



expectations are in place. These expectations often drive the worker to strive. When the system is broken, and expectations are not met, the staff is dejected. They feel overlooked and unimportant. They often feel you are taking advantage of them. This does not create an environment for winning. It actually leads to slow decay and failure. Staff members resign, and you are back to hiring untrained people who have to earn the trust of the team.

If there isn't an organizational system for reward, I recommend you create one. One of the questions I always asked when interviewing for the Vice President's position was, "Do you have a system to grow and promote admission staff with both pay and title?" If the answer was no, I recognized this as an important point for negotiation.

I will not take a job as a supervisor if I cannot reward my staff for their hard work. I will not take a job where I cannot professionally develop those who work alongside me. You would be surprised how often I have been able to negotiate for this before signing a contract. I get the word of the president to do both salary and title changes, on a step system based on staff work and outcomes. Having a reward system in place creates an environment where people work hard, are loyal, and feel appreciated. Numbers are met!

I realize there are no easy answers to solve the problems I present. However, my goal, as always, is to share honest thoughts and get you thinking about your apple cart and new ways to tip it over. I want to see you make those pies, scoop some ice cream, and then serve your staff, as a leader should.

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STRATEGIES

Disrupt Your Campus Visit Experience

By Jeff Kallay

Shakeout. Turnaround. Disruption. Paradigm Shift. Choose your favorite business cliché and hop on board, friends—the college visit needs you, desperately.

I am officially calling it: the old model of campus visits is dead. RIP, long info session, with your alienating, "talk at," death-by-PowerPoint presentation. So long, exhaustive walk of campus, led by a backward-walking, scripted tour guide. We had some good times, didn't we?

Savvy enrollment managers take heed: you have a new breed of guests coming to campus, and they could not be more different from the Baby Boomer parents and civic-minded Millennials who created the industry we know today.

Over two decades ago, Millennials and their parents upped the visit ante and spawned the

beloved "college search/family road trip" so often referenced (and spoofed!) in TV and film. However, things have evolved. Your audience has changed. Prospective families visiting colleges these days don't necessarily think they need you, the admissions professional. They have online communities, a short list of priorities, and even shorter attention spans. More to come on them later.

The time has come to throw out the traditional format of the campus visit. Nobody is having fun—not tour guides, not parents, and definitely not prospective students. I cannot stress enough that the "one visit fits all" approach simply does not connect for Gen X parents and their college-bound Gen Z offspring.

So, what's next? **To start, colleges must reformat the visit and make it more "agile."** They must do less talking and more listening.

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Most importantly, they must make the visit relevant again, by introducing the flexibility necessary to meet the specific wants and needs of this audience.

Know Your Audience

Nationwide, admissions professionals on campuses have questions about the families walking through their doors on a daily basis. How well do we know the traits of Gen X parents and Gen Z students? How do they influence the college search process? The answers may surprise you.

There are three things you should know about Gen X parents:

1. **They are pragmatic.** In many cases, this generation of “latchkey kids” virtually raised themselves. They do not tolerate hype or spin (just get to the point, thank you). They’ve essentially reduced the college search to “How much does it cost, and what do we get for it?” The key is not to be afraid to lead with cost, but make sure you boldly reveal what they get for it. Remember: outcomes matter more than costs.
2. **They don’t trust you.** Well, not you specifically, but institutions in general. The campus visit is the single most trusted source of information in the college search, but it only connects with Gen X if it is authentic and honest. Is your campus visit earning or losing their trust?
3. **They tend to scare Millennial staffers and tour guides.**

Three things you should know about Gen Z students:

1. **The Great Recession seriously impacted Gen Z during their childhood.** As a result, they are more frugal and fiscally literate than previous youth generations.
2. **They are more entrepreneurial and “resume-minded.”** The parts of your tour, and those with whom they interact while on campus, will be increasingly important.
3. **They bring with them hyper-connectedness and high levels of anxiety.** Everyone knows that modern teenagers are hyper-connected. Do we put enough emphasis on the fact they have been raised in an economy of experiences and mass customization?

