

# 132% More Likely to Enroll:

The Behavioral Psychology Behind  
Increased Student Enrollment with the  
*Career Training Readiness Lead Funnel*



# A Research Case Study

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# 132% More Likely to Enroll: The Behavioral Psychology Behind Increased Student Enrollment with the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel

## I. Introduction

The following case study explores how behavioral psychology, most notably the principle of “Pre-suasion”, as applied in the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel, the tool developed by Enrollment Resources and powered by their proprietary Virtual Adviser software system, to increase student enrollment in post secondary schools.

The study outlines how behavioral psychology principles can be applied to benefit education explorers and summarizes research findings that show prospective students who engage with the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel are over 15 times more likely to request a school tour/appointment and as much as 132% more likely to enroll.

## II. Background

### The Challenge

Enrollment Resources was driven to try to increase the volume of quality leads generated by private post secondary schools, particularly small to medium sized colleges, without increases to schools’ advertising budgets. The Enrollment Resources team recognized the significant challenges private vocational schools face when it comes to student recruitment, including:

- Low lead volume - Not enough prospect inquiries
- Low lead quality - Inquiries from individuals who are not genuinely interested
- High competition - More school options





### **Low Lead Volume:**

One of the most common problems is a low number of prospect inquiries or “leads” per month. Without enough leads, schools struggle to maintain enrollment numbers and may not be able to sustain their programs. This can lead to a decline in revenue, loss of reputation, and can have a significant impact on their business operations and bottom line.



### **Low Lead Quality:**

The *quality* of the leads that come in is crucial. Many schools attract a disproportionate number of inquiries from individuals who are either not genuinely interested in the schools’ programs or lack the necessary motivation to enroll. Low-quality leads result in wasted resources while schools spend time and money on recruitment efforts that do not yield results. The lack of quality leads can be particularly detrimental for small to medium sized schools, which rely heavily on enrollment numbers to keep their programs running. Without a steady stream of potential students, schools may need to cut back on courses, lay off staff, or even close their doors altogether.



### **High Competition:**

The increase in online and other remote learning options that don’t rely on students from a specific geographic area has meant more schools vying for the attention of prospective students in each market. In order to be competitive, schools must find a way to differentiate themselves to stand out from the crowd and capture the attention of prospective students. This can be particularly difficult for smaller schools with limited resources and marketing budgets.

Overall, these challenges can negatively affect a school’s ability to sustain programs and can significantly impact their bottom line. To help schools overcome these specific challenges, the team at Enrollment Resources developed the *Career Training Readiness Lead Funnel*, a powerful lead generation and qualification tool.

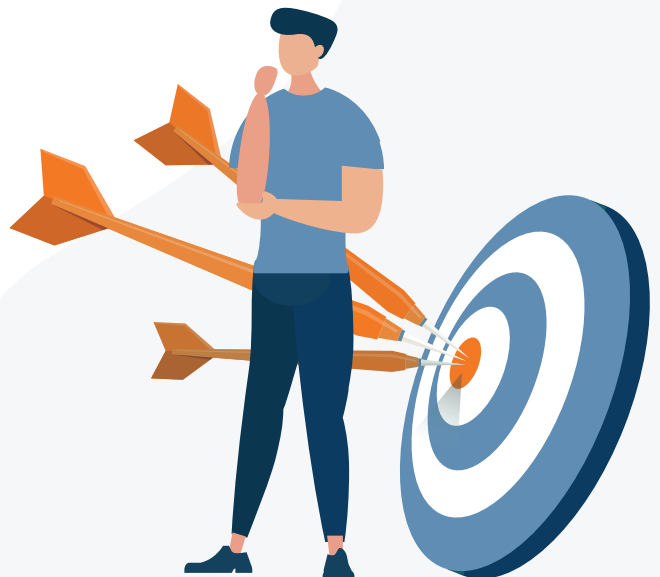
## The Career Training Readiness Lead Funnel

### What is it?

The *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel is an engaging multi-step questionnaire. When placed on a school's website and other online pages, this Lead Funnel provides a low-pressure way for prospects to engage in a self-directed investigation of a school and of their own motivations.

