

Effective Marketing of Online Programs

Best Practices, Strategies & Tips

*October & November, 2004
Sloan-C Online Workshop*

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Speaker Background

- C.J. DeSantis, President, eLearners.com
 - After online master's degree - saw need to help colleges market their online programs
 - Founded eLearners.com Inc. in 1999
 - Served over 75 college clients in past 5 years
 - Have used and analyzed over 100 advertising sources to find interested online students for clients
- Contact Info
 - cdesantis@elearners.com
 - 866-eLearners (353-2763)

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Presentation Goals

- Provide you with best practices in marketing your online programs
- Advise you on the benefits & potential pitfalls of marketing your programs online
- Share the lessons learned from 5 years of marketing education online

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Best Practices

1. Set appropriate goals and expectations
2. Coordinate marketing & admissions
3. Utilize tracking & metrics
4. Build effective web sites
5. Benefit from eMarketing advantages
6. Test & refine your eMarketing
7. Understand pricing models

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

1. Set Appropriate Goals and Expectations

- What is your main marketing goal?
 - To generate highly qualified, convertible inquiries/leads?
 - To create awareness of your programs and your institution?
 - *To increase your enrollment with the highest return on investment?*

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Expectation Considerations

- Enrollment needs
- Amount & types of programs
- Budget & business model
- Staff size & skills
- Prior marketing experiences

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

What About Branding Expectations?

- What type of marketing do you need?
- Fill your programs >> Direct Response
- Reputation/recognition >> Branding
- “Zero-Cost Branding” is available online
- We’ll presume it’s direct response

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

2. Coordinating Marketing & Admissions Efforts

- Critical questions to ask yourself...
 - Are your marketing and admissions departments set up to cooperate?
 - How many admissions personnel do you have to handle the inquiries/leads you generate?
 - How many leads can each of those admission personnel handle each day or month?
 - Is the admission staff trained to “sell”?

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Lead Lifecycle Coordination

Marketing

1. Research
2. Place Ads
3. Ad Viewed
4. Ad Clicked / Action
5. Web Site Viewed

Admissions

6. Lead Submitted
7. Lead Assigned
8. Lead Contacted
9. Follow-up
10. Conversion / Enrollment

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

The Admissions Opportunity

- Competitors may all share the same lead/inquiry
- Not all leads are of equal quality
- Consider spending less resources generating leads and focus on conversions
- Admissions can be your competitive advantage

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Conversion Tips

These tips require complete cooperation between marketing and admissions:

- Quick initial follow-up
- Personalized contact (phone, email)
- Make multiple contacts
- Get your leads to take action
- Prioritize your leads & follow-up
- Track the process

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Enrollment Mgmt. Systems

- Central tracking of both marketing and admissions progress
- What can a system do for you?
 - Manage print mailings
 - Manage phone follow-up
 - Manage applications
 - Track inquiries, applicants & enrollments
 - Manage the process
- The right system can help improve efficiency

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

3. Utilize Tracking & Metrics

- In the old world of marketing, tracking was very challenging & often overlooked
- Today your metrics can show exactly what works
- Each enrollment must be tagged to an ad campaign and an individual ad
- Need coordination between marketing & admissions and a tracking system

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

The Best Metrics

- Metrics help you analyze the efficiency of your marketing spending
- Use the best metric you can:
 - Good: Cost Per Lead
 - Better: Cost Per Enrollment
 - Best: ROI (Return On Investment)
- ROI determines which ads *really* work

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

The Importance of Tracking

- Without tracking you won't be able to calculate any metrics
- What must be tracked?
 - tag each ad, click, lead, applicant, enrollee
- Try to plan for tracking and metrics at each step in the marketing process
- Third party software can help

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Calculating Marketing ROI

- If you have the data, ROI provides the most accurate metric of which ads work
- $ROI = (\text{revenue} - \text{cost}) / \text{cost}$
- Note: total ROI would account for all costs, but you can use marketing costs to find your “marketing ROI”

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Decision Making With Metrics

- Which is the best deal for \$2,500?:
 - 1 directory listing for a year
 - 1,000,000 banner ad impressions
 - 1,000 clicks on paid search listings
 - 100 leads from an online directory
- What else do you need to know?
- Which metrics would be most helpful?

