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The Hidden Motivations of Prospective Students

250,000 Career Education Prospects Reveal The Underlying Influences That Guide Their Buying Decisions

Introduction

Abstract:

Enrollment Resources has compiled research data from over 250,000 prospective career education students across North America to better understand the career education buying decision experience. The following White Paper is a presentation of that data with analysis. Findings include insight into prospective students' core motivations, personality style and triggers that drive buying decisions.

Methodology:

The Career Training Readiness Pathway, a quiz-style lead generation tool powered by Enrollment Resources' proprietary lead optimization software **Virtual Adviser**, was placed on the websites of a variety of career education schools across the U.S. and Canada.

The pathway presents prospects with a series of questions to investigate their current lifestyle, employment, goals, frustrations, strengths, social styles, supporters, motivations and more and ultimately presents them with a numerical "Career Training Readiness Score."

Roughly 2.2% of unique website visitors to a typical school's website will engage with the Career Training Readiness Pathway. The data sample represents approximately 120 schools with a wide variety of program offerings across disciplines including both male and female dominated programs.

What It Means for Career Education Professionals:

In each section of research findings, Enrollment Resources will present the data, analyze the findings and summarize what those findings can mean for education marketing and admissions professionals and for any interested school's bottom line.

In addition to data, this paper aims to provide insights and practical strategies communicated in plain language to help career education professionals best serve prospective students and boost enrollment through cost effective process improvement.



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CHAPTER 1 Career Motivation

Top Things Prospective Students Say They Want in a New Career

Fig. 1: Prospects were asked what they would change about their current employment situation:

What would you change about your employment situation?	Overall
Work that interests me	64.37%
Opportunity for advancement	62.22%
Better pay	60.57%
Different work environment	44.49%
Better schedule	37.32%
Be more respected	26.42%

Across all responses, the top 3 things they would change are:

- 1. "Work that interests me" (64.4%)*
- 2. "Opportunity for advancement" (62.3%)*
- **3.** "Better pay" (60.6%)*
- *prospects were able to select more than one response

Findings:

Unsurprising the responses involved with upward mobility such as earning more and opportunity for promotion rank highly. But more than earning more money, respondents express a desire for work that interests them. Prospects know they need to work in order to survive, but they are tired of putting so much time into work that doesn't offer any personal fulfillment.

Career Motivation: "Working" vs "Not Working" Prospects

Fig. 1.1: This dumbbell chart illustrates the gap between working and non-working prospects when answering the question: "What would you change about your current employment situation". The vertical line in each row represents the percentage of prospects overall (ie. regardless of working status) that selected the corresponding motivation. Data to the right of the line indicates prospects are more motivated in that area, or to the left, less motivated in that area.



What would you Change about your current Situation?

"One should never make revenue or spending decisions based on what someone thinks, believes or assumes. Every decision made should have data behind it. If you don't have data to make a decision then set up split tests and collect the data needed."



STERLING SIMPSON VP of Business Development #Enrollment Resources

Findings: "Working" vs "Non-Working" Prospects

Findings:

Data shows that respondents who indicate they are not currently working are more **internally motivated**; they are more likely to indicate work that interests them over better pay.

"Working" prospects are more likely to be **externally motivated;** they are more likely to indicate an interest in better pay and advancement over work that is fulfilling or interests them.

What This Means for Your School:

For prospects who are not working, whether they've been unable to secure suitable employment or have been out of the waged workforce raising a family, or for other personal reasons, they have potentially had an opportunity to get some distance from the routine of regular employment and they may have ideas about what's important to them in a return to work. If you know a prospective student has been out of the traditional workforce for a while, it's important to communicate the personal aspects of the career or careers they may be considering. Things like personal accounts from working professionals in the field will carry more weight than things like employment stats and wage data. This is relevant both in admissions interactions and marketing materials.



Career Motivation: Prospects by Age Group

Fig. 1.2: This dumbbell chart illustrates the age outliers between younger prospects and mature prospects when answering the question: "What would you change about your current employment situation". If the age appears to the left of the vertical line, they are less likely to resonate with that answer, to the right, they have a higher interest in that motivation.



Findings: Prospects By Age Group

Younger prospects between 18-25 tend to be more **internally motivated.** They were more likely to choose 'work that interests me' than older prospects. (*Fig. 1.2*)

Prospects over 35 tend to be more **externally motivated** choosing motivating outcomes such as: 'better pay', 'better schedule', 'different work environment' and 'opportunity for advancement' than younger or older prospects. (*Fig. 1.2*)

What This Means for Your School:

Mid-career aged prospects show a higher interest in concrete things like earning potential and are more likely than younger students to potentially have young families and other outside responsibilities to juggle. That may seem intuitive, but it should inform the messaging presented to these prospects. Accurate local wage data for professionals in their field in your area and real job posting examples with posted work schedules will help these prospects in their buying decision.

"This is the first time I have seen empirical data that shows the relationship between age and career motivations. We've finally moved past the trite "boomer" "millennial" "Gen Z" labels, to get a meaningful understanding of how motivations change as we age."



SHANE SPARKS Founder & CEO

Enrollment Resources

Career Field by Age Group

Fig. 1.3: The following figure displays career fields broken out by age group. The top row ("Overall") shows the % distribution of each Age Group for all Career Fields. Subsequent rows show the % distribution of each age group segmented Career Field.

Career Field	0-18	19-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50+
Overall	•				•	•	•	•
Agriculture	•				•	•	•	•
Arts, Culture and Entertainment			٠	٠	٠	•	٠	•
Beauty	•			•	•	٠		•
Business, Management and	•				•	٠	•	٠
Community and Social Services	•			٠	•	٠	•	•
Education			•	•	•		•	•
Health and Medicine	•			•	•	•	•	•
Hospitality	٠			•	•	•	•	•
Law and Public Policy	•			٠	•	٠	•	٠
Medical Administration	•				٠		٠	•
Science and Technology	•				•		•	•
Trades	•			•	•	•	•	٠

Fig. 1.4: This bar chart shows the median age of all prospects segmented by Career Field.



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Findings: Career Field By Age

The Median Age for all prospects across all programs is 29.

Prospects interested in **Business Management and** Administration, Community and Social Services, Education, Medical Administration, and Science and Technology are more evenly distributed among age groups compared to Overall.

Prospects interested in **Arts Culture and Entertainment, Beauty, and Trades** are more likely to be younger (ie. up to 24) compared to Overall.

Medical Administration prospects have the **highest** median age.

Arts Culture and Entertainment prospects have the **lowest median age.**



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CHAPTER 2 Career Goals

Fig. 2: The following represents the cumulative findings for when prospects were asked to indicate which goals were important to them.

Which goals are important to you?	Overall
I want a career where I feel fulfilled	83.72%
I want a career where I feel I am making a difference	71.75%
I want to make more money	71.58%
I want to be more independent	62.98%
I want to have more financial security	62.96%
I want to own a home	61.56%
I want a career where my loved ones will be proud of me	57.98%
I want to give my kids a better life	47.80%
I want to travel	47.06%
I want a better life for sure, I just have trouble imagining the details	35.62%
I have no long term goals, I prefer living in the moment	6.39%

"Whether I'm promoting Cosmetology or Automotive Tech, it never ceases to amaze me that ads with headlines like 'Pursue Your Passion' and 'Love What You Do' perform the best."



TRENTON CRAWFORD Conversion Leader Enrollment Resources

Learn the motivations of your prospects with VirtualAdviser

Instantly get to know your prospects' needs, desires and goals in real-time. See up to a 30% Increase in prospect inquiries and reduce cost-per-start by 80%. Get a Demo to See How

Findings: Career Goals

1. The overall highest shared goal amongst prospects of all ages across all demographics is a desire for a career that provides opportunity for personal fulfillment. This echoes the findings in Chapter 1 around what prospects hope for in a new career.

2. Over 30% of prospects across demographics indicate they struggle to imagine the details of a better life.

What This Means for Your School:

1. Fulfillment

As shared in "Chapter One: Career Motivations," prospects across demographics indicate a strong desire for work that is personally fulfilling. It's crucial to cultivate a robust collection of stories, case students and real-life "before and after" examples to share with prospective students. A major job of EDU marketing and admissions departments is to relatably communicate to prospective students how they can achieve fulfillment.

2. The Struggle of Imagination

More than 30% of prospective students indicated that they "want a better life for sure" but "have trouble imagining the details." This represents an exciting opportunity for schools to step up and provide real stewardship for these students. Platitudes around achieving goals and "reaching for your dreams" get thrown around a lot, but there's often a huge disconnect between "reach for the stars" rhetoric and the actual practical steps that go into achieving a goal.

