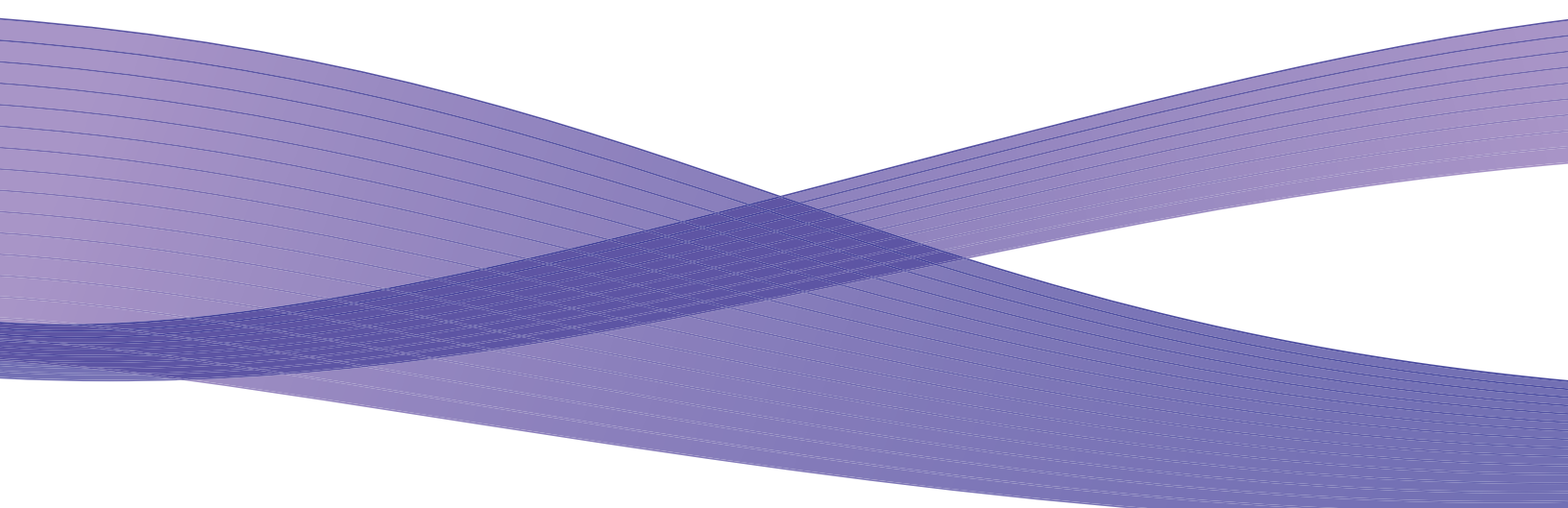


Miami University and b+p+t communication solutions Graduating with Honors Program

Miami University exceeds Honors
enrollment target by more than 30%.



Cutting-edge communications to attract high-achieving students



The Players

Industry:
Education

Client:
Miami University

Direct Marketing Provider:
b+p+t communication solutions

Variable Data Programming:
Trek Cross Media

Project Management:
Xerox 1:1 Lab

In the prestigious upper reaches of higher education, the caliber of students a university program is able to attract and enroll is a critical measure of success. So how do you get some of the most heavily recruited “high-achieving” high school students in the country to apply to your university’s Honors Program? First you design a cutting-edge education program that gives exceptional students unparalleled freedom to tailor their learning experiences to fit their highly individual goals. And then you design a cutting-edge recruitment program that tailors your communications to convey your commitment to each student’s individuality long before he or she sets foot on campus.

The Miami Way

Miami University defies expectations. For one thing, it’s not where you might think it is. Miami University isn’t perched at the sunny southern tip of Florida—it’s nestled in the picturesque college town of Oxford in southern Ohio. A public university with a long, proud history (poet Robert Frost once called it “the most beautiful college there is”), Miami University also has an exciting vision for the future. And nowhere is that vision more apparent than in the school’s prestigious Honors Program.

Recognizing that a static educational model doesn’t work in a rapidly changing world, Miami University revamped its Honors Program to give students the opportunity to shape their studies and explore their interests beyond the traditional classroom, gaining the experience and abilities major employers and educational leaders have identified as crucial for success. Clearly the highly individualized approach is working:

	Miami Honors	National Average
Acceptance rate into law school	100%	66%
Acceptance rate into medical school	100%	52%
Acceptance rate into graduate school	96%	N/A
Job placement prior to graduation	89%	35%
Students who return after the first year	98%	75%
Students who graduate within 4 years	98%	<53%

Statistics based upon information collected in a survey of 2010 Miami University Honors graduates. All graduates were asked, but not required, to respond.

