

Staying on track

CAHEA 2016 - Closing Session

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WOW!

Ending the Conversation

“The idea of ‘staying on track’ in the adult student market translates into an ongoing willingness to continue to evolve, expand, try new things, and learn”.

Ending the Conversation

What did you learn?

**What was the one great idea you will take
back to your campus?**

Keys to Staying on Track

Great success, inspirational stories, are always based on three simple concepts which we often forget because we believe it is the IDEA that is key.

“how do we do what ASU/Starbucks did?”

“We want to become the next Southern New Hampshire”

Keys to Staying on Track

In reality the “idea” is not the story.

The “realized idea” is the story.

Keys to Staying on Track

Creation of a plan

Execution of your plan

Evaluation of the plan

Creation of a Plan

Creation of a Plan

- Please do NOT form five committees
 - Please do NOT ask for everyone's input
 - Please do NOT rewrite a plan that is already in place
 - Please do NOT craft an overcomplicated plan
 - Please do NOT write a plan that takes into account the outliers not the norms
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- Determine what problem you are trying to solve and write a plan to solve it. Think small if you must – keep this uncomplicated.

Plan Development – Gone Wrong

The Problem: Poor retention is eliminating all enrollment growth

The Plan: An 11 person committee has been formed with representation from all areas that contribute to the adult student program – marketing/recruitment/advising/financial aid/faculty (one representing each program)/administration/administrative assistant

The Outcome: Due to the “difficult time of the year” for scheduling at this point nothing beyond the first 60 minute meeting has been scheduled

Plan Development – Done

The Problem: Poor enrollment, limited marketing budget, limited human resources

The Plan: Development of Manageable Outreach Plans Focused on Lead Generation

The Outcome: Given a template, each site has developed a targeted outreach plan identifying 6-8 targets and 3 touch points with each target in the next 6 months. Plans include dates of contacts AND the number of leads each target will generate over six months. Approach to be evaluated January 5th, 2017.

Plan Development – Done

Current State – After much resistance to the idea of “charging ahead” with a rushed timeline each of the 10 sites who participated in this process are moving forward and are seeing the tangible outcomes (leads) of their efforts. Staff are more energized about the outreach because they have a goal associated with what they are doing.

*** Leads are currently overall tracking ahead of last year by 18%

Execution of Your Plan

Execution of Your Plan

- Identify those who need to be “on board” with execution
- Speak candidly about why this is a problem you are trying to solve
- Share the plan with key players (gather input in a limited one time way)
- Communicate with key players a clear timeline regarding the steps within the plan (small chunks)
- Identify a point person (person responsible) for plan execution and communicate that to key players
- Set follow-up meetings (as needed) to ensure the plan is being executed

Execution of Your Plan – Gone Wrong

The Problem: Graduate enrollment is flat

The Plan: Spend marketing dollars to drive more leads

The Outcome: Money is spent, leads are up, applications are up, enrollment is still flat (nobody spoke with the faculty who were responsible for admissions decisions and they weren't interested in growing enrollment)

Execution of Your Plan – Done

The Problem: Graduate enrollment is flat

The Plan: spend marketing dollars to drive more leads in a limited number of key programs with serious growth potential in the marketplace as identified in partnership with the academic leadership of each program. Communicate with recruitment team regularly about lead flow (reachability/level of interest/movement in the funnel).

The Outcome: Leads in 3 of the 4 identified programs are up, applications in those same programs are up, and enrollment in those 3 programs are up. We also learned which program didn't have market demand.

Evaluation of the Plan

Evaluation of the Plan

- Discuss how you will define success during plan development
- PRESS for a clear definition of success
- Set realistic goals
- Communicate the goals to the key players (manage expectations)
- Regardless of how obvious it seems (huge success or huge failure) formally come together to evaluate the plan
- Recognize that not all things will work – but there is learning in everything

Evaluation of the Plan – Gone Wrong

- The Problem: Soft enrollment for the Fall
- The Plan: Call blitz/list purchase/one time marketing spend for radio campaign
- The Outcome: Met enrollment goal for Fall (but we don't know why and really who cares – we made our enrollment goal!!!!!!)

Evaluation of the Plan – Done

- The Problem: Soft enrollment for the Fall
- The Plan: Call blitz/list purchase/one time marketing spend for radio campaign (one month)
- The Outcome: Met enrollment goal for Fall
 - Phone Blitz of old leads resulted in 13 “re-engaged” students 5 enrolled
 - List purchase resulted in 4 inquiries to the University and no students
 - Radio campaign – lead flow was measured for same time year over year and leads were up by 30. Of leads that came in during that one month window 4 additional students enrolled vs. last year.

