How To Make Student Communications Stick #LetsDoThis

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Today's Agenda

+ The Problem—Noise, Competition

+ The Rule of 7

+ Communication Channels

+ Top 3 Channels to Optimize

+ Group Exercise!

Problem:

Communicating effectively with students is exceedingly difficult.

Student Attention—Who's Vying For It?

MARKETING EXPERIENCES

Mobile Marketing

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Video Marketing & Ads

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Search & Social Ads

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Customer Experience/VoC

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Lovalty/Referral/Gamification

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Personalization & Chat MYBUYS

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Testing & Optimization

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Interactive Content



Content Marketing

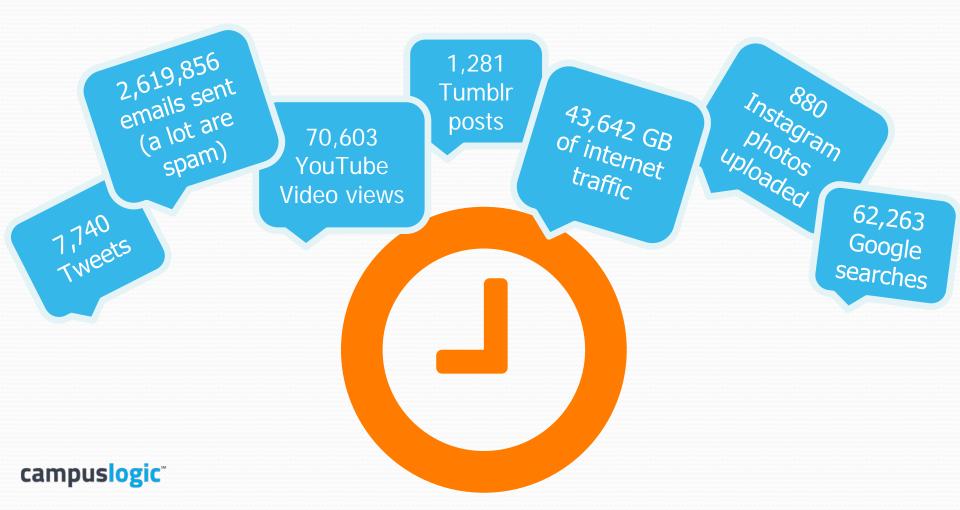
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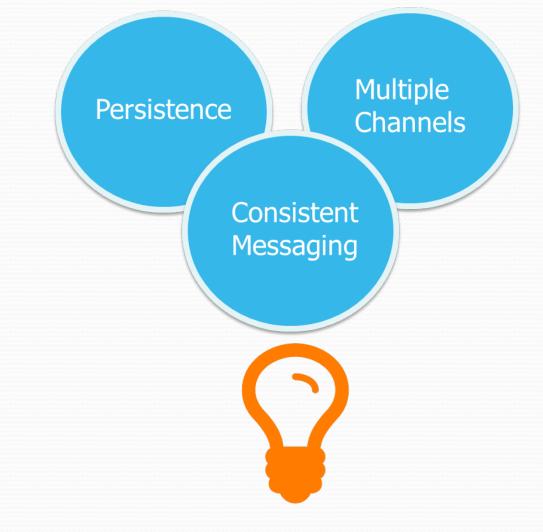
A Lot Happens In One Second



Students Are Overwhelmed



How Do You Break Through?

