

College Students

The Best Source for Interactive & Social Media Marketing



Getting found on major search engines just got easier!



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An intermediate level of knowledge of interactive marketing is assumed within the context of this white paper. If you are a novice to implementing interactive marketing strategies, or would like detailed information on marketing scholarships, consider purchasing our eBook *Achieve Interactive & Social Media Marketing Success*. To request your copy, email us info@emineomedia.com.

Background & Overview

Larger companies successfully operate through the loyalty of their customers. For this reason, they may devote their efforts to giving back to their patrons. A good number of corporations take service to heart by investing in education. Scholarship programs founded by large companies are excellent sources of financial aid.

However, it is not only the students who benefit from the scholarships. These corporations also get something in return as they help build identities and also direct people's preferences. Simply put, providing scholarship grants is just one of the many ways companies promote themselves.

Unfortunately, thousands of scholarship dollars go unclaimed each year. This often occurs because the scholarships are either hard to qualify for or hard to find. Most scholarships simply are not promoted or marketed to a greater audience.

Social media has leveraged the playing field however, and now your business can also benefit from giving back to the community through scholarships. But how do you make sure your scholarship does not fall under the unclaimed category? How can your business accomplish the same goals larger companies achieve through their scholarship grants?

You guessed it; an interactive strategy to Social Media Marketing! Over the past 18 months small and medium-size businesses have been caught in the wake of this tidal wave, attempting to hang-ten with the population churning the surf, teens and young adults ages 18 to 30. And if you are not already, you soon will be an “interactive” business engaging with this demographic of the population.

The going to college and college-bound demographic is dominating social media. They exert a lot of time and effort searching for more money to pay for the rising cost of college.

If you are thinking, we do not have excess money to grant scholarships, look again.

It is hidden in your marketing budget. All businesses are adding to or shifting more of their marketing budgets to online. So your real concern should be focused on the investment (marketing campaign) that will produce the best results.

When properly structured and executed, interactive businesses are experiencing exponential growth (and exposure) across social media channels as students compete for their scholarship monies. In the end, the scholarship participants know a lot about those businesses, and the scholarship recipients are closer to a paid-in-full tuition bill.

The System is Ingenious! An interactive marketing strategy that captures the next generation of customers and instantly builds a relationship with them; plainly because, the businesses, regardless of what they produce or sell have exactly what each student wants and needs. It is a Win-Win solution poised for long-term, sustainable growth.

So how do you become an interactive business and offer scholarships?

It is actually easier than you would think – but there are a few things you need to know.

Creating a Scholarship

Structure the scholarship so it supports students in your community. Scholarships can be based on need or merit. You decide the community you wish to reach, high schools and/or colleges and universities, and establish the criteria. Allowing students to use their creativity produces the maximum number of potential participants. The key is to get the students engaged with your brand.



Naming a Scholarship:

Using the full name of your business in the name of the scholarship will benefit your branding efforts. However, it also gifts a business with a whole new set of searchable key words.

Applicant Criteria:

Because every scholarship application has different requirements, you want to pay attention to the information and documentation you request on the application. The applicant criteria requested differentiates one qualified applicant from another and does not limit the applicant by race, gender, or religion. For example, all graduating seniors from a local school system meet the public criteria; whereas, applicants who are all part of the same family does not. The criteria must be disclosed to the applicants and the basis of the selection clearly defined. Make sure you provide a full disclosure. The application deadline is part of the criteria as well.

Scholarship Amount:

The first consideration in developing your scholarship program is how much you will award, how frequently will you offer it, and how many awards will you provide. The most important of the three is the actual amount. Think about how the lottery system generates tickets sales. The larger the pot, the more people buy tickets. It is similar with a scholarship. Remember, the smaller the award, the less interesting the appeal. How much time would you spend to win \$100 versus \$1000? Determine the budget for the program. It is recommended that you offer no less than \$500; however, there is no minimum and there is no maximum.

How Frequently Should you Promote the Scholarships?

Be careful with how many times you run your scholarship offer. If you run the application process too short, you shorten the potential of maximizing traffic. The goal is maximum exposure and traffic. If you run it too long, early applicants may become disheartened and potentially end up with a negative feeling about your business or put off applying thinking they have plenty of time to apply and completely forget about the offering once they find another. Typically, a scholarship application period is three to six months long. It is recommended, however, that you stick with a three-month application period to allow you to run the program several times a year. You may opt to only offer one scholarship a year. Just keep in mind, many post-secondary programs run a 12-month academic calendar. Most traditional colleges and universities still run a nine to 10-month academic year (August to May).

Selection Committee:

The first step in the judging process is to eliminate as many non-qualifying applications as possible. This strategy reduces the application volume to a more manageable size. The selection committee should be made up of a group of objective individuals. They may not be related to any applicant by blood, marriage, adoption, employment, or business relationship, nor can they be a relative or a spouse of your business or organization. If you, as the business owner or one of your staff/employees serves on the committee, make sure you are in a minority position. There should be at least two other selectors unrelated to your business or organization. The names and contact information of the people on the Selection Committee needs to be disclosed.

Creating the Buzz – Marketing Your Scholarship

This is a key step in activating the interactive marketing system that will perpetuate awareness of the scholarship. This is also where you will have to get aggressive and exercise all your contacts and relationships, both online and offline, to generate the traffic you need to jump start the campaign itself. You may also opt to include a mention of the scholarship in offline advertising efforts. If you have an active email list, this is the time to repurpose it. In the message, ensure you ask recipient to share or forward the email (or information) with a friend, coworker, colleague or family member to extend the reach of 1) your business and 2) the scholarship announcement.

Ensure you update and post scholarship information on your website and any social media sites you are on. And be ready to handle traffic and answer questions that

anyone may have about your scholarship. You want people to complete your contact forms and browse your website. You want people to interact and engage with your brand, so be social and engaging. Not being able to find detailed information about your scholarship online is socially unacceptable. And you want them to talk about your business in a positive light, not bashing your site because it was hard to locate what they were looking for.

High Schools:

Do not forget to contact the school(s) you have chosen and ask to speak with the guidance counselor or the staff member in charge of providing students with scholarship opportunities. Additionally, many high school counseling centers have a senior bulletