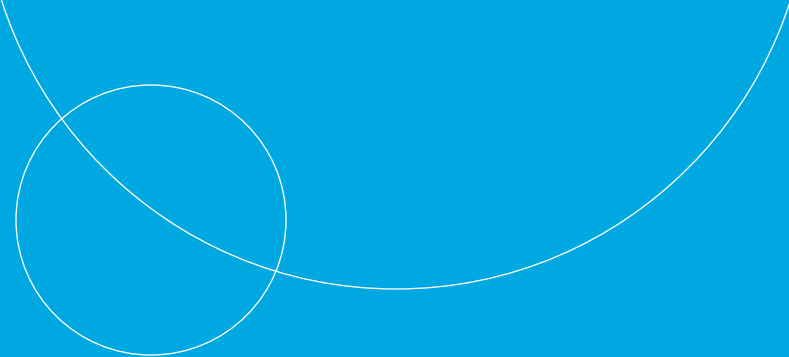rnl national conference
leading ai innovation
empowering higher education

Creating a Recruitment Culture: Building Community and Inspiring Engagement in Higher Ed Marketing

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How does it feel to be a higher ed marketer?

(This is a safe space)

What we'll cover

1. Overview and background

2. How to build a recruitment-focused culture and community

3. How to maximize college and university resources in support of departmental recruitment marketing

4. How to build data-driven strategies between a university, its colleges and its units

About the College of Arts and Sciences at Ohio State

- **38** academic departments and schools
- **20+** centers and institutes
- **80+** majors
- **100+** minors
- **50+** graduate programs
- **15+** certificate programs
- **16,400+** undergraduate students
- **2,200+** graduate students
- **2,500+** faculty and staff
- **215,000+** alumni

About the Marketing and Communications Office

- We partner with academic departments, college administrative offices, and the university in providing creative solutions for strategically engaging with our core audiences.

- Our current portfolio includes brand management, email marketing, content marketing, social media, graphic design, recruitment, alumni and internal communications, video production, and strategy.

- Senior Director
- Assistant Director
- Senior Marketing Strategist
- Content Strategist
  - 2 Senior Content Specialists
- Social Media Senior Associate
- Senior Graphic Designer
- Senior Advancement Comm. Manager
  - Advancement Comm. Specialist
- Digital Media Studio Manager
  - Audiovisual Production Specialist

The recruitment marketing landscape is changing...

What is the enrollment cliff?

- A significant multiyear decline in the number of traditional-age college students, which will peak in 2025 and then decline dramatically for several years.

- The college-going population is expected to shrink across the next five to 10 years by as many as 15 percentage points, or approximately 576,000 students.

  - Ohio high school graduates who enrolled in a two or four-year institution by October of the year they completed high school:

    - 2016: **70%**

    - 2021: **66%**

What other challenges is higher education facing?

- Growing skepticism about the value of higher education

  - Only a third of Americans aged 18 to 29 think a college education is 'worth it' and only 36% of Americans have a lot of confidence in higher education.

- Market forces impacting how institutions should think about enrollment

  - 35% of students do not believe education after high school is necessary and 63% of teens are open to options other than a four-year degree.

- The rapidly increasing cost of an education and the student debt burden

  - Nearly 40% of student loan borrowers don't finish their degree within six years.

What do these challenges mean for our team?

- A renewed and innovative focus on:

    - Our recruitment numbers!

    - Reminding the public of the value of arts and humanities majors

    - Assisting under-enrolled academic programs

    - Better understanding the changing needs and expectations of the student and their parents and families

