

Mystery Shopper Report

Report presented on January, 2016



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Methodology

The Mystery Shopper research began on November 10th, 2015, and ended on November 24th, 2015.

The focus was on two key elements of student recruitment – how simple is it for potential students to request information about a degree program, in this case, the MBA, and what the potential student experiences in response to that request for information.

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In the first phase, requesting information, we visited your website and searched for a “Request Information” link or form on your home page and the home/main page of the MBA program. We then evaluated the request form and any automated communications the submission of the form triggered – Thank you page and/or automated email.

In the second phase, we kept a diary of any communications received from your institution and evaluated the communications based on timing, frequency, channel (email, mail, phone, other), messaging and call to action.

In both phases, results are scored on a scale of “1” to “5” with “1” being “Least Desirable” and “5” being “Most Desirable”. The first phase is worth up to 25 points, and the second phase is worth up to 20 points.

There is a “score card” included in the Appendix of this report, for your convenience.

What is shown here is our entry-level option – if you would like to learn more about other options, please feel free to contact us.

NOTE: During the Mystery Shopper phase of this research, we did not speak with any enrollment/admissions staff via the phone because we did not want to take their valuable time. We did note when they called and if they left a message. And if a message was left, we included that in the evaluation.

Mystery Shopper Scorecard

The following is a summary scorecard for our experiences on your site. Additional details and examples, with comments and recommendations, can be found in the body of the report.

Criteria	Your Score
Ease of finding the request information form on the Home Page	1
Ease of finding the request information form on the Program Home Page	1
Ease of Filling out the Form	2
Automatic Thank you page	2
Automatic Email Response	1
REQUESTING INFORMATION SUBTOTAL	7
Appropriate Timing of Follow up Communication (does not include auto-responders mentioned above)	1
Use of Appropriate and Effective Channels	1
Appropriate Content in Follow-Up Communication:	1
Clear CTA in Communication that explains what to do next	1
FOLLOW UP COMMUNICATIONS SUBTOTAL	4
TOTAL	11
TOTAL AVAILABLE POINTS	45
SCORE	24.4%

This is a summary of the scores awarded for each phase of the Mystery Shopper research. What follows is a narrative of what was experienced at each stage, a rationale for the score awarded and recommendations to improve performance.

As you can see in the table above, you scored below average— we do feel there is room for improvement, and we offer suggestions below.

Mystery Shopper

Home Page

The first step in the Mystery Shopper process is to visit the Home Page (<http://www.ycp.edu/>) in order to request information.

For this step, we are evaluating the “ease of finding the request information form on the site” on the following factors.

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1. Cannot be found on home page
3. Can find the ‘request for information’ but is difficult to find/doesn’t stand out on the page
5. Clearly visible when interacting with all content

Comments and Findings



Figure 1 York College of PA Home Page First Impression

The first impression a site visitor receives is shown in Figure 1 (above) – and there is no visible “Request Information” option.



Figure 2 York College of PA Home Page Middle

And as one scrolls down to the next section of the home page, there is no visible option for “Request Information”.

We would recommend that you consider placing “Request for Information” link in the upper header (see below) so that it is at the top every page within your site.



Figure 3 Page Header

Your Score

Based on the findings, your score is:



Cannot be found on home page

This score is below average and not ideal.

Program Page

The second step is to visit the MBA program home page in order to search for a “Request for Information” link or form.

In order to find the program page, we clicked on “Academics” and found “MBA” as a link in the lower left segment of the page, under “Graduate Programs”. We arrived at <http://www.ycp.edu/academics/graduate-programs/master-of-business-administration/>.

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Like the Home Page, this will be evaluated by the “Ease of finding the request information form on the site” and with the same scoring criteria.

1. Cannot be found on program page
3. Can find it but below the fold/must scroll a lot
5. Clearly visible when interacting with all content

Comments and Findings



Figure 4 MBA Home Page

On this page, there is no visible “Request Information” button/link.

