

## ENROLLMENT EFFICIENCY: TURNING INQUIRIES INTO STUDENTS

Shane Sparks, Managing Director, Enrollment Resources, and Martin Lind, Education Vertical Manager, Leads360



The success of a private sector school begins during the enrollment process. A poorly-run admissions department handicaps a school's success from the beginning: spending money on leads not contacted as quickly as their competitors, and wasting enrollment counselor time trying to contact an inquiry long after they have likely chosen another school.

About 10 years ago, it became clear that the make-or-break performance indicator for converting Internet leads was speed to contact. Schools began improving their response times to inquiries from several days to responding immediately. Virtually every high-performing school now practices an immediate response approach to contacting Internet leads.

However, contact rates still remain low. This appears to be partly a result of leads being sold to multiple schools and partly because there haven't been any best practices established around a contact strategy. Clients frequently ask us, "How often should we call a prospect? How many calls are too many? How many are too few?" There wasn't research to provide a right or wrong answer; it really depended on the experience and gut feeling of the admissions director.

Recently, Leads360 conducted an analysis of the ideal contact sequence and illustrated some groundbreaking results. **After examining millions of anonymized leads across thousands of clients, they determined that the ideal contact sequence is six contact attempts over 12 days followed by periodic check-in calls.** This approach is most effective when combined with an email marketing campaign.

The study found that the optimal strategy is calling three times the first day that you get the lead, once on day three, again on day four, and a final time on day 11 or 12. More specifically, new inquiries should be called immediately and in two subsequent time windows during the first day until contact has been made. If contact has still not been achieved, calling on day three, four and day 11 or 12 will help maximize contact and conversion rates.

Logically, the five call attempts on days one through four are to maximize the likelihood of getting someone on the phone who is likely also being contacted by other schools. The delay until day 11 or 12 gives the school a chance to re-engage a prospect who has interviewed a few schools but did not find one of interest and is now ready to engage with a second round of schools.

Most schools do not take a consistent approach to contacting inquiries they receive and few have a consistent response strategy that extends past the first call. This new research strongly suggests that to take your admissions team to the next level of performance, your school will need to create a system to sequence calls. This research is a good place to start, but we encourage you to experiment because your needs may differ. You should measure the results of every strategy and adjust it to maximize your enrollment efficiency.

Shane Sparks is managing director of Enrollment Resources, a conversion improvement company specializing in the for-profit education sector. Learn more at [www.enrollmentresources.com](http://www.enrollmentresources.com). Martin Lind is the education vertical manager at Leads360, enrollment management software designed for schools that compete for students. Learn more at [www.leads360.com/highered](http://www.leads360.com/highered).

“... THE IDEAL CONTACT SEQUENCE IS SIX CONTACT ATTEMPTS OVER 12 DAYS FOLLOWED BY PERIODIC CHECK IN CALLS.”