GUIDE OVERVIEW

Intending to reach to the college market – and actually making it happen – are two very different things. Although college includes the Gen Z demographic, born 1996 or later, it also includes some other very attractive groups including parents of 18 to 22 year old soon-to-be freshmen, students, alumni, and college sports fans. These groups collectively pose an incredible opportunity for brand marketers.

This planning guide will help get you on the path to marketing success with the college-aged Gen Z students and others in the college market.

Read on for helpful tips to answer these key planning questions:

1. Which type of college activation is right for your business?
2. In addition to college students, should you consider other groups like parents, alumni, high school seniors, and sports fans?
3. What MUST you know about your college audience before launching any campaign?
4. What’s the best timing and sequencing for your campaign elements?
5. What factors should you consider as you establish your budget?
6. How will you demonstrate success?
CREATE AN ACTIVATION PATH

WHICH TYPE OF COLLEGE ACTIVATION IS RIGHT FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

Just like in any other market, successful college marketing programs are comprised of multiple activation paths. The right path for your brand is dependent upon your product or service and your specific goals. That being said, college is an ecosystem with unique activation paths not available in other life stages.

Answer these questions to help you narrow down potential activation paths that are right for your brand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Sampling &amp; Collateral Distribution</th>
<th>In-Store Pop-Up</th>
<th>Event Marketing</th>
<th>Digital Advertising</th>
<th>Social Media</th>
<th>Contests &amp; Giveaways</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is your product a consumable? (food, beverage, beauty, etc)</td>
<td>TRIAL</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can your product be demoed? (electronics, autos, apparel, etc)</td>
<td>TRIAL, EDUCATION</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your activation process improve with in-person conversations?</td>
<td>EDUCATION, LEAD GEN</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have limited time, special promotions planned?</td>
<td>SALES, EXCITEMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have a new product launch planned?</td>
<td>SALES, EXCITEMENT, EDUCATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you trying to build a database of followers/consumers?</td>
<td>LEAD GEN, BRAND</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you want to drive visitors to your website or special landing page?</td>
<td>TRAFFIC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you want to drive your visitors in-store?</td>
<td>TRAFFIC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you new to or trying to break into the college marketplace?</td>
<td>AWARENESS, BRAND</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TRIAL, EDUCATION, SALES, EXCITEMENT, LEAD GEN, TRAFFIC, AWARENESS, BRAND.
CONSIDER HIGH VALUE AUDIENCE SEGMENTS

IN ADDITION TO COLLEGE STUDENTS, SHOULD YOU CONSIDER TARGETING OTHER GROUPS INCLUDING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS, PARENTS, ALUMNI, AND SPORTS FANS?

When we speak about the Gen Z college market, we generally think 18 to 22 year olds enrolled in colleges and universities. But also associated with that market are some very attractive groups with tremendous buying power. Each group has different purchase motivations and may relate to your brand offering very differently.

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS
Upon receiving their acceptance letter, they join their college social media sites to connect with future classmates. It’s at this stage that they begin planning for their trip to campus, shopping, and talking online with others.

NEW STUDENTS
As they begin their lifechanging journey, they now make product and service purchase decisions for the first time. This is an opportune time for marketers to begin planting seeds that will grow lifelong brand followers.

GRADUATING SENIORS
Soon-to-be and new graduates are looking for ways to ease the transition from college life into the work world. During this time, new grads are in the market for many products for the first time, like furnishing a new apartment or choosing an insurance provider.

NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS
Non-traditional students come from many backgrounds including working adults who want to finish a degree, active and former military, and those who just want a new skill to enhance their career. This group is short on time and looks for products and services to add convenience to their busy lifestyle.

PARENTS
Parents want their students to succeed both academically and socially. As key decision makers with unmatched spending power, they are open to receiving offers for products and services that work to that end.

ALUMNI
Alumni have strong ties to their alma maters and welcome offers and deals that are exclusively for alumni. They frequently return to campus for athletic and social events, like homecoming, where they are most receptive to branded messages exclusive to them.

SPORTS FANS
College sports fans come from near and far to support their favorite teams. Extend your reach to this affluent and engaged group of big spenders.
RESEARCH YOUR BRAND

WHAT MUST YOU KNOW ABOUT THE COLLEGE AUDIENCE BEFORE LAUNCHING ANY CAMPAIGN?

Specific to your campaigns, it’s always best to take a pause and do some research – formal or informal, whatever fits your timeline, abilities, and budget – to be sure you’ve got a handle on key issues that should be driving your program.