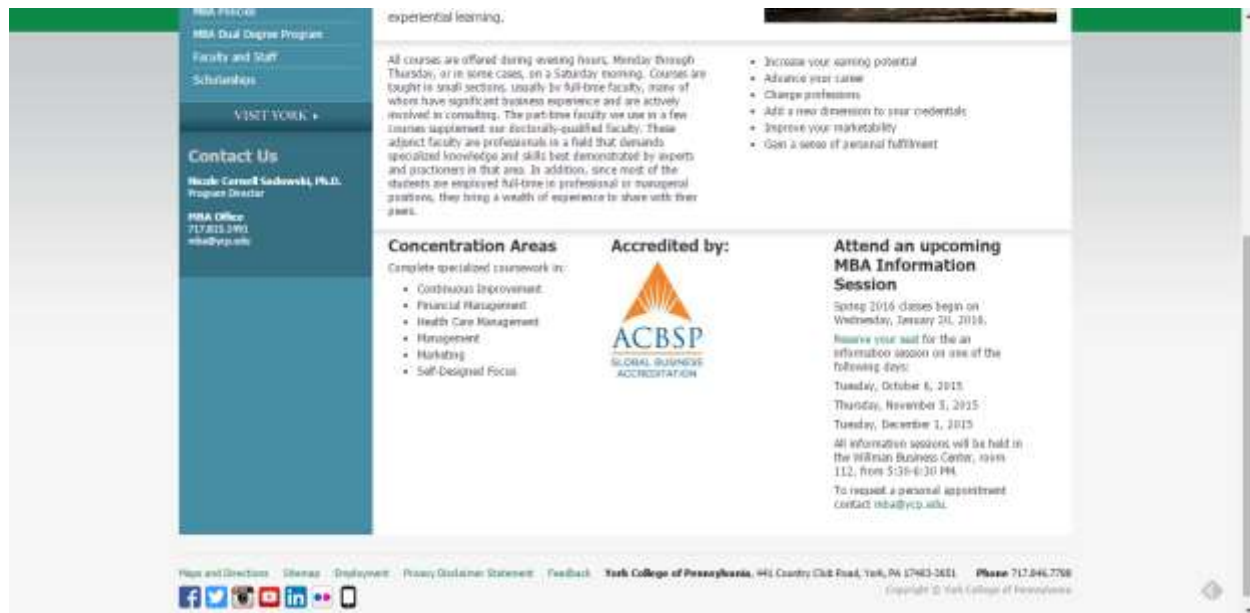


Figure 5 MBA Home Page Bottom Half

There is also no visible “Request Information” link on the bottom half of the page, though there is a “Contact Us” section with a phone number and click to email link.

Again, we recommend that you should consider placing a “Request Information” link in the page header across the site for consistency and ease.

Your Score

Based on these findings, your score is:

1



Cannot be found on the program page

Ease of Filling out the Request Information Form

Since we were unable to find a “Request Information” link on either the home page or the MBA program home page, we drew upon our experience and clicked “Admissions” where we found “Information Request Form” as a link in the left navigation links. We clicked on that link and were taken to https://ycp.askadmissions.net/emtinterestpage.aspx?ip=info&_ga=1.253253577.1553529274.1447171113

Requesting information on your website is how a potential student makes themselves known to your institution. Typically, it is the first time they share their information with you in order to get something of high perceived value in return. However, based on testing ‘Request Information’ forms over the years, it has been found that “shorter is better” – get what you really need and be concise.

We strongly recommend asking for (and requiring) the following 5 data points:

1. First Name
2. Last Name
3. Email
4. Program of Interest
5. Expected Start Date

With this information, you can begin sharing appropriate information (program of interest) and prioritize the inquiry (expected start date) so that your enrollment team can best manage their time. For example, your enrollment team can focus on those that select the nearest start date over those that have selected start dates that are further out into the future.

One other point – you can ask for the individual’s phone number, but we suggest that, at this time, you do not make that a required field. You will have plenty of other opportunities to ask for additional information and we recommend that you take the time to build trust with the individual and ask for that additional information at more appropriate times.

Too much, too soon can damage your chances to enroll that student!

