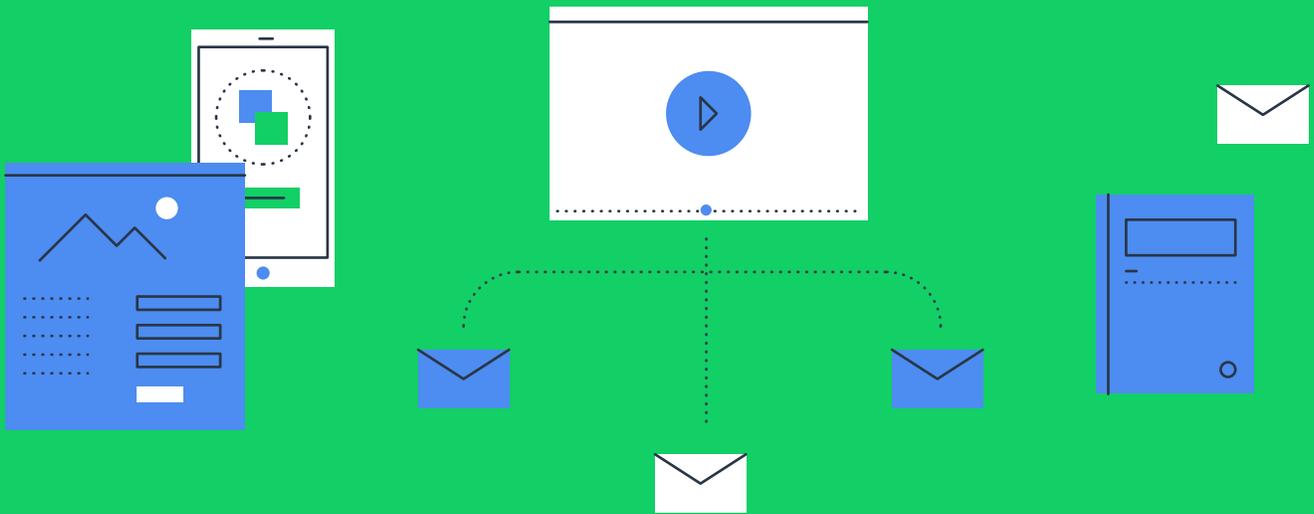


EDUCATION CASE STUDY

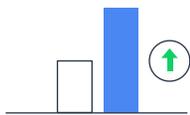
Maryville College: Inbound Marketing Success



Introduction

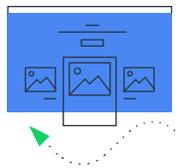
In 2013, Maryville College realized the need to cut through the clutter that prospective college students experience when getting ready to apply for college. While they had historically relied solely on traditional marketing, including direct mail and billboards, the cost associated with these methods was high and the tracking was minimal. By working with Pyxl to build an inbound marketing program, Maryville College created the perfect formula for increasing their enrollment and diversity. In 2014, Maryville College broke their total enrollment record, enrolling more students than any other time in the school's 195-year history.

Results



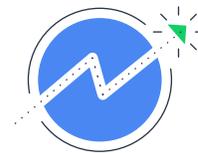
2x

greater than the national average enrollment growth¹



5,300

new visitors per month driven via organic search



225%

ROI on inbound marketing initiatives

¹ Maryville College gained a 3.9% increase in total enrollment, while the national average is 1.9% Source - The College Board, Trends in College Pricing 2014, Figure 27. <https://lp.collegeboard.org/trends>

Story

Maryville College is a nearly 200-year-old private, liberal arts college that was looking to reach potential students in a new way. While the vast majority of colleges rely solely on direct mail pieces and recruitment events to pique the interest of potential students, Maryville College wanted to find a unique way to reach them where they are – online.

Pyxl worked with Maryville College to create My College Path, an online destination focused on answering the wide variety of questions high school students have as they prepare to apply for college. This microsite became the college education tool for prospective college students. Pyxl created a blog on My College Path where students can read about everything relating to the college search and application process – from what to look for in potential schools, to how to apply for financial aid. The blog also helped SEO efforts, allowing Maryville College to reach more students and rank higher in search engine results.

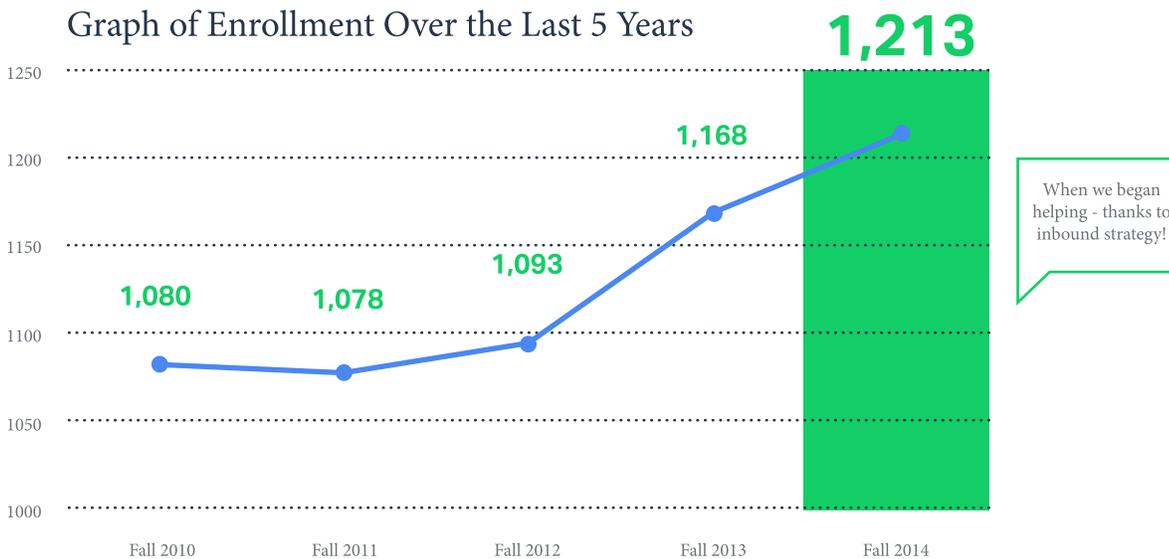
“Making the decision to create a digital, inbound strategy was the best thing we could have done to supplement the current admissions process and marketing tactics,” said Cyndi Sweet, Director of Admissions.

“Not only are we reaching our potential students where they spend the most time, but we are able to build a relationship with them in a way we couldn’t previously, and that’s invaluable.”

Through a strong content marketing strategy, the site generates a growing 5,300 visits per month, the majority of which come from organic search. More importantly, it has also driven more than 1,000 potential student leads, all of which are then placed into a comprehensive lead-nurturing program.

The objective of creating a successful inbound marketing program is to identify your audience, set your goals and create your tactical plan.

This will help you acquire new leads and nurture them so that they establish trust and build a relationship with your brand. Once you've reached that place in the buyer's journey where the relationship is built, you can engage with them on a deeper level, gently nudging them along to your end goal. The buyer's journey is a critical component to your inbound marketing campaign, and includes three stages – awareness, consideration and decision. It is a roadmap that allows you to understand how and when to talk with your audience.



Acquisition

Using HubSpot for marketing intelligence and lead nurturing creates opportunities to connect email, social and organic web traffic into one cohesive program and track leads through the pipeline. Leads are acquired through inbound activities such as premium content, SEO, PPC and social media outreach. It is extremely important to build trust at this stage so we can begin nurturing them.

Landing Pages

In order to capture information from student leads visiting My College Path, Pyxl created landing pages that housed downloadable resources like eBooks and checklists. These landing pages followed best practices including having one call-to-action (CTA), no navigation and a form to capture lead information. Typically, leads were sent to landing pages via social posts and digital ads.



Premium Content

Premium content resources like eBooks and checklists provide in-depth information regarding certain topics that are both interesting and relevant to the target audience. Your potential audience needs to feel like the piece of premium content warrants giving out their information.

When creating premium content, it is important to consider industry topics that are popular, important and current for your audience.

Social Media

Another acquisition tactic is social media. Maryville College's target audience is primarily on Facebook and Twitter, so that is where we focused our efforts.

Each blog from My College Path, along with additional content, is posted to both platforms. Users are directed to the website via each social post – either to a landing page or blog post – allowing leads to be captured.



Landing Pages

Using multiple tools, we determined the most profitable keywords for My College Path, with the highest search volume and lowest competition. We then tailored content on the website, in blog posts and on landing pages around those keywords. This strategy increased My College Path's posts in search rankings, which led to more organic views and potential leads.

Pay-Per-Click

Through Google AdWords and Facebook ads, we built upon our previous SEO actions and promoted our premium content. These ads helped increase the number of potential leads by expanding our reach to a larger and more diverse audience.

Nurturing

Once the lead's information is captured, the student is nurtured through inbound activities like blogging, email marketing and workflows. The students had already taken an action with My College Path, so we knew there was some level of interest. This is the time to build the relationship with them and familiarize them with the brand – in this case, My College Path and Maryville College.

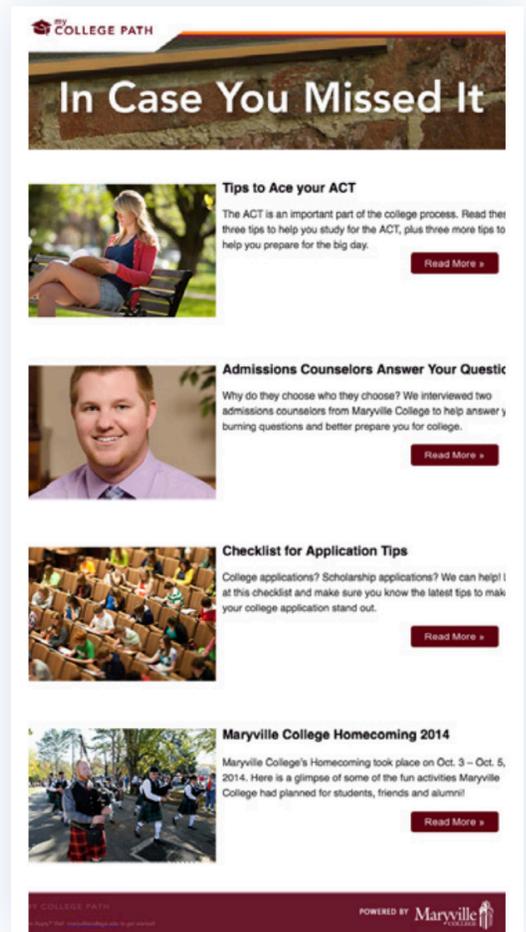
Additionally, we nurtured students who came to us from Maryville College through lists obtained at college fairs and other places. We uploaded those contacts into HubSpot and input them into our workflow campaign. We included them in the lead nurturing process to help educate the students further on Maryville College and the college search and application process.

Blogging

The My College Path blog generates content relevant to high school juniors and seniors, with topics ranging from college search help, to tips for college applications and what to do after you apply. There are also several posts that highlight Maryville College and introduce the students at the college, since our end goal is to get admitted and deposited students at Maryville College.

Email Marketing

Email marketing provides a great touch point with leads. Whether weekly or bi-weekly, emailing your leads about important dates or popular blog posts will not only keep them coming back to the site but will keep you at the top of their mind. These leads received bi-weekly marketing emails with popular blog post recaps and several one-off Maryville College emails a month



Automated Workflows

Once information is captured, students are put into workflow campaigns to nurture the relationship building process. Workflows are more structured and permanent, and they allow you to set them up and watch them play out. They are typically a string of four to eight emails that are created and set up to hit a certain list with a certain timeline in between each email. They rely on triggering relevant and timely actions, based on where your potential students are in the buyer's journey.

Through these effective inbound marketing tactics, Pyxl successfully acquired and nurtured leads – or in this case, students – through to the end goal. Many of those students took an action with Maryville College and helped Maryville achieve its record-breaking enrollment year. For example, nearly 40 student leads generated through inbound activities subsequently began the application process with Maryville College.

Also, five members of Maryville College's 2014 freshman class found out about the college through the My College Path microsite, representing a 225% ROI on this program to date.



Potential student becomes a subscriber



Subscriber receives welcome email
(eBook: Master the Admissions Process)



Subscriber clicks through to download the eBook



Subscriber's lifecycle stage is upgraded to Lead



Lead receives email (Save Money: The Maryville College Application is Free)



Lead starts application



Lead receives email (Don't Forget! Your Application is Waiting for You!)



Lead completes application



Lead is entered into next nurturing workflow

With an ever-growing community of colleges, universities and students seeking higher education, it is more important than ever before to stand out and reach a wider audience. The best way to beat out the competition is to begin an inbound marketing campaign tailored to your target audience.

Pyxl has extensive experience and proven success developing and executing inbound marketing strategies and campaigns for clients across the higher education industry. We utilize the inbound methodology to help our customers attract their ideal potential students, nurture them along the decision process and convert them into actual applicants. This leads to an increase in admissions numbers and is what drives our customers' success.

We are a full-service inbound marketing firm, where our communications team helps develop your strategy and write content, our designers bring your visions to life and our developers create your online presence.

We are driven by results and truly believe in becoming an extension of your team. Interested in learning more?

If you have questions or are ready to begin increasing your admissions numbers, please contact us today at HigherEd@thinkpyxl.com.