perform marketing tasks.
- This is not a call center.
- I am not a telemarketer.



Part II: Marketing Strategies

Turning Leads into Loyal Alumni



- Internet Marketing (IM)
 - Goals
 - Strategies
 - Methods
 - Metrics
 - Why ineffective: Myths & Hypes
- Branding

Internet Marketing (IM)

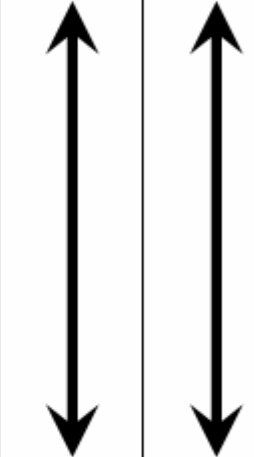

- Goal
 - Increase Revenue; Increase Enrollments
- Strategies
 - Pull; Push; Blended Strategies
- Pricing Models & Metrics
 - Reach: Number/Frequency of hits
 - Response Based: CPM/CPC/CTR
 - Action Based: CPA/CPS/CPR
- Return on Investment (ROI)
 - $ROI = (Revenue - Cost) / Revenue$
 - Marketing ROI, Total ROI

Internet Marketing Methods: Web Advertisements

- Banner Swapping / Exchanges
- Affiliate Web sites, Spot Leasing
- Pop-up / Splash Screen
- Search Engine Ad Word
 - Keyword Search (optional placement ads)
 - Embedded search links
- Chat Rooms Ads
- E-Zine Ads
- Mobile Phones & GPS Technology

Internet Marketing Framework

- Intuitive, persuasive, and convincing

Customer Behavior	Pricing Model	Metrics	Description	Your Cost	Your Risk	Outsource Options		
Passive to Neutral	Fixed Cost	Flat Rate	Graphic Ad / Directory Listing	Low	High	One or Two Processes		
Exploratory	Impressions	Cost Per 1000 (CPM)	Frequency of Banner Impressions					
Information Gathering	Traffic to Sponsor Web Site (generate leads)	Cost Per Click (CPC)	Pay Only for Clicks					
Final Decision	Enroll in Course or Program (convert leads)	CPA, CRS, CPR, CTR [Cost Per Action, Start, Revenue, Sales,] ROI: Return on Investment	Pay Only for Enrollments			High	Low	Processes leading up to lead conversions/ enrollment including the Help-desk.

Internet Marketing: How & Why

- Process: How to increase enrollment?
 - Buy Leads (from marketing firms)
 - Prioritize & Contact Leads (eMail, Phone etc)
 - Follow-up Leads
 - Leads to Conversions / Enrollments
 - Measure Ad Effectiveness (Calculate mROI)
- Why internet marketing?
 - Relatively low cost of ad campaign
 - Tools available to track ad campaign
 - Price models and metrics are intuitive
 - High ROI estimates are tempting

Not an Effective Strategy

- Institution's Perspective
 - Focus on **recruitment** through mass marketing.
 - **Disconnect** between recruitment and rest of the institutional processes.
 - Results in a low student retention rate.
 - Does not provide steady revenue stream - not a sound business model.
- Student's Perspective
 - Flooded with advertisements and promotions
 - Paying less attention to marketing campaigns
 - Blocking and filtering adv and promotion messages
- E-Mail Service Providers
 - AOL & Yahoo are considering "Goodmail", the certified email service to charge mass e-mail marketers for the e-mail services to opt-in customers.

Shaik, N. (2005). Marketing Distance Learning Programs & Courses: A Relationship Marketing Strategy. Distance Learning Administration 2005 Conference, Georgia.
Goodmail <http://goodmailsystems.com/>



Branding: Marketing Strategies



- **What** is a Brand?
- **Why** Branding?
- Branding Challenges
- **How** - Branding Processes?
 - Create Brand
 - Promote Brand
 - Billboards & Web Site
 - Value-added Services

What is a Brand?

- Name (plus a Logo and a catchy Slogan)
- Attribute Set
 - Name without any association to it is not a brand.
 - Name becomes a brand if students associate **positive attributes** to it.
 - What students think about your institution and NOT what you think.
- Example of internet brands with a very strong customer service focus.
 - eBay.com (flex-price) and amazon.com (fixed-price) virtual stores established strong brand identities and have stellar growth.

