

CAREER COLLEGE CENTRAL

www.CareerCollegeCentral.org

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► The Definitive Voice of the Career
College Sector of Higher Education

TODAY'S STUDENTS

Who is sitting in your
classrooms and what
do they need
from you?

INTERVIEW WITH AN ANALYST

Behind the crystal ball
predictions of education
stock analysts

THE PRESIDENTS' FORUM

Conference gathering
sorts out regulatory and
accreditation issues facing
career colleges

A BEAUTIFUL FIGHT

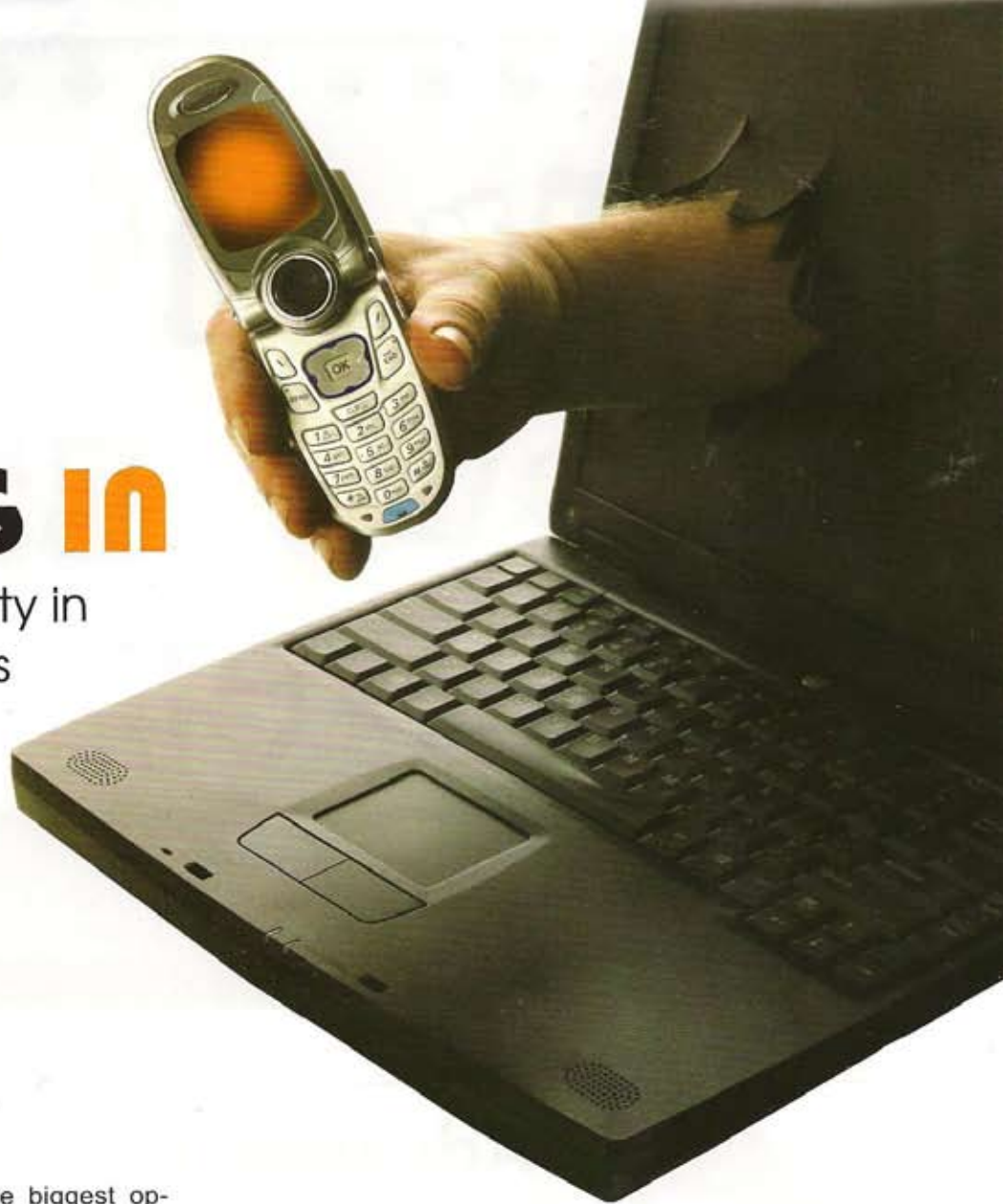
Hanover Park Beauty
College's Gloria Sidell
fights ALS



2009 Platinum Award Winner:
Marcom Creative Awards

PHONING **in**

Quality trumps quantity in improving conversions



► Vince Norton | Norton Norris, Inc.