The Case for Disruption

As campus visit consultants, our team began noticing that parents’ tone and tenor was changing about two years ago. We realized they were flipping Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Boomer parents trusted institutions and wanted to know how your school was going to make their bumper sticker-worthy one-of-a-kind child all the more special. They wanted to know how attending your school would increase their student’s self-esteem and self-actualization.

Suddenly, the new wave of Gen X parents doesn’t put as much emphasis on those higher levels of the hierarchy, favoring more pragmatic questions about cost, internships, and outcomes. Having raised their children in a post-9/11 culture of fear, they don’t trust

you have the basics covered: things like food, shelter, safety, and security.

As a result, here are the most frequently asked questions we hear on campus tours:

- “How safe is it?”
- “What are the dorms like?”
- “How is the food?”
- “What about internships?”

And, the popular Gen X flip of the spin and hype: “So, what is it that you don’t like about this place?”

Ask your tour guides and your admission counselors: “Where are families most engaged and animated during the tour, and what questions do they have?” You’ll most likely get confirmation of our point that they are primarily concerned—at least at first—with housing, food services, transportation, and safety.

Safety isn’t a statistic, and it is not just about having blue lights on campus. Safety is a sense of well-being. We like to remind campus colleagues that “services are the new amenities.” Gen X parents want to see front and center those things that will keep their child “well” and employable after graduation: counseling centers, career centers, and health centers. They want a deeper understanding of housing and food services, than their Boomer counterparts do.

As for the Gen Z students, they get caught up with basics like speed and reliability of the Wi-Fi on campus. Don’t underestimate the importance of these seemingly small factors that Millennials tended to

overlook, or forgive.

To better connect with today’s audience, we recommend you disrupt your campus visit in three ways:

1. **Show them the basics first.** Lead with housing, food, and services that offer support. This is counter to years of recommending to clients, “You’re a university, lead with academics!” Show them what matters to them most, and don’t bury the lead. You’ll earn their trust with the basics and help them relax, so you can move up the hierarchy into academics.
2. **Shorten or place your information session, in the middle.** Don’t make prospective families wait in the presentation room. Get them out on campus to see what they came to see.
3. **Mix it up to keep their attention.** Break up your tour into “agile” segments. Have each part delivered by a different guide or admission staffer.

Here are some best practice examples:

University of Puget Sound, Tacoma WA
2500 Students on 97 Acres

A few years back, the University of Puget Sound changed from the standard format of a lengthy information session followed by a 90-minute walking tour led by one guide. (This made the total time on campus about 2-2.5 hours.) Families are now given a sheet with fast facts and statistics at check-in and



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asked to read/review it while they wait. A senior intern will then take five minutes to set the expectations of the visit. Next, a "Campus Life" student guide (usually a sophomore) takes the group through the student center, first year and upper-class housing and the fitness center. (About 40 minutes). The group returns to the admissions office for a bio break and about a 20-minute info session. An "Academic" student guide (usually a junior or senior) then leads an academic-focused walk. This includes a sit-down in a classroom and several stories about the academic experience. The new visit format uses the same amount of time as a traditional visit, but it is now portioned into digestible nuggets. "Families are smiling more since the format is livelier. They get to engage with more current Puget Sound students," says Laura Martin Fedich, Vice President for Enrollment.

Furman University, Greenville SC

2970 Students on 750 Acres

Consistently ranked one of the most beautiful college campuses, and with a four-year housing requirement, Furman wasn't revealing enough of student life, nor showing the value of the institution. The information session could take up to 90 minutes,

followed by a 60-minute campus walk that revealed only about 30% of the student experience. The visit now starts with a lively 20-minute information session. Families then either hop on people movers, where they get to see the outer parts of campus (first-year housing, upper-class apartments, the iconic bell tower, and the athletic facilities), or, they take the 40-minute walk of the academic core of campus, which also includes Trone Student Center. (The number of visitors determines the order of visit for families.) In the middle of the two walking/riding segments, is a bio break back at the welcome center. This agile format is revealing and yielding more, according to Brad Pochard, Associate Vice President for Enrollment and Dean of Admissions. "We now show more overall value. Before reformatting, we converted 51% of visiting students to application; this current cycle it's 87%!"