Why Branding?

- Brand identity plays a crucial role when services are less differentiated.
 - Example: Starbuck
- E-marketing is uniquely positioned to:
 - Leverage the brand through interactivity and dialogue
 - More effective than one-way print/radio/TV ads.
 - Medium offers multiple channels to reinforce the brand message.

How: Branding

- Identify your target audience (using market segmentation analysis).
- Create a logo and a short message.
 - Don't make a promise that you cannot deliver.
- Promote & reinforce the brand
 - Web-site is an interactive multi-media billboard.
 - Use multiple-channels to reinforce brand.
 - Provide value-added services
- Design web-site
 - to convey an image and a clear message
 - for subtly instilling brand awareness
 - for interactive communications
 - to foster and manage relationships
- Everyone in the supply chain works as a team to deliver the promise: consistent quality services.

Branding: Value Added Services

Example: internet companies providing value-added services and creating new services to stay competitive:

- E-mail services
 - Microsoft hotmail, Yahoo e-mail, Google gmail
- Text Messaging
 - MS messenger, Google Talk, Yahoo messenger
- Search Engine
 - Google, Microsoft, Yahoo
- Maps
 - Yahoo Local Maps, MSN Maps, Google Earth

Another Example

Mobile phone companies are creating new value-added services to remain competitive.

Create: Brand Vs. Value-Added Services

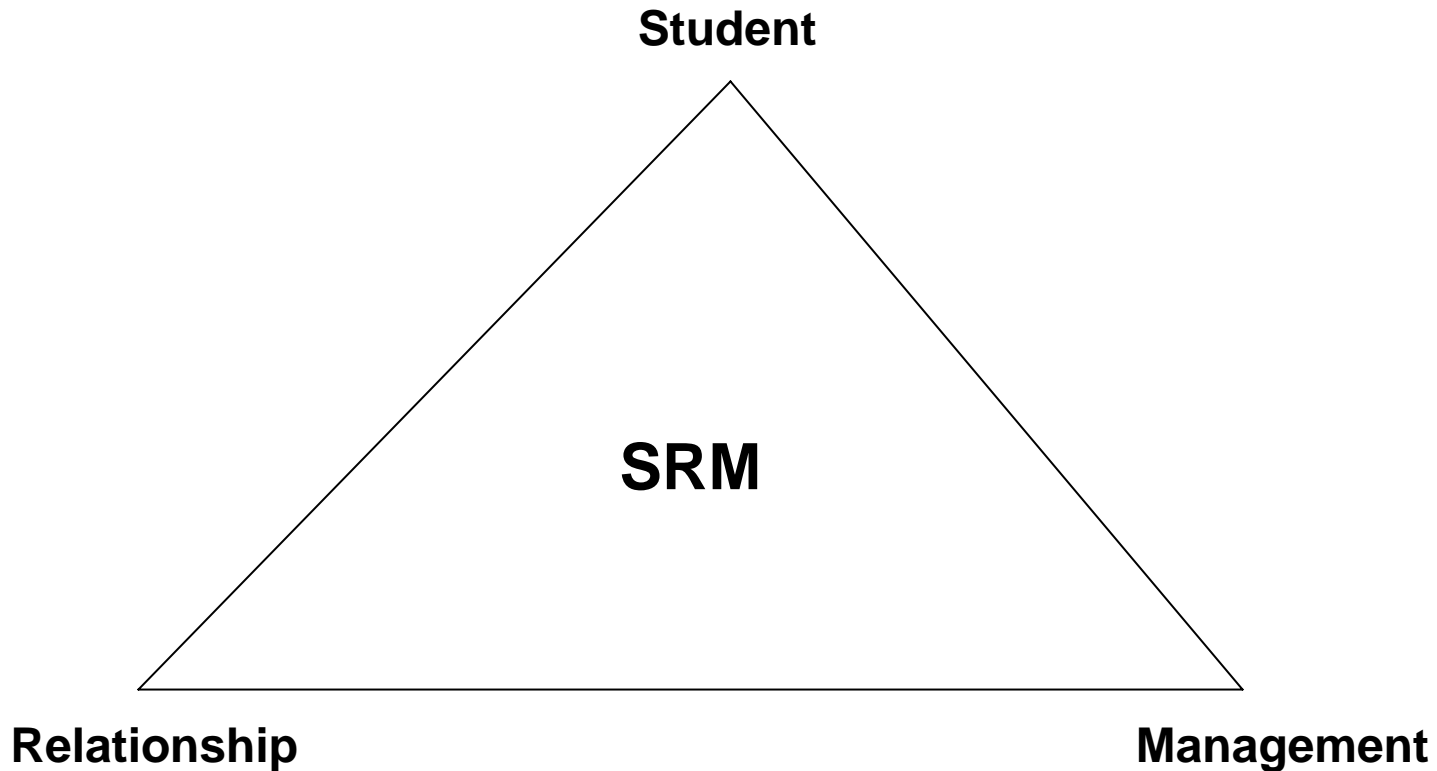
- Most institutions create value-added services to survive and remain competitive.
- Creating value-added services is not enough.
- To be successful, institutions need to create their own “Brand” of services.
- Not a (short-term) quick-fix solution. Requires innovative “out-of-box” solutions to stay competitive.



