Laureate International Universities
Experiences designed to attract students

Adobe Target helps Laureate International Universities attract students with personalized messaging, enhanced digital experiences

Laureate International Universities provides more than 780,000 students with access to more than 70 accredited campus-based and online universities in 29 countries. The Laureate network offers hundreds of undergraduate and graduate degree programs in various fields, including architecture, art, business, culinary arts, design, education, engineering, health sciences, hospitality management, information technology, law, and medicine.

Founded in 1998, Laureate today encompasses the world’s largest network of accredited post-secondary institutions. The network of universities has refined its digital marketing infrastructure to effectively promote its network of top programs and institutions. Most recently, Laureate has turned to Adobe Marketing Cloud, including Adobe Target and Adobe Analytics solutions, to increase requests for information and improve the quality of leads from digital outreach.

The right first impression

One of the members of the Laureate network is the NewSchool of Architecture and Design (NSAD) in San Diego, California. NSAD offers degrees in architecture, interior design, construction management, digital media arts, and other disciplines. Laureate is addressing complex marketing challenges—including raising awareness of the school outside of the San Diego area and engaging prospective new students.

Using Adobe Target, Laureate wanted to determine whether creating customized, optimized landing pages for specific keyword searches would compel more people to fill out online forms. The existing digital assets included the main NSAD website, which contains general information, and landing pages for direct marketing with information about construction management degrees, graduate programs, and undergraduate programs.

However, there had not previously been landing pages that specifically highlighted architecture degree programs. As a result, when prospective students searched for “graduate architecture programs,” they would arrive on the general NSAD landing page and view content that spoke to all of the degree programs on that page.

With Adobe Target and assistance from Adobe Consulting, Laureate tested its existing site against new keyword-optimized pages that contained specific content about the school’s architecture programs. The goal was to determine whether delivering more targeted webpages based on keyword search would improve conversion.

“Conversion went up almost 200% with the new experience,” says Gifta Monero, digital media buying manager for Laureate. “We saw an increase from 9.94% on the control page to 18.66% on the keyword-optimized page. With Adobe Marketing Cloud, we could quickly measure the results and had the confidence and functionality necessary to rapidly implement changes.”
For the NSAD digital media arts program, Laureate created a new landing page and tested it to determine whether different background colors and images around the form would affect interaction. Changing the form background from gray to green yielded an 83% lift and a 24% conversion increase. "Adobe Marketing Cloud helps us continually refine our landing pages to generate additional leads for our programs through more engaging, targeted experiences," says Monero. "Equally important, it provides clear insights that we can act on immediately."

Implementing positive changes

Testing with Adobe Target has also shown that adding certain elements to web pages can cause unintended results. That was the case for the website supporting Santa Fe University of Art and Design—a Laureate network school that offers a variety of undergraduate degrees in creative art and design programs, including fine arts, graphic design, theatre, photography, creative writing, contemporary music, digital arts, and film.

Marketers initially thought art and design students would be more likely to respond to visual content, such as videos, and would be more inclined to complete the request for information (RFI) if they had access to more videos. "Adding video to the landing page actually showed a negative impact on conversion," says Monero. "Although people might engage with the video, Adobe Target showed us that it ultimately seemed to distract visitors from filling out the RFI."

Additional tests focused on how reducing the number of fields on the request form and limiting the form to one page would affect response rates. The one page test won and it was recommended that the school adopt the streamlined version.

Similar to Santa Fe University of Art and Design, testing revealed that videos distracted visitors on the landing page for NSAD’s new interior design program. Laureate tested multiple landing page variations, including with and without videos, with images above and below the form, and with a call-to-action banner in various colors.

A version with the form above the fold, images grouped below the form, no video, and a pink callout yielded a 358% lift in lead volume and a 465% increase in conversion—illustrating the importance of content and image placement, as well as the benefits of reducing distractions on the page. "As a design school, we had a lot of ideas around what designs people want to see," says Monero. "Adobe Marketing Cloud allows us to inject data-driven insights into the design process and create experiences that really engage our audience, as well as deliver the best outcomes."
Increasing marketing precision
The next phase of Laureate’s website testing will focus on using geographic capabilities in Adobe Target. Geotargeting will allow Laureate to run different campaigns in different locations and focus marketing messages according to specific segments and audiences. Tests will include sending traffic from a geotargeted banner to a geotargeted landing page that accounts for language, currency, and other location-based features, then testing it against a universal experience.

"We’re expanding the role of targeting to better personalize our content," says Monero. "Testing is a way to find out whether we’re doing the right things for our audiences. It’s something we want to continue to do and definitely involves harnessing even more sophisticated capabilities in Adobe Marketing Cloud."

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Gifta Monero, digital media buying manager, Laureate International Universities

For more information