

The Hidden Motivations of Beauty School Prospects

Data from 50,000 Prospective Beauty School Students & Analysis to Help You Turn Research Findings Into Enrollments

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 research paper is a subsequent investigation into beauty school prospects specifically, which comprise 50,000 responses. Findings include insight into prospective beauty school students' core motivations, personality style and triggers that drive buying decisions as well as industry specific insights and comparative analysis of beauty school prospects against the data of the cumulative general prospect population.

Methodology:

The Lead Capture Quiz, a 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 between 2018 and 2022.

The quiz pathway leads prospects through 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 *Lead Capture Quiz*. The cumulative data represents approximately 120 schools with

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a wide variety of program offerings across disciplines including both male and female dominated programs. The beauty industry specific data represents only those schools that offer beauty industry programs and only prospects that expressed interest in a beauty industry career such as cosmetology, esthetics or barbering.

What It Means for Beauty School 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 beauty school professionals best serve prospective beauty industry students and boost enrollment through cost effective process improvement.



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CHAPTER 1 Social Styles

During the *Lead Capture 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



Social Styles Overall

Fig. 1: The following chart shows the overall percentage of each Social Style/Personality Type across all prospects in the cumulative data set, i.e. prospects across all program areas.



Findings



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.



Findings:

Beauty school prospects are shown to be outliers in the area of "Expressive" Social Style when compared to the general results of all career school prospects.

More Specifically:

- 58% of beauty prospects identify as Social Style "Expressive", 21% higher than the general average.
- The second most common Social Style amongst beauty school prospects is "Amiable" at 18%, 20% higher than the general average.
- Beauty prospects are 40% less likely to be of the Social Style "Analytical".

Fig. 1.2: The graphic below provides more detailed information on the best ways admissions reps can engage with each "Social Style."



Social Style & Booked Tour Rate

Fig. 1.3: The bar chart on the left shows the percentage of prospects that booked a tour segmented by Social Style.

Fig. 1.4: The bar chart 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 "Analytical" prospects are 10.30% less likely to book a tour.



Findings:

• "Expressives" are 7.58% more likely to book a tour over individuals of other Social Styles

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 prominence of prospects with the Social Style "Expressive" is great news of beauty school admissions teams. Not only is it far and away the most common social style for beauty school prospects, it is ALSO the most common personality type amongst admissions professionals. It's the nature of the role, since individuals with an "Expressive" Social Style tend to be outgoing and to thrive in environments that allow for personal interaction. That means there is a high likelihood that your admissions team is naturally well suited to fit the communication style and needs of the majority of beauty school prospects.

What about prospects that fall outside the "Expressive" Social Style? The ability to adapt to the particular needs of various Social Styles can be particularly relevant when it comes to trying to book a tour. While only 15% of beauty school prospects in our data set identity as "Analytical", they represent an important opportunity. 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 materials by email or providing external resources for the prospect to evaluate in their own time as part of their buying process.



CHAPTER 2 Demographics

Fig. 2: The circle graph in the top left illustrates the percentage of beauty school prospects who indicate they are currently working at the time they inquired about beauty school.

Fig. 2.1: The bar graph in the top right illustrates the age distribution among beauty school prospects.

Fig. 2.2: The bar graph in the bottom left illustrates the percentage of beauty school prospects who have earned a high school diploma prior to the time they inquired about beauty school.

Fig. 2.2: The circle graph in the bottom right illustrates the percentage of beauty school prospects who indicate they have previous experience with post-secondary education.



Demographics

Findings:

- The majority of beauty school prospects indicate that they are currently working at the time that they inquire about school.
- 31.8% of beauty school prospects have attended some post-secondary previously.
- 7.2% of beauty school prospects do not have a high school diploma.

Fig. 2.4: The bar graph below illustrates the average age for prospective career school students across various program areas and the median average age amongst all prospective students.



Demographics: Median Age by Career Field

Findings:

• Compared against all other career fields, beauty school prospects have the lowest median age overall.