Part III: Marketing the Brand



- Student Relationship Management (SRM)
- University of Illinois Online Degree Programs
 - Graduate School of Library & Information Sciences Online Program (LEEP)
 - Human Resources Education Online (HRD)
 - Curriculum, Technology, & Education Reform (CTER)
- Service Quality



Adapted from: Gray, P., & Byun, J. (March 2001). Customer Relationship Management. Center for research on information technology organizations, University of California, Irvine.

Student Relationship Management (SRM)

- Strategic business and process issue.
- Enterprise-level system component to aligns processes and technical solutions.
- Building and maintaining structural relationships.
 - Anticipates students' needs
 - Develop trust between the student/sponsor
 - Offer customized programs to students
 - Address student's concerns and resolves issues amicably
 - Support student recruitment and retention initiatives.
 - Provide memorable learning experiences to students.

Gummesson, E. (1999). Total Relationship Marketing. Rethinking Marketing Management: From 4Ps to 30Rs. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Sweeney Group (2000) What is CRM? <http://www.sweeneygroup.com/crm.htm>

Shaik, N. (2005). Service Center - A Student Relational Management Application. Paper accepted for presentation to the Eleventh [Sloan-C International Conference on Asynchronous Learning Networks](#), November 2005, Florida, USA.

Service Center

- Goal: Serve the needs of continuing education
- Designed and developed at UIUC by Office of Continuing Education staff
- An important component of SRM
- Web-based system
- Interfaces with University of Illinois Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW)
- Provide services to departments offering outreach programs

Service Center: Features

- Easy to use web-interface
- Separate interface for staff & campus departments
- Online registration component
- Comprehensive student profile
- Generate customized reports
- Communication tools
- Third-party Software
 - Camtasia for staff tutorials
 - Elluminate for online help-desk

UIUC Online Graduate Degree Programs

- Sample: Online Graduate Degree Programs
 - Graduate School of Library & Information Sciences Online Program (LEEP)
 - Human Resources Education Online (HRD)
 - Curriculum, Technology, & Education Reform (CTER)
- No Silver Bullet
 - Three different models / solutions.
 - Each program created to meet their constituents needs.
 - Departments micro-manage their program for (service) quality control.
- Enrollment
 - LEEP: 200 plus students
 - CTER: 25 students per cohort
 - HRE online: 25 students per cohort
- Retention Rates: 95% and above

Library & Information Science Distance Education

- School of Library & Information Science.
- Master of Science & Certificate of Advanced Study.
- Inter-institutional collaboration (WISE model).
- National and International focus.
- Students from diverse educational backgrounds.
- Quasi-cohort model.
- Flexible & customized curriculum.
- Hybrid model (mostly online).

URL <http://www.lis.uiuc.edu/programs/leep/>

Lesht, F., Montague, R., McCracken, H., & Shaik, N. (2004). Services that Work for Retaining Students in Online Degree Programs, ICCHE 2004

Montague, R (2004). <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla71/papers/067e-Montague.pdf>

Human Resource Education Online

- Department of Human Resource Education
- Master of Education & Certificate of Professional Development
- National and International focus
- Individuals working in or aspiring to HRD positions
- Cohort model & structured sequence of courses
- Online

Sources: URL <http://hre.ed.uiuc.edu/online/index.htm>

Lesht, F., Shaik, N. (2003). Best Practices in Helping Students Complete Online Degree Programs. Annual Conference on Distance Teaching and Learning, Madison, Wisconsin.