### Benefits:

- **Effective Lead Generation:** The *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel has been shown to increase website leads by an average of 31%.
- **High-Quality Lead Generation:** The *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel not only generates more leads, but also more high-quality leads. Prospects who complete the Lead Funnel are up to 132% more likely to enroll.
- **Efficient Lead Qualification:** When a prospect completes the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel, Admissions Reps receive a highly detailed lead report. Unlike a traditional lead notice, a *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel Lead Notification includes valuable insights like employment status, social style, goals, support systems and other information provided directly by the prospect about their specific situation. Admissions Reps that receive these detailed lead reports have a rich portrait of the prospect before they reach out. This allows your team to identify promising leads and to build more meaningful connections with prospective students in less time. The detailed lead reports generated through the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel can integrate seamlessly with most CRMs.
- **Empowered Prospects:** Prospects today expect to be able to conduct online research about anything they are potentially interested in. The *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel empowers prospective students to explore their personal strengths, motivations, and career aspirations in an easy and accessible way. The pathway then guides prospects to request a meeting with your admissions team.



## The Concept of 'Pre-suasion'



*"Pre-suasion is the art of influence by capturing and channeling attention. Rather than seek to change what people think (difficult), change what they think ABOUT instead by directing their attention (easy)."*

**DR. ROBERT CIALDINI**  
Psychologist



A concept coined by social psychologist and best-selling author Dr. Robert Cialdini in his book "Pre-suasion: a Revolutionary Way to Influence and Persuade (2016)", the principle of Pre-suasion centers on the idea that the moments that lead up to an interaction can significantly influence the outcome of that interaction. This principle suggests that it's possible to move people in the direction of a particular action, for example booking a tour/info session with your school, before they experience that message. Pre-suasion is achieved by setting up initial conditions that make individuals receptive to a message, for example "book a tour" before they encounter that message.

### III. The Role of Pre-suasion in Lead Generation

Pre-suasion can be highly effective in lead generation strategies since it primes your potential leads to be more receptive to your marketing message or call to action. Here are some key principles of this psychological concept and how they work in the context of lead generation.

Pre-suasion Principle	Description	General Example	EDU Example
 <b>Priming</b>	Exposure to one stimulus influences the response to a subsequent stimulus.	If a person reads the word "yellow" and is then asked to name a fruit, they are more likely to respond "banana" than "apple."	Pictures of smiling professionals working in their chosen field or real students working hands-on in your facilities can prime a prospect to perceive the offering more favorably.
 <b>Contrast</b>	Presenting two options in such a way that one seems clearly better than the other.	Contrasting the time-consuming nature of manual data entry with the speed and accuracy of an automated data entry software.	Highlight the stark differences between a prospect's current situation, for example unpredictable work schedule, low pay or unfulfilling work against the potential positive life changes they could enjoy with a new career.

Pre-suasion Principle	Description	General Example	EDU Example
 <p><b>Future Pacing</b></p>	<p>Asking prospects to imagine a future where they are already enjoying the benefits of your product or service. This helps prospects to visualize the value they could receive, increasing their likelihood to convert.</p>	<p>If you're generating leads for a fitness program, you could ask prospects to imagine how they would feel six months from now after achieving their fitness goals.</p>	<p>Present a clear portrait of the future possibilities available to successful graduates of your program. Details could include things like potential salary, working conditions and the kind of personal satisfaction professionals in that field commonly report.</p>
 <p><b>Identification</b></p>	<p>People are more likely to be persuaded by others they perceive to be similar to themselves. In lead generation, you can use identification by tailoring your messaging to closely align with the interests, values, and aspirations of your target audience.</p>	<p>Using testimonials and case studies from customers who closely resemble your prospects.</p>	<p>Share stories of real students, graduates and employers.</p>
 <p><b>Anchoring</b></p>	<p>Presenting a higher price first (the anchor), then offering your actual price. This makes your price seem much more reasonable in comparison.</p>	<p>Mentioning the high cost of a common problem before introducing your more affordable solution.</p>	<p>If you offer an accelerated program, emphasize the money a prospect can potentially save by getting in to the workforce in less time. You may also be able to contrast your program with the cost and time associated with traditional 4-year programs.</p>
 <p><b>Empathy</b></p>	<p>Showing understanding and empathy for the prospect's situation. This can make the prospect feel more connected to you or your brand, making them more likely to convert.</p>	<p>Acknowledging the challenges your prospects face and showing how your product or service can help alleviate those pain points.</p>	<p>Highlight ways in which programs are tailored to support working parents or individuals working full or part-time. Another example would be to acknowledge anxiety individuals may feel about a return to school.</p>
 <p><b>Reciprocity</b></p>	<p>People feel obliged to give when they receive. By offering valuable content (like a free ebook, webinar, or trial) to prospects, you trigger a sense of obligation in them to give something back.</p>	<p>Offering a free trial of a service in exchange for contact information.</p>	<p>Offering students a full Career Training Readiness Report.</p>

