



Web Strategy and Interactive Marketing Services

Create online connections that produce enrollment results

RUFFALOSM
NOEL LEVITZ

Develop a digital presence that engages students on your site, in your emails, and through social media

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Students have more options than ever to research, evaluate, and communicate with your campus. This means that you have to be ready for them along an ever-expanding avenue of online access points: your website, emails, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, text messages, and more.

How can you ensure that those students have an ideal experience, one that meets their expectations and positions your institution positively?

Our Web Strategy and Interactive Marketing Services help you optimize your online presence across every key digital platform you use to reach students. We partner with your campus to produce online experiences that attract the interest of students, engage them with your campus, and move them toward enrollment.

Find the guidance, expertise, and resources you need to create a comprehensive and compelling online experience

What do you receive when you partner with Ruffalo Noel Levitz for web services?

- **A collaborative partner for your success**—We work with you to analyze your current e-recruitment strategies and align them with your overall enrollment goals.
- **A customized approach that fits your exact objectives**—Looking to optimize the search results for specific academic programs? Develop an email campaign that’s optimized for mobile devices? Build a brand new website that increases interaction? No goal is too big or too small, and we’ll make sure the solution we propose meets those goals.
- **A full arsenal of next-generation tools to analyze and engage the digital generation of students**—Discover everything you need to engage prospective students online: web design and content, email development, search optimization and interactive marketing strategies, social networking solutions, and analytical tools to assess the effectiveness of your efforts.

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Have a question or want to talk about web strategy and e-recruitment? Start a conversation with the web strategy team.

We love to chat with campus colleagues about your goals, challenges, and opportunities for your websites and online campaigns. Email us at ContactUs@RuffaloNL.com or call us at **800.876.1117**.

Services for online strategy and development

Website assessment and development

Understand what students want from your website, then exceed their expectations.

Digital Marketing Analysis with Advanced Diagnostics

This advanced analysis assesses your website in terms of its recruitment marketing value. It includes a search engine optimization (SEO) analysis of your site, up to three competitors' sites, and pages for two academic programs; user analysis including "heat maps" showing user behavior on specific pages; and a review of site management, governance, and workflows.

Web and Interactive Marketing Opportunities Analysis

This is a comprehensive study of your overall site performance for key external user groups, emphasizing enrollment markets and including a review of SEO performance, Google Analytics, and position among competitors.

Website Design and Development

Create a new site or revamp your existing site using designs that engage students and make it easy for them to navigate. This includes information architecture development and graphic design services, including template development.

Content Strategy

Populate your site with content that increases your SEO for key terms and makes a compelling case to enroll at your campus.

Governance and CMS Consulting

Learn about the strategies and CMS systems that can help you keep your content fresh, manageable, and optimized for search.

Testing and analytics

Gather vital site data and strengthen your search rankings.

Remote and Campus-Based Usability Testing

See how students in different markets react to your site. This testing can be customized for pre- and post-site development and includes participants from two different markets.

Google Analytics Strategy, Analysis, and Instruction

Add the power of Google Analytics to your site and learn how to interpret, evaluate, and act on the data you gather.

E-Communications

Deliver messages that get opened and make enrollment connections through social media.

Campus Email Consulting

Deploy emails that resonate with prospective students while letting Ruffalo Noel Levitz handle the development and delivery. We'll work with you to develop key messages, write the content, and design the emails. Then we'll send them out and share the results with you.

Social Media Strategy

Tap into the enrollment power of Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, blogs, and other emerging social media. Ruffalo Noel Levitz will analyze your enrollment goals and help you develop a social media approach that builds connections with prospective students while remaining manageable for your campus.

Search engine optimization (SEO) and online marketing

Generate better search traffic and student leads from your digital marketing.

SEO Consulting

Increase web traffic to key pages on your website and analyze SEO from your competitors with the most advanced SEO consulting available to higher education.