Curriculum, Technology, & Education Reform

- Department of Education Psychology
- Master of Education
- National and regional focus
- For pre-college teachers and administrators interested in issues concerning curriculum, technology, and education reform
- Cohort model
- Semi-structured sequence of courses
- Online program

Sources: URL <http://cter.ed.uiuc.edu/>

Lesht, F., Shaik, N. (2003). Best Practices in Helping Students Complete Online Degree Programs. Annual Conference on Distance Teaching and Learning, Madison, Wisconsin.

Strategies

- Institutional Commitment
- Recruitment & Admissions
- Orientation & Advising
- Learning Environment
- Learning Community
- Support Services
- Quality Metrics
- Effectiveness

Shaik, N. (2004). Retention in Distance Learning Programs: Effective Strategies. UCEA Mid-America & Great Plains Regional Conference, Kansas City, Missouri.

Lesht, F., Montague, R., McCracken, H., & Shaik, N. (2004). Services that Work for Retaining Students in Online Degree Programs, ICCHE 2004.

Institutional Commitment

- Clear vision and mission
- Foster and develop a culture of retention
- Ensure stakeholder involvement in program design
- Promote a collaboration & team work environment
- Provide infrastructure to support instructional delivery and a collaborative learning environment
- Ensure an integrated quality support services
- Provide built-in mechanisms to enable students to complete the program (multiple offerings, flexible schedule and sequence, delivery modes etc)
- Provide a reliable enterprise information system
- Establish quality metrics, benchmarks and standards

Shaik, N. (2004). Retention in Distance Learning Programs: Effective Strategies. UCEA Mid-America & Great Plains Regional Conference, Kansas City, Missouri.

Lesht, F., Montague, R., McCracken, H., & Shaik, N. (2004). Services that Work for Retaining Students in Online Degree Programs, ICCHE 2004.

Sloan-C Quality Framework

Five Pillars - tool for continuous improvement

- Access - means for all qualified, motivated students to complete coursework (technical infrastructure, administrative support, varied offerings, etc.)
- Faculty satisfaction - personally rewarding and professionally beneficial (institution research and rewards, technical training and support, etc.)
- Student satisfaction - course rigor and fairness, professor and peer interaction, & support services (description=outcomes, community, etc.)
- Learning effectiveness - online at least as good as other models (assessment, design, interaction, outcomes, resources, etc.)
- Cost effectiveness - educational value (infrastructure, institutional commitment, marketing, sustainable, etc.)

<http://www.sloan-c.org>

Lesht, F., Montague, R., McCracken, H., & Shaik, N. (2004). Services that Work for Retaining Students in Online Degree Programs, ICCHE 2004

Effectiveness: Service Quality

- Management Questions / Challenges
 - What constitutes good distance learning services by students?
 - What actions should be taken to deliver quality services?
 - What role will different campus units play in creating a unique learning experience for the students.
 - How to measure service quality?
- Service Quality
 - service satisfaction: generally associated with single transaction
 - based on technical quality (outcome) and functional quality (processes)
 - associated with repeat purchases (retention)
 - longer time duration (multiple quarters)
 - based on cumulative assessment (process)
 - involves deeper reflection (outcome)
- DL_sQUAL Questionnaire
 - to measure service quality of distance learning programs.

Shaik, N., Lowe, S., & Pinegar, K. (2006). DL_sQUAL: A Multiple-Item Scale for Measuring Service Quality of Online Distance Learning Programs. [Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration](#), 9(2), Summer 2006.

Gummesson, E. (1999). Total Relationship Marketing. Rethinking Marketing Management: From 4Ps to 30Rs. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.



Take-Home Message



Marketing is **90% attitude** and **10% technique**.

A marketing attitude of mind is required across the institution.

Every institution has the capabilities to cultivate the attitude.

Create value added services to support quality teaching and learning experiences.

Internet provides a multi-medium low cost effective branding solution.

No silver bullet: Departments at University of Illinois UC created their unique brand (program) by serving as student's advocates.

Institutions can create their unique brand (program) by providing non-imitable and memorable learning experiences to their students.

Comments / Questions