About Beckfield College

- Career-oriented education since 1984
- Headquarters: Florence, Kentucky
- www.beckfield.edu

Goals

- Bring more qualified applicants to the Beckfield website
- Lower the cost for each new applicant
- Understand more about each applicant's path
- Gain more clarity about data overall

Approach

- Build a data-driven model for paid search and online ads
- Use Google Analytics and remarketing to drive quality leads
- Create multi-channel funnel reports to see the full consumer journey

Results

- 35% increase in the number of qualified applicants per month
- 40% decrease in the cost per applicant
- More conversions with a path length of 3+ in multi-channel funnels
- Deeper segmentation of ads by gender + device used

InfoTrust and Google tools help Beckfield College earn 35% more applicants at a lower cost

How do you reach more students while spending less in today's very competitive online education environment?

That was the question facing Beckfield College in 2013. The school opened its doors to students in 1984 with a focus on personalized career training outside of the traditional settings. Now, 30 years later, the school is flourishing with both online and on-campus education delivery, but the effective way to connect with prospective students was changing in a very competitive environment.

That's when Beckfield College turned to the digital agency InfoTrust LLC for help with their online marketing, web development and analytics.

Putting the spotlight on users

InfoTrust has built its business on helping organizations not just earn more clicks, but turn those clicks into leads and real customers. An AdWords and Google Analytics Certified Partner, they have a special focus on data and results, and that's where they started with Beckfield College.

"We thought that Google's new Universal Analytics (UA) feature looked like a great match for Beckfield," said James Love, Digital Advertising Manager of InfoTrust. UA allows marketers to track more detailed combinations of users and devices -- such as women, ages 24-34 on Android smartphones -- and also better follow users from referral to conversion. "The biggest benefit we get with Universal Analytics is a better understanding of users instead of sessions," explained Love. "This totally changes analytics for us."

Better tracking

InfoTrust used Google Tag Manager to launch a new set of measurement tags for Beckfield College. The next step was more focused remarketing lists in Google Analytics to fuel new Adwords campaigns, hence the migration of the Beckfield College system to Universal Analytics.

Beckfield College has multiple domains and properties. Prospective students may begin their journey at Beckfield.edu, go directly to specific program pages such as human resources or chiropractic assisting, or begin with other subdomains. Analysis of this detail is where tools like referral exclusion rules helped.

"With Universal Analytics, the referral exclusion feature allows us to look beyond these domains and subdomains all owned by Beckfield College," noted Love. "Before, we had skewed metrics, specifically the true source of visits were lost because we were tracking sessions instead of users. Now, with UA, we know our source data is accurate."

Better campaigns

With Universal Analytics, Beckfield College could change its campaigns to reflect the true pathway of potential students. For instance, prospective students often take one or more months and use a variety of mediums before applying at Beckfield College. UA provides us the detail on their journey in online shopping."
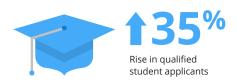
"Changing the campaign timeout period in the interface is another really cool tool for Beckfield," added Love. "We saw some incredible source paths for some of our conversions — they'd start with a paid click, then an organic find, then another paid click, and finally a direct visit before they'd convert. We'd see these paths of 7-8 different channels before applicants filled out a form."

Beckfield College was also able to target potential students more effectively. For example, they learned that females typically convert on nursing-related ads, where males convert on computer technology-related programs. They also found distinctions on devices: males use tablets more and have double the conversion rate when they do so. Using this data, InfoTrust can make custom remarketing lists based on gender, and bid adjustments in Adwords based on device.

Results

Using Google's Universal Analytics, custom remarketing lists, Adwords bid adjustments and user-based tracking across multiple sessions, Beckfield College saw an increase in conversions — especially those with a path length of 3+ channels. And multi-channel funnel reports gave them a deeper view of what was working. This was not only due to the increase in data available about users such as gender, interests and how specific programs correlate to demographic profile, but also the many tweaks that were made to campaigns along the way. Ad copy and delivery method were tailored to reflect specific visitor types, interests and devices most likely to convert. Realizing that certain demographic profiles do not need generic remarketing ads shown, but specific relevant ads about programs they'd be interested in really drove users to come back to the site and apply.

As a result, Beckfield College saw an impressive 35% rise in the number of qualified student applicants per month. That's not all: they also lowered their acquisition costs per applicant by 40% by getting rid of non-performing or irrelevant ads.

↑35%
Rise in qualified student applicants

↓40%
Lowered acquisition costs per applicant

Reaching a third more applicants and paying less to do it: these are the kind of results that make clients like Suzanne Deatherage, Vice President of Marketing at Beckfield College, smile. "InfoTrust helps remove the guesswork from Beckfield College's marketing efforts," she said. "From website updates to remarketing campaigns and everything in between, we know that the digital decisions we make are backed by data."