Fig. 2.5: The bar graph below illustrates the percentage of prospects by beauty school career field, Cosmetology, Esthetics and Barbering, that hold a high school diploma.



Demographics: High School Diploma vs. Program Choice

Findings:

• Esthetics prospects are 9.3% more likely than other beauty school prospects to have graduated high school.

Fig. 2.6: The bar graph below illustrates the percentage of prospects by beauty school career field, Cosmetology, Esthetics and Barbering, that hold a high school diploma.



Demographics: Age Group vs. Program Choice

Findings:

• Cosmetology prospects are much more likely to be younger (in the under 20 and 20-24 age group) than other beauty school prospects. 62% of cosmetology prospects are 24 years old or younger.

• Esthetics and Barber prospects are much more likely to be middle aged/older than the average beauty school prospect. 35% of barbering prospects are over the age of 30.

What It Means For Beauty Schools:

Currently Working:

The majority of beauty school prospects indicate they are currently working. Make sure that your admissions interview process is flexible enough to accommodate a variety of work schedules and also make sure in the interview to ask prospects about their current work, including things they like and don't like, in order to help them picture a different future.

Previous Education:

One in three beauty school prospects indicate that they have previous post-secondary experience. Whether they are already beauty professionals looking to upgrade or have previously pursued education in another field, their prior education experience can have a huge impact on their approach to your school. Make sure your admissions interview process includes questions and conversation to inquire about prospect's prior education.

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.

No High School Diploma:

While only a small percentage of prospects indicate they do not have a high school diploma (these prospects are NOT currently enrolled in high school), there is opportunity for beauty schools to support these prospects. If a high school diploma is necessary for enrollment, consider a bridging program that allows students to pursue their high school equivalency while enrolled in your program or offer support to find local resources that can help the prospect achieve the required education they need to enroll. If a high school diploma is NOT required for enrollment, make sure that is made clear in your marketing.

Age:

Typical cosmetology prospects tend to trend lower in age. These prospects are less likely than esthetics or barbering prospects to be career changers. Younger prospects may be less likely to engage with a phone conversation initially. Make sure that your admissions team has multiple ways to reach out to prospects including email, text and potentially even via social media.

CHAPTER 3 Career Interest

Fig 3: The top bar graph below shows answers by beauty school prospects to the question "what makes you interested in this particular career field?"

Fig 3.1: The bottom bar graph below shows answers by beauty school prospects to the question regarding how much research the prospect has done about their prospective program and career path.



WHAT RESEARCH HAVE YOU DONE ON THE PROGRAM/CAREER PATH?



Findings:

- Most beauty school prospects have a long standing interest in the career field they inquire about.
- Slightly over half of all beauty prospects are just beginning to explore training options.

Fig. 3.2: The barbell graph below shows answers by beauty school prospects to the question regarding how much research the prospect has done about their prospective program and career path, broken down by career area of interest between cosmetology, esthetics and barbering.

Demographics: Age Group vs. Program Choice



Findings:

- Esthetics prospects are 15.96% more likely to have done online program research than the average for all beauty school prospects.
- Barbering and Cosmetology prospects are more likely to be influenced by family and friends than Esthetics prospects.

What It Means For Beauty Schools:

Beauty school prospects, in particular cosmetology prospects, are unique in how certain they are of their career drive before they reach out to school. But while they state a long held interest in the field, over half of the prospects surveyed indicated that they were just beginning to explore their training options. These prospects have thought about the field of cosmetology for a long time but are new to cosmetology schools. This sets up your school to be an ambassador between these interested prospects and their dreams. It's crucial for beauty school admissions and marketing professionals to remember what it was like to NOT know all the ins-and-outs of beauty career education. The prospects you meet with are more likely than prospects in other fields to have a strong understanding of the career, but that doesn't mean they understand the particular licensing requirements for your area and what the actual program entails.

For barbering and cosmetology prospects in particular, it's important to learn who the prospects' supporters are and to even invite them to be part of the admissions process.

