



William & Mary finds qualified MBA leads in specialized niches

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Lendora Johnson
Marketing Account Manager
Raymond A. Mason School of Business, College of William & Mary

Reaching tough-to-find audience segments

The College of William & Mary’s Raymond A. Mason School of Business used LinkedIn to find relevant prospects for two specialized business graduate degree programs: its Executive MBA program and its part-time Flex MBA. These programs appeal to two niche prospect segments: 1) working professionals whose employers are willing to pay for them to obtain an MBA; and 2) individuals with work or family commitments who need the flexibility of a part-time MBA program. “These programs fill specific niches, and LinkedIn gave us the kind of hypertargeting capabilities we needed to get in front of well-qualified prospects,” says Lendora Johnson, marketing account manager at the Raymond A. Mason School of Business. “Sponsored Content allows us to get really targeted in terms of location, career types, and specific companies, so it’s a good way to make sure we reach the right people with our message.”

Challenge

- Reach highly targeted prospects for niche business programs
- Build awareness of business programs in regional area
- Increase diversity of applicant pool

Solution

- Sponsored Content
- Precise targeting by location, career type, and company
- Ongoing optimization to improve targeting

Results

- Gathered hundreds of highly qualified leads
- Average CTR is more than 50% above LinkedIn benchmarks (top-performing campaigns exceed benchmarks by more than 4.5X)
- Average engagement rate is more than 51% above LinkedIn benchmarks
- Company Page followers increased by more than 100%

Compared to other lead generation platforms, LinkedIn Sponsored Content generates leads that are eager to engage with school representatives. "You can connect these leads with an actual person, and they have a real profile," says Johnson. "Leads from LinkedIn are ready to talk about enrollment. You rarely find anyone who won't return a call or email."

Increasing applicant diversity

LinkedIn's targeting capabilities have helped the school increase the quality and diversity of its applicant pool. For instance, a new Sponsored Content campaign for the Flex MBA program is focused on increasing the number of female applicants, to help address the "glass ceiling" issue for women in business. The campaign features testimonials from female program participants and graduates, with messaging focused on enhancing work/life balance with flexible education models. Within days of launch, the campaign had already resulted in five highly qualified leads.

The school has also focused on targeting by geography in a "Beyond the Beltway" campaign. "There are an abundance of MBA programs in the Washington, D.C. area, so by extending our targeting outside of the area of Hampton Roads and Richmond, Virginia, we've been very successful and have been able to maintain a reasonable cost per lead," says Johnson.

Testing and tweaking made easy


Johnson also appreciates LinkedIn's unique ability to stop and start campaigns at any time, and to easily change targeting segments or ad creative on the fly. That allows William & Mary to make the most of its online marketing budget, paying only for ads that get clicks, and optimizing campaigns to decrease the cost per click.

"It's a really good way to test different things without committing to a fiscal year's worth of creative or an extensive contract," says Johnson. "This form of advertising allows you to experiment and figure out what works. LinkedIn makes everything that a marketer does so much easier."

Targeted Sponsored Content promotes the College's Executive MBA and Part-time Flex MBA programs


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