Based on this, the ‘Request Information’ form is evaluated by the “Ease of filling out the form” using the following criteria:

1. Form doesn’t exist
2. Form exists but has more than 5 fields with most, if not all required
3. More than 5 fields only basic information required (Name, Email, Phone, Program of Interest, Start Date)
4. Form exists and requests 5 fields (Name, Email, Phone, Program of Interest, Start Date)
5. Form exists and requests 5 fields (Name, Email, Phone, Program of Interest, Start Date) but also responds to errors on the form such as “Not Phone Number” or “Not email address”

Comments and Findings

YORK COLLEGE
OF PENNSYLVANIA

ALUMNI | PARENTS AND FAMILIES | PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS | ANY YCP | LIBRARY | ROOMSTORE | OFFICES AND SERVICES | FACULTY AND STAFF DIRECTORY | GIVING

ABOUT YORK | ACADEMICS | ADMISSIONS | LIFE AT YORK | ATHLETICS | NEWS AND EVENTS

Please fill out the form below to receive information and special admissions events from the Admissions Office. You may also contact Admissions at 800.455.0018.

Information Request

First Name* M.C. Last Name*

Address Line 1*

City*

State*

Zip*

Country*

Citizenship

Phone Number*

Gender*

Date of Birth*

[Click here to find your school. If unavailable, click here to type in your information below.](#)

High School Name

Year of High School Graduation*

I have attended a college or university since I graduated from high school. ☐ Yes ☐ No

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Country*

Citizenship

Phone Number*

Gender*

Date of Birth*

[Click here to find your school. If unavailable, click here to type in your information below.](#)

High School Name

Year of High School Graduation*

I have attended a college or university since I graduated from high school. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Major

Email*

Verify Email*

Parent Email 1

Cost & Financial Aid

- Understanding the Full Cost
- York College Scholarships and Grants
- State and Federal Financial Aid
- How to Apply for Financial Aid
- Contact the Financial Aid Office

Graduate Admissions

- Master of Business Administration
- Master of Education
- Master of Science in Nursing
- Doctor of Nursing Practice

Other Students

- Transfer Students
- International Students
- Veterans
- Credit Validation
- Home-Schooled Students

Visiting York

- Maps & Directions
- Rooming
- Campus Tours
- Nearby Attractions
- School Tours

The form is extremely long and goes well beyond what is considered best practices for an information request form – with 10 required fields including Country, Phone, Gender and Date of Birth.

We completed the form with the following information:

Field	Response
First Name*	Pat
Middle Name	
Last Name*	McGraw
Address Line 1*	5601 Honeygo Ridge Court
City*	White Marsh
State*	Maryland

Zip*	21162
Country*	United States of America
Citizenship	US Citizen
Phone Number*	410-977-7355
Gender*	Male
Date of Birth*	November 17, 1959
High School Name	CATHOLIC CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
Year of Graduate*	1977
Attended College since graduation?	Yes
Major	Business Administration (A)**
Email*	patmcgraw@comcast.net
Confirm Email*	jim@abc.com***
Parent Email	mommy@abc.com

** There were two choices for “Business Administration” and “Business Administration (A)” – and we weren’t sure what the difference was between the two.

*** We entered a different email for “Confirm Email” and that error was caught so we could correct it.

We recommend that since you asked for ‘Phone’ as required, you consider asking if the phone is mobile and if the individual would like to receive SMS texts – assuming you have the ability to text as part of your nurturing/conversion efforts. This provides you with the email address as well as the opportunity to call and/or text.

The form is obviously designed for an undergraduate student – with high school and parent’s email fields – which may cause working adults interested in a graduate degree to think twice about completing the form. We would suggest a graduate form – ideally one on the program home page with the proper coding so you know what program they are interested in based on the location/page.

Your Score

Based on the above findings, your grade is:

2

Form exists but has more than 5 fields with most, if not all required

Thank you page

The 'Thank you' page offers you the ability to confirm the content submitted and, if you so choose, have the individual correct any errors. It also provides you with the opportunity to provide the individual with relevant information and clearly explain appropriate next steps so that their expectations are clearly set.