First, run a brand checkup to determine the health of your brand among this audience. As a baseline study, you will want to gauge awareness, understanding, and positive or negative attributes that are associated with your brand. After this baseline is established, you may want to conduct a follow-up tracker after specific campaigns or at regular intervals (quarterly, semi-annually, or annually).

- What does your target need? How strong is that need?
- What is driving that need?
- What is the motivation for purchase?
- What message will resonate?
- What offer/promo/contest will spark their interest?
- Do your values and corporate message align with the values of your target audience?

Learning about and engaging with your audience shouldn’t stop when your programs launch. Research should be embedded in everything you do. Continue to build your insights base during program with: split (A/B) testing, social media polls, and other adhoc research to ensure that you’re on the right track.
The most successful college marketing brands have a constant presence in students’ lives and relate to college milestones that occur throughout the year.

As you also consider college audiences (think parents, alumni, and others), particular events may be more relevant than others. For example, parents are most engaged as their kids enter college, at stressful times like finals, and at graduation. Alumni connect most with their schools and former classmates at events like homecoming and big games.

Regardless of your specific college targets, the key is reaching Gen Z college students, parents, and alumni with the right message, at the right place, at the right time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JAN</th>
<th>FEB</th>
<th>MAR</th>
<th>APR</th>
<th>MAY</th>
<th>JUN/JUL</th>
<th>AUG/SEP</th>
<th>OCT</th>
<th>NOV</th>
<th>DEC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Back-to-School</td>
<td>Spring Semester</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>Finals</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>Summer Sessions</td>
<td>Fall Finals</td>
<td>Decision Day</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>Finals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back-to-School Shopping</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>Midterms</td>
<td>Book Returns</td>
<td>Grad Preparations</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>Decision Day</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>Finals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowl Games</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>De-Stress Fest</td>
<td>Book Returns</td>
<td>Grad Preparations</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>Decision Day</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>Finals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back-to-School Shopping</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>De-Stress Fest</td>
<td>Book Returns</td>
<td>Grad Preparations</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>Decision Day</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>Finals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ESTABLISH A BUDGET

WHAT FACTORS SHOULD YOU CONSIDER AS YOU ESTABLISH YOUR BUDGET?

Depending upon your company practices and polices, you may be building your college budget from scratch or you may be working from last year’s numbers. Regardless of your approach, try to keep these factors in mind as you’re crunching numbers.

- What percentage of company (or division) revenue is expected to come from your college marketing programs?
- What percentage growth have you forecasted as the result of your college marketing programs?
- Have you scheduled new product launches and innovations that will appeal to this demographic?
- Have you determined the lifetime value of capturing the Gen Z college students for your brand?
HOW WILL YOU DEMONSTRATE SUCCESS?

Good practice should prevail and dictate that multiple metrics – both quantitative and qualitative – be solidified before program launch.

Additionally, sharing success metrics with management before, during, and after launch will help program sell-in and ongoing flow of funds.

TIPS FOR BUILDING MEANINGFUL & MEASURABLE METRICS

- **Metrics need to tie back closely to your objectives.** So be sure that you have fully thought through and articulated ALL your objectives.
- **Rank your objectives in order of priority.** A solid program will help you achieve multiple goals, but they most likely are not at the same level of importance.
- **Utilize both “hard” and “soft” measurements.** To help you get a 360 view of program performance, it’s best practice to track hard numbers as well as soft or anecdotal/qualitative data.

Build in multiple metrics to your program using this list as a guide:

**QUANTITATIVE METRICS**
- Sales results, margin, market share
- Traffic – website, in-store, phone
- Social media activity and engagement levels
- Event attendance
- Number of leads generated
- Number of contest entries submitted
- Brand tracker score

**QUALITATIVE METRICS**
- Customer comments (positive, negative, suggestions)
- Field/sales personnel comments (positive, negative, suggestions)
Congratulations!
By reading this guide, you’ve taken the first step towards a successful College Marketing program.

Ready to engage with the College Market, your next generation of loyal customers? Visit bncollegemarketing.com to learn more.

ABOUT BARNES & NOBLE COLLEGE BRAND PARTNERSHIPS

As the flagship business of Barnes & Noble Education (NYSE:BNED), Barnes & Noble College is the official bookstore and strategic partner on campus. We work with our brand partners to get them access to 11 million+ college students, parents, and alumni – at 770+ college campuses nationwide.

Our deep insights and extensive experience in the college market allow us to deliver customized, on-target marketing programs that connect students with the brands and products they value most.

We live and breathe College. Let us share our experience and insights with your brand.