



CUSTOMER CASE STUDY > NORTH AMERICAN BOARDING SCHOOLS

Summary

Boarding schools in North America have experienced a continuous, 15-year decline in their primary enrollment categories. To combat that trend, The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS) launched the North American Boarding Initiative's "Ready for More?" campaign on July 1, 2016. The initiative's purpose is to answer a strategic imperative from heads of school to address the decline in domestic enrollment for high- and full-paying families.

The North American Boarding Initiative (NABI) focused communication based on the content pillars of world-class academics, a 360-degree network of adult support, and the opportunity to try everything. Using Pardot, integrated with Salesforce, they were able to achieve their goals 6 months ahead of schedule.

About

The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS) serves college-preparatory boarding schools in the United States, Canada, and around the globe. The Association leads a domestic and international effort to promote awareness and understanding of boarding schools and to expand the applicant pool for member institutions. TABS is the comprehensive, indispensable resource for educators seeking training, research, guidance, and support on all issues pertaining to the residential school experience. TABS is the voice for independent boarding schools, their historical contribution to our world, and the current and compelling benefits of living and learning in an academic community.

Challenges Tabs Faced

The decline in boarding enrollment amounted to a \$15 million net tuition revenue decline for boarding schools who were members of TABS. The decline centered around international enrollment, resulting in the initiative designed to increase domestic enrollment. Even after the campaign was launched, TABS faced the general perception that boarding schools are reform school alternatives for students. Premium news outlets repeatedly refused to publish positive stories about boarding schools and the outcomes of their students. Additionally, while boarding schools had a fair amount of brand awareness, consideration of and intent to send a child to boarding school was lower than 2% within the target audience. TABS needed to convincingly advertise the value proposition of boarding schools to families who could afford it but never considered boarding as an education option for their children.

How fusionSpan Helped

Sheila Mitchell, VP for Market Growth and Deputy Managing Director of NABI, previously used Pardot, HubSpot, and Marketo, but preferred Pardot and chose fusionSpan as her implementation partner.

Sheila wanted to use Pardot:

- To use logic to build a nurture sequence
- To segment audiences
- To review analytics at a granular level

On a daily basis, Sheila receives emails from Pardot highlighting which prospects have most recently interacted with the website or completed a form. Due to the success of the campaign, she has limited time to get into the granular details of email sends. Instead, she utilizes fusionSpan to help create, test, and send emails to prospects. The Digital Strategy team at fusionSpan recently helped redesign how email preferences are managed and capture why prospects unsubscribe from emails. fusionSpan also created landing pages for historical emails that are part of an email series so that prospects can easily go back and review what they may have missed. Overall, Pardot allows for personalized communications, which enabled TABS to maintain high engagement rates among its target audience.

Results

NABI launched a new website, ReadyForMore.com, and simultaneously launched Salesforce and Pardot to capture and nurture leads.

Looking at the data, the North American Boarding saw:

- A 2% overall increase in enrollment of the target audience from open day 2016 to present
- An 8% increase in enrollment of 9th-grade domestic boarders, a critical entry point for the majority of boarding schools
- Stemmed the 15-year decline in domestic enrollment. Without TABS, based on previous attrition, there would have been a 3% decrease in enrollment.

As a bonus, by having Pardot and Salesforce integrated, major data governance issues were covered and TABS had high confidence in the reliability of the data. TABS views Pardot and Salesforce as "sustainable platforms that are robust and stand the test of time."

Client Testimonial

Sheila recommends that associations spend a significant amount of time at the beginning of implementation to thoroughly develop nurture engagement programs based on segmented lists.

Sheila welcomes the strategic guidance that fusionSpan provides and the Digital Strategy team is truly appreciative of how she pushes the boundaries with her ideas and desire to use the full capabilities of Pardot.

"fusionSpan listens, understands my needs, responds quickly, and gives me more than what I ask for. They are a true partner and I value their capabilities."

- Sheila Mitchell