



2011 Education Marketing Benchmarking Survey Shows For-Profit Schools Increasing Marketing Budgets Despite Regulatory and Compliance Concerns

Survey finds schools focused on generating more inquiries in-house and increasing technology investments

LAS VEGAS, March 2, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- According to the 2011 Education Marketing Benchmarking Survey, conducted by LeadsCouncil and CUnet, for-profit colleges and universities remain bullish in their marketing spending for the coming year, with a majority of schools (55%) planning to increase their budgets. This continued commitment to marketing comes in a period of significant change as the market grapples with ongoing concerns related to regulatory compliance and transparency.

According to the survey, 65% of for-profit marketers identified the Department of Education regulations as a significant or major concern, with nearly all schools reporting one or more plans for change in response to the regulations — including demanding transparency from third-party affiliates (93%), re-training admissions staff (79%), and increasing academic standards (64%).

The results were announced today at LeadsCon (www.leadscon.com), following an online survey of marketing professionals in higher education conducted by LeadsCouncil (www.leadsCouncil.com), the largest independent industry organization focused on online lead generation, and CUnet (www.cunet.com), a leading provider of performance marketing solutions for higher education.

"We partnered with CUnet in this research because we have been impressed by their willingness to openly share their ideas and data with the industry as a whole — through both CUnet and Sparkroom — and their continued commitment to thought-leading quantitative research," said Dave Wengel, co-founder of LeadsCouncil. "We created LeadsCouncil to help share best practices, provide members with access to high quality research and ideas and promote the growth of the lead generation space; this survey is a great example of how we are fulfilling on that promise."

Other highlights of the survey include:

- Social media marketing appears to be hitting its stride, with 63% of schools planning to increase their spending, and 28% maintaining their spending in this space.
- For-profit higher education marketers report success with certain phone inquiry solutions; among those for-profit schools that are using hot transfer phone call solutions, 87% are planning to increase (56%) or maintain (31%) their spending, with just 12% reporting a decrease.
- The majority of inquiries (66%) are generated by 3rd party vendors, with the remaining 33% coming from self-generated sources. With more than two-thirds of respondents (69%) reporting that they plan to increase their investment in self-generated inquiries during the next year, this ratio may be set to change in 2011.

"This is the second year we've undertaken a major survey of the industry, and once again, it has illuminated a number of interesting trends that will help schools to benchmark their priorities and concerns against their peers," said Jamie McDonald, Managing Director, Customer Solutions of CUnet. "It's clear that schools are looking for ways to take more control over their marketing and increase transparency, both in their dealings with 3rd party affiliates and by generating their own inquiries. As a vendor, this insight also helps us to better serve our customers with the products and features they need, from software and compliance solutions to new media products."

The survey was conducted February 7 through 25, 2011, and 293 professionals who are directly involved with marketing at a college or university in the United States responded. A full report of the survey findings and accompanying analysis will be available to LeadsCouncil members at www.leadsCouncil.com in mid-March. Non-council members may also register to receive a copy at blog.cunet.com/2011SurveyReport.

About LeadsCouncil

LeadsCouncil is the first independent industry organization dedicated strictly to advancing online lead generation.

LeadsCouncil members include lead buyers, lead sellers, technology solutions providers, and investment professionals. The group focuses on best practices, research, education, and networking to provide a more transparent and effective marketplace for online lead generation.

About CUnet

CUnet delivers industry-leading technology, media, and marketing services to higher education institutions to help recruit and enroll students. Driven by a commitment to technology leadership, compliance, and exceptional customer service, CUnet's higher education experts partner with schools to improve marketing performance and deliver qualified inquiries that meet enrollment and retention goals. CUnet is proud to be a founding sponsor of the Education Marketing Council and is dedicated to promoting ethical marketing practices in postsecondary education. CUnet, headquartered in Paramus, NJ, is part of Nelnet (NYSE: NNI), a leader in education planning and financing for more than 30 years. For more information, visit www.cunet.com.

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