Based on this, the following criteria are used to evaluate the 'Thank you' page:

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1. No thank you page
2. Thank you page but does not address any of the following [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information
3. Thank you page but lacks some of the following [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information
4. Thank you page with [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, but lacks some or all of the following [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information
5. Thank you page with [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information

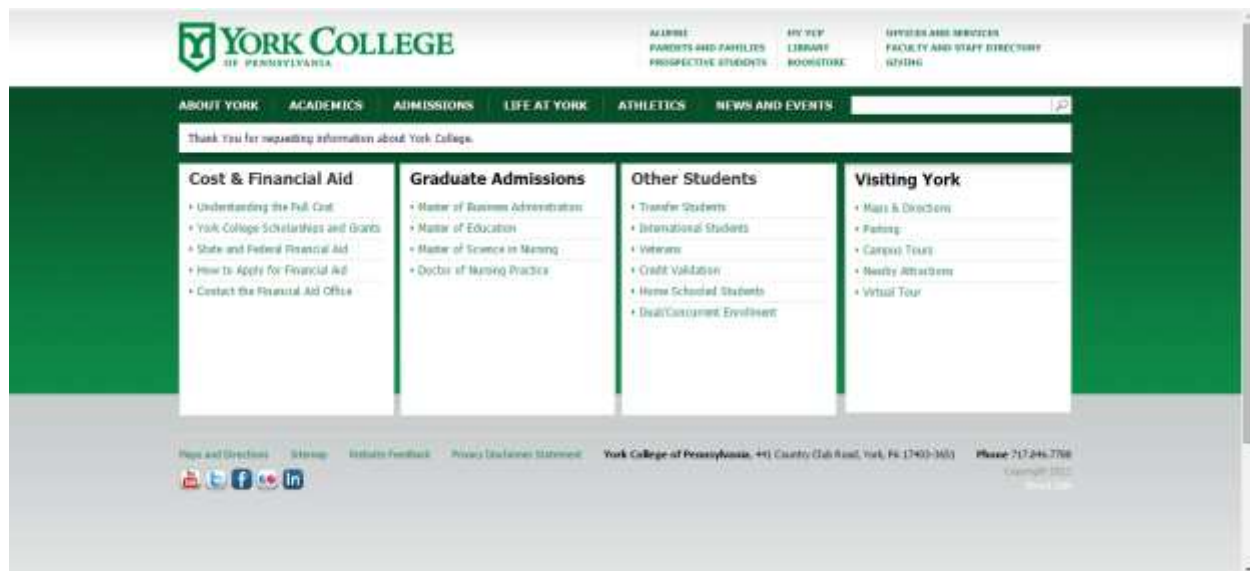


Figure 8 Thank you page for Form Submission

Comments and Findings

There is a "thank you" page with a brief note that is general in nature and does not establish a clear cut next step for the individual. Remember the individual expressed interest in the Professional's MBA program and there is no proposed/recommended next step for them to take – just information on how to call or email which are two channels they rejected when they elected to complete and submit the form.

The person wants information on the program. They also have other questions that need to be answered for them to make their decision as to if they should enroll in your program.

Why not find out what those other questions are so you can provide them with the relevant information they need?

Are some concerned with costs and being able to afford your program? If so, why not some links to content on those topics so they can educate themselves to the options available to them and determine if they wish to proceed?

Are some concerned about career services/job placement services? If so, why not some links to content on these topics?

Best of all, when they go down one of the paths from this page, you can use that topic to drive your upcoming nurturing effort! Imagine the individual concerned about cost receiving an email about tuition rates, book fees, financial aid, scholarships, interest free payment plans etc. And the person interested in career services/job placement receiving information about upcoming company visits, how to register with career services, etc.?

One final thought – is it possible to present the assigned enrollment counselor/admissions specialist on this page? Or what about a ‘team photo’ with names and contact information so you begin to bring in the personal/human relationships.

Imagine the impression if you used this page to introduce the potential student with their assigned counselor/specialist, asked 3 to 5 key questions about motivation and concerns in order for the counselor/specialist to be better prepared to assist them, and told the potential student to expect a call from the counselor/specialist within 48 hours. Or better yet, had one of the questions address a day/time for the counselor/specialist to call!