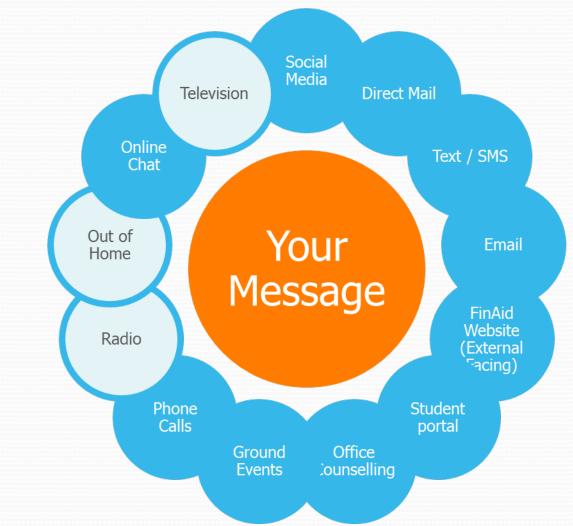


The Rule of 7: Students Need to See Your Message At Least 7 Times To Take Action

Available Communication Channels



Relevant Channels for Student Financial Services



Optimize Mobile & Online Channels

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- There are more active mobile devices than there are people on earth
- 85% of 18–29 year-olds in the U.S. own smartphones—the highest rate of all age groups
 - **60%** of Americans' digital media time is spent on smartphones & tablets
- The average college student brings 7
 Internet-connected devices to campus.
- More than half of smartphone users used their devices to look up health information or do online banking within the last year.

3 Important Channels To Optimize

- 1. Email
- 2. Text / SMS
- 3. Social Media

(Your school website (.edu) and student portal (SIS) are important channels, too—but you may not have much influence over them. We've got some tips there, too.)

1. Email

Email Trends



40% of all email are spam

14.5 million spam messages/day

Pros

- + Unlimited word count, can explain in-depth
- School branding adds credibility and familiarity can lead to higher open rates
- + Can be customized and automated
- + Analytics available on open/click rates
- + Can test effectiveness of headlines, time for send, and more

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Cons

- + So. Much. Spam.
- + Unlimited word count leads to long emails no one reads
- + Inboxes are crowded
- Students have multiple email accounts

Email At Rivier University (NH)

Michael Macias'S Financial Aid Offer Letter and Cost Outline

| - Cost of | Attendance 🚯 | |
|-----------|--------------|--|
| - COSL OI | Allendarice | |

| Direct Costs 0 | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| Tuition And Fees | \$10,000 |
| Indirect Costs () | |
| Room And Meals | \$5,000 |
| Books And Supplies | \$1,000 |
| Transportation | \$1,000 |
| Loan Fees | \$100 |
| Miscellaneous Expenses | so |
| Total Cost Of Attendance | \$17,100 |

| Total Cost Of Attendance | \$17,100 |
|---|----------|
| Parent Contribution (federally determined) | SC |
| Student Contribution (federally determined) | so |
| Total Financial Need | \$17,100 |

| our Finalicial Alu Awaru | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| vier University Funding | | |
| ier Grant | | |







Total

\$1,000

- Use emails sparingly—so students know it's important information
- + Use compelling subject lines
- Keep your messages short and sweet
- AwardLetter is a BIG WIN for Rivier. It's the email that gets opened, read, and acted on the most

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2. Text / SMS

Student Text Trends

80% report sleeping with their phone 4,000 texts a month

Pros

- + Instantly & directly delivered to students
- Students can communicate with you, anytime, anywhere
- People tend to read all their texts; they don't read all their emails
- + 2/3rds of students say it's ok for schools to contact them via text

Cons

- + Must keep message short
- Some students may be wary of receiving unsolicited text messages—get buy in
- Regulations exist around communicating in this format—be informed

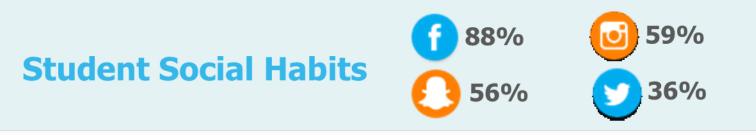
Texting At Mineral Area College (MO)

- Texts pushed fast adoption of new financial services processes
- Text alerts saved all but 8 of the 250 students at risk of getting dropped
- MAC experienced so much success, it's looking into using this channel for other school initiatives
- Warning: Students expect your immediate response; they don't care about office hours
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MAC saved 242/250 students

at risk for dropping due to non-payment

3. Social Media



Pros

- + Students already use these channels
- 75% of students use social the during college search
- Students will engage w/ schools on social, but they want to initiate
- Many channels are free and easy to set up
- + In-channel analytics refine strategy campuslogic

