



CASE STUDY: GMU COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

IN 2024, THE GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY'S COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND SOFTWARE'S MASTERS CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY RUNNING THROUGH THE FIRST 6 MONTHS OF THE YEAR, GENERATING AN AVERAGE OF 380 CONVERSIONS PER MONTH.

The Higher Ed Enrollment Marathon: Why You Need an Evergreen Strategy

In the competitive landscape of higher education, traditional enrollment marketing often resembles a sprint – a flurry of activity during application periods followed by a lull. But the reality of a student's decision journey is far from a race. Prospective students research, explore options, and weigh decisions over extended periods, almost always months or even years in length. This is well outside of designated enrollment windows, so this case study explores a data-driven approach that ditches the sprint mentality: the evergreen, full-funnel search campaign.

We'll explore the benefits of a continuous marketing strategy built around evergreen marketing strategies with a concentration on paid search. By strategically targeting relevant keywords across all stages of the student journey – from initial program awareness to application submission – institutions can nurture leads, address concerns, and ultimately convert interest into enrollment. This case study will demonstrate

how an evergreen campaign can significantly outperform traditional, time-bound marketing efforts, keeping your institution top-of-mind throughout the student decision marathon.

Other Departments Benefit

[George Mason University's College of Engineering and Software's Masters](#) programs were the key subject of this campaign. By targeting a comprehensive range of search terms related to specific engineering and software specializations, the campaign captures potential students at varied stages of their decisions. But interestingly, the success of this targeted approach isn't limited to just these Masters programs. The increased brand awareness and website traffic generated by the campaign is creating a "halo effect," driving organic interest in related undergraduate and certificate programs offered by the college, showcasing the college's comprehensive educational offerings.

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Search Conversions by Month

In 2023, the campaign ran only April through June, and garnered an average of 217 conversions each month. In 2024, the campaign has been consistently running through the first 6 months of the year, generating an average of 380 per month.

+60%

Conversion, YOY

Brand Awareness

Repeated exposure builds familiarity and trust. A long-running campaign keeps your institution top-of-mind for when students are finally ready to apply.

Content Authority

Evergreen content creation allows you to establish yourself as a thought leader in your field, attracting qualified leads who are actively seeking information.

Data-Driven Optimization

Continuously monitoring and analyzing data lets you refine your campaign over time, maximizing return on investment (ROI).

Why Your Higher Ed Digital Campaign Needs Longevity:

Student Decision Journey

Prospective students research and consider programs over extended periods, not just during application windows. An evergreen campaign keeps you visible throughout their decision marathon.

SEO Power

Building long-term search engine optimization (SEO) authority takes time. A sustained campaign allows you to climb search rankings and capture organic traffic consistently.

In conclusion, the traditional, time-bound approach to higher education marketing simply doesn't reflect the reality of the student decision journey. By adopting an evergreen, full-funnel search strategy with a long-term focus, institutions can establish a lasting presence that captures student interest throughout their exploration process. This not only fosters targeted lead generation for specific programs like the Master's offerings in the College of Engineering and Software, but the "halo effect" creates a ripple of organic interest across the entire college's program portfolio. By making the switch to a long-term digital strategy, higher education institutions can ensure they're there for prospective students every step of the way, turning a one-time sprint into a winning enrollment marathon.

**Need Support Moving from Spring to Marathon?
Reach out.**