Jeff Kallay is Principal and Co-founder of Render Experiences, the campus visit consultancy that has worked with 250+ client campuses in the past eleven years. He began his admissions career immediately after graduating from Lees College (TN), served as the new business guy at Mindpower, Inc and a Vice President at TargetX. He has taken over 2000 campus tours in the span of his career. jeff@renderexperiences.com

Widener University, Chester, PA

3427 Undergraduate Students on 108 Acres

A metropolitan campus between Philadelphia and Wilmington, Widener has a traditional campus setting with robust internship and co-op opportunities in a nearby three state area.



Previously, "Logistics drove the campus visit, and we had to flip that to the visitor experience driving logistics," according to Courtney Kelly, Executive Director of Admission. Families checked in at admissions and were then walked to a cramped presentation room in an historical museum/archive space on campus. After about a 30-minute information session, families walked a tiring 90-minute loop around campus. Families are now given a simple fact sheet, and a map of the tour route (explaining the what, where, and why of the walk). They are immediately taken into University Center (food), first-year housing and walk into the heart of campus. There is a bio break in an academic building, where they then get to sit in a theatre style classroom and have a senior intern present a well thought out information session for Gen X and Z. During the last part of the visit, a second guide walks the group through the academic facilities and even offers a signature moment photograph at the mascot statue. Kelly explains, "We reframed to connect with Gen Z at the core of every campus visit detail and to collaborate for a campus-wide buy-in of support for the visit and visitors." Prospective families have three student points of view and a break in the middle of the visit. Families appreciate this, and express it in positive evaluations. According to Kelly, "Evaluations show that 99.2% of visitors respond that interest in Widener has increased, or remained the same following the campus visit."

So what about your visit? Is it relevant to today's prospective families? Is it agile, delivered in "digestible nuggets"? If not, then it's time to disrupt and reformat. Otherwise, you might be boring your guests and negatively impacting your enrollment cycle.

THE FAST 4 ACTIONABLE IDEAS

By Mike Wesner

Like you, enrollmentFUEL has a travel season. Ours starts in March. Jacqui and I crisscross the country, meeting with campus leaders. I always return from my travels FUELED by new ideas. As you plan for next year, I wanted to share a few things to try as you head into the next recruiting season.

1 Shake things up!

New seasons bring new energy. Clean up your office. Get rid of clutter. Try a stand-up desk. I have a stand-up desk, as well as my regular desk. Although I sit most of the time, I like to use my stand-up desk for Googling, brainstorming, and jotting down big ideas.

2 Revisit mail

At enrollmentFUEL, we believe in direct mail. We're fans because:

- Direct mail reaches your audience.
- An email is seen and read. A direct mail piece is seen, touched, and read. The haptic element of touch promotes higher levels of interaction with information, which can spark interest and increase mindshare.
- An article from *Scientific American* titled, "The Reading Brain in the Digital Age: The Science of Paper versus Screens," presented research showing we are more likely to retain printed information over digital communications.¹

3 Take a Cold Shower!

Dutch researcher, Geert A. Guijze asked 3,000 volunteers to douse themselves at the end of their showers with cold water from 30 seconds to 90

seconds. After this self-induced shock therapy, twenty-nine percent of the study group missed fewer workdays and claimed they felt better.²

What is even more amazing is that two-thirds of the group continued the practice after the study ended, because they thought the showers provided a physiological or psychological benefit.³

Try it to start the day. First, you will hate it. Then, you will love it.

4 Look for a QR Code Renaissance.

Built into Apple's iOS 11 native camera is a QR Code reader. This is also available to anyone who upgrades their phone or software. By including a QR code reader, Apple eliminates obstacles. Apple phone users will no longer have to install an app or fumble around opening an app on their phones.

If the QR code was dead, Apple wouldn't have made the effort. Look for new QR code uses in the future.

In the world of enrollment management, I never stumble across magic formulas or miraculous potions that instantly improve results. But, I do meet plenty of smart, talented people who work hard and try new ideas – or old ideas in new ways, and consistently bring in their class.



Mike Wesner is the founder and Chief Imagination Officer of enrollmentFUEL. He loves to visit enrollment leaders and share big ideas. He will be traveling to your area soon and would love to say hello. Email him at mike.wesner@enrollmentfuel.com.

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