Paid Interactive Marketing

Engage prospective students across the web with targeted ads that grab their interest and generate qualified leads for your campus.

Receive support at every step of the way from a team of consultants and specialists

The Web Strategy and Interactive Marketing team brings a combination of higher education enrollment experience and technical expertise you will not find anywhere else, including:

- Consultants who have worked with public and private campuses of every type, size, and mission.
- Current campus e-recruitment professionals sharing their insights into what's working right now in digital marketing and e-recruitment.
- Expert web writers who can balance creative copy with search-optimized content.
- Web designers with experience working with campus websites.
- Technical specialists in SEO, web analytics, information architecture, and other critical web areas.

Web strategies in action: Recommendations from our consultants

Taken from the Ruffalo Noel Levitz blog: blog.noellevitz.com

Strategies for creating engaging, optimized web copy

Stephanie Geyer, Vice President, Web Strategy and Interactive Marketing Services

1) Prioritize the pages you optimize

To get the best return on your investment of time and/or money, focus your initial search engine optimization efforts on “magnet” pages, the ones on your website that are the most likely to attract search engine clicks. For most colleges and universities, these are degree and program pages, followed by accreditation pages, financial aid pages, and rankings, awards, and recognition pages.

If your institution has a significant number of degree and program pages, and you need to further prioritize your work, use the following criteria to select pages for optimization:

- Programs or degrees that have capacity for students and need an enrollment boost.
- New programs or degrees that you need to build awareness for.
- Programs or degrees that are more unique to your institution and therefore have less competition for search results from competing campuses.
- Popular programs and degrees that will have large numbers of students searching for them (e.g. criminal justice, nursing).

2) Incorporate keywords into your web writing

To determine which words and phrases are the most popular (and therefore have the highest search volume), it's important to conduct keyword research. For maximum effectiveness, insert keywords into headings and subheadings (H1 and H2), body copy, anchor text in links, and photo captions. For examples on how to do this, see our pages on higher education SEO at www.noellevitz.com/SEO.

3) Plan your page

Once a visitor has landed on your page, the key to getting your copy read is to have clear goals for what you'd like to accomplish with the page. What are the main points you want to communicate? What questions will you answer? What information will be presented on this page that isn't already covered on another page? What information should be left off this page, either deleted or moved to another page?

Keep the focus of each page tight. By maintaining a narrow focus, it's easier to position the page for SEO (particularly in terms of URLs, title tags, and H1 headings). In presenting your information, follow the inverted pyramid delivery, presenting the most important information at the top of the page, with less important information placed toward the bottom.

4) Consider how the page relates to other pages

In pre-planning for a page, it's also helpful to consider how the page relates to other pages on your site. For example, if your school offers a BA and a BS option for the same major, and you intend to create a separate page for each degree, you'll need to decide what information to include on each of the respective pages and how to cross-reference them.

It's also important to consider:

- Where the page will reside on your website.
- Which other pages on your site will link to the page.
- Which other pages the page will link to.

5) Optimize the length and amount of content on the page

Google doesn't like pages that are too short, but web visitors generally don't like pages that are too long. Ideally, you want to find a happy medium between these two demands and create pages with about 300-700 words of content. If you have a page that's too long, split the copy and create multiple pages; if the page is too short, beef up the content or eliminate the page.

On all pages, break up the text, keeping it in short chunks. You can use bullets, links, and pull quotes to help separate the text and give visitors points of interest.

As you're writing each page, don't assume the reader knows something about your school. Many won't, so it's important to include brief, top-level information on your pages. Including something as simple as "Centennial University, located in Denver, Colorado, offers more than 35 bachelor degree programs" can go a long way toward helping visitors lock in on key points.