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The application of real, practical goal setting is something many people are never taught. Admissions professionals are in a unique position to help break down the practical steps that can go into building a better future for a prospective student. It's terrifying to take a step if you don't know what you're walking into. As admissions professionals, it's crucial to remember what it was like to NOT know all the ins and outs of your school and things like education financing. If 3 in 10 prospects struggle to picture the details of a brighter future, as an admissions professional you have an opportunity to be an ambassador to that better life by taking the time to help individual prospects to fill in the details that can make up the path to their brighter futures.



Goals by Career Field

While most of the career goals among various career tracks were similar, the following had some interesting outliers among career fields.

Independence

Fig. 2.1: 'I want to be more independent' is significantly more common among Beauty prospects.



What It Means for Beauty Schools:

Beauty professionals are significantly more likely to indicate a desire to be more independent. As indicated in previous data *(figures 1.3 & 1.4)*, beauty industry prospects tend to skew younger, so part of that motivation for independence can be attributed to typical young adult development and a desire to step out from underneath parental oversight and come into their own. Another piece is the nature of the career. It's common within the beauty industry for professionals to work as private contractors, either renting space in a spa/salon or running their own business.

If you run a beauty school, it's important to **realistically** speak to the ways in which beauty training can offer the prospect opportunities to assert their independence.

Make a Difference

Fig. 2.2: 'I want a career where I feel I am making a difference' is significantly more common among Career Fields:

- Community and Social Services
- Health and Medicine
- Law and Public Policy



What It Means for Your School:

Not surprisingly, careers in public service tend to attract individuals with a strong drive to make a difference. These prospects are motivated by a desire to serve their communities and to make a positive impact. It's important to remember this altruistic drive when working with prospects in these fields. While practical details like job opportunity and potential wages are still important, for these prospects it's important to emphasize the way in which their future career will not only benefit them but also allow them to make an impact in the world around them.

Earn More Money

Fig. 2.3: Financial Goals 'I want to make more money' are more common among Career Fields:

- Medical Administration
- Science and Technology
- Trades



What It Means for Your School:

Individuals interested in Medical Administration, Science and Technology and Trades indicate a higher-than-average interest in earning more money. An important thing to remember in admissions, is that for individuals interested in getting into a new career in order to earn more money, the actual money isn't the end goal. Important questions to ask are things like "what would earning more money mean to you?" or "how do you think your life would look different if you earned x amount per year?" These types of questions can help prospective students to envision their desired future and can help to contextualize their training and career goals. It can also help to put in perspective the cost/benefit ratio of your training.

Goals by Age Group

Fig. 2.3: Younger prospects (19-24) are much more likely to indicate that they "want a better life for sure" but "have trouble imagining the details."



What It Means for Your School:

In fig. 2 we talked about the struggle of imagination. Prospective students 18 - 29 will need more guidance in the admissions process to not only define if the career is the right step forward but what each step looks like to achieve their goal. Providing your prospective students a map from application to graduation will go a long way to easing their anxiety and boosting their confidence in their decision to enroll.

When we initially developed the Career Training Readiness Pathway I was skeptical that website visitors would take the time to fill it out, but I was proven wrong - about a quarter of million times so far. Not only do prospects click on the pathway, the vast majority complete it. Many request a school tour. A major lesson I've learned through years of copy and software testing is that people want to feel seen. They want to tell their story. A big job of education marketers and admissions professionals is to create a way really hear and respond to prospects.



CHAPTER 3 Education Status

High School Diploma by Career Field

Fig. 3: The top row ('Overall') shows the % of prospects that have a high school diploma, the % of prospects that do not have a high school diploma, and % of prospects that are still in high school for all Career Fields. The subsequent rows show this % breakdown segmented Career Field.



Findings: High School Diploma Status By Career Field

The data shows that 8% of prospects across programs indicated that they are not in high school and do NOT have a high school diploma or GED.

What This Could Mean for Your School:

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If you offer programs that do not require a high school diploma/GED, there is opportunity to emphasize that in your marketing. Make it clear to interested individuals that a lack of high school diploma/GED is not a barrier to entry.