Pre-suasion Principle	Description	General Example	EDU Example
 <p><b>Consistency</b></p>	<p>People tend to follow through to stay consistent with their commitment. In lead generation, you might ask prospects to make a small initial commitment. Once they've made that initial commitment, they are more likely to make larger commitments later.</p>	<p>Asking prospects to sign up for a newsletter or take a short survey before introducing a product or service.</p>	<p>Asking prospects what type of things they would like to discuss during a potential info session with Admissions makes them more likely to schedule and attend that interview.</p>
 <p><b>Authority</b></p>	<p>People are more likely to follow suggestions or directions if they believe they are issued by an expert. In a lead generation context, demonstrating your expertise and authority in your industry can help build trust with your prospects.</p>	<p>Showcasing your expertise through high-quality content, endorsements from respected figures in your industry, or displaying relevant certifications and awards.</p>	<p>Make it clear to prospects that your school is available as a resource to help them understand things like financial aid and the enrollment process.</p>

## IV. Application of Pre-suasion Techniques in the Career Training Readiness Lead Funnel

The *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel strategically incorporates Pre-suasion principles. Each principle of Pre-suasion leverages a different aspect of how people make decisions. Experienced together, these principles create a powerful psychological push. When we guide prospects through this series of steps, we create an environment where they're more receptive to a school and its programs, which makes them more likely to book an information session which ultimately increases the likelihood of enrollment.





# How each step in the Lead Funnel uses Pre-suasion to increase the likelihood of enrollment:



**94%**  
 94% of all prospects who start the quiz reach the consideration phase

**89%**  
 89% of all prospects who start the quiz reach the intent phase

**75%**  
 75% of all prospects who start the quiz reach the evaluation phase

## 1. Priming (Discover Your Ideal Program):

Priming helps set the stage for what comes next. By priming the prospect to think about their ideal program and their attraction to it, you're shaping their mindset and making them more open to the idea that your institution can provide the program they're interested in. This increases their likelihood to enroll as they start to see your institution as a place where their academic and career goals can be met.

## 2. Contrast (Assess Your Current Work Situation):

Contrast highlights the differences between two situations. In this case, you're contrasting the prospect's current work situation with the potential benefits of enrolling in your institution. This technique can make the potential improvements and benefits of your program seem even more appealing, increasing the chance they will enroll to seek these improvements.

## 3. Future Pacing (Explore Your Future Goals):

Future pacing helps the prospect visualize their success after going through your program. This can make the outcome more tangible and desirable, increasing the chance they will enroll to achieve this envisioned future.

## 4. Identification (Social Style):

People like to belong and to be understood. By encouraging prospects to identify themselves and their style, you're subtly suggesting that people like them belong at your institution, which can make them more likely to enroll.

## 5. Anchoring (School Match):

Anchoring is about making certain attributes stand out. By asking prospects what they want in a school, you're creating a reference point or 'anchor' that highlights your institution's matching qualities. This can make your institution seem like a perfect fit, increasing the chance of enrollment.

## 6. Authority (Assess Your Qualifications and Logistics):

People tend to trust and follow perceived experts or authorities. By asking pragmatic questions about the prospect's qualifications and logistics, you're demonstrating your institution's experience and care for students, which can increase their trust in your institution and their likelihood of enrolling.

## 7. Empathy Framing (Identify Your Support System and Obstacles):

Displaying empathy can create an emotional connection, which is a powerful motivator. By showing understanding of the prospect's support system and obstacles, you're building this connection and making them more likely to choose an institution that they feel understands and cares for them.

## 8. Reciprocity (Receive Your Report)

People generally feel compelled to return favors. By providing a personalized report and score, you're giving the prospect something of value, which can make them feel inclined to reciprocate by considering your institution more seriously, increasing the chance of enrollment.

## 9. Book a Tour:

By encouraging prospects to book a meeting with the admissions team, this step leverages the principle of commitment and consistency. Once they've made this smaller commitment, they're more likely to consider enrolling due to their desire to be consistent.