CHAPTER 4 Career Motivations

Fig 4: The bar graph below illustrates the driving motivations of beauty school prospects in terms of what they want from a new career.



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Fig. 4.1: The barbell graph below charts the motivations of beauty school prospects vs the cumulative general career school respondents.

Career Motivations: Beauty vs. Other Programs



Findings:

- Beauty school prospects are more likely to choose "Work that interests me", "Different Work Environment" and "Better Schedule" as motivating factors for their interest in career training.
- Beauty school prospects are less likely to choose "Better pay" and "Opportunity for advancement" as motivation.

Fig. 4.2: The barbell graph below charts the motivations of beauty school prospects when compared with their working status.

Career Motivations: Beauty vs. Working Status



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 It Means For Beauty Schools:

The research shows that beauty school prospects are internally motivated. They are driven to pursue their passions and interests. Beauty schools that are able to speak to those passions, both in their marketing and admissions process, will create more connections with well-suited prospects.

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.

CHAPTER 5 Career Interest - Why Beauty

Fig. 5: The graphics below show a breakdown of the most common reasons beauty school prospects give for why they are interested in a career in the beauty industry.



Findings:

• "Personal Interest," things like doing hair and makeup and/or barbering for friends and family as well as a long held interest in style and/or for the beauty industry in general is far and away the reason most prospective students cite when asked "what makes you interested in a career in beauty."

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Fig. 5.1: The figure below shows a qualitative analysis of the open-ended responses beauty school prospects gave to the question "what makes you interested in a career in the beauty industry" where the answers centered around the prospects' personal interest.

The keyword phrases on the right indicate the most frequent topics mentioned and the most frequent language used when describing their interest. The pie graph on the left demonstrates the percentage of responses overall by each topic.



Theme: Personal Interest

Fig. 5.2: Word cloud that illustrates the prevalence of words and phrases used most commonly in beauty school prospects' open-ended responses on the theme of "Personal Interest."



Theme: Personal Interest

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Findings:

- The language prospects' used in this section reinforces earlier data about how the typical prospect in this field has been thinking about this career for a long time. Phrases like "since high school", "always" and "long time" figured prominently in prospects' responses.
- 20% of responses included the word "love"

What It Means For Beauty Schools:

Beauty school prospects are driven by passion. They already feel a connection to the field before they ever step foot in a beauty school. They may have been cultivating skills doing hair and makeup for themselves and loved ones. That makes the admissions process for a beauty school prospect unique in that there is less need to make sure the prospect understands the career and the potential opportunities in the field.

Building personal rapport and connecting with prospects over a shared passion for the beauty industry is important in this field.



Fig. 5.3: The figure below shows a qualitative analysis of the open-ended responses beauty school prospects gave to the question "what makes you interested in a career in the beauty industry" where the answers centered around the prospects' prior experience.



Theme: Prior Experience



Fig. 5.4: Word cloud that illustrates the prevalence of words and phrases used most commonly in beauty school prospects' open-ended responses on the theme of "Prior Experience."



Findings:

• Family factors hugely into prospects' prior experiences in the beauty industry. Many mention Moms or Aunts who work in beauty. Family also factors in around practice, such as doing hair and makeup for friends.

What It Means For Beauty Schools:

Prospects' social circles are incredibly important in the case of beauty school prospects'. This instance of friends and family coming up when asked about previous experience is unique to the beauty industry. For individuals with family who work or have worked in the beauty industry, those individuals' experiences can potentially have a huge impact. It's crucial for beauty school admissions to understand the role a prospects' family may have on their career training journey. Things like inviting prospects to bring a friend or family member along with them to the tour can help with this.



Fig. 5.5: The figure below shows a qualitative analysis of the open-ended responses beauty school prospects gave to the question "what makes you interested in a career in the beauty industry" where the answers centered around the prospects' Career Outcomes.



Theme: Career Outcomes



Fig. 5.6: Word cloud that illustrates the prevalence of words and phrases used most commonly in beauty school prospects' open-ended responses on the theme of "Career Outcomes."