It's no secret in our sector that the biggest opportunity to improve conversions is at the top of the funnel. The current buzz is all about "speed to lead" and how fast can we contact those Internet inquiries. We'll label that **quantity**. Don't doubt it's important.

But what happens on the call? Let's call that **quality**. We believe it's even more important. Here's why:

Over the past year, we've had the opportunity to phone-shop hundreds of admissions reps at schools and colleges across the country. The results range from average to alarming. Here are the biggest opportunities:

1. Verification of important contact information

We understand that the individual has filled out an electronic inquiry form. But, we still believe it's critically important to verify the contact information and make sure

the lead data is correct. It's also a nice, low-intensity initial set of questions. By the way, when we call the campus directly, most reps never collect complete contact information (name, address, phone and email).

2. Verification of high school graduation or a GED

It's not that hard to slip this question in. Your compliance people will love you if this is a routine practice. Unfortunately, over half of our shoppers were never asked this question on the initial call.

3. Probing to see if the prospect has attended another college

Remember the old rule, "Gather information before you give information?" Yup. Knowing whether your prospect has attended another college will give your reps

a huge advantage on the phone call. Unfortunately, our shoppers were rarely asked.

4. Probing to understand why the prospect is interested in their field of study

For old-timers this may sound unbelievable. Maybe the knowledge transfer just hasn't happened. Maybe it got left out of the call outline. Whatever the reason, we recommend this question be asked as we seldom heard it raised.

5. Failure to begin the process over the phone

We know that old habits are hard to break. We know that you really do want that prospect to visit your campus. But what's your stance when they really can't come in or don't want to come in? Think about it. *Your prospects can get the process started over the phone with your online division or your online competitors.* But, we don't allow on-ground prospects to get useful information over the phone. And we don't push the prospects to start the process by completing an online application.

"Over the past year, we've had the opportunity to phone-shop hundreds of admissions reps at schools and colleges across the country. The results range from average to alarming."

The leaders in the industry are taking fast steps to remedy this, and we commend them. Full engagement telephone interviews are a solution that more schools should explore. You've got the student on the phone, so why not have a meaningful conversation? ■



Vince Norton is Managing Partner at Norton Norris, Inc. Since 1979, he has served in higher education administration, marketing, admissions, and enrollment management, for both not-for-profit and proprietary institutions. He has consulting experience in marketing and enrollment management with more than 50 institutions of higher education. Contact Vince at 708.478.1144.



elearnqueen.blogspot.com

The blogs you should be reading

Blog-ography

E-Learning Queen focuses on distance training and education, from instructional design to e-learning and mobile solutions, and pays attention to psychological, social, and cultural factors. The edublog emphasizes real-world e-learning issues and appropriate uses of emerging technologies.

Who is the Queen? Meet Susan Smith Nash, PhD and blogger phenomenon.

Blog-versation

Q: As one of the few bloggers on the topic, what influenced you to create an online presence for the distance training and education sector?

A: For a community to be able to engage in sustainable economic development, it is absolutely imperative to develop human potential. This necessitates access to education that is vibrant, relevant, and alive. Unfortunately, many communities do not have access to the resources they need – courses, libraries, assessment facilities, digital object / media repositories.

Without access to educational opportunities, individuals and communities are trapped in an economic death-spiral. The rate of change accelerates with every technological innovation, economic downturn, or technological / job "sea change." So accelerates the death spiral.

Having access to a distance education program delivered via e-learning, mobile learning, or a blend of technologies with face-to-face, unbinds one. You can take the courses you need. You can become a health professional, an energy specialist, a computer technologist, a teacher, an entrepreneur – whatever you can envision. You can move, you can breathe; you can grow and prosper.

So, my goal in creating an online presence for distance training and education sector was two-fold. First, I wanted to help individuals have access to education, or materials that would help them expand access. Second, I wanted to deliver resources to provide food to nourish the fledgling communities of interest (primarily education and training).