## V. Case Study: Results and Impact

To determine the effectiveness of the psychology principles built into the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel, we first evaluated the percentage of prospects that engage with each step of the pathway.

In an evaluation of over 2 million (2,008,067) *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel submissions, across 268 schools, we found the following results.

# 94%

**Steps 5-7**  
Consideration

94% of all prospects who start the quiz reach the consideration phase

# 89%

**Steps 8**  
Intent

89% of all prospects who start the quiz reach the intent phase

# 75%

**Steps 9**  
Evaluation

75% of all prospects who start the quiz reach the evaluation phase

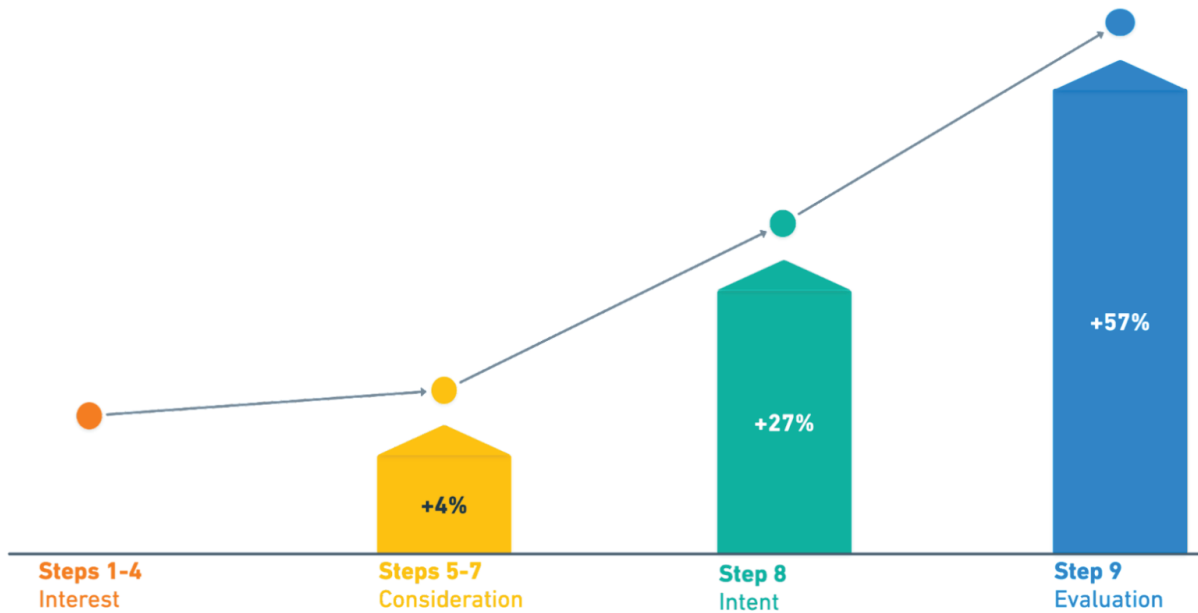
Three quarters of all prospects that start the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel, reach the end "Evaluation" phase of the process.

## Progress on the Career Training Readiness Lead Funnel & School Enrollment

**Sample School #1:** Multi-campus vocational college with locations in the Midwest and Southeastern United States, as well as online programs.