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

4. Build an Effective Web Site

- Most online ad types require an effective direct response web site to convert visitors
 - Note: No site is needed for performance-based directory listings that deliver leads
- Different ad types require different “landing pages” for max efficiency
- Building an effective site requires testing and more testing

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Conflicting Site Purposes

- Efficiently convert high priced ad traffic
- Resource for students, faculty & alumni
- Generating free traffic via search engines
- Potential Solutions:
 - Consider a separate site for paid ads
 - Build the ideal “landing page” for each ad
 - Use site data to justify changes

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Good Site Characteristics

- Consistent navigation & design
- Call to action (a lead form)
- Limit your text
- Design for search engines (SEO)
- Understand your audience
- Compare changes using A-B testing

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

5. Understand Online vs. Traditional

- Your balance of online and offline ads will depend on many factors
- There is no “magic” blend that works
- Don’t just copy other colleges
- Understand online & offline and use the advantages of each

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

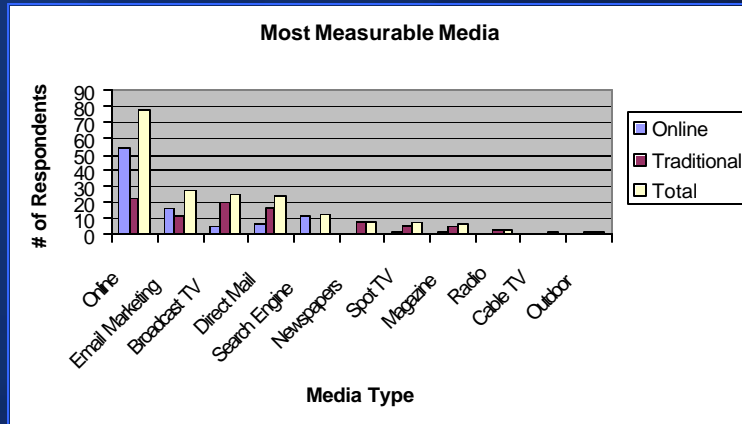
Traditional vs. Online Ads

- You may want/need both
- How many resources to invest in each?
- Which do you think is:
 - Easiest to measure effectiveness
 - Easiest to setup and use
 - Most targeted media
 - Highest ROI

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Online is Most Measurable

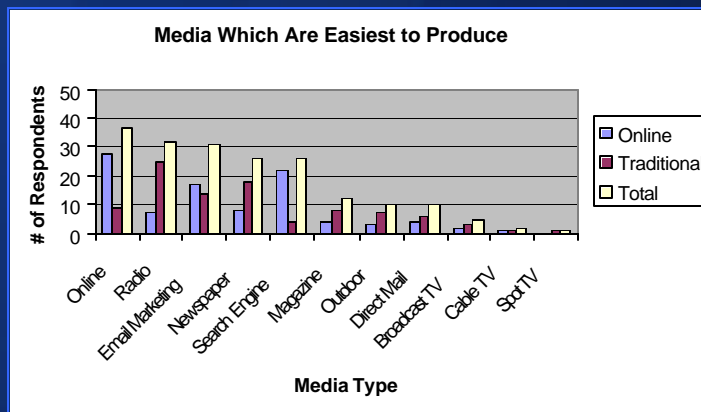


Source: MediaPost Sept. 2003 survey of online and traditional media planners/buyers

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Online is Easiest

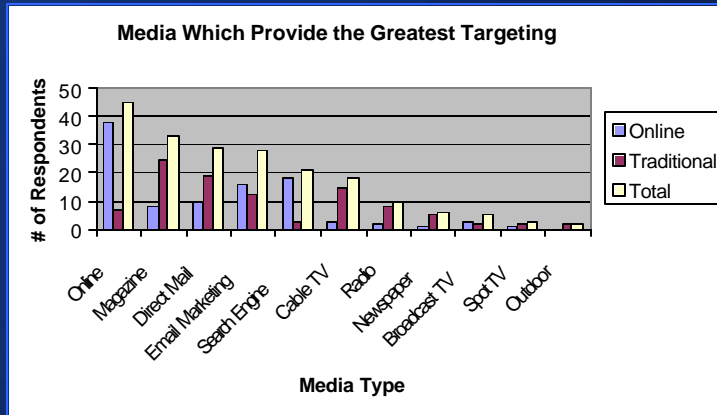


Source: MediaPost Sept. 2003 survey of online and traditional media planners/buyers

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Online is Most Targeted

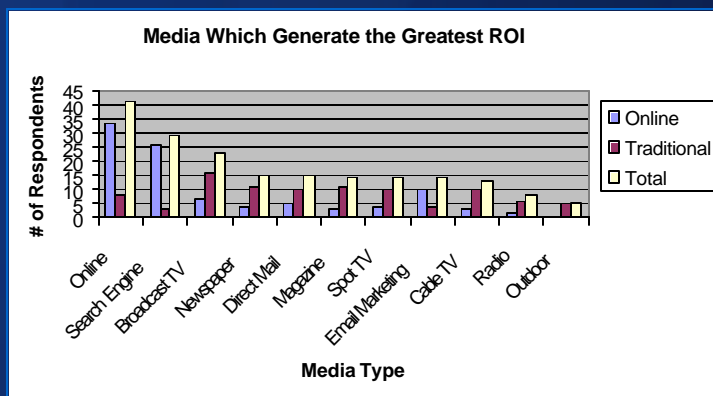


Source: MediaPost Sept. 2003 survey of online and traditional media planners/buyers

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners.com

Online Has Highest ROI



Source: MediaPost Sept. 2003 survey of online and traditional media planners/buyers

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners.com

Online Programs Are Different

- On-campus programs typically have geographical & physical limitations
- Traditional marketing matches well with on-campus programs
- Online programs have NO geographic limitations
- Different marketing needed for online programs
- Online programs need online students who can be found...ONLINE!

