

Five Reasons to Re-Think Print!

CONTENT DERIVED FROM A LIAISON ENROLLMENT MARKETING WEBINAR

THE ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT LANDSCAPE TODAY

is one of unprecedented challenge—and this is in an industry already facing significant challenges: increased competition for fewer students, reduced state funding, the Gen Z emergence, to name a few. Now a global pandemic has upended every level of operations and introduced the pressing need for innovative new strategies.

The New York Times recently reported that freshman enrollment has dropped significantly at U.S. universities and community colleges (Oct. 21, 2020). Looking forward, more than half of higher education enrollment officers said they expect the pandemic to significantly affect how they build their applicant pools going forward.*

There is no doubt that 2020 is a year of change and challenge, but it's also a time to rethink processes, establish new efficiencies and develop new ways of marketing. It's a time to embrace technologies that— while not new—have not been applied widely.

Weaving print into your communication plan today will increase your ROI if it is done right. **Elements for success mean your pieces are:**

Relevant to students & families **Quick to Deploy**
Targeted **Affordable** **Simple to Update** **Proven** to increase engagement
Intelligent **Customizable** **Essential** to any campaign

WEBINAR SPEAKERS



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Kristin Bowers
Associate Dean, Admissions, Cazenovia College

*National Association for College Admission Counseling and Salesforce.com study. salesforce.com/form/sfdo/edu/strategic-data-analytics-admission-offices

REASON N° 1 IT'S DELIVERED

Simply put, print is highly visible. We go to the mailbox every day. People like it: about 50% of customers prefer direct mail to all other forms of marketing.*

The average person receives 126 emails a day, and those are just the emails that make it through the filters. After that, the average open rate of most email campaigns is less than 18%.[†] There's a place for email, certainly, but print cuts through the noise in a way emails never will.

REASON N° 2 IT'S TARGETED

We have established that print gets delivered. But after you've made it to the mailbox, you need your audience to engage with your mailing piece, to read it and share it.

How do you do that? By leading with messages and images that are relevant to your students personal interests and concerns. If you're talking to a biology student, you need your best science lab image, alumnae stories, stats and profiles. Same for interior design, nursing, architecture or creative writing. Imagine how much more powerful your print piece is when it's relevant to its recipient.

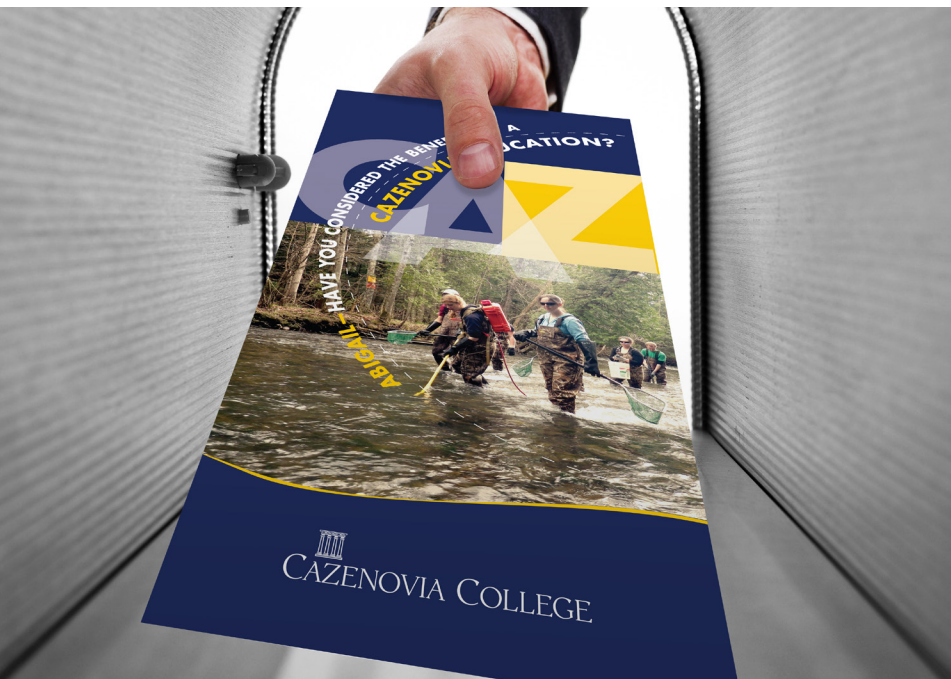
The way to achieve that relevancy for each prospective student is through variable print. "Variable print" literally "varies" the words and images to target the recipient. It's the cost-effective, intelligent way to promote engagement.