For programs that DO require a high school diploma/GED, is there a way you can help individuals to get that certification, either by offering programs through your school or by partnering with an external program? If a motivated student comes to you interested in going to school but has a significant barrier like a lack of high school diploma/GED, how can your school act as a support for that individual? By staying involved with a prospect as they complete a GED requirement you can potentially boost enrollment and even if an individual ultimately doesn't enroll with you, you've created goodwill that can turn into positive word-of-mouth and potential referrals.



Attended Post-Secondary vs. Career Field

Fig. 3.3: Overall, 38% of career school prospects surveyed have attended some form of post-secondary education.



Findings: Post-Secondary Education Status

Career fields that reflect a below average rate of prospects with previous post-secondary education tend to have younger demographics, while fields that attract more mature students have a higher average rate of previous post-secondary.

What This Could Mean for Your School:

Asking prospective students whether they have attended previous post-secondary can be a crucial step to your admissions process. For prospects that HAVE attended other post secondary, important follow-up questions include:

- 1. What type of program were you enrolled in?
- 2. Did you complete your program?
- **3.** (*If they completed*) What type of degree/certification did you receive?
- **4.** (*If they did NOT complete*) What held you back from completing?
- **5.** How did you find your previous experience in school?
- 6. (If you are a Title IV school) Did you receive Financial Aid & do you know the status of your loans?

Knowing whether a prospect has had difficulty, for one reason or another, completing a previous program can be crucial to your evaluation of their fit for your program and knowing how to best support that prospect.

Enrollment Resources VirtualAdviser © 2022 The Hidden Motivations of Prospective Students Understanding a prospect's previous education experience and perception of post-secondary education can help you to set your school apart and explain ways in which your school or program is distinctive from other post-secondary experiences.

Stories from successful graduates of your school who have previously attended other schools can be particularly powerful. These types of personal testimonials can lend incredible credibility by speaking directly to the experience many prospects have and can help to allay doubts that may linger for some prospects if they have had negative experiences with post-secondary in the past.

CHAPTER 4 Social Styles

In the Career Training Readiness Quiz, prospects are asked a series of self-assessment questions which determines which "Social Style" they most closely identify with based on the following profiles:

- Analytical: Serious and more exacting
- **Driver:** Strong willed and more emotionally controlled
- **Amiable:** Easy-going and more supportive
- Expressive: Outgoing and more dramatic



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Social Styles Overall

Fig. 4: The following chart shows the overall percentage of each Social Style/Personality Trait across all prospects in the data set.



Social Styles vs. Career Field

Fig. 4.1: This dumbbell chart illustrates the gap between career field choices with respect to Social Style. The vertical line in each row represents the percentage of prospects overall (ie. regardless of career choice) that identify with each social style. The data focuses on the outliers by program for each social style. To the left, the program is less likely to attract that personality type, to the right, programs trend toward a dominant social style.



"Understanding social styles can not only help direct a school's marketing language but can also inform admissions reps on how to craft their words so prospects both hear what is being said and connect to it emotionally."



JODIE GASTEL Sales Administrator #Enrollment Resources

Findings: Social Style vs. Career Field

Overall, three Career Fields stood out as 'outliers' compared to the others. They were Trades, Beauty, and Science and Technology.

More specifically:

Science and Technology Prospects are 7% more likely to be of Social Style 'Analytical'.

Trades Prospects are 5% more likely to be of Social Style 'Analytical', and 5% more likely to be of Social Style 'Driver'. They are 7% less likely to be Expressive.

Beauty Prospects are 11% more likely to be of Social Style 'Expressive'. They are 9% less likely to be Analytical.

What It Means For Your School:

The ability to recognize that a large portion of prospects in a particular program or career field tend to lean toward or away from a specific social style can help you to tailor content and conversations that will resonate with those prospects. For example, beauty school prospects tend to be sociable expressives and trend lower on the analytical scale. When you work with expressive people, things like connection, relationships and first impressions matter most. These prospects also have a higher likelihood to say "yes" in the moment and later doubt their decision. For expressives in particular, it's important to provide reinforcement and regular check-ins while they are in their decision process.

Social Style & Booked Tour Rate

Fig. 4.2: The bar graph on the left shows the percentage of prospects that booked a tour segmented by Social Style. The bar graph on the right highlights how much more/less likely each Social Style is to book a tour compared to overall. For example, we see that Expressives are 7.58% more likely to book a tour.