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Findings:

- Entrepreneurial spirit runs strong in beauty school prospects. Given the opportunity in open-ended comment sections, 36% of prospects mentioned a desire to own their own business.
- A similar amount, 35%, mention a desire to help others.

What It Means For Beauty Schools:

It's common for a beauty school prospect to have higher than average desire for independence. Many are drawn to the industry in part by a desire to potentially set their own schedule and many are interested in one day running their own business.

Success stories from graduates who recount the ways they were able to chart their own course can be particularly helpful for your prospects as well as an emphasis on the human interaction and opportunities to help others inherent to this career field.



CHAPTER 6 Career Interest - Why Beauty

Fig. 6: The figure below shows a qualitative analysis of the open-ended responses beauty school prospects gave to the question "what are you looking for in a school?"



School Choice: What are prospects looking for in a School?

Fig. 6.1: Word cloud that illustrates the prevalence of words and phrases used most commonly in beauty school prospects' open-ended responses to the question "What are you looking for in a school?" around the theme of the instructors and learning environment.



Theme: Instructor and Learning Environment

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Findings:

Resources

• Details about the school, things like instructors, facilities and details on the hands-on learning opportunities are by far the top priority for most beauty school prospects.

What It Means For Beauty Schools:

The on-campus/in school experience is a huge consideration for beauty school prospects. Photos and videos that reliably communicate the vibrant, hands-on environment of your school will go a long way to compelling new prospects to take a serious look at your school.



Fig. 6.2: The following graphs illustrate the prevalence of words and phrases used most commonly in beauty school prospects' open-ended responses to the question "What are you looking for in a school?" around the theme of program details.



Theme: Program Details

Fig 6.3: Word cloud that illustrates the prevalence of words and phrases used most commonly in beauty school prospects' open-ended responses to the question "What are you looking for in a school?" around the theme of program details.



Theme: Program Details

Findings:

• Almost a quarter of all respondents are concerned about program details including things like licensing and schedules.

Fig. 6.4: The following graphs illustrate the prevalence of words and phrases used most commonly in beauty school prospects' open-ended responses to the question "What are you looking for in a school?" around the theme of school details.



Theme: School Details

Fig. 6.5: Word cloud that illustrates the prevalence of words and phrases used most commonly in beauty school prospects' open-ended responses to the question "What are you looking for in a school?" around the theme of school details.

Theme: School Details PHRASES good school school offer clean campus quality education financial aid good education hands on school small school local school affordable school SAMPLE RESPONSES " a school that offers financial aid and has a good grad rate and job placement rate" -Aesthetician/Esthetician prospect " quality education/ instructors/ healthy environment/ affordability" - Cosmetology prospect

Findings:

• 10% of total respondents included comments about financial aid/school affordability in their open-ended responses.

What It Means For Beauty Schools:

For almost 25% of prospects, the decision is in the details. They are highly motivated to learn about things like the program schedule and other details. Every member of the admissions and support staff should be able to confidently answer any questions regarding:

- If/How Your School Prepares Prospects for State/Area Licensing Exams
- Schedules



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CHAPTER 7 Supporters & Availability

Fig. 7: The circle graphs below show the breakdown of most common supporters amongst beauty school prospects.





Findings:

- Almost 30% of beauty school prospects indicated they expect to receive some financial support from a parent
- 65.4% of respondents specified they will receive moral support from an important figure in their life.

What It Means For Beauty Schools:

In the case of cosmetology prospects, who tend to be younger than average, it can often be incredibly important to involve parents, guardians and/or other significant figures in the prospect's life in the admissions interview process. Ask questions early on to determine whether the prospect you're speaking with expects to receive financial support from a parent/guardian. If so, try to involve that person in the process as soon as possible.

For all beauty school prospects, understanding who their supporters are is an important piece of the admissions interview process.

CHAPTER 8 Sales Funnel

In this section we explore how far along the sales funnel a typical beauty school prospect is at their first point of contact.

