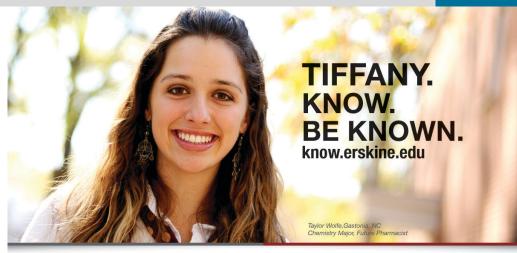
# PODi CASE STUDY

## **ERSKINE COLLEGE**

BECOMES KNOWN FOR RELEVANT COMMUNICATIONS





VIBRANTLY LIBERAL ARTS I AUTHENTICALLY CHRISTIAN
CLOSELY CONNECTED I BEAUTIFULLY LOCATED I UNIQUELY YOUR OWN



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# ERSKINE COLLEGE BECOMES KNOWN FOR RELEVANT COMMUNICATIONS

VERTICAL MARKET: Education

BUSINESS APPLICATION: Direct Marketing/Lead Generation

### **BUSINESS OBJECTIVES**

Erskine College, located in Due West, South Carolina, is one of the oldest and most prestigious church-related liberal arts colleges in the South. The college offers 23 degree programs that can be customized by working with faculty to create an appropriate course of study specific to the career interests of students.

As a small school Erskine offers students a very personalized experience and the opportunity to develop strong connections with faculty. Erskine wanted to demonstrate this in its communications with prospective students. They also needed a direct marketing program that would help them achieve their admissions goals:

- Increase the number of qualified student applications
- Increase the number of accepted and enrolled students

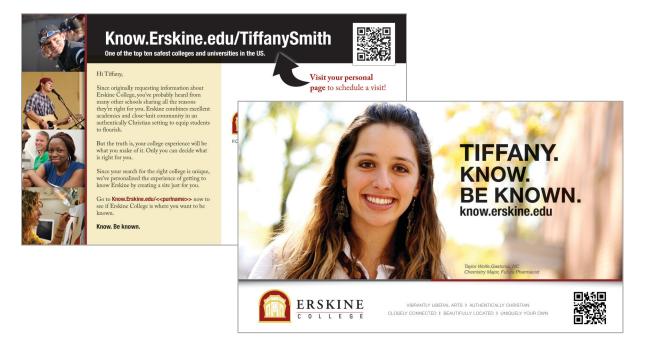
#### RESULTS

Working with marketing service provider Digital Innovations Group, a multichannel communications strategy was developed that helped the school meet its objectives. As of January 2012:

- 72% year-to-date increase in applications submitted
- 58% year-to-date increase in accepted students
- 71% year-to-date increase in deposits received

#### CAMPAIGN ARCHITECTURE

To help prospective students learn about Erskine College and begin a personalized dialogue, a customized URL, <a href="know.erskine.edu">know.erskine.edu</a>, was created to be used on static materials distributed from the admissions office. Outbound emails and direct mail are used to encourage prospective students to visit the landing pages and provide information about their interests and probable majors.



Once students complete an online form a personalized microsite is created on the fly with relevant information about their choices.

Respondents can easily browse additional information, see financial aid information, apply or schedule a visit. Students can also request a personalized print brochure which is customized for their interests. In the first six months of this program over 200 personalized print brochures were requested.

Respondents are encouraged to revisit their personalized site often, and subsequent communications use their Personalized URL as the response mechanism.

### TARGET AUDIENCE AND MESSAGING

For the initial launch of this program communications were sent to 18,000 prospective students who were already in Erskine's database. Students were sent emails and then personalized postcards if they did not respond to the emails.





The communications encouraged recipients to visit their Personalized URL to learn more about Erskine and schedule a campus visit. Students also had the option to visit their personalized microsite via a QR Code.

After the initial launch, prospective students are entered into the communications cycle as they express interest in Erskine via the <a href="mailto:know.erskine.edu">know.erskine.edu</a> site or through other channels.

Communications via all channels – print, email, online – carry a consistent theme of "Know. Be Known." This emphasizes the personal experience and strong connections that students can expect from an education at Erskine College.

#### **CREATIVE**

The creative for all communications highlights images of current students and faculty and consistently incorporates elements such as the school's logo and colors.









#### REASONS FOR SUCCESS

Best practices learned from this solution are:

- USE DIRECT MARKETING TECHNOLOGIES TO FURTHER YOUR COMMUNICATION GOALS – NOT AS GIMMICKS. Erskine College effectively used tools such as Personalized URLs, QR Codes, personalized emails, on-demand microsite generation and variable data printing to generate a dialogue with prospective students. This was essential to the culture that Erskine wanted to convey and the messaging at each communication step was carefully thought through.
- USE PRINT STRATEGICALLY. Prior to the implementation of this solution Erskine College sent expensive print brochures to all of the prospective students in their database. With their new focus print brochures are only sent to those students who are genuinely interested in learning more about the school. With this change the admissions department has been able to use its print budget for other initiatives such as open house promotions.

CLIENT	Erskine College, www.visit.erskine.edu Founded in 1839, Erskine College is committed to the principle that facts and values - learning and faith - are inseparable. Erskine College offers 23 degree programs that can be customized by working with faculty to create an appropriate course of study specific to the career interests of students. Erskine College offers a faith based education in the liberal arts and boasts that 100% of students applying to medical or graduate schools are accepted and 85% of those entering the workforce have positions within ninety days of graduation.
TARGET AUDIENCE	Prospective students
DISTRIBUTION	18,000 at initial launch
DATE	October 2011 launch. On-going.