**Sample Size:** 5,037 Prospects

**Duration:** 22 Months

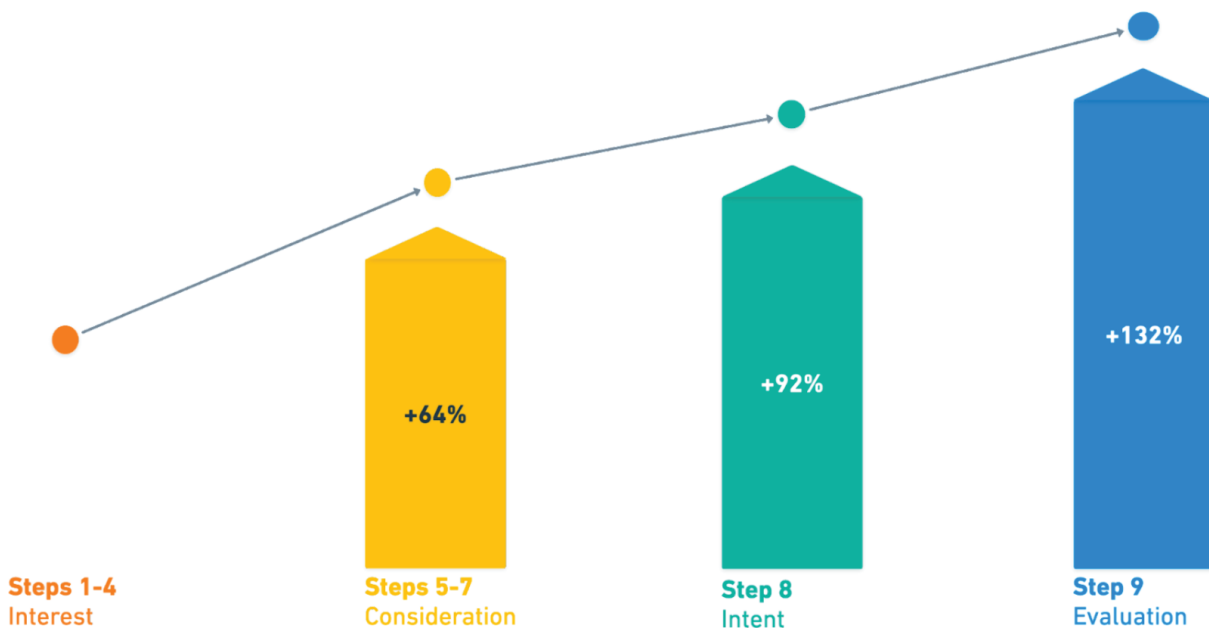


- Prospects that reached the “Consideration” phase of the *Career Training Readiness Lead Funnel*, Steps 5-7, were **4% more likely to enroll**.
- Prospects that reached the “Intent” phase of the *Career Training Readiness Lead Funnel*, Step 8, were **27% more likely to enroll**.
- Prospects that reached the “Evaluation” phase of the *Career Training Readiness Lead Funnel*, Step 9, were **59% more likely to enroll**.

**Sample School #2:** Multi-campus vocational college with locations on the West Coast and Southern United States.

**Sample Size:** 2,268 Prospects

**Duration:** 22 Months



- Prospects that reached the “Consideration” phase of the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel, Steps 5-7, were **64% more likely to enroll**.
- 92% of prospects that reached the “Intent” phase of the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel, Step 8, **were 92% more likely to enroll**.
- Prospects that reached the “Evaluation” phase of the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel, Step 9, **were 132% more likely to enroll**.

For both Sample School #1 and #2, we see that the farther a prospect progresses along the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel, the more likely they are to ultimately enroll.

## Booked Tour Requests on a Standard “Book a Tour” Form vs Step 9 of the Career Training Readiness Lead Funnel

It’s no surprise that prospects that book a tour are more likely to enroll. Individuals who take the initiative to request a tour are highly motivated prospects. Where the psychological persuasion principles within the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel come into play is the significant impact they have on moving a prospect from website visitor to a booked tour.

To prove this hypothesis, we examined the percentage of tour requests received off a school’s basic “Book a Tour” form, compared with tour requests made by prospects when they reached the end of the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel.

### Book Tour requests via web form vs. via Career Quiz: A comparison

The following chart reviews findings from 10 legacy clients over the course of 22 months and compares instances of tour requests off of the “Book a Tour” form and from the end of the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel.

Client	Booked tour via web form	Booked tour via Quiz	% Increase
Client A	371	2343	532%
Client B	348	3490	903%
Client C	233	9470	3964%
Client D	72	1054	1364%
Client E	40	864	2060%
Client F	117	1255	973%
Client G	300	3457	1052%
Client H	720	1685	134%
Client I	348	3490	903%
Client J	51	1706	3245%

Prospects that are asked to book a tour after they experience the Pre-suasion principles strategically employed through the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel are significantly more likely to book a tour. These prospects were shown to be an average of **1,513% more likely to book a tour.**

Even a prospect that arrives at your website highly motivated to enroll still needs clear, inviting and supportive structures in place to engage with your school. The *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel provides the infrastructure to capture and cultivate relationships with highly motivated prospects and to nurture the interest of prospects at various stages of their decision making journey.

We know that prospects that book a tour are more likely to enroll. By increasing the likelihood of a tour booking by over 1,500% on average, the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel is shown to have a dramatic positive impact on student enrollment.