Staying on Track

Whatever your great idea is that you are taking back to campus please keep in mind the three things

Creation of a plan

Execution of your plan

Evaluation of the plan

Staying on Track - Example

Multi-site small private has pumped the breaks on it's 11 term enrollment decline.

- Developed a 5 email communication flow for every lead
- Established a more aggressive (5 phone call) approach for human follow-up after the initial inquiry
- Reallocated resources to hire a Financial Aid professional to work within each region thus making someone the “identified expert”
- Provided manager’s training for supervisors
- Provided all staff training on the importance of recruitment and how every person (recruiter/advisor/FA/site director/administrative assistant) is engaged in the process
- Invested in digital advertising of a limited number of programs

Staying on Track - Example

Small private has doubled the enrollment in their fully online graduate program in School Counseling.
(15 – 30)

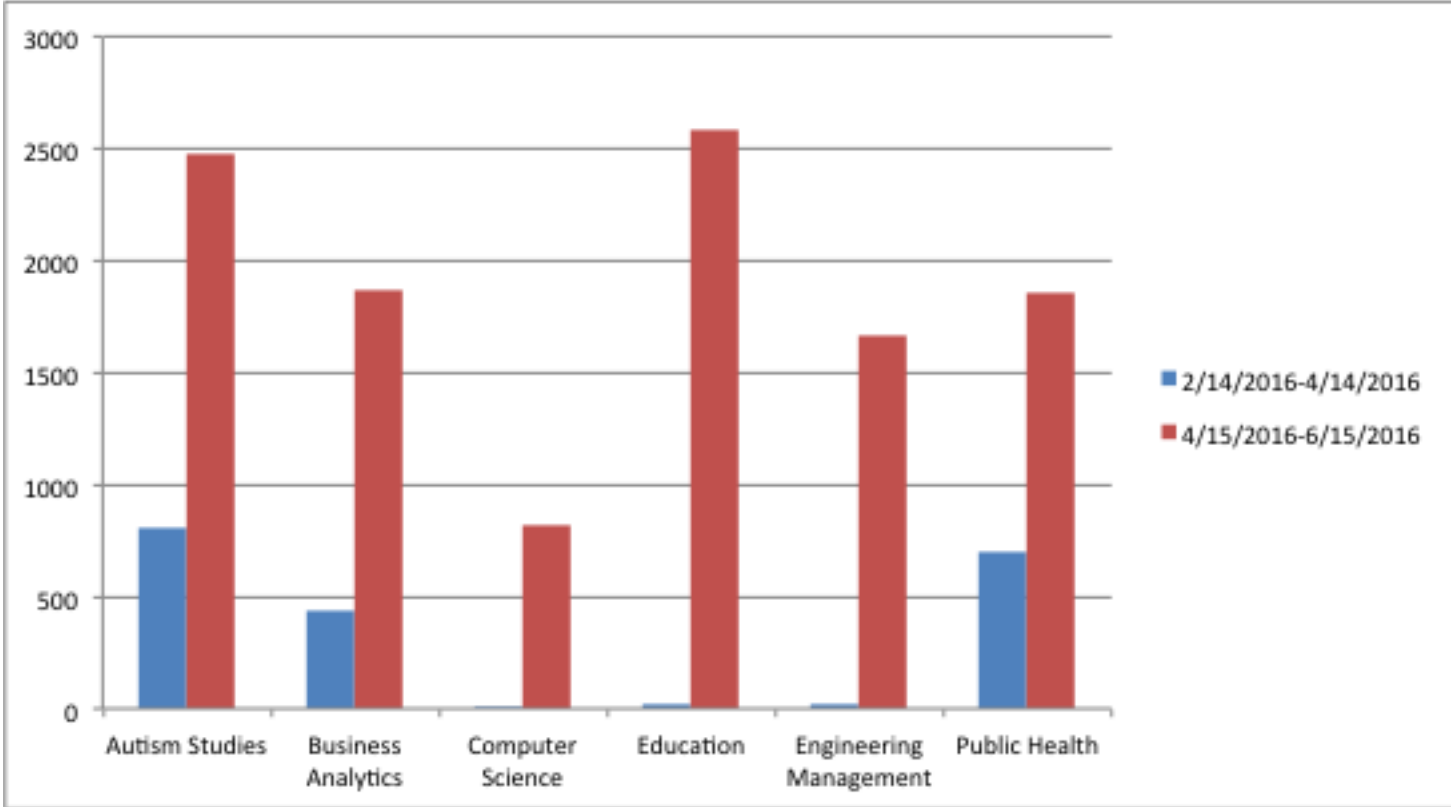
- Evaluation of messaging and points of pride
- Promotion of employment data that supports the decision to become a school counselor
- Aggressively promoted (shamelessly really) the fact that 100% of their graduates had passed the certification exam.
- Invested in digital advertising on a very limited basis in a tight geography that they could afford (total one year spend roughly \$14,000)
- Examined follow-up process with leads