Variable print is personalization taken to the next level. While some basic solutions allow name and address personalization, true variable print allows you to "vary" majors, activities, home towns, student profiles and more. Every student receives a completely customized print piece that speaks directly to their interests.

On-demand print means you print only what you need. It means the end of boxes and boxes of marketing materials that are outdated the moment they hit the shelves. On-demand pieces are mailed almost immediately so you can keep your institution top of mind.

Intelligent print is print that uses data to drive the message. That data can include major or program interest, athletics, activities, location, etc. That data is fed into a print engine to automatically create a print mailer that is one of a kind, just like your student. Intelligent print is immediate, relevant, automatic and connected.

Relevancy drives engagement. Relevancy means sending students (and their parents) a tailored, fully customizable message (in this case, via print) rather than an overwhelming generic marketing piece.



[†]www.campaignmonitor.com

*<https://act-on.com/blog/direct-mail-is-not-dead-top-4-ways-to-integrate-digital-and-direct-mail/>

Kristen, what are some of the creative ways that Cazenovia and your team are using on-demand printing?

My favorite piece is the financial aid offer. Financial aid is important to every single family, no matter their circumstances.

We introduced a tri-fold that is taking the place of the traditional financial aid award letter. It's colorful and offers a tremendous amount of information in terms of what each award means. It's also an invitation to take action, to set up a meeting with your admission or financial aid counselor. When that hits the mail, it's not in a white envelope with a white letter. It's in a clear envelope so you see the piece and its relevancy immediately.

In addition, we're seeing sophomores taking a stronger interest in their college search so we send an initial postcard. But we don't send a standard size. This is a starting point for our engagement.

How has on-demand printing affected your budget?

Printing on-demand has definitely allowed us to be budget conscious and make some great strides in saving money. And also it's better for the environment; I don't miss the pallets at all!

In working with our business office and auditors, we discovered a 35% reduction in print costs, which occurred during our first year with Liaison. It goes back to being able to print on demand and not having thousands of view books printed because you think you're going to use them and ultimately, you don't.

What other advantages have you seen?

We're focused on flexibility. Being able to make changes has been a huge advantage. It's been so efficient. For example, we recently changed our athletic conference. We added major options. Now we can make changes at any point in the cycle without any delay in processing. We're continuing to provide up-to-date information to students, but it's also a very, very cost-conscious process.



Kristin Bowers
Associate Dean, Admissions, Cazenovia College

Cazenovia College is an independent, co-educational school located in the Central New York region of New York State, offering graduate and bachelor's degree programs in the liberal arts and professional studies. Cazenovia has been working with Liaison since 2018.

REASON № 3 IT PLAYS WELL WITH OTHER CHANNELS

The importance of direct mail increases significantly when you partner it with other channels. We call this the "validation phenomenon." When someone gets a well-designed, targeted print piece, it validates their opinion of the product or service—and that validation drives up interaction with other channels.

We've tracked our clients, and the results are telling. Whenever a variable print piece is released, we'll suddenly see nearly a 40% higher open rate when compared to emails that aren't supported by mailings. Students are responding to the emails, but the print piece is validating the offer and driving those results.

Of course the pieces need to work together with a consistent message and call to action; variable print supports the brand.

REASON № 4 IT'S ECONOMICAL

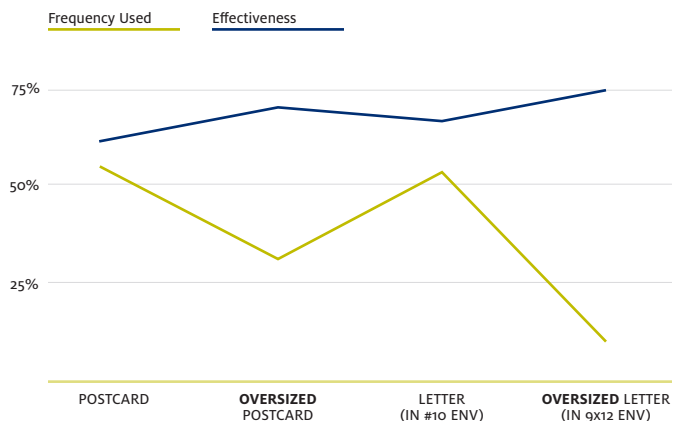
Variable printing seems like it would be more expensive, but the affordability comes from only printing what you need. A new piece is generated for each student—no more, no less.