Findings:

- Overall, of this data set, 51% of individuals who completed the "Social Styles" self-assessment as part of the *Career Training Readiness Pathway* indicated an interest in booking a school tour.
- "Expressives" are 7.58% more likely to book a tour over individuals of other Social Styles.
- "Analyticals" are 10.3% LESS likely to book a tour over individuals of other Social Styles.

Social Style Do's and Dont's

Fig. 4.3: The graphic below provides more detailed information on the best ways admissions reps can engage with each "Social Style".



Social Styles: Create Better Connections By Adjusting Communication Preferences to Match Your Prospect

What It Means For Your School:

Knowing the Social Style of an individual prospect before you pick up the phone/reach out to them can provide incredible insight and allow admissions representatives a map in terms of how to best engage with that prospect. Similarly, knowing the most common Social Style of a typical prospect to a particular program/career field can help marketing departments to build streams that are most appealing and most likely to resonate with and generate a response from individuals of that particular Social Style.

The most common Social Style of this data set is "Expressives" at 45% of respondents. The typical admissions adviser is also an Expressive personality type. It's the nature of the role. These individuals tend to be outgoing and thrive in environments that allow for personal interaction. For programs that skew high toward Expressive prospects, this sets up a natural connection between prospects and admissions reps. The 26% of prospective students identified as "Analytical" Social Style represent a potential disconnect with "Expressive" personality type most common on admissions teams. These two social styles communicate differently and value different approaches to communication. If your admissions team, like most, is predominantly Expressive Social Style, it's important to understand and adapt to the needs of different social styles, as illustrated in 4.2. This can be particularly relevant when trying to book a tour with a prospective student who you either know is an Analytical Social Style or who has expressed interest in a career field common to Analyticals. The types of personal rapport-building techniques that admissions reps often rely on may not resonate as strongly with these "Analytical" prospects. Your admissions team may need to be resourceful and be able to pivot to react to and meet these prospects in a way that resonates with them. This can mean sending more supplementary data by email or providing external resources for the prospect to evaluate on their own, in their own time as part of their buying process.

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CHAPTER 5 Admissions Meeting Outcome

Meeting Outcome Overall

Prospects were asked what they would like to discuss during a meeting before making any decisions around enrollment:

What would you like to have covered during this meeting?	Overall
Discuss start dates	83.26%
Meet with Financial Aid	72.02%
Go over schedule	68.66%
Discuss program details	67.04%
Discuss my career path/goals	58.56%
Get a tour of the Campus	52.58%
Meet with a faculty member	30.44%
I want to learn about Scholarship opportunities	26.56%
Connect with some current students	1 7.7 6%

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Meeting Outcome vs. Career Field

Fig. 5.2: This chart illustrates the gap between Career fields with respect to what they would like to discuss during a meeting before making any decisions around enrollment. The vertical line in each row represents the percentage of prospects overall (ie. regardless of career field choice) that selected the corresponding meeting outcome. If a program appears to the left of the vertical line, they are less likely to resonate with that topic, to the right, they have a higher interest in that subject.



"I ran an experiment last year that tested a complete redesign of our Landing Pages. It was wildly successful across all programs, except for Beauty and Medical Administration. We had a hunch it was because these particular prospects were 'different'. Seeing this data reinforces that belief. It's one example of why testing and tracking content and design changes against a desired result is so important."



SASHA TIEDE Testing Analyst #Enrollment Resources

Findings:

Trades and Beauty prospects put more emphasis on program details and a campus tour.

66% of all Trades / Science and Technology prospects indicated they want to discuss Career Path/Goals (7% more likely compared to overall).

What It Means For Your School:

Review how you are presenting your programs to prospects. In the case of Beauty and Trades, they'll want to see students doing hands-on activities showcasing your facilities. Whereas science and technology, you'll want to emphasize career outcomes to help them visualize their future. Be sure you are aligning your imagery and content to what the prospect desires and remember that each program can be radically different. Create a hierarchy of information, ensuring the most important topics for your prospect are near the top of the page.



CHAPTER 6 Hesitations/Preventing Moving Forward

Prospects were asked if there was anything preventing them from moving forward with Career Training:

Is there anything preventing you from moving forward?	Overall
No	75.33%
Yes	24.67%

Findings:

These percentages remained more or less the same regardless of age, working status and program.