Eager to increase awareness of—and enrollment in—its cutting-edge program, Miami University needed a cutting-edge strategy to get the word out to potential Honors students. With the goal of attracting a higher percentage of high-performing college-bound students, Miami University participated in the Xerox 1:1 Lab. Designed to demonstrate the marketing power of relevant direct marketing, the Xerox 1:1 Lab sets up and carries out customer-specific tests, comparing the results of traditional static direct mail vs. data-driven 1:1 direct marketing. For Miami University, the Lab was a unique opportunity to “test drive” new personalized recruitment applications in their unique market segment—and create a program that could be replicated and expanded in future years.

Building on Experience

Miami University had limited experience with personalized direct marketing before participating in the Lab. For the 2008 – 2009 recruitment campaign, it had created a letter customized with each prospective student’s name and field of interest, a dedicated landing page on the web site and individualized email blasts to prospective students. When those relatively modest 1-to-1 marketing tactics generated positive results compared to prior campaigns, Miami made the decision to build on that experience by increasing variable data marketing in the 2009 – 2010 recruitment campaign.

At first glance, b+p+t communication solutions was not the most obvious partner for Miami University on this project. Despite decades of experience as an industry leader delivering a wide range of printing services and solutions in the Cincinnati area, b+p+t was relatively new to variable data printing. But like Miami, b+p+t recognized the potential of 1-to-1 marketing and was eager to build on its traditional areas of expertise with the powerful new personalization capabilities of a recently installed Xerox® iGen3® Digital Production Press. And b+p+t had a unique advantage as a vendor: b+p+t could offer Miami University the extensive resources and expertise of the Xerox 1:1 Lab.

When the possibility of participating in the Lab was broached in an early meeting, Miami University immediately embraced the idea. Coming from an academic environment, it understood the value of rigorous experimentation, genuine collaboration and quantifiable results. It was also prepared to work as full partners, putting in the time and effort that would be required to make the program a success.

For b+p+t, the Miami University project came at an ideal time. It had been redefining its business to reflect a new emphasis on variable data printing. From learning new terminology to opening up new markets, b+p+t had been working closely with Xerox both in-house and at off-site workshops to master this new area of its business. The strong customer support offered by Xerox—including the 1:1 Lab—had been a major factor in b+p+t’s decision to purchase the iGen3. Now it was a major factor in Miami University’s decision to partner with b+p+t on the Honors Program Recruitment Campaign.



Did You Know?

Marketers are using an average of 2.7 media channels per campaign according to InfoTrends October 2010 study, *Capturing the Cross-Media Direct Marketing Opportunity*.

The Solution

Doing the Homework

Once they had committed to the Lab, Miami University and b+p+t communication solutions threw themselves into the process. It was already late in the school's recruitment program timeline when the project began, so the implementation timeline for the ambitious new campaign was shorter than usual. The deadline for students to apply to the Honors Program was November 1. In previous years, Miami had sent an Initial Search Piece to a large purchased list of high-ability high school seniors in early July and a follow-up Inquiry Piece to a narrowed-down list in early September. This time, with a later start and additional variable marketing pieces to plan and produce, the first recruitment mailing from the 1:1 Lab wouldn't drop until the second week of August.

In the meantime, a great deal of strategic and practical "homework" had to be done:

- Target audiences for the mailings had to be defined according to how much information Miami already had about them. Had they been in contact with Miami, or were they "cold calls" selected for their academic profiles? Were they male or female? What were their expressed areas of interest?
- Once audience data had been categorized, it had to be correlated to Miami's existing creative assets (campus and student photography, academic and co-curricular messaging, targeted calls to action) to maximize the relevance of the personalized mailings and increase the likelihood of response.
- Finally, 1-to-1 marketing pieces incorporating personalized messages and images had to be designed and developed, including a new customized Honors brochure, postcard and PURL utilizing variable data and messaging.

The team worked together to strategize the relevant content for the creative and design elements; Miami University took responsibility for ensuring that the "look and feel" of the new materials would be consistent with the overall branding; and b+p+t brought in Trekk Cross-Media, a full-service marketing agency experienced in variable cross-media communications, to create the 1-to-1 programming for the personalized applications using XMPie variable software. The Xerox 1:1 Lab devised a test to compare the effectiveness of a direct mail program customized to reflect the individual interests of each targeted student vs. the "one-size-fits-all" static direct mail approach Miami had used in the past.

Preparing for the Test

For the purpose of this campaign, students who had no previous known contact with Miami University, but whose basic academic profile (provided by the College Board and other data suppliers) fit the requirements of the Honors Program, would be considered "suspects." Students known to have expressed some level of interest in the Miami University Honors Program would be considered "prospects."

The plan was to extend a multi-hit campaign through the application deadline, giving Miami maximum exposure in the abbreviated time available. By incorporating email follow-up, dedicated phone support from pre-selected Miami students and admission programming appropriate to each targeted student, the goals of the campaign were to:

- Drive response to a personalized URL designed to convey more relevant information to interested students about the Miami Honor's Program and to capture more relevant information about the potential applicant through a high-value survey. Students who completed the survey would then be contacted by Honors peers whose interests most closely "matched" those of the respondents.

