

DIGITAL MARKETING IN 2018:

WHAT HIGHER EDUCATION NEEDS TO KNOW, AND TO DO





INTRODUCTION

Anyone who thinks higher education doesn't need marketing and advertising - *Hey, everybody wants a higher education degree these days, so what is there to advertise?* — is kidding themselves.

From colleges to universities, to community colleges and online degrees, from graduate schools to trade schools and faith-based colleges, students today have more options than ever before when it comes to selecting an institute of higher learning. More options mean students naturally spend more time factoring in what's going to work best for their educational goals and ambitions. So those who work in higher education need to understand that it's crucial to develop a brand that separates them from competitors.

It also means having a strong and effective digital presence, from a website to social media accounts to a well-researched email drip campaign. Research indicates that today, the vast majority of students use smart phones to learn. But students use mobile devices for more than just learning in school. They also use their phones to conduct research on colleges and universities.

And research supports the notion that mobile technology can inspire and engage students, letting them lead their learning in effective ways. And if

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schools are lagging behind when it comes to embracing student-owned devices and the technologies offered to them, they do so at their own peril.

If you're in higher education and you struggle to unlock the keys to a successful and results-driven marketing campaign, you're going to want to start by reaching out to a proven digital first agency like Chatter Buzz, which has spent years delivering proven results for businesses. Voted the No. 1 digital advertising agency, we help companies grow faster, and we excel at Higher Education marketing strategies, because we understand the marketing goals of educational institutions.

1 HIGHER EDUCATION MARKETING IN 2018

Universities and colleges today understand that it's not enough to design innovative courses without the ability to find creative ways to attract new students. There may be some unique innovations in the works when it comes to the design and delivery of those courses, but students still have to know those specialized courses are available, that they exist.

So universities and colleges face the challenge of creating marketing campaigns that are as cutting edge as some of the new degree programs they're offering.

Today, higher education institutions face the challenge of beating their competitors not just in the high quality and excellence of their courses, but also in:

- Marketing creative communication to prospective students;
- Highlighting their programs to ensure they're visible on the web and in social media platforms;
- Ensuring the desirability of their courses is well known;
- Creating unique marketing strategies that will successfully raise awareness of their courses and programs;
- Marketing the resources that will be available to new students who select your university.

Not surprisingly, universities and colleges have long since stopped relying on brochures or setting up booths at college fairs. Today, their resources are going to digital marketing, but this is a field that's constantly evolving. Using older, shopworn techniques can be risky, and can limit your reach among the pool of prospective students.

So what are the savviest higher education institutions using today?

In this very competitive higher education landscape, the ideal way to connect with students is through Inbound Marketing strategies. A successful one enables educational institutions to:

- Increase quality website traffic;
- Generate leads among prospective students;
- Establish firm connections with those leads;

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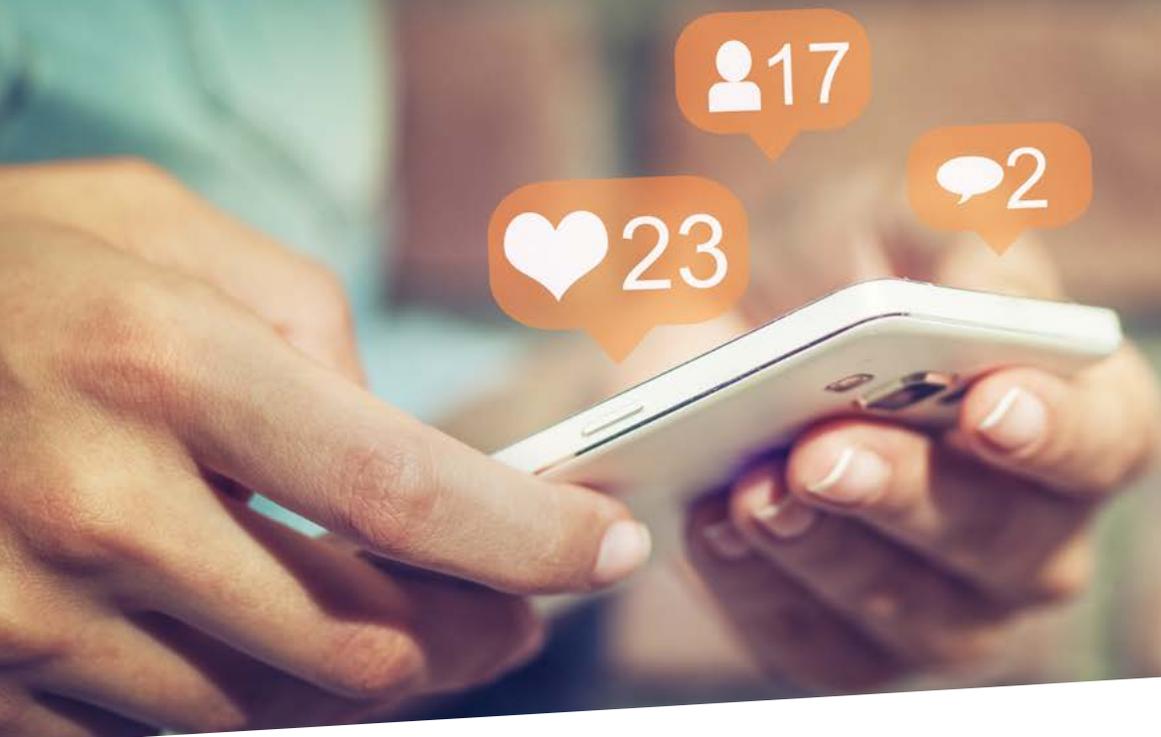
- Share content that conveys your brand - your institution's vision, values and innovations;
- Build student personas to more successfully find new leads;
- and create content that effectively resonates with your audience.