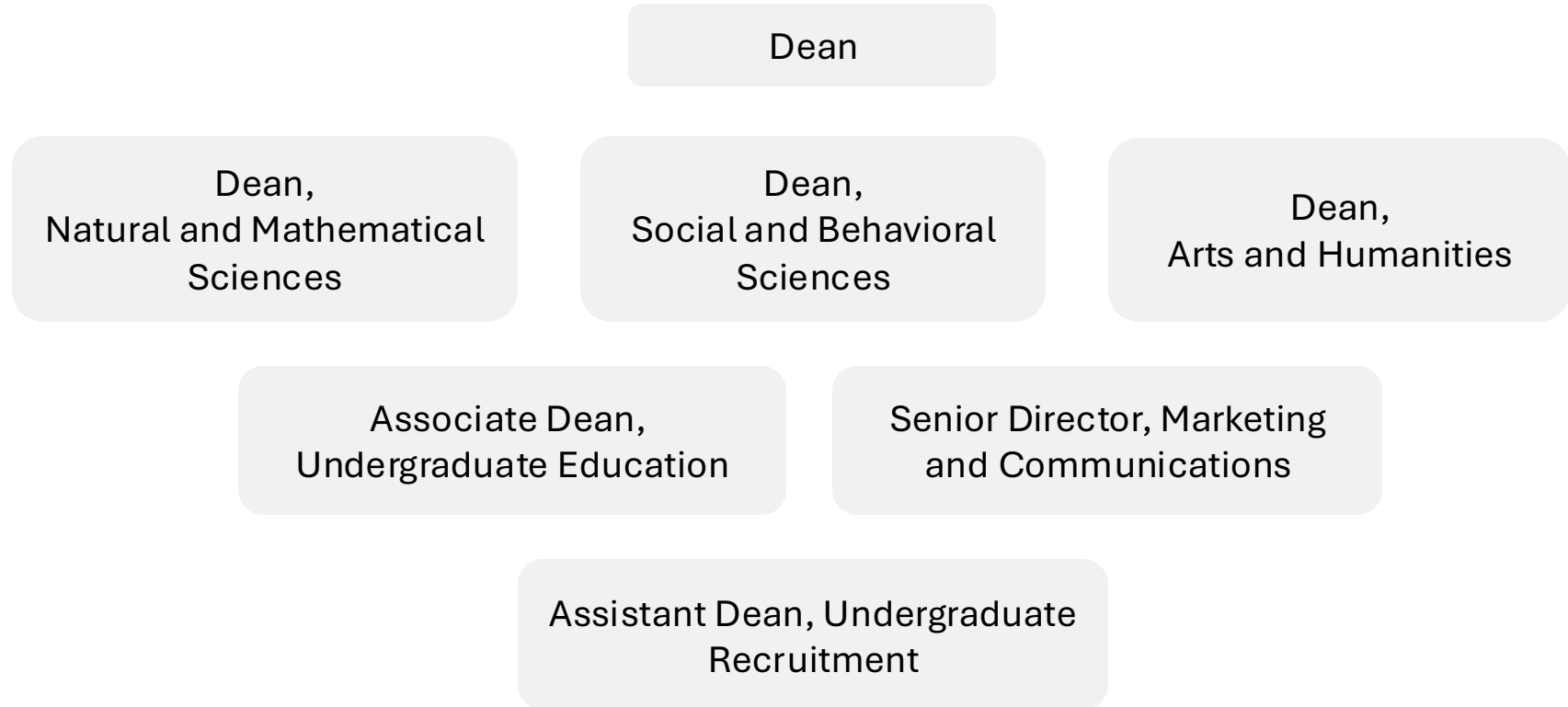# Why create a recruitment culture and community?

- Community is defined as a group of individuals who share a mutual concern for one another's welfare.

- When people have a sense of community at work, they're:
  - 58% more likely to thrive at work
  - 55% more engaged at work
  - 66% more likely to stay with their organization
  - Experience significantly less stress and are far more likely to thrive outside of work, too

How to build a recruitment-focused culture and community

It starts with...support from leadership!

Our key partners:

Dean

Dean,
Natural and Mathematical
Sciences

Dean,
Social and Behavioral
Sciences

Dean,
Arts and Humanities

Associate Dean,
Undergraduate Education

Senior Director, Marketing
and Communications

Assistant Dean, Undergraduate
Recruitment

It continues with…setting AND managing expectations

...ng and convincing larger... found ourselves having to... few HVI marketing proj... from diving into those with higher impact.

Can you make me a logo?

This email has to go out immediately (it doesn't)

Let's get together and rethink our entire recruitment messaging strategy (it's March)

Can you make me a PDF that I can upload to my website?

Can you help me promote my event? (it's tomorrow)

Let's spend our entire advertising budget on a billboard

Can you make me a 32-page newsletter? Oh, I only want to print 10 copies.

Can you market my course? (there are 7 prerequisite courses)

It ends with…building community and providing support!