Staying on Track - Example

Mid-sized public

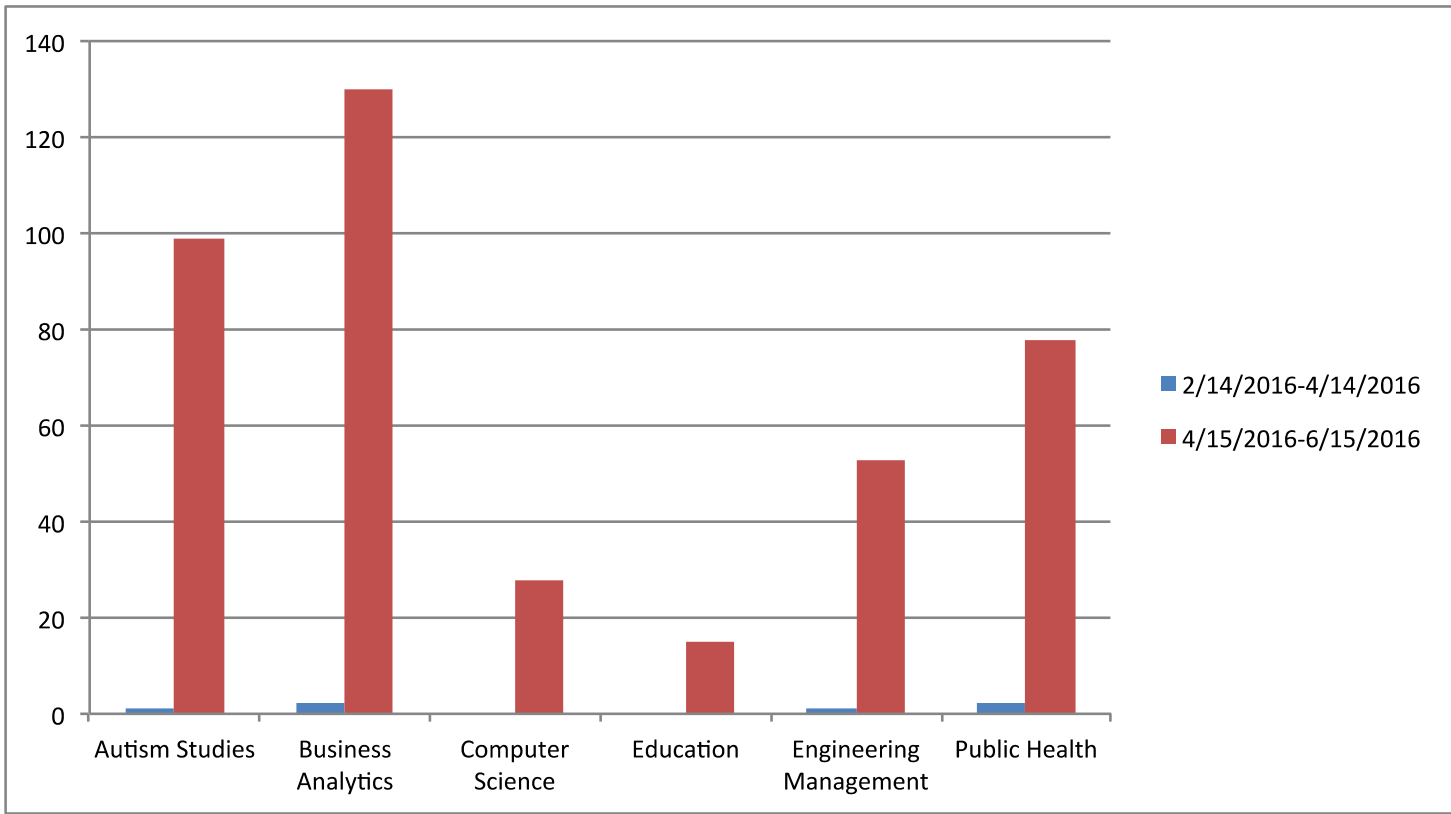
- Intentionally promoted six academic programs to drive lead generation