Because, let's face it: There's no turning back the clock. Digital marketing is here to stay, and more and more students - if not the vast majority - are selecting their higher education future based on your online presence.

And today, creatively marketed strategies aimed toward students often start with creative content on social media.



2 INSTAGRAM/ SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING



Digital marketing strategies for higher education need to start with relevant content — and using it effectively on social media platforms.

Knowing that students are constantly engaged with their mobile devices, a key to reaching them is to offer content that's engaging, memorable and speaks directly to them. Content is king, but the focus needs to be on quality and authenticity, on building trust with students and parents, on finding ways to get an emotional reaction, to show you're all about helping them.

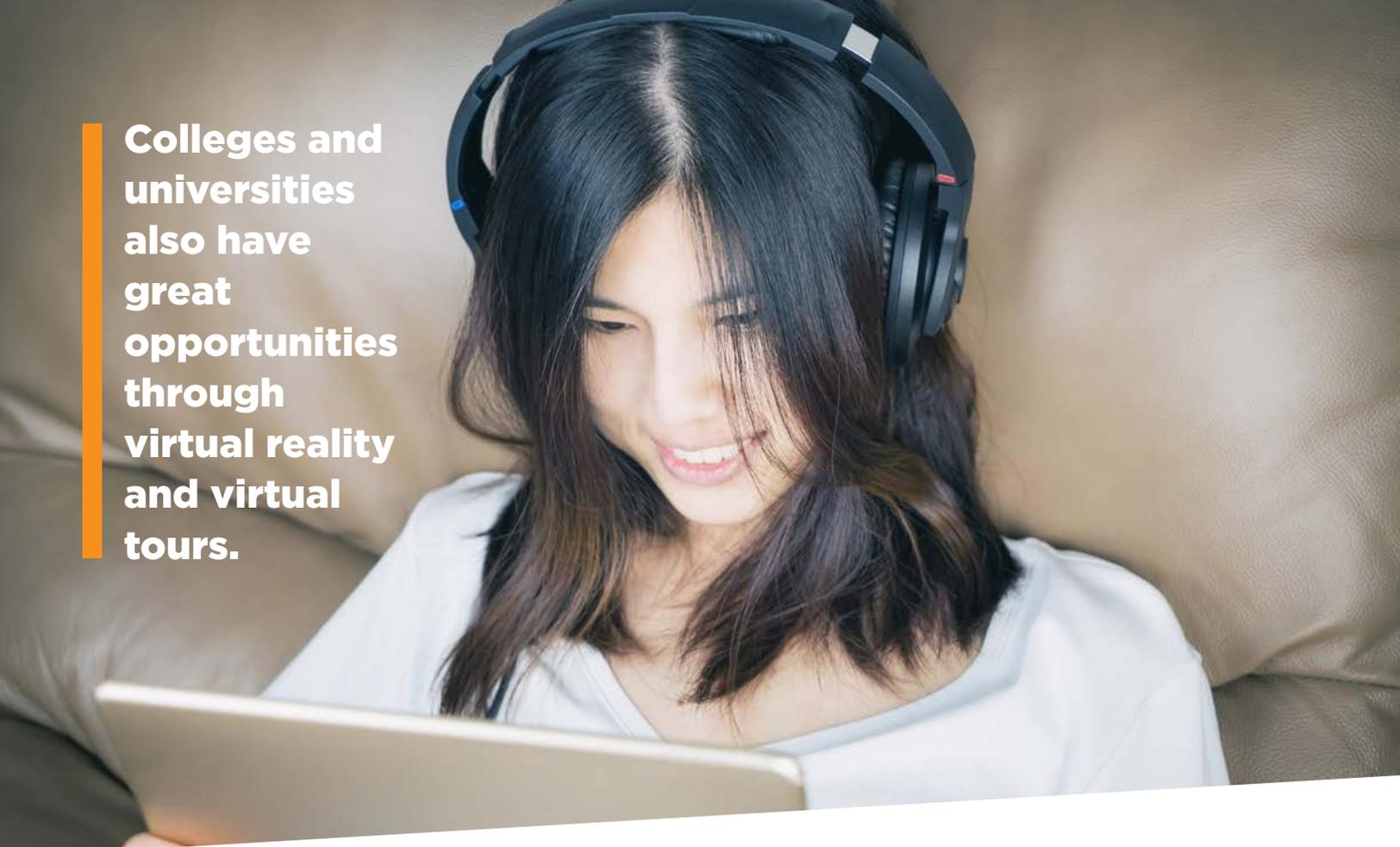
And one of the most popular social media platforms today is Instagram, which has more than 700 million users and, through the sharing of photos, remains particularly popular with young users.