Your Score

Based on what was experienced, your score is:

2

Thank you page but does not address any of the following [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information

Auto Email Response for Form Submission

The automated email offers you the ability to re-confirm the content submitted and, if you so choose, have the individual correct any errors with a link to an “update information” page. It also provides you with the opportunity to provide the individual with relevant information and clearly explain appropriate next steps so that their expectations are clearly set.

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Based on this, the following criteria are used to evaluate the automated email response:

1. No reply no confirmation of submission
2. Automatic email but does not address any of the following [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information
3. Automatic email but lacks some of the following [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information
4. Automatic email with [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, but lacks some or all of the following [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information
5. Automatic email with [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information

Comments and Findings

After more than 24 hours, no automated email had been received. We would recommend an automated email be sent as soon as possible after the submission of the form and that the email be used to [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information.

Your Score

Based on the experiences described above, your score is

1



No reply no confirmation of submission

Follow up Communications

Delivering the right message to the right person at the right time via the right channel with the right call to action in order to motivate the individual to make the right next step – that’s what your nurturing campaign needs to focus on. Some will go too quickly to “Apply Now” without making sure the individual has all the information they need in order to make an informed decision. Others will write about features – “...36 credit hour program...” – instead of benefits – “...you can complete this program in less than 18 months which is 6 months faster than most other programs...”

In this area, follow up communications will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Appropriate Timing of Follow up Communication (does not include auto-responders mentioned above)

1. No Follow up Communication
2. One contact/attempt only
3. 2 contacts/attempts in 2 weeks
4. 3 contacts/attempts in 2 weeks
5. More than 3 contacts/attempts in 2 weeks

Use of Appropriate and Effective Channels

1. No Follow up Communication no channels used
2. Only one channel
3. Used 2 channels
4. Used 3 channels
5. Used more than 3 channels

Appropriate Content in Follow-Up Communication:

1. No Follow up Communication no channels used
2. Content not specific to degree chosen nor stage of your process [ex] fails to mention program of interest and suggests you “enroll now” when it is more appropriate to provide information on the program, institution, etc.
3. Content degree specific and appropriate to stage, builds on previous content with benefit rich content
4. Content degree specific and appropriate to stage, builds on previous content with benefit rich content, presented in clear, concise manner and easy to read/scan format (ex: bullets, clear subject line and to line)
5. Content degree specific and appropriate to stage, builds on previous content with benefit rich content, presented in clear, concise manner and easy to read/scan format (ex: bullets, clear subject line and to line) with clear instructions on what to do next

Clear Call to Action (CTA) in Communication that explains what to do next

1. No Follow up communication
2. Content has no CTA is just long list of information
3. Content has CTA but onus is on prospect, not the school
4. Clear and engaging CTA with the onus on the school to help you take the next step

5. Clear and engaging CTA with the onus on the school to help you take the next step and materials to read/engage with during the waiting period. Clearly define when they will talk to you next and/or offer help in the next step (keep conversation open)

Date	Time	Channel	Comments

Comments and Findings

There were no follow up communications received – and we would suggest a follow up communication plan that leverages your available resources and plays to your strengths. We would also recommend testing messages, calls to action, creative, communication channels etc. in order to identify the most effective communications.

Your Score

Appropriate Timing of Follow up Communication (does not include auto-responders mentioned above)



No Follow up Communication

Use of Appropriate and Effective Channels



No Follow up Communication no channels used

Appropriate Content in Follow-Up Communication:

1



No Follow up Communication no channels used

Clear CTA in Communication that explains what to do next

1



No Follow up communication

Appendix:

Phase I: Requesting Information

Requesting Information: Ease of finding the request information form on the website home page.