However, prospects that answered 'yes' to the above were then asked to elaborate on what exactly was preventing them from moving forward with an open text comments field. We ran those responses (27,452) through our open text analysis tool and explored the results. The most common themes around prospect hesitations:

- Money
- Time
- Life circumstances
- Fear

Let's take a closer look at each of these topic clusters to gain insight into areas that may prevent your prospect from moving forward.

Theme #1: Financial Barriers

37.5% of all responses mentioned finances as a barrier to moving forward with their education. Below are a sample of responses describing money as the hesitation.

"Financial Support to help me pay for school and help cover living expenses"

"Would I need to quit my job to pursue this program? What are the financial repercussions of doing so? Is there **financial aid**?"

"Well my **financial situation** isn't the best don't have much money to pay for classes or anything like that"

"Saving up enough money for the program/pay down my existing **student loans**"



Theme #1: Financial Barriers

Fig. 6.2: The following chart and word cloud shows the most common words used when prospects describe their pain points around affording post-secondary education.

Total Number of Responses	Number of Responses in View	% of Responses in View
27.452	10.312	37.56%
francial operations through supporting the analysis of the and a support of the analysis of th	bills afford tuition tuition costs financial resources pay theorem financial commitment financial costs financial hardship school time financial resources pay theorem financial limit financial situations pay tuition financial situa	ready of the ancial case where where the ancial taken with a school free schoo

Keywords





Theme #2: Time

12.8% of total Responses indicate their concerns around being able to juggle going to school with their other responsibilities. Some examples of their responses:

"Worried on how I'll be able to balance a **part time job** to afford rent and be able to go to school at the same time."

"Working is necessary and my **current job** is not a set schedule so it's hard to plan and prepare...online courses is my only option"

"Working around a **school schedule** and a work schedule and never seeing my kids like when I was attending Remington for pharmacy technician"

"Schedule, have to maintain my current employment"



"When prospects are searching keywords like "colleges near me" or "online colleges" they aren't focused or certain about what they want to do, but they know they want a change. In the early stage of exploration, we want to relieve uncertainty or fears and guide them through a process of discovery."



CHRIS CUNNINGHAM Conversion Leader Enrollment Resources

Theme #2: Time

Fig. 6.3: Word cloud and chart exploring time as major barrier to education. Most of these prospects indicate the requirement to maintain their job / have an income while going to school.

Total Number of Responses	Number of Responses in View	% of Responses in View
27,452	3,534	12.87%
current field time management current employment school cost school expenses current financial	tion school hours school school hours school current current job current school program ime schedule current school school life	time finding time position current position current bills time constraints time money ourses time jobs t schedule t employer ame _{school} debt temployer ame _{school} debt time financial school balance school education school due time consuming





Theme #3: Life Circumstances

8.1% of total Responses indicate current life challenges as a hesitation to moving forward with education. Some examples were:

"What is holding me back is I am a single mother of 3 an I have no real help with **child care**...but I want to get my life together for my kids"

"The fear of not completing the program due to my **mental health**."

"Not having a stable *living situation* or transportation"

"Single mom with a Full time job so I cannot attend day time classes."



Theme #3: Life Circumstances

Fig. 6.4: Word cloud and chart highlighting most common phrases used when describing obstacles they are facing in their life right now.





	Phases	
child care		648
mental health	257	
living situation	197	
single mom	179	
single mother	169	
health issues	138	
home mom	129	
single parent	128	
current situation	48	

Theme #4: Uncertainty & Fear:

4.3% of total Responses are struggling with the decision to go back to school. Some sample statements were:

"I'm worried I won't find a job I'm good at. I'm passionate about many things, and I want to make sure I feel confident on the **career path** I take."

"Worry about making a **career change** at my age."

"With so many options **I'm scared** of making the wrong choice"

"My conscience, I am unsure with my **career choice**."



Theme #4: Uncertainty & Fear:

Fig. 6.5: The word cloud and chart highlight the common phrases that create some anxiety in these prospective students' buying decisions.





	Phases	
career path		330
career change	115	
I'm scared	89	
l'm afraid	69	
I'm worried	65	
career choice	64	
job security	49	
job due	37	
career paths	33	

Findings: Top Hesitations For Going Back To School

37.5% of respondents mentioned financial concerns as a big barrier to going back to school

12.8% of respondents indicate time as a significant barrier

8.1% of respondents mentioned current life circumstances as a challenge

4.5% of respondents said they are afraid

What It Means For Your School:

When it comes to open text data (qualitative) it is less about absolute numbers like you would see in a multiple-choice answer (called quantitative data). In qualitative analysis, you are listening for trends. Frequent comments with similar keywords help paint a picture of pain points and frustrations.