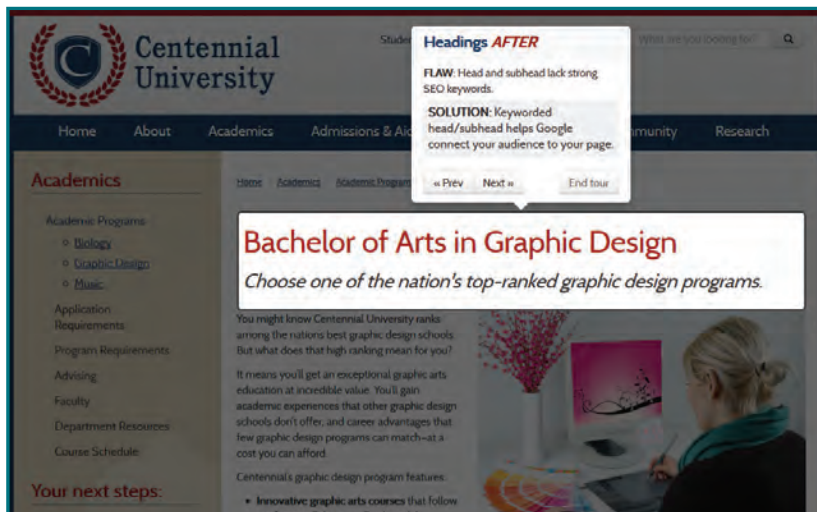


Stephanie Geyer directs website development and e-communications projects for Ruffalo Noel Levitz. Her web consultation services are based on current best practices in enrollment management and are frequently integrated with recruitment and marketing consultations and market research projects. She also oversees the annual E-Expectations research project on the E-Expectations of prospective college students.

“ Once a visitor has landed on your page, the key to getting your copy read is to have clear goals for what you'd like to accomplish with the page. ”

Stephanie Geyer

See more examples of SEO strategies in action at www.noellevitz.com/SEO



Find out how to optimize content for search on your campus webpages while also making your content more engaging and readable for prospective students. Vist www.noellevitz.com/SEO.

Content marketing for higher education: The psychology of the click

Michael Lofstead, Assistant Vice President, Web Strategy and Interactive Marketing Services

When I work with campuses on content marketing, I get this question a lot:

“Why not just put the e-deliverable PDF link or the content within the e-brochure on the landing page, instead of making it available only following a form submission?”

First, you want to ask your respondents to take an action to demonstrate their interest in your institution. This approach is rooted in the marketing psychology that the prospective students who request e-brochures have—without expressly realizing it—increased their emotional commitment to the school. By accepting your offer and completing the form’s required fields, they have entered into somewhat of a “social contract” with your campus. Put simply, the transaction goes like this:

Step 1: The landing page for your campaign has a call-to-action offering an item (in this example an e-brochure) that provides informational value for the prospective student.

Step 2: The prospective student considers the offer and decides (within just seconds) if they agree it is of potential value to them.

Step 3: They fill in the form, click submit, and then (reasonably) expect that you will complete your part of the transaction and deliver what was offered, consistent with the promises you made in the language of the offer’s call-to-action or the social contract.

This line of marketing thought even goes a few steps further, suggesting that from the first click on a search engine ad through each subsequent click to the landing page or microsite’s top links, the level of subconscious commitment increases.

Adherence to this marketing philosophy also heightens the importance of accuracy when describing the items being offered (an e-brochure, video, infographic, etc.) on the landing page when seeking to entice someone to fill in the form. **It is critical that we avoid misleading characterizations of what that content will include**—for instance, creating a false promise that your e-brochure answers every question a student could possibly have about attending your campus, paying for college, choosing a career in a certain field, and so on. When we oversell, we risk creating false expectations that then cause the student to feel disappointed or misled when they find the deliverable does not match our description of it.



Michael Lofstead offers 20 years of experience in higher education marketing and communications. His areas of expertise include interactive marketing, email communication strategies, landing page optimization, web strategy, search engine optimization (SEO), online lead generation, analytics, and team development and training. He has extensive experience with customer relationship management (CRM) systems, content management systems (CMS), Google Analytics, email delivery systems, and higher education portals.



