

DePaul University: Creating Word of Mouth Through an Online Community for Parents

Challenge:

DePaul University has been a leader in the higher education industry in building its brand, helping yearly enrollment grow. Parents are more involved than ever in their students' decision on where to go to college; once in college, parents helped their students be successful.

The questions for DePaul became: How could DePaul make sure that these important influencers – parents -- understand all the great things about DePaul? Would they then be more likely to encourage their students to attend DePaul? DePaul recognized that by engaging with parents, the university would directly address an important institutional goal related to enrollment growth.

Solution:

DePaul University created DePaul Quad, an online community to foster dialog among parents and the university.

The objectives of the DePaul Quad are:

- * Establish stronger relationships with parents through a "customer service" and information-sharing approach
- * Create sustainable word-of-mouth for DePaul among parents

Main elements of the Quad include a) discussion boards, b) a Resource Section with information about DePaul, c) Live Sessions, d) parent blogs e) featured member profiles f) an "Ask DePaul" button, and e) a yearly calendar.

Regular e-mail communication with Quad members highlights new content, informs them of things happening at DePaul and of opportunities to meet other parents and get more involved on the community.

Results:

Case Study Library



- * 1,693 members of the community, which represents approximately 30% of the parents who have been invited to join
- * An average of 1,701 unique visits per month (over the past three months)
- * Total of 210 participants across the live sessions, an average of 30 per session.
- * 28% to 53% open rate for weekly emails
- * Numerous comments from parents about the Quad's value
- * Feedback has helped DePaul shape its programs and processes with parents, students (prospective and current)

Client: DePaul University

Agency: Zocalo Group

Budget: Undisclosed

Date of Campaign: Community launched in August of 2007

Case Study URL: <http://www.depaulquad.com>