From these 4 top themes, it's apparent how daunting the decision is for your prospective students. Particularly for career schools, where they trend toward a demographic coming back to school after spending some time in another job or career. Many may have family responsibilities and all will need ways to support themselves if they are going to commit to training. Not only do they need to trust your school's commitment to help them succeed but also trust in their own ability to reach their goals.

Knowing that they have these enormous mountains in front of them, how can your school give them a lifeline to make that climb easier? "We've found in our copy testing, the more you reflect back the anxiety prospects are feeling in their decision process, the more likely you are to make a meaningful impact. When a prospect can see themselves in your marketing, you'll loosen the fear and replace it with more confidence in taking the next step."



TAMMY MILES Head of Marketing Enrollment Resources

Conclusion: Create Connections That Turn Into Students

Learning how program choice, age, personal goals and fears shape a prospect's buying decision can guide better conversations that create connection and trust. Career schools are in a unique position to help people dramatically change their life, pursue their passions and in many cases overcome a generational story of poverty to a new generation of prosperity.

Regardless of the technology, whether it is low-tech interviews or online lead engagement tools like Virtual Adviser, ask questions about your prospects. It will become apparent where changes need to be made in your marketing and admissions process, such as:

- What key points need emphasis on your website and admissions process
- Where to change the tone to match your target demographic personality traits
- How to use images to resonate with your prospects more effectively

Your admissions team will also be empowered around key objections and have resources readily available in anticipation of the needs and fears influencing your prospects decisions.

Talk to your team members who interact most with your students. What are some common frustrations or fears that surface?

You'll start to gain insights and your marketing and prospective student experience will be the better for it.

"Enrollment | VirtualAdviser

Increased Enrollment, Decreased Cost

Virtual Adviser has all the tools you need to accelerate your enrollment growth and lower your marketing costs. Using Virtual Adviser you can:

- Increase your website leads by 30%
- Improve lead quality with tested prospect engagement templates
- Decrease your cost per start by up to 80%
- Empower your enrollment team with best practices knowledge base

Learn More

"We use all the Virtual Adviser tools everywhere and it has the best Cost Per Start thus far" -Guy Pierce, FNU

Contributors

Data Collection

<u>Virtual Adviser</u>: Virtual Adviser is an advanced inbound lead capture platform, built by Enrollment Resources, specifically to help schools increase leads, optimize online engagement and ultimately boost enrollment. For a demo and to learn more, <u>click here</u>.

Career Training Readiness Pathway: The Career Training Readiness Pathway is a lead capture tool powered by Virtual Adviser. With an interactive, quiz-style interface, the Career Training Readiness Pathway is placed on a school's website or in other online marketing to engage prospective students and to turn web traffic into qualified leads. The pathway empowers prospective students by providing a way for them to get informed and do some self-evaluation in the early stages of their buying decision, which moves them further down the enrollment funnel. It also provides Admissions and Marketing teams with unparalleled prospect insights. For a demonstration of the Career Training Readiness Pathway, click here.

Admissions Interview Pathway: The Admissions Interview Pathway is a virtual interview and tour experience that admissions reps use on their first call with prospects. It is designed to systematically guide prospects through a best-practice, compliant, interview, every time. The result is an average 41% improvement in interview-to-enrollment rates. The data gathered in each interview also provides rich insights into prospects' language when describing their struggles and motivations that schools can use to better inform their marketing communications.

Data Analysis & Review

The following Enrollment Resources team members made a significant contribution to the preparation of this report: Sasha Tiede, Testing Analyst and resident Data Scientist, Andrew Becker, Chief Technical Officer, Katie Humphries, Content Director and Tammy Miles, Head of Marketing and Innovation.

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WHO WE ARE

Enrollment Resources has been a North American leader in student recruitment for proprietary and career schools since 2004. We believe that schools deserve better than just 'leads', so it's our mission to help our clients connect with more of the right prospects and drive those prospects down the funnel, boosting enrollment and lowering cost-per-start.

We are the developers of Virtual Adviser, an advanced inbound prospect capture platform, leaders in internet advertising management, and experts in website optimization.

You deserve better than just leads.

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