*“Putting the Virtual Advisor tool on our website and offering prospective students the opportunity to take the Online Degree Readiness quiz **significantly increased the number of leads we were able to reach** out to. Previously students were only able to let us know of their interest through our own online form. Comparing the number of form submissions between this year and the previous year, not only did we receive a slight increase to the leads through our own form, but in addition we received 20% more submissions from Virtual Advisor than our own form.*

*While there were some duplicates between sources, **we effectively doubled the number of prospective students we were able to extend the invitation to attend.** What’s more, students who submitted through Virtual Advisor provided more information allowing us to have more meaningful conversations with them. It has **proven to be a great tool** for identifying those keen on pursuing their educational goals and dreams.”*

**KEVIN SHANLEY**

Continuing Education Director, USU



## VI. Conclusion

Providing prospects with a framework that appeals to the natural psychology of their decision-making process can have a positive impact on student enrollment. The Pre-suasion principles employed in the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel have been shown to:

### Increase booked tours



**+1,513%**

Increase booked tours by an average of 1,513%

### Increase likelihood to enroll



**+132%**

Increase likelihood to enroll by up to 132%

## Is the Career Training Readiness Lead Funnel right for your school? Find Out!

If you're curious to learn more about the psychology and research behind the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel and other Lead Funnels developed by Enrollment Resources and powered by Virtual Adviser, sign up for a personalized Demo. A knowledgeable EDU marketing specialist will help you to explore how to use proven behavioral psychology principles to boost enrollment at your school.

Ask about a FREE 30-Day Conversion Kickstart.



## Data Collection

**Virtual Adviser:** 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, [click here](#).

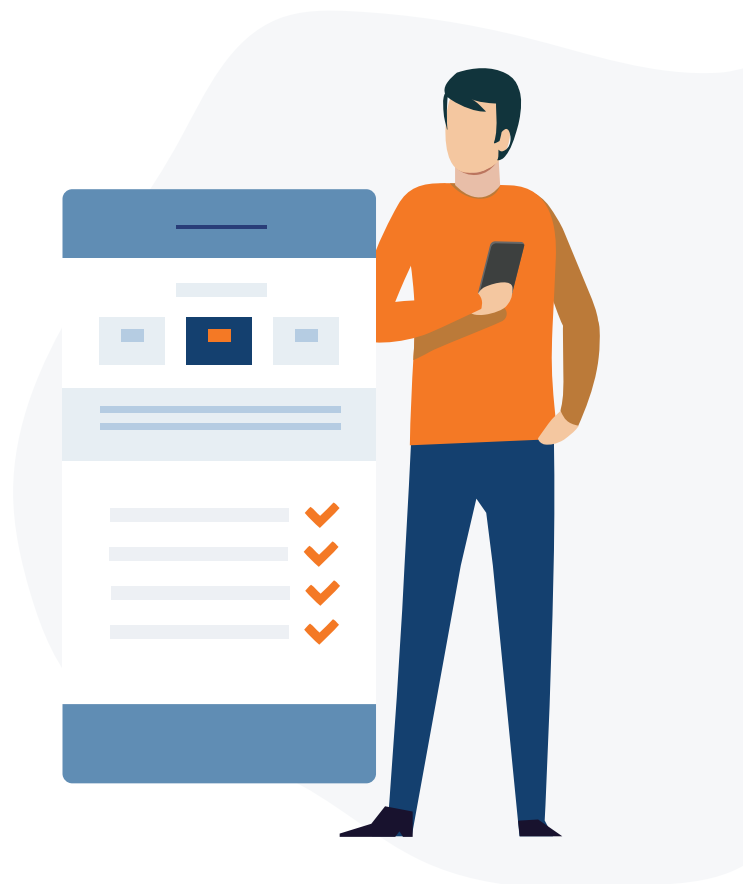
**Career Training Readiness Lead Funnel:** *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel is a lead capture tool powered by Virtual Adviser. With an interactive, quiz-style interface, the *Career Training Readiness* Lead Funnel is placed on a school's website or other online marketing real estate to engage prospective students and to turn web traffic into qualified leads. This Lead Funnel 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, Leslie Sharp, Data Analyst, Andrew Becker, President and Chief Technical Officer, Katie Humphries, Content Director, Christie Burns, Email and Social Media Marketing Manager, Tammy Miles, Director of Marketing and Paulina Flores, Designer.

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