- Encourage campus visits during Scholar Saturdays. Previous Miami research had determined that students who visited campus, especially during the highly regarded Scholar Saturdays dedicated to Honors programming, were much more likely to apply to Miami than students who had not visited the campus.
- Convert as many qualified suspects into prospects, and prospects into applicants as possible, enabling the school to increase enrollment in Miami University's Honors Program without lowering the standards for admission.

The Campaign Rollout

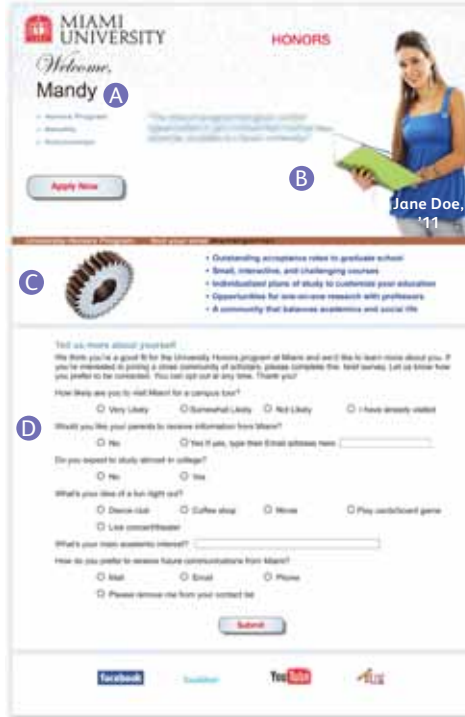
Working collaboratively, Miami University, b+p+t communication solutions, Trekk Cross-Media and the Xerox 1:1 Lab drew up schedules, lined up resources and produced printed pieces for a multi-faceted campaign.

In early August, the variable brochures and static brochures were mailed. The control portion of the campaign consisted of a traditional static self-mailer brochure with a blank BRC similar to Miami Honors recruitment brochures from previous years. The control brochure, with a personalized URL, was sent to more than 20,000 qualified high school seniors. The test portion of the campaign consisted of a variable brochure with a pre-populated BRC and a personalized URL. This brochure was sent to another list of more than 20,000 qualified high school seniors. Follow-up emails were conducted several days after the mail drop.

In the second phase of the campaign, postcards promoting campus visits on Scholar Saturdays were sent to prospects with an email follow-up to non-responders several days later. A second planned Scholar Saturdays postcard, PURL reminder and email follow-up was canceled due to overwhelming response to the first postcard mailing.



A Name personalization



- A Name personalization
- B Gender-based image of actual student including name, year of graduation and student quote
- C Major specific image
- D Survey to further understand individual student interests



- A Image specific to major
- B Image specific to gender
- C Image based on student visited or not visited campus



- A Personalized URL
- B Text based on major
- C Name personalization
- D Address pre-populated
- E Image based on major

The Results

Positive Early Results

Less than a month into the campaign, Miami University had early and convincing indications that the new 1-to-1 marketing efforts were working. Response to the first personalized postcard promoting Scholar Saturdays was so strong that the “first-come, first-served” Scholar Saturdays events were quickly filled to maximum capacity, making it unnecessary to do further promotion. The results represented a 32% increase in attendance for these influential September campus visits over the previous year.

Anecdotal evidence was also positive, including this email from the parent of a potential Honors Program applicant:

“My daughter absolutely loved the Scholars Day and spent most of yesterday working on her applications. I wanted to mention that she’s been recruited by a lot of top tier schools and what stood out to her ahead of time was Miami’s marketing materials and the personalization she received in the materials (personalized web site/Scholar’s Day invite/fun facts in the brochures/opportunities for leadership and community service as part of the program). ...She now compares all of the materials she receives to Miami’s and threw away a huge stack of other schools’ brochures yesterday because they’re not ‘good enough!’”

In addition, it was already obvious in early September that traffic to the Honors Program web site had increased dramatically over the previous year, as indicated in this note from Kristy Burton, Associate Director of the Honors & Scholars Program at Miami University:

“In the past, I have found it helpful to look at web traffic as an indicator of prospective student interest in our program at this early stage in the app process. I just pulled our web stats, and I was honestly shocked at the results. Comparing the time period 7/1 (when our application becomes available) to 9/3 for 2008 and 2009, unique visitors to our site have increased by 40%, the number of first time visitors has increased by 42% and the number of returning visitors has increased by 21%.”

