

CASE STUDY

Bowling Green State University Executive MBA & Executive MOD Campaign



SITUATION

Bowling Green State University offers Executive Masters Degrees that are among the best in the nation. While both the Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) and the Executive Master of Organizational Development (EMOD) programs are nationally ranked. Both were seeking to grow their student enrollment for the upcoming 2022-23 academic year.

The EMBA and (and Professional MBA) programs at BGSU are listed among the best in America by: Princeton Review, U.S. News and World Report, Bloomberg Businessweek, and Military Times. In addition, they are Ranked as 50th in the Nation's Top 100 part-time MBA programs by University Headquarters.

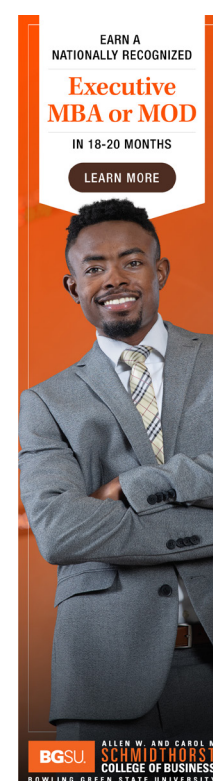
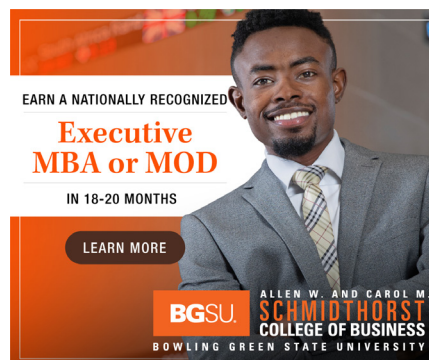
Similarly, BGSU earned their reputation as a pioneer in the organizational development field, because they were the first in the country to offer a master's in organization development (EMOD). This state university program is highly ranked alongside prestigious private colleges, such as Case Western, Pepperdine and American University.

CHALLENGE

Previous efforts to promote the programs only utilized paid Search Engine Marketing (SEM), and sponsored events/conferences. While understanding that paid search was still important, BGSU looked to Cooper-Smith to help them strategically define a media plan that would attract a larger audience with a limited budget. The goal was to increase applications and enrollment for the EMBA and EMOD programs.

STRATEGY

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the previous campaign tactics, Cooper-Smith worked with the BGSU team to analyze their website statistics. We learned that 56% of website visits came from organic search vs. 8.5% from paid search, indicating that people were actively seeking opportunities in this space and researching best options. The ages and locations of visitors were considered, as well as seasonality, with January generating the most traffic.



Our media team then explored additional media tactics that would efficiently expand audience reach and engagement to help us reach BGSU's goals.

Based on previous experience with BGSU's Main Campus Branding and Application Generation campaigns, Cooper-Smith recommended launching the campaign in phases. A Branding campaign would begin in January 2022 and run through March. This would be followed by an Application Generation campaign that would run April through August. A Retargeting campaign would run throughout both the Branding and Application Generation phases, targeting visitors to the EMBA and EMOD pages.

EXECUTION

The campaign began in January 2022 using both Digital Display, Pandora Digital Audio and Facebook/Instagram. LinkedIn was added during the second half of the campaign. Audience targeting was Adults 25-34 (primary) and Adults 35-54 (secondary), living in Toledo, Columbus and Cleveland DMAs. Additional targeting included adults with in-market interest for post-secondary education, as well as targeting those who visited the EMBA and EMOD web pages.

RESULTS

Despite maintaining an average enrollment of 34% for several years before the campaign, the EMBA and EMOD programs have seen incredible growth in new webpage users, with a 23% increase in organic traffic year over year. This growth has translated into a 35% increase in enrollment compared to pandemic trends. When analyzing specific tactics, all media performed better than industry benchmarks in almost every measurement:

- Display – Branding achieved CTR of 0.34% and Display – Retargeting achieved 0.53% CTR. Both exceeded the industry benchmark of 0.15%.
- Facebook/Instagram had a CTR of 1.10%, which is double the Jobs and Education Industry average of 0.55%.
- LinkedIn saw a 0.40% CTR. The industry benchmark is 0.40% to 0.60%.
- Click-through rate is not a KPI for Pandora due to the type of devices in which it is used. However, this tactic provided almost a million targeted impressions throughout the campaign.