



Kellogg School of Management uses multi-product organic and paid approach to boost leads for Executive Education Program

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Gretchen Baker
Executive Development Advisor
Kellogg School of Management, Executive Education

Connecting with the professional mindset

The Kellogg School of Management's Executive Education Program at Northwestern University offers non-degree programs that range from broad topics, such as leadership, to highly specific programs, like supply chain management, enrolling more than 6,000 executives each year. Kellogg needed a tailored approach to reach and appeal to senior executives, board members, operations managers and those striving to grow and improve specific skills.

Kellogg recognized that LinkedIn, more than any other platform, was an overwhelmingly rich network of the mid- to senior-level business people for whom the program is designed. Regular engagement with organic content immediately demonstrated that the LinkedIn community was well-suited to Kellogg's offerings. After seeing results with LinkedIn's self-service platform, the school increased investment and worked with a dedicated

Challenge

- Raise overall awareness and understanding of Kellogg's Executive Education Program
- Target prospective participants
- Communicate value of program to drive qualified leads

Solution

- LinkedIn Sponsored InMail and Sponsored Updates
- Organic and paid content strategy targeting professionals by title, company, and seniority

Results

- Engagement and clickthrough rates nearly 2X higher than LinkedIn benchmarks
- Sponsored Updates allows Kellogg to test messaging and tie efforts more closely to ROI
- Received nearly 40% additional media value from earned clicks, social actions, and follows

account management team to implement A/B testing. This data informed Kellogg's messaging and highly specific targeting to best leverage Sponsored Updates and Sponsored InMail, building overall program awareness and driving leads among the right audience.

"In marketing it can be difficult to prove that your work is having a direct effect on business goals," says Michael Peck, Content Strategist for Kellogg Executive Education. "Sponsored Updates allow us to tie our efforts more closely to ROI than any organic content marketing."

A well-tested marketing strategy

Kellogg considers every Sponsored InMail and Sponsored Update a test for evaluating messaging and targeting. To ensure that budget is being spent effectively, each Sponsored InMail and Sponsored Update is evaluated against response and lead generation and then optimized for future message and targeting success.

For instance, when testing what messaging works best with each product, Kellogg's team discovered that offers and announcements are best served by Sponsored Updates. "Sponsored Updates allow us to be proactive and reactive," says Peck. "If we need to increase marketing for a program, I can put it in front of an audience as fast as I can type and click."

Meanwhile, news about open enrollment programs and long-lead communications were best delivered through Sponsored InMail. Sponsored InMail was used to introduce upcoming programs, deliver messages from instructors, or discuss the importance of Executive Education as a whole - providing a lead funnel to build future engagement with prospects.

This communication strategy was rounded out with thought leadership content, delivered through organic updates. Sponsored Updates, Sponsored InMail and organic content each provide content specifically honed for a targeted demographic, directly leading to increased program awareness and lead generation.

"We consider LinkedIn a key partner in marketing any program," says Executive Development Advisor Gretchen Baker. "With Sponsored InMail we're able to explain the value of our Executive Education Program to the audience that the programs are specifically designed for. We're using each message to discover if we're getting in front of the right people, if they are opening the message and if they are requesting a brochure. And we're increasingly satisfied with those results."

Understand who you're reaching

Kellogg recognizes that the LinkedIn platform houses an unquestionably premier business audience, perfectly suited for overall education about the value of executive education for business. Beyond positioning the Kellogg School of Management as a thought leader through organic content, Sponsored InMail and Sponsored Updates have enabled specific targeting and testing to develop a dynamic and informed approach to proactive and reactive communication. With this highly targeted approach, Baker appreciates the ability to fully understand and report the value of these marketing efforts.

"Our executive education programs are themselves targeted," she says. "They are designed for business people who are specifically looking for certain knowledge or skills. LinkedIn gives us an unparalleled ability to target the people that this program is designed to reach, maximizing our budgets. We look at brochure requests, we even break leads out into the likelihood that they are to register. Sponsored InMail in particular gives us the right access to the right people to feed that pipeline."

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