Capturing New Data

Meanwhile, web activity on the PURL (personalized landing page of the campaign) was generating important information for Miami. 76% of the unique visits on the PURL were from students who had received the prospect variable data mailer. That reinforced the importance of initiating contact with potential students as early as possible, ideally before their senior year in high school, to turn suspects into prospects before the final recruitment effort. It also demonstrated the effectiveness of 1-to-1 communications designed to direct students to personalized URLs containing targeted information and calls to action.

One significant call to action on the Miami Honors Program PURL was a carefully worded survey soliciting further information from respondents. 39% of the PURL visitors completed the survey form, a very high rate of response for an action that offered no incentive for participation. This indicated to Miami that the survey was deemed relevant and easy to perform by respondents—useful information for future campaigns. Of the students who completed the survey, 89% had received the prospect variable data mailer—another indication that the personalized mailings were working.

The survey yielded valuable insights about the types of students showing strong interest in the Honors Program. 42% of the survey respondents had already visited the campus, and 34% said they were very likely to visit in the future. 72% expect to study abroad during college. Business, engineering and biological sciences topped the list of projected major areas of study. 99% of respondents expressed interest in receiving future communications from Miami. And more than 20% clicked through directly from the PURL to the Miami University Honors Program Application Page. All of this data will enable Miami to refine its messaging and approach in future recruitment campaigns.

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Making the Grade

The final and most important measures of the success of the Xerox 1:1 Lab were the application and enrollment numbers for Miami University's Honors Program. Miami University's goal was to enroll an incoming Honors class of approximately 400 students; in fact, 525 highly qualified students enrolled in the Honors class—exceeding the school's target by more than 30%. With an increased pool of qualified applicants, Miami University was able to increase class size without compromising the rigorous academic profile (exceptionally high standardized test scores, grade point averages, class rankings and other markers of academic achievement and potential) that defines the program.

The final campaign numbers were also very positive. Of the students who enrolled in the 2010 class, 90.5% had received the variable mailers, while only 9.5% had received the control mailers—an 847.9% difference. 94% of the overall number of prospective students who responded to the school's recruitment campaign had received the variable mailers—representing a 1,466.8% increase in response over the control mailers. And 98.5% of the suspects who were converted to prospects by the campaign came from the variable campaign, a 6,610.6% advantage over the control campaign.

Another crucial result for Miami wasn't an increase but a reduction. The Honors Program reduced the number of print pieces in the recruitment campaign by 29% from the previous year, while achieving the highest yield rate in its history. From 75,000 print pieces to 53,955 print pieces, Miami was able to cut down on print and mailing costs by more efficiently and effectively targeting its audience through personalization and the strategic use of electronic media.

"In the past we had always taken a 'more is better' approach," so we just kept adding names to our list without being strategic. This year, our goal was to become more strategic in our decision making by measuring suspect to prospect conversion and testing the effect of multi-channel personalized communications on the suspect population," explained Kristy Burton.

Miami was so pleased with the results of the 1:1 Lab that it is working again with b+p+t communication solutions to extend the reach and impact of personalized marketing in the 2010 – 2011 Honors recruitment campaign. With a longer time frame for development and implementation, Miami and b+p+t will focus on using the power of personalization to help the Honors Program achieve both short-term enrollment goals and strategic long-term goals such as attracting more multicultural and out-of-state students; increasing awareness of the unique and highly competitive nature of the program; and building on their reputation for academic excellence and real-world experience.

The Miami Way

Case Study Snapshot

Industry

- Education

Key Client Contacts

- Associate Director, Miami University Honors Program
- Director of Marketing & Business Development, b+p+t communication solutions

Partners

- b+p+t communication solutions
- Trekk Cross Media
- Xerox Graphic Communications

Business Challenge

- Increase enrollment to the Honors Program at Miami University, attracting high-performing college-bound students
- Create a more strategic approach to direct marketing efforts versus “a more is better approach” of mailing to high number of prospects

Background

- The Xerox 1:1 Lab is an educational program for creating data-driven direct mail
- The Miami University campaign integrated relevance in direct mail, email and personalized URLs to engage with potential college-bound students



Program Objectives

- Prove that customized, data-driven direct marketing generates more interest and secure the targeted audience—high potential high school students
- Increase the number of prospective Honors applicants
- Increase enrollment to the Honors program
- Increase the number of students to the on-campus visitor events
- Identify best practices for more strategic direct marketing versus mass marketing

Results—Power of Relevance

Data-Driven Customized Package

- Surpassed the target enrollment number by over 30%
- 90.5% of the student enrollment had received the data-driven mailer
- 1,466% increase in response over the control
- Over 6,000% advantage with the data-driven mailer for suspects converting to prospects
- Decreased print pieces by 29% using the targeted approach

For more information about the Xerox 1:1 Lab or to schedule an appointment with a Xerox representative to discuss how your business can build better relationships with customers using the power of digital, data-driven direct marketing, visit www.xerox.com/1to1lab or call 1-800-ASK-XEROX.

