Proceedings of Cloud based International Conference ,
"Global Business Trends In View of Lock Down and Role Of Digital Transformation for Sustainability"
15th May, 2020 Organized by sbytetechnologies.com

Impact of Covid-19 on Educational Sector – Strategies to Success

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Abstract: **The impact of COVID-19 can be felt around the world, especially across the higher education sector. Worldwide closures of educational institutions have** impacted over 95% of the world's student population**, with 1.5 billion learners not able to attend classes. In the wake of this shift, educational institutions have had to quickly adopt new approaches to foster student success in these extraordinary times. In the short term, these measures include delaying start dates, shifting to online course delivery, and offering new forms of financial support. But, what can we do to support the future of Education?**

Key words: **Covid19; Future of Education; Student Population; Strategies to Success;**

INTRODUCTION

Today Indian Higher Education System is the world's largest with 1,000+ universities, 42,000 colleges, 3,25,000 schools with closely 320 million student's population. 95% of Indian Institutions before this crisis concentrated promoting infrastructure facilities of their campuses to attract the students. In this crisis situation most of the campuses are empty and major investment of these institutions spent on infrastructure development are in unused condition and not even 5% of institutions are equipped to deliver online engagement to the students. From last few weeks every education institution is trying to deliver online classes without much technological knowledge. In this crisis situation, survival of educational institutions is a great challenge. If we don't adopt technological changes and marketing strategies**.** Rather than stop your marketing efforts, adapt your messaging and highlight your institution's strengths to attract candidates looking for a new opportunity. The coronavirus pandemic has been disruptive for Educational Institutes and candidates alike, closing campuses, changing admissions plans, and moving learning online. Educational Institutions naturally are wrestling with many questions about continuity of their programs during this time, such as whether they'll be able to offer in-person classes in the coming semesters, or how they can enhance their offerings to offset enrollment declines. But some questions are less obvious, and perhaps more delicate to broach, like, *How should we market to candidates during coronavirus? What content should we share? Should we change or pause our marketing activities?*

While candidates' priorities and study preferences are changing because of coronavirus, the pandemic has not impacted the number of people interested in joining full time education. According to a recent survey, 90 percent of candidates still plan to go to full time programmes, even if their plans are a little delayed. People are at home in lockdown on their computers. In this period, traffic to visit educational institutions website has doubled, and we are seeing consistently high returns from institutions usingdigital marketing to attract the candidates. Stopping your marketing activities during this time is downright counterproductive. It's never been more important to promote your institution, stay present in this difficult time, and keep your brand top of mind for prospective students. The trick is to adapt quickly to the changing situation and find the right balance in your messaging, adjusting what you say and how you say it. Here are four tips for marketing your Institution during the pandemic:

1. Understand Your Audience's Changing Priorities

Knowing who your audience is and what they're interested in is crucial in any marketing strategy. In the current climate, think also about how your audience's priorities, interests, and behaviors are changing. Think about how people are consuming your marketing content—whether that's a change in the time of the day they're online or whether they're using mobile or desktop devices. We've found that webinars are an increasingly effective way to engage with candidates, who may have a little more time on their hands now and are getting more accustomed to video calls and online meetups. It's also a time when social media posts with the right kind of messaging can go a long way, with communities engaged and active across social media channels. Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, and YouTube are the most popular channels for students.

2. Rethink Your Messaging

The vast majority of consumers do not think brands should stop advertising during coronavirus,

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according to market research. Instead, they expect brands to keep them informed of what they're doing, set a positive tone, and communicate brand values. The message: You should not be afraid to continue to promote your institutions to candidates during coronavirus, but you do need to be conscious of the climate you're doing it. Obviously, what won't work as well now is to promote the benefits of your institution's location, campus experience, international collaborations, or face-to-face experiential learning activities. Instead, share how your institution is dealing with the crisis—how you're engaged with the local community or if you're at the forefront of online learning. Communicate the long-term value of the degree. Show how, in previous times of economic crisis, for example, going to full time programs helped students advance or change their career paths. Get expert industry leaders and faculty to share theirthoughts, leadership content related to the crisis. Create timely, useful content for candidates.

Above all, create content that offers value and is relevant to your target audience. This genuine, less directly promotional approach is what distinguishes content marketing from advertisements and makes it an especially useful tool during corona virus. While the coronavirus crisis is temporary, showing that you are in tune with your target audience and understand their changing needs can help instill a lasting sense of trust and value.

3. Be Transparent

Coronavirus is presenting a lot of new challenges. Some full-time students have signed petitions asking for reduced tuition fees and refunds. Plenty of candidates are uncertain about whether to still apply this year or hold off, and many are unsure about the changing admissions requirements and shifting application deadlines. It has never been more important to be honest and completely transparent with your audience. Address these issues head-on with clear communication, answer candidates' questions, and do not be afraid to talk openly about the challenges you face in your marketing content. Everyone understands that this is a difficult time and the future is uncertain; candidates mostly just want to be kept informed. If done well, communicating with candor can be an effective way to build trust with your audience. You should also be honest with yourself. Some issues that are beyond your control will impact your carefully laid plans. You may have to re-evaluate your marketing campaign goals and expectations. It's also important to be realistic when measuring the success of some marketing activities—for example, straight-up lead generation campaigns—during this time. Take a step back to consider the context you're operating in and which marketing approaches will deliver the best results.

4. Consider Content Marketing

Effective content marketing is one of the best ways to engage your audience, tell honest stories, be clear on your messaging, and define your brand. And it becomes even more important when you're looking to overcome challenges around context. External issues can impact candidates and the perception they have of your institution. However, whatever the external challenges, you can overcome them if you have a strong enough brand that helps your institution stand out. Content marketing allows you to define and promote your brand so you can overcome challenges like the current pandemic and instead have candidates associate your brand with the key themes you want to promote. Much content marketing, particularly if its purpose is brand building or brand awareness, can be longer term in focus. However, especially in today's climate, content marketing is crucial when it comes to promoting your institution and keeping your brand in the minds of prospective learners. The other positive advantage to Indian Higher Education Institutions is the global Covid-19 pandemic has left the entire admission processes for students looking to pursue overseas studies to defer. Several American and European Universities are reportedly considering cancelling all in-person classes until next year. In that case, students are unlikely to even apply for admissions for academic year 2021. Closely 2.5 million Indian students go overseas for higher education and these all students are ideal candidates for a good institution.

CONCLUSION

During the lock down situation , educational institutions have had to quickly adopt new approaches to foster student success in these extraordinary times. In the short term, these measures include delaying start dates, shifting to online course delivery, and offering new forms of financial support. But, **what can we do to support the future of Education? This paper has briefly presented some methods to be followed for success.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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