Methodology:

For this section, a survey was placed on the "Thank You" page of a midsize single campus beauty college's website; this is the page that displays once a prospective student has filled out a contact form of some kind. The survey contained a few questions designed to gather information about where exactly these prospects are in their career exploration journey, specifically:

a) Have they solidly decided to pursue a career in beauty and are looking for training options

Or

b) Are they still exploring their career options?

If the prospect answered "a", to indicate that they are already confident in their decision to pursue a future in beauty, we asked a series of follow up questions to help uncover and highlight the exact things they were most interested in when it came to investigating their potential school/educational experience.

If the prospect answered "b" to indicate they were unsure of what career field they were interested in, we asked a series of follow up questions to determine what was most important to them in terms of a potential future career. **Fig. 8:** The image below illustrates the subsequent questions posed to beauty prospects after they inquired with a school.

Findings:

- Roughly 70% of prospective students indicated that they had already decided on a career in beauty and were looking for training/school options.
- The remaining 30% of respondents indicated that they were still exploring their career options.

What best describes where you are at in terms of your career exploration journey? I've decided pursue a career as a Cosmetologist, & am looking for training options I'm still exploring my career options

> What are you looking for in a school/educational experience? Pick the top 3 most important.

- Personalized Support/Help When I Need It
- Financial Aid/Funding Options
- Practical Work Experience Opportunities
- Schedule Options (Day/Evening/Part-Time)
- Friendly Atmosphere/I Want to Be Part of a Community
- I Want to Graduate in the Shortest Time Possible
- Modern Facilities, Classrooms and Salons

> What else is important to you in regard to where you pursue career training?

What things are important you in a future career? Pick the top 3 most important.

- Money/Earning Potential
- Opportunity to Help Others
- Chance to Be Creative
- Be Part of a Respected Industry
- Job Opportunities Where I Live
- Opportunity for Career Advancement
- I Want to Work in a Salon
- Steady Hours/Predictable Monday-Friday Schedule
- Schedule Options (I Don't Want to Work a Typical 9am-5pm)
- Potential to Work Part-Time
- Hands-On Career
- Potential to Be Self-Employed

What else is important to you in a potential career?

What It Means For Beauty Schools:

The results of this survey support the theory that, unlike many other career school prospects, the **majority of beauty school prospects have already made the decision as to what career field they are interested in**. Both marketing and admissions can spend less time and effort explaining the ins-and-outs of the career in an effort to help prospective students understand whether the industry is a good fit for them.

For prospects that are solidly determined on their desired career focus, more emphasis needs to be placed on the school environment and experience. The majority of beauty school prospects KNOW they want to work in beauty. The deciding factor of whether or not they want to pursue that goal with your school will come down to the experience they feel they'll have as a student.

For most career school programs the significant focus of all marketing materials and admissions efforts is on the final outcome - the professional position, over the experience the prospect will have during their training. But for beauty school prospects, the at school experience is all part of the portrait of a life in the beauty industry. Things like your salon facilities, hands-on training opportunities and other student life experiences are crucial for these prospects.



When talking about the school/program, it's important to emphasize:

- Schedule Options
- Financial Aid/Funding Options
- Practical Work Experience Opportunities
- Length of Program

When talking about the career, it's important to emphasize:

- Money/Earning Potential
- Entrepreneurial Opportunities
- Creative Opportunity

Conclusion: Show Off & Create Connections That Turn Into Students

Show Off:

As beauty school professionals you are in the unique and enviable position of helping individuals to pursue their passions. Individuals interested in beauty careers are often highly motivated in the career field, so where you can provide the most assistance is in showing off what makes your school special. Make sure prospects understand exactly what sets your school apart and help them to picture how they will feel as a part of your school community.

Create Connection:

The more you know about your prospects, their career aspirations, goals, fears, support systems and other significant factors that shape their decisions, the better prepared you are to meet them where they are and to create a real connection.

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.

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.

Acknowledgements

A big thank you to the whole team at Enrollment Resources for providing additional analytical support and peer review.

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.