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

6. Test & Refine Your eMarketing

- There are many types of online ads
- Online/eMarketing evolves rapidly
- What is the ideal eMarketing mix?
- There is no “magic” formula
- Test and refine each ad you run

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

eMarketing Examples

- Directory listings
- Banners / Graphical
- Email
- Popups / Adware
- Search engine marketing
- Other (affiliate, promotions, etc)

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Which Ad Type is Best?

- All ad types can be effective
- Considerations:
 - Enrollment goals
 - Size & strengths of marketing staff
 - Cost models & complexities of type
 - Marketing budget
 - Pressure from your administrators

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Directory Listings

- Flat Fee / Traditional
 - One annual fee
 - Easy to budget
 - Limited guarantees
- Performance-Based
 - Pay per lead (CPA / CPL)
 - Fewer unknowns

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Banners & Graphical

- Banners typically refer to ads where size = 468x60 pixels
- Many standard size ads:
www.iab.org
- Users started ignoring banners
- Rich Media = ads that use flash or other interactive technology to gain clicks
(ie. Orbitz ads on ESPN.com)

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Email

- Lists
 - Email marketing companies
 - Opt in vs. opt out
 - Concerns about SPAM laws
- Newsletters
 - Ads in daily / weekly newsletters
 - Targeted audiences

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Popups & Adware

- Contextually targeted ads
- User behavior tracked by “legal” software on user machine
- Some companies also sell popups on their site or network of sites
- Disliked by many users, but high click rates

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Search Engine Marketing

- Broad & complex topic!
- Free/Organic/Natural Listings
 - Left side of Google results
- Paid Placement/PPC Ads
 - Right side of Google results
- Paid Inclusion/Feeds
 - Listed among free listings
 - Guaranteed inclusion

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Other Alternatives

- Affiliate Marketing
 - Pay other sites to send targeted visitors to your site
 - Pay by visitor or lead
- Promotions
 - Good at generating quantity of leads
 - Questionable quality
- Many other alternatives...

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

7. Ad Pricing Models

- Flat-fee / Cost Per Ad (traditional)
 - Most unknowns & highest risks
- CPM / Cost Per 1000 Impressions
 - Many unknowns & risks
- CPC / Cost Per Click
 - Shared risks (advertiser & publisher)
- CPA / Cost Per Action (lead or inquiry)
 - Fewest risks (highest for publisher)

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Unknowns = Risks = Work

- More unknowns mean more risks
- More risks mean more complexities
- More complexities mean more work to ensure good performance
- All price models can convert for you, but some typically require more work

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Flat Fee

- Most unknowns for advertiser
 - No guaranteed impressions, visitors or conversions
- Lowest risk for publisher
- The “Publisher” or “Mall” model
- Some directory listings (Petersons,...)
- Sponsorships (MSN/AOL,...)

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners.com

Flat Fee Example

The screenshot shows the Encarta eLearning website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Encyclopaedia, Dictionary, Atlas, Homework, College, Grad, eLearning, Career Training, and Upgrade to Encarta Premium. A search bar is located below the navigation. The main content area is divided into several sections. On the left, there is a sidebar with 'eLearning Home' and 'Degree Programs' (Associate, Bachelor's, Masters, Postgraduate, Certificate Programs). Below this is 'Program Categories' (Business, Education, Health Care, IT & Computer Science). The main content area features an 'eLearning' header with a 'Powered by' logo for 'ClassesUSA'. Below this is a section titled 'eLearning with ClassesUSA' with a photo of a woman and text: 'The Encarta eLearning Center, powered by ClassesUSA, offers the best in online education. Browse our schools and programs and find the one that's right for you.' To the right of this section is a large advertisement for 'ONLINE DEGREES FROM ACCREDITED UNIVERSITIES'. The ad features a woman sitting at a desk with a laptop and lists 'Associate's', 'Bachelor's', 'Master's', 'Post-Grad', and 'Certificates'. A 'Start Today!' button is at the bottom of the ad. A small arrow points from the 'Flat Fee Example' title to the advertisement.