Instagram photos give higher education institutions the ability to connect with prospective students by showcasing their brands, finding international students, and showing campus life through features like Instagram Stories.

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It sounds deceptively simple, although it's not. Colleges and universities need to be creative; but it helps that a platform like Instagram enables them to connect with their current students by encouraging them to share photos of their own campus day-to-day activities.





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3 VIDEOS AND VIRTUAL TOURS

We already know that colleges use a lot of videos, including in their courses and programming. Creating videos to advertise the school, campus and courses is a must, and fortunately there are plenty of channels available that institutions can use to share videos on, including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and YouTube.

Powerful visuals go a long way toward your overall branding strategy and offer some of the most sophisticated tools for storytelling.

Another strong tool is Infographics, which offer visual representations of data. For those in higher education, this can be particularly helpful to the admissions teams. It's a way of delivering information to students about job growth, future salaries and employment trends to online readers. Infographics can also drive traffic to an institution's website.

Colleges and universities also have great opportunities through virtual reality and virtual tours, which are being used more often these days in the admissions process.

Virtual tours allow prospective students and their parents to explore a campus that's far off without having to actually go there to see it. Panoramic virtual reality tours around a campus and inside classrooms, dorm rooms and other buildings can speak volumes to students.



4 HOW DO I IMPLEMENT THESE STRATEGIES?

Great question. Having ideas for a successful digital strategy isn't the same thing as knowing how to successfully execute each one. In that case, you need to be sure you have content that works and delivers results.

That's why your first step is to contact an experienced and proven digital marketing company, particularly one with experience in the challenging field of higher education marketing.

You're looking for solutions to your marketing needs, but you don't want to leave that to chance. And it helps as well to understand what a lot of your competitors want to see in higher education marketing in 2018.

Education needs to be marketed like any other tangible product and service, and a key is listening to the voice of the customer - in this case, the students, parents, and alumni. But there's no question that digital marketing enables colleges and universities to flex their muscles when it comes to showcasing their brand, highlighting the excellence of their faculty and courses, and making a genuine connection with both new and current students.

Digital marketing, with strong content, enables higher education institutions to communicate with prospective students more effectively than ever before. And today, how they perform on mobile and laptop is something that a college and university can't ignore.

But don't leave it all to guesswork. Your success depends on working in collaboration with a team that has a track record of delivering results for those working in the field of education.

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5 CHATTER BUZZ DIGITAL MARKETING THAT WORKS

Chatter Buzz, a full-service agency focusing on digital solutions, has a highly skilled and educated team that's worked on numerous digital strategies for higher education institutions.

Our team has successfully met the needs of our clientele in the higher education market, employing proven methods that promote brand awareness and unlock the keys for helping colleges and universities to:

- recruit top-quality prospective students;
- boost and re-energize their fundraising drives;
- maximize admissions and enrollment through the most sophisticated digital campaigns.

Your school has a core value. At Chatter Buzz, we help you convey the value of your institution in a way that's unique, original, artistic, creative and highly effective. We strive for big ideas and expansive goals, utilizing social media, email marketing, website design, content creation, blogs and PPC campaigns to integrate the assets of each client's institution into each platform.

We're the best higher education marketing agency around, because we know what it takes to build much-needed buzz for your school and attract more applicants than ever before.

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