- 1 Cannot be found on home page
- 3 Can find the 'request for information' but is difficult to find/doesn't stand out on the page
- 5 Clearly visible when interacting with all content

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Requesting Information: Ease of finding the request information form on the program home page

- 1 Cannot be found on program page
- 3 Can find it but below the fold/must scroll a lot
- 5 Clearly visible when interacting with all content

Ease of filling out the form

- 1 Form doesn't exist
- 2 Form exists but has more than 5 fields with most, if not all required
- 3 More than 5 fields only basic information required (Name, Email, Phone, Program of Interest, Start Date)
- 4 Form exists and requests 5 fields (Name, Email, Phone, Program of Interest, Start Date)
- 5 Form exists and requests 5 fields (Name, Email, Phone, Program of Interest, Start Date) but also responds to errors on the form such as "Not Phone Number" or "Not email address"

Thank you Page

- 1 No thank you page
Thank you page but does not address any of the following [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information
- 2 Thank you page but lacks some of the following [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information
- 3 Thank you page with [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, but lacks some or all of the following [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information
- 4 Thank you page with [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information
- 5 Thank you page with [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information

Confirmation of Requesting Information: Automatic Form Reply Email

- 1 No reply no confirmation of submission
Automatic email but does not address any of the following [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information
- 2 Automatic email but lacks some of the following [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information
- 3 Automatic email but lacks some of the following [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information

- Automatic email with [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, but
- 4 lacks some or all of the following [b] relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information
 - Automatic email with [a] confirmation of Name, Program of Interest and Desired Start Date, [b]
 - 5 relevant recommended next steps and [c] introduction of assigned enrollment counselor by name with contact information

Phase II: Follow up Communications

Follow up Communications: Appropriate Timing of Follow up Communications

- 1 No Follow up Communication
- 2 One contact/attempt only
- 3 2 contacts/attempts in 2 weeks
- 4 3 contacts/attempts in 2 weeks
- 5 More than 3 contacts/attempts in 2 weeks

Use of Appropriate and Effective Channels

- 1 No Follow up Communication no channels used
- 2 Only one channel
- 3 Used 2 channels
- 4 Used 3 channels
- 5 Used more than 3 channels

Appropriate Content in Follow up Communications

- 1 No Follow up Communication no channels used
- 2 Content not specific to degree chosen nor stage of your process [ex] fails to mention program of interest and suggests you “enroll now” when it is more appropriate to provide information on the program, institution, etc.
- 3 Content degree specific and appropriate to stage, builds on previous content with benefit rich content
- 4 Content degree specific and appropriate to stage, builds on previous content with benefit rich content, presented in clear, concise manner and easy to read/scan format (ex: bullets, clear subject line and to line)
- 5 Content degree specific and appropriate to stage, builds on previous content with benefit rich content, presented in clear, concise manner and easy to read/scan format (ex: bullets, clear subject line and to line) with clear instructions on what to do next

Clear Call to Action (CTA) that explains what to do next

- 1 No Follow up communication
- 2 Content has no Call to Action (CTA) is just long list of information
- 3 Content has CTA but onus is on prospect, not the school
- 4 Clear and engaging CTA with the onus on the school to help you take the next step

- 5 Clear and engaging CTA with the onus on the school to help you take the next step and materials to read/engage with during the waiting period. Clearly define when they will talk to you next and/or offer help in the next step (keep conversation open)

About DWS Associates

DWS Associates team has more than 75 years of marketing, merchandising, research and business development expertise. We have been providing marketing research and consulting services to the educational, business-to-business and business-to-consumer sectors since 1982.

Our areas of expertise include:

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- Strategic marketing planning
- Market research and competitive analysis
- Educational marketing
- Integrated marketing communications, campaign planning and execution
- Direct and data-driven marketing
- Digital and social media marketing
- Marketing organization development and management

We have conducted major marketing opportunity assessments and competitive analysis studies for customers in a variety of industries including technology manufacturing and services, consumer goods manufacturing, retailing, education and business and financial services. We are extremely knowledgeable about the He is extremely knowledgeable about the educational marketplace as many of our technology clients have been involved in the creation and delivery of technologies to support this industry, especially the continuing education arena. Within the education sector, we have provided our expertise to industry leaders including Blackboard, University of Maryland University College, Walden University and we've also worked with Education Dynamics, and Noel-Levitz.

We have worked with a variety of organizations from Fortune 100 companies like IBM and Microsoft to technology startups.

Our in-depth marketing and direct marketing expertise allows us to provide a clear, third party, unbiased assessment of the competitive environment.