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners.com

CPM

- Cost per 1,000 Impressions
- Many unknowns for advertiser
 - What counts as an impression?
 - No guaranteed visitors, or quality of visitors
- Low risk for publisher
 - (# of monthly visitors) x (Pages viewed) x (ads/page)
- The “Advertising” model
- Banner ads (About.com,...) & email newsletters

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners.com

CPM Example

The screenshot shows a web page from About.com. At the top, there is a red banner for Walden University with the text "Apply knowledge directly to your career." Below this, the main content area features a search bar and a featured article titled "Distance Learning" from Josh Wain. To the right of the article is an advertisement for WIMBLEDON, which includes a "free" logo and the text "What is your favorite screensaver?". The page also has a sidebar with "Featured Channels" and "Most Popular" sections.

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners.com

CPC/PPC

- Cost Per Click / Pay Per Click
- Shared risk for advertiser & publisher
 - Publisher only gets paid when visitor clicks
 - Advertiser risks the quality of clicks (# of conversions)
- The “Search Engine” model
- PPC & paid inclusion (Yahoo,...)
- Also banners, text links, “pop-ups”, email

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners.com

CPC/PPC Examples

Yahoo! search results for "online mba degrees". The page displays several search results with blue links and snippets. Two arrows point from the title "CPC/PPC Examples" to the search results, indicating that these are examples of CPC/PPC advertising. The results include:

- **Accredited Online MBA Degree** - Newark University is proud of its 102 years of cutting edge education. We are experts at delivering an **online** Master-level education in business administration. Join the tradition. www.nyu.edu
- **Earn Your MBA Degree Online at Santa Jo** - Give your **MBA** online at Saint Joseph University. Our innovative program utilizes the latest in internet technology. A fully accredited, quality education at a price you can afford. www.santajo.edu
- 1. **Online Education** - provides information on accredited **online** education programs. Categories: [Online Learning](#) - [Work/Distance](#) www.online-education.info - [J&J](#) - [Contact](#) - [More pages from this site](#)
- 2. **Online Degrees - List of Online and Local College Degree Programs** - **Online Degrees** - About Us - Contact Us - Map - All Schools at All Schools - Accredited - List All Schools by Specialty Program - Degrees - **MBA** - Technology - Telecommunications - Health Care - Education - **Online** - Schools - **MBA** - **College** - **Medical College** - **Online** - **By** - **Engineering** - **Degrees** - **Bachelor** - **Degrees** - **Master's** - **Degrees** - **MBA** - **Programs** www.onlinedegrees.com - [Contact](#) - [More pages from this site](#)
- 3. **MBA Degrees Online** - Associate Degrees - Bachelor Degrees - **MBA** Degrees - Graduate Certificates - An **online** **MBA** degree program offers everything a traditional **MBA** program offers, just the convenience and www.online-degrees.com - [Contact](#) - [More pages from this site](#)

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners.com

CPA/CPL

- CPA = Cost Per Action/Acquisition
- CPL = Cost Per Lead (or PPL)
- Fewest unknowns for advertiser
 - Publisher does not get paid unless a visitor is interested in being contacted by you
- Highest risk for publishers
- Numerous online lead vendors
- Not all leads are equal!

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

CPA/CPL Example

The screenshot shows the DeVry University website with a lead generation form. The form is titled "TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP TODAY!" and asks for contact information. A black arrow points from the "CPA/CPL Example" header to the form. The form includes a "state/province" dropdown, a "Continue" button, and a "required fields" section with "select country", "first name", "last name", "street address box", "city", "state/province", and "zip/postal code" dropdowns.

DeVry University

TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP TODAY!

To receive information about programs that interest you, fill out the form below:

Please select the city you are interested in:

state/province

required fields

select country

first name last name

street address box

city state/province

zip/postal code

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Steps to Enrollment

Marketing

1. Research
2. Place Ads
3. Ad Viewed
4. Ad Clicked / Action
5. Web Site Viewed

Admissions

6. Lead Submitted
7. Lead Assigned
8. Lead Contacted
9. Follow-up
10. Conversion / Enrollment

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Optimizing Your Resources

Ad Pricing	Unknowns, Risks & Complexities
Flat Fee	# impressions, # clicks, # leads, # enrollments
CPM	# clicks, # leads, # enrollments
CPC/PPC	# leads, # enrollments
CPA/CPL	# enrollments

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

Remember Best Practices

1. Set appropriate goals and expectations
2. Coordinate marketing & admissions
3. Track ads & use metrics
4. Build effective direct response web sites
5. Utilize advantages of online ads
6. Test & refine your eMarketing
7. Take advantage of ad pricing models

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com

More Information

- Download our resource document from the Sloan site or simple visit:
<http://elearners.com/sloan/>
 - Glossary
 - Calculating Metrics
 - Pricing Models
 - Printable Slides
- Also feel free to contact me directly

Copyright © 2004 eLearners.com Inc.

eLearners[®].com