Cons

- + Many platforms to consider
- Highly public, channels, must be monitored
- + Students expect immediate answers on social media
- Responding & monitoring takes staff time

Social Media at D'Youville (NY)



Attention Students and Parents:

Paperless forms are now available from D'Youville's Office of Financial Aid. Starting in 2017-2018, if you have outstanding tasks (selected for verification, application data discrepancies, and others) to finalize your FAFSA, you will be directed to complete these processes using an online FAFSA verification process. Benefits to students and parents include completing verification directly from your phone or computer, the ability to e-sign documents, and receive reminders about uncompleted tasks. Contact Financial Aid at 716-829-7500 with any questions.



 Forms | Financial Aid | D'Youville College

 Paperless forms are now available.

 DYC.EDU

 Image: Like
 Comment

 Share
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| | D'Youville College @DYouville · Feb 15 | ` |
|----|---|---|
| ٥Ì | D'Youville College @DYouville · Feb 15 ICYMI: Paperless forms are now available from D'Youville's financial aid office dyc.edu/admissions/fin | |
| | | |

- Works with the social media team on strategies and goals for social channels
- Posts consistent communications across social channels, all timed together
- Uses strong visuals to create eyecatching posts
- Best practice: Plan out by month, or quarter, for at least one post per week

Putting It All Together: Missing Paperwork Exercise

Social **Missing Paperwork** Text Email Website Portal



Optimize Around How Students Are Communicating & You'll Win





Questions?

APPENDIX – TIPS!

Social Media Tips

Facebook

- Tell a story, show faces, people, outcomes.
- Be conversational
- ✓ Focus on providing info, not on generating likes or shares
- Link back to relevant FinAid resources
- Provide your social media team with talking points and guidelines on who to direct questions to

Twitter

- Say something worth listening to in 140 characters
- Visuals help you stand out
- GIFs are eye-catching and give your feed variety
- Use for immediate information dissemination: systems down, office closures, deadlines approaching
- Include relevant hashtags #FinancialAid #FinLitMonth #FinAidFail





- Keep things short and sweet
- Identify yourself and your reason for texting clearly
- Include a CTA (call to action), a reason for the text

- Provide an opt-out process
- Text during hours your students will consider 'normal' but know they'll likely respond at all hours
- If you need to use shorthand, start with most obvious words

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Email Tips

Content Counts

- Keep things short and sweet
- Use subheads to guide readers
- Avoid embedding forms-link to them instead
- Don't overdo it on fonts, styles, colors
- Optimize your email for mobile devices
- Use Analytics
 - A/B test where possible (subject line, time of day)
 - Monitor analytics and refine

- Avoid spam filters
 - Use recognizable sender name
 - Keep email send list clean
 - Stay up to date with ISP practices and anti-spam laws
- Subject Lines Matter
 - Try to stay around 30-45 characters max
 - Questions get higher open rates
 - Avoid all caps, exclamation marks in headlines

School Website (.edu) Tips

- In the USA, <u>94% of people with smartphones search for local</u> information on their phones.
- Make sure your site is mobile optimized here: <u>https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly</u>
- Use other channels to drive traffic to your website: email, social
- Website visitors will usually stick around for 59 seconds max but the first 10 seconds matter most. Make info easy to find, scan, navigate.
- Meet ADA Standards for Accessibility design



Student Portal (SIS) Tips

- Target messaging by student ID, driving engagement
- Request high-visibility portal spaces to pass along timely information: landing pages, right rails, banner ads
- Mobile optimize your portal <u>https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly</u>
- Request analytics on student usage: high traffic times, most visited pages, most clicked links
- Pay attention to least-visited pages, links that are not clicked on, high bounce pages, and rethink their use / strategy
- Many portals include community building initiatives, monitor FinAid streams and groups and provide information