- We hold department-level yield season office hours.
- We offer college-level recruitment workshops.
- We provide financial support through recruitment grants.
- We supply logistical support for recruitment events.
- We build and host toolkits showcasing easy-to-use marketing materials.
- We encourage relationship-building efforts among the recruitment marketing community.

How to maximize college and university resources in support of departmental recruitment marketing

Where we started:

- We followed what felt like a customer service model – a unit requests a project, and we give them that project (no questions asked).

- We tracked our projects in Microsoft Word and in spreadsheet software. This made it hard to track our volume, to share status updates, and to collaborate across teams.

- We were not coordinating as a team because our work areas were extremely siloed. Often, we did not know what projects were being worked on in design vs. content and where the opportunities for strategic work were.

Our team was doing a lot of **reactive marketing**.

It felt a lot like this:
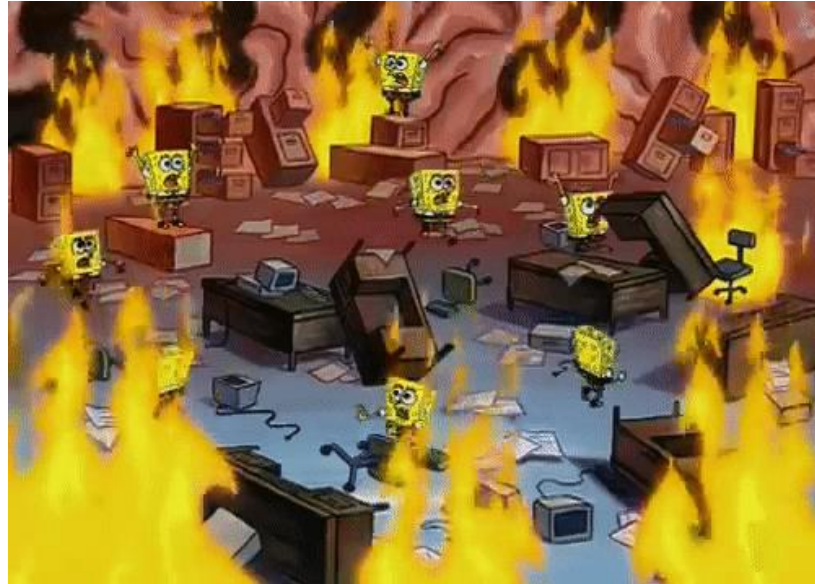
We knew we needed to get organized…

Here is what we did:

- We determined our policies and processes as a team.

- We researched and invested in a project management system.

- We created an intake form to formalize our project queue.

- We developed marketing toolkits for our units.

DISCLAIMER

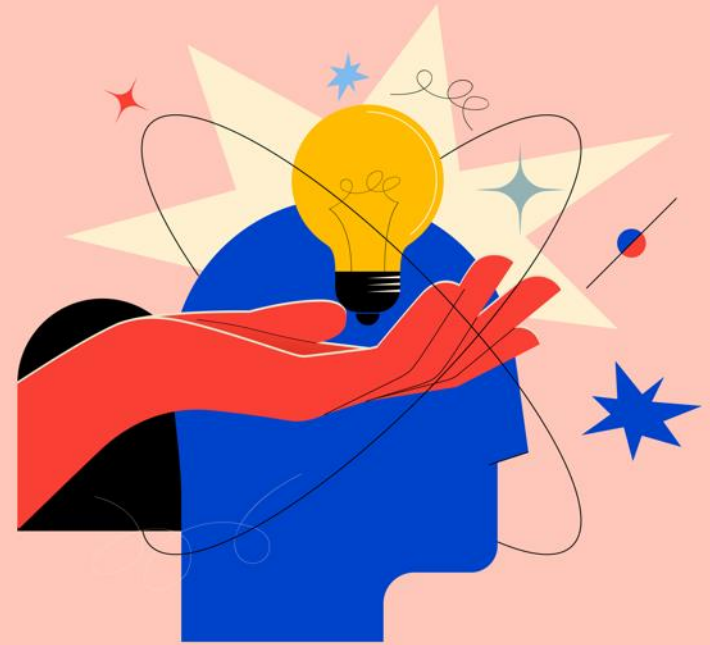# This type of work doesn't happen overnight.