Prospective students who request e-brochures have—without expressly realizing it—increased their emotional commitment to the school. By accepting your offer and completing the form’s required fields, they have entered into somewhat of a “social contract” with your campus.



Michael Lofstead

Making the optimal investment in time and social media content: The example of Twitter as an e-recruitment tool

Vaughn Shinkus, Executive Consultant, Web Strategy and Interactive Marketing Services

As with all potential marketing strategies, much of the answer depends on what you hope to accomplish in relation to your audiences and high-level organizational goals. It can be tempting to experiment with emerging platforms, but entering a new social space is ill-advised until you have the bandwidth to truly build an engaged community.

A balanced social media program is built on a robust presence in established networks and fully-baked strategies for expanding your social footprint. Let's consider an established network such as Twitter. Twitter may not be a main channel for recruitment, but it is a very worthwhile addition to a well-rounded e-recruiting portfolio. The 140 character limit per tweet makes it easier for campuses to plan and deliver multiple daily messages, helping keep their feeds active. Its interactive nature allows campuses to engage in ongoing dialogue with active Twitter users among students, prospective students, and other important constituencies. It also can turn users into advocates for your campus as they re-tweet to their followers, giving you valuable free marketing.

However, according to the *2014 E-Recruiting Practices Report*, only two-thirds of four-year public campuses (68 percent) have Twitter accounts. That number drops to 48 percent for four-year privates and just 24 percent for two-year institutions. This means that many campuses are missing out on a cost effective and manageable tool for their e-recruitment efforts.

Campuses without Twitter accounts should consider starting one as a means of sharing updates that strengthen their value proposition and engaging in meaningful dialog with students, alumni, and other members of their community who are active in the medium.

If your campus has an existing Twitter account, look at the content you publish. Are your followers re-tweeting it or responding to it? Are you presenting engaging content that leads students to important information about academic offerings, campus life, or other items that may be key in their enrollment decisions? Do any of your tweets lead to places where students can make inquiries or offer information?



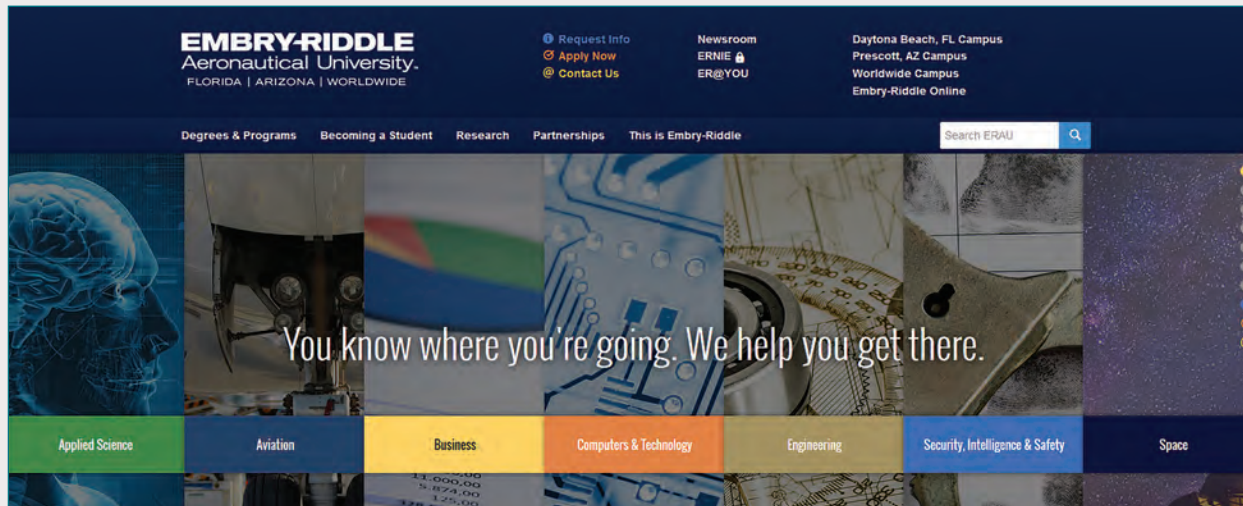
Vaughn Shinkus brings more than 20 years of higher education experience to his work with Ruffalo Noel Levitz campus partners. His areas of expertise include social media, website development, content strategy, email communication, public relations, and marketing communications staffing and team leadership.