Staying on Track - Example



Landing Page Visits

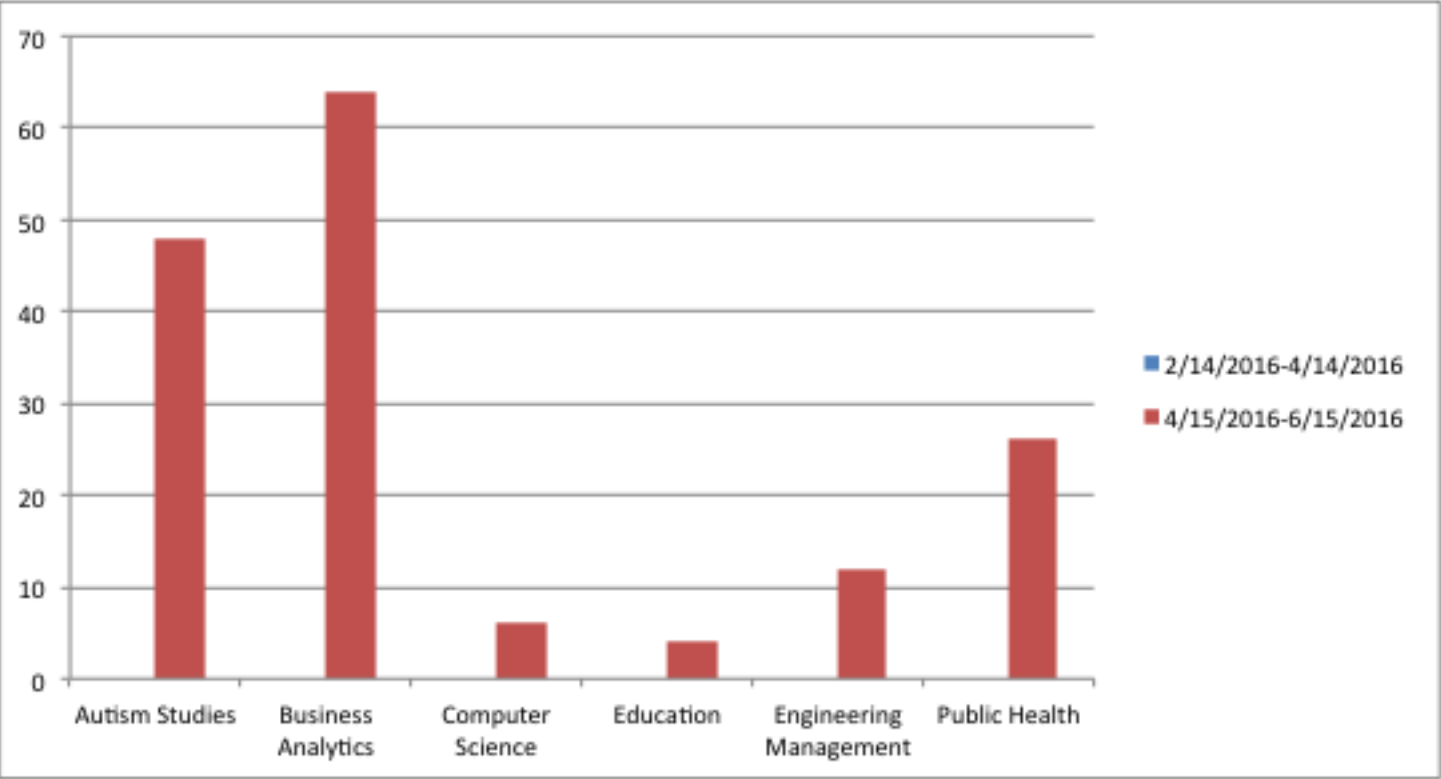
Staying on Track - Example



Form Page Visits



Staying on Track - Example



Thank You Page Visits (leads)



Staying on Track – Example

Mid-sized public

- Intentionally promoted six academic programs to drive lead generation
- This was a failure due to the fact that the increased leads are not being followed up on and faculty are not interested in growing enrollment in the programs

Staying on Track

- Success is often driven by multiple factors
- Figuring out the players who have the ability to derail your plan (and getting them on board) is a key part of the process
- Measurement is how you know if something worked (and what)

Staying on Track – A Few Closing Thoughts

- You are all tremendously busy people – be kind to yourselves
- It is a challenging time to work in Higher Education – tensions are a bit high and stress is in the air
- Re-creating and evolving is sometimes frightening work and when people are frightened they sometimes act in less than stellar ways
- Your people are truly your most important asset and resource on your campus – train them

Staying on Track – A Few Closing Thoughts

Be kind.

(to yourselves and one another)

Staying on Track – A Few Closing Thoughts

Find joy.

(we really do amazing work and change lives every day)

Staying on Track – A Few Closing Thoughts

Offer grace.

Safe travels home and thank you again!

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