Don't get discouraged!

Determine policies and processes as a team

These are the kind of questions we asked ourselves:

- What kind of projects are we currently doing?

    - What kind of projects DO we want to do?

    - What kind of projects DON'T we want to do?

- What are our timelines for work?

- How do we intake projects?

Invest in a project management system

- Allows us to anticipate volume, create a work queue, manage tasks and timelines

- Encourages collaboration and communication

- Gets work out of our inboxes

- Emphasizes strategic thinking and planning

- Reports on project and productivity data

We chose **Asana** but there are a lot of great systems out there.
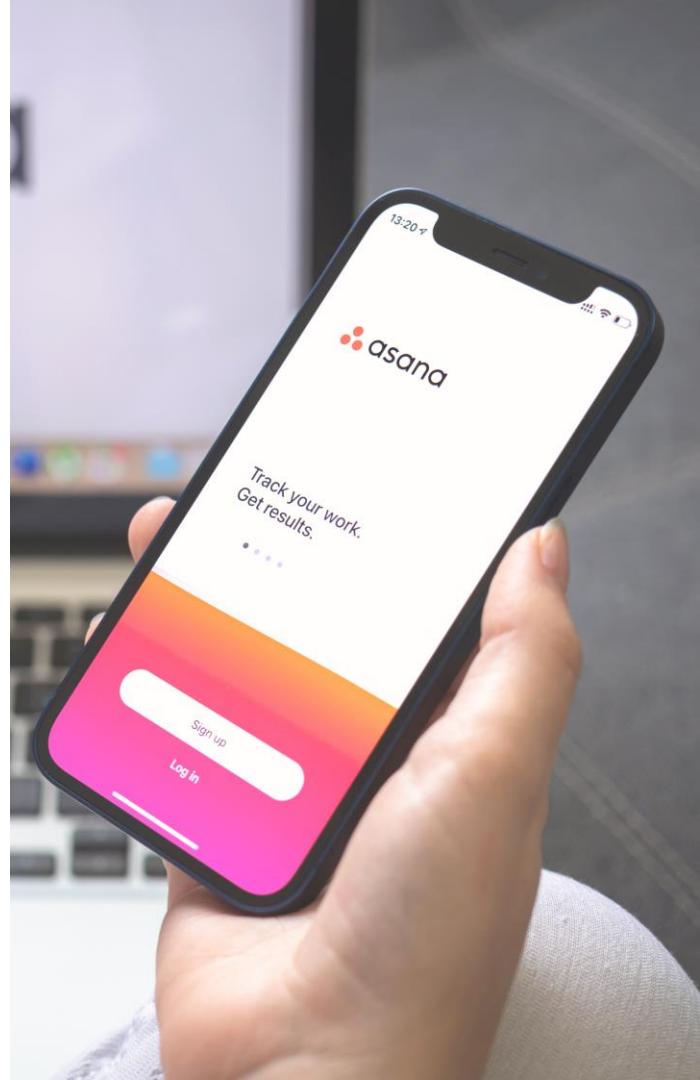
Create an intake form

- Captures all marketing activities offered through our service menu

- Funnels all unit requests in one place

- Connects directly to our project management system

- Asks high-level questions to get units thinking about marketing strategy

- Has deadline-driven parameters to discourage "customer-service" requests and allow us time to intake and schedule (benefits everyone!)

Your information

Submitter name *

[Enter your name]

Submitter email address *

[Enter your email address]

Unit name *

[Choose one... ⌄]

Have you already connected with someone in the Marketing and Communications office about this project?

Please answer below and include the name of the staff member you spoke to.

[Enter your answer]

Request details

Request name *

What are you requesting?

[Enter your answer]

Request type *

☐ Graphic design

☐ Content and editorial

☐ Email

☐ Social media

☐ Strategy consultation

Build a general marketing toolkit

Resources

- Brand guidelines and answers to frequently asked questions

    - Unit identification

    - Editorial style

    - Social media policies

- Industry resources and best practices

- An online community to share updates and ask questions

Marketing and Communications

The Marketing and Communications office advances reputation and drives choice for the College of Arts and Sciences. We partner with departments, schools, centers and programs in providing creative solutions for strategically engaging with your audiences.