“A balanced social media program is built on a robust presence in established networks and fully-baked strategies for expanding your social footprint.”

Vaughn Shinkus

CASE STUDY | Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

After doubling its programs, university focuses on website development



The top aerospace and aviation university in the world, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) offers seven primary fields of study, including more than 70 baccalaureate, master’s, and PhD programs. The university consists of a centralized administration with three main business units: 1) a traditional, residential campus in Daytona Beach, Florida; 2) a traditional, residential campus in Prescott, Arizona; and 3) a flexible Worldwide campus with more than 150 locations across the globe that primarily serve adult, online, and military populations.

With a presidential vision to reach a wider audience and academically transform from an aeronautical institution into a world-class, comprehensive university, ERAU grew from 30 degree programs in 2005-06 to 75 programs of study today. As the university invested in this vision, website leadership, governance, and structural challenges evolved into a “culture of no” that stalled the university’s ability to innovate its website. Instead of driving enrollment to their three campuses, the site reflected internal silos and agendas with a primary focus on the university’s three-campus organizational structure rather than the programs and educational outcomes of its students.

In response to a sense of urgency to grow enrollment and realize returns on investment in new degree programs, institutional leadership shifted their focus to the web team to redevelop its Worldwide site in 2012-13. To fine-tune the user interface and content strategy, the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Web Strategy and Interactive Marketing Services team reviewed new design prototypes and facilitated direct research with prospective students, including quantitative survey and qualitative user-testing sessions. The results of our research were used to fine-tune the final user interface and content strategy for the site.

To promote the breakdown of silos across all of ERAU, the Worldwide partnership served as the basis for additional user-testing projects for the Prescott and Daytona Beach sites. As a result, ERAU’s enrollment, marketing, web, and IT teams converged and reorganized into a powerful, closely-knit team with the resources, ideas, and knowledge to drive enrollment while building strong internal relationships. Staff, administrators, and faculty creatively thrive in a transparent culture that actively solicits review, input, and feedback from the university community. With these new strategies in place, ERAU launched the redesigned www.erau.edu in July 2014, transitioning from campus-based to program- and outcomes-focused content.

ERAU continues its partnership with Ruffalo Noel Levitz, currently employing dynamic search engine optimization (SEO) and content strategy in the development of playbooks, ensuring internal staff, such as admissions counselors and program marketers, have a singular go-to resource for each of ERAU’s programs. Serving as an online training manual, these playbooks outline each program’s essential value proposition, key positioning themes, functional details, marketing materials, alumni outcomes, competitors, and potential pitfalls. Each playbook is a living document, allowing for updates as programs evolve.



Playbooks for staff were optimized for mobile devices.



Partnering with [Ruffalo Noel Levitz] helped the university realign resources in a way that put web and digital communication and marketing technologies at the forefront of our overall efforts. Prior to our partnership, many staff and faculty members saw the web as mysterious, an afterthought.

“The playbook project was really a turning point in our relationship with faculty. It gave them the assurance that there is something new going on in university marketing—that our doors are open and we value their contributions.”



Chrissy Clary—Director, Web Services Management

Bill Hampton—Vice President for Enrollment

Case Study | Monroe Community College

Monroe Community College (MCC) is considered the flagship community college within the SUNY system and ranks within the top 2 percent of community colleges in the United States for the most associate degrees awarded. However, the college has been facing projected declines in the amount of college-bound seniors in the Northeast for the next 5-10 years. Given the future enrollment outlook for the region, MCC sought to strategically stabilize and increase enrollment, and in late 2012 they engaged Ruffalo Noel Levitz to deliver recruitment and e-communications support.