Print on-demand is not only more relevant, it's less wasteful. The old way is printing thousands and thousands of marketing pieces each fall, only to find out there's an error in your copy, or you've earned an important new ranking—or unfortunately something happens like the current global pandemic and all of your processes and messaging must change immediately.

Now what do you do with your closet full of static, suddenly unusable or outdated print pieces? Every piece you recycle is money thrown away, never recovered. **Cazenovia College reported saving 35% off their print budget by switching to a variable model**—a very achievable goal.

REASON N° 5 IT'S MORE THAN A POSTCARD

Returning to the concept of engagement, variable print also offers the opportunity to make your mailer stand out in exciting new ways. Modern printing technology can be applied to oversized, unusual shapes or three-dimensional mailers, even tubes and promo items. Postcards have a role in any communication flow but the technology has advanced to allow for so much more, at more affordable rates than ever before.



Oversized print pieces, though used far less often in direct marketing, respond better than their standard-sized counterparts

—Demandmetric.com

GOING FURTHER

The old way: Huge books, bigger quantities. Produced annually and unchanged until the next cycle. Everyone gets the same message.

Today, institutional websites have replaced “everything but the kitchen sink” marketing pieces for many colleges and universities. Yet our “secret shopper” studies found that many colleges are still using these kinds of viewbooks. We looked at more than 90 of these. We found that 22-page books are the norm, with each book at 8 1/2 x 11 finished size, sent in a white envelope. *How many of these are never read? And at what cost?*

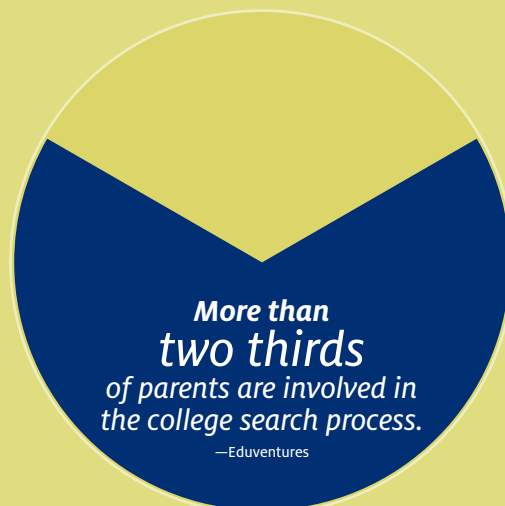
On-demand printing works differently. Imagine a student requests a brochure any time, day or night, from your website. That order is loaded automatically into our print engine with all of the necessary variables (like major, etc.). The next morning, their unique piece is printed and addressed. **It’s in the mail within 24 hours** and arrives in the student’s mailbox in three to four days.

Maybe that student also completed request forms at two other colleges that night. The Admissions team that responds immediately has a distinct advantage over the team that’s bogged down with manual processes.



One trend remains constant: **Parents have the biggest influence on a student’s college decision.** For undergraduate admissions, overlooking the parent conversation is a major missed opportunity, and direct mail is often the only way to gain access to parents. Targeting your messages to parents’ concerns (affordability and location are top issues right now) can make a big impact on your engagement rates.

Parents understand what their child is looking for, and they want to see that reflected in the materials they receive. For a parent, the latest program ranking, a relevant student success story, and a tailored affordability message will have resonance and prompt the parent to engage with their student.



—Eduventures

IN CONCLUSION

As you look to the challenges ahead, ask yourself:

1. How quickly are you responding to your inquiries?
2. Are you sending targeted messaging or is it generic?
3. Do you have pallets of questionable or outdated materials you are loath to recycle?
4. Is your overall print budget being trimmed?
5. What's your parent outreach strategy?

And, the big one ... *Are you doing all you can to bring in your best class? It's a lot to think about.* But with the current enrollment and admissions environment, rethinking print strategies has never been more relevant.

ABOUT LIAISON

With more than two decades of experience serving over 31,000 programs and 1000+ campuses and counting, *Liaison knows what it takes to #BuildABetterClass.* Our experts provide all of the planning, support, print management and strategic consulting you need to ensure you launch your campaigns hassle-free. Partner with us for *immediate, relevant, automated* and *trackable* solutions designed to help you reach your goals.

**ENROLLMENT
MARKETING**
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