147 Journalism Building
asccomm@osu.edu

Our staff >

Project inquiry form

Submit news and events

Logos and templates

Content

Email marketing

Social media

Build a general marketing toolkit

Resources

- We audited the types of projects we do a lot of (examples: newsletters, brochures, postcards, posters, flyers) and made downloadable **templates** for our units — and us! — to use.

  - We can ensure materials produced are consistent with the university brand and meet accessibility requirements.

  - We can encourage units to use these templates rather than come to us for custom work.
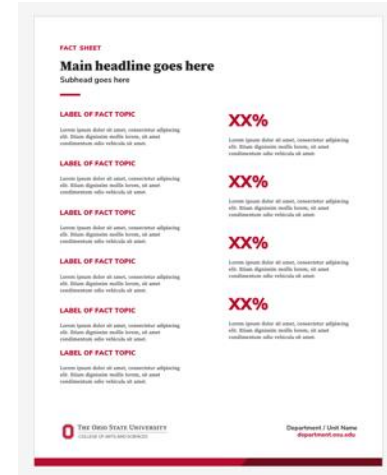
Build a *recruitment* marketing toolkit

Resources

- Recruitment timelines and updates to make throughout the year

- Templates and brand guidelines

- Prompts to establish unit core messaging

- Events to participate in

- Industry research about prospective students and parents/families

- Ways to connect with us (office hours)

Building a recruitment marketing toolkit

Funding

- We work with the Office of Undergraduate Recruitment to administer **yield marketing grants**.

- Units submit their proposals in early fall and then work with our office in winter and spring to deploy projects and initiatives.

  - Project examples: personalized postcards from current undergraduates, program overview brochures/handouts, table fair collateral and merchandise, department-hosted visit days and webinars

  - All activities are tracked, and data is reviewed over the summer to determine effectiveness and build upon for future projects.

Where we are:

- We are professionalizing the work that we do and educating our units (and ourselves!) on the value of marketing and communications.

- We are working across our team strategically with more opportunities for collaboration and creativity.

- We are anticipating requests and planning our work queue, allowing more time for high-impact initiatives.

- We have templates and resources available to increase our productivity and empower our units to do their own marketing work.

- We are giving ourselves grace and room to explore.

Our team is now doing a lot of **proactive marketing**.

It feels a lot like this:

mn national conference

How to build data-driven strategies between a university, its colleges and its units

Department of Philosophy

- Marketing and communications tactics:

  - Webinar (students, parents/families)

  - Storytelling

  - Branded merchandise

Department of Classics

- Marketing and communications tactics:

  - Personalized notecards to admitted students

  - Invitations to bring admitted students to campus for a personalized experience

Department of Mathematics Actuarial Science

- Marketing and communications tactics:
  - Yield email communication to students
  - Improved event marketing

School of Earth Sciences

- Marketing and communications tactics:
  - Web content improvement
  - Professional student videos
  - Social media strategy
  - GE courses campaigns to current students

Department of Astronomy

- Marketing and communications tactics:
  - Web content improvement
  - Professional student and faculty videos
  - Social media strategy
  - 2024 Solar eclipse

Department of Speech and Hearing Science

- Marketing and communications tactics:
  - Student ambassadors
 - Social media strategy

What's next for our college recruitment marketing?

- Reorganize yield marketing recruitment grants

- Improve department recruitment marketing for select units

- New and improved college-level recruitment marketing messaging

- New and improved college-level recruitment marketing materials, print and digital

Things you can start doing today

- Identify your people (advocates)

- Identify your people (community)

- Audit the type of work you're doing

- Make a template

- Make an intake form

- Invest in your craft

- Be kind to yourself
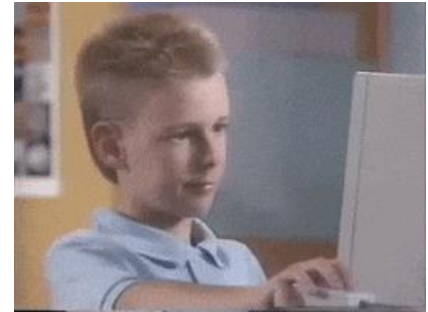
Let's talk!

Thank you!

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