With a reorganization and new leadership in key enrollment and marketing positions, counsel from Ruffalo Noel Levitz provided MCC with the ability to develop realistic and measurable funnel goals as well as strategies and recommendations for segmenting and monitoring their recruitment funnel within territory and relationship management best practices.

MCC’s recruitment initiatives resulted in:

- Establishment of a new CRM for student communications and funnel management;
- Strengthening MCC’s campus visit program, which led to a 150 percent increase in summer visits;
- Realigning staff roles to ensure inquiry collection and fulfillment;
- Admissions and marketing collaboration to create plans, timelines, budgets, and priorities;
- Financial aid process and packaging better aligned to serve new-student populations; and
- Improved communication flow from inquiry to orientation and student services.

Apply for Financial Aid ASAP

Need Help? Send us your questions today.

Tell us what's holding you back. Questions? Concerns? Use the form below to tell us what's keeping you from registering, then we'll contact you with information and help.

Contact Admissions
{QuestionSource}

Financial Aid Opt Out
[Name]
[Email Address]

I will not be applying for financial aid for fall

For Monroe Community College, emails and customized landing pages were designed to help target specific student audiences and generate program interest.

“Our consultants were all fantastic. Each of them was genuine, extremely knowledgeable in their field of expertise, and they generally listened to us. They didn't enter the partnership with a 'heavy hammer' approach. Instead, they had a distinctive way of listening to us and developing unique, workable solutions.”

Randy Bowen—Assistant Vice President, Enrollment Management

Improvements in MCC's e-recruitment practices were central to the college's success. Initiatives included adoption of a campus email consulting program with individual landing pages; improved website navigation and information architecture; and search-engine-optimized content and paid interactive marketing designed to target specific audiences, generate program interest, drive prospective student inquiries, and ultimately guide students through the enrollment process.

Examples of results:

- MCC's email campaign allowed enrollment management staff to reach “across the aisle” to collaborate with financial aid, student accounts, and satellite campus staff;
- Ruffalo Noel Levitz's initial Web and Interactive Marketing Opportunities Analysis provided a collegewide candid discussion about the power of their website; and
- The ensuing discussion further advanced the philosophy that MCC's website is their most powerful recruitment tool.

Over the past few years, perhaps the most important benefit of the MCC/Ruffalo Noel Levitz partnership has been the culture change that evolved. Collaboration across campus removed the notion that enrollment management was primarily viewed as a processing operation. Now, the support and integration of enrollment management and admissions and nearly every other department on campus is appreciated as a means towards fiscal health and prolonged stability.

About Ruffalo Noel Levitz

A trusted partner to higher education, Ruffalo Noel Levitz helps systems and campuses reach and exceed their goals for enrollment, marketing, and student success. Over the past three decades, our higher education professionals have consulted with thousands of colleges and universities nationwide.

Ruffalo Noel Levitz has worked with four-year and two-year campuses to optimize their digital marketing for enrollment, including website development, email consultation, social media strategies, online analytics, and user testing. Our combination of enrollment management experience and technical expertise ensures that campuses create an online experience that meets the expectations of today's prospective students while aligning with your institution's enrollment goals.

For more information, visit www.RuffaloNL.com.

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Start by benchmarking your online e-recruitment efforts with an on-campus Digital Marketing Analysis

See how your website, email campaigns, and social media outreach compare to the latest national research on student expectations. This on-campus analysis is grounded in current best practices and the latest research. You receive a review that highlights opportunities for greater engagement as well as long-term recommendations.

Email ContactUs@RuffaloNL.com or call **800.876.1117** to find out more about what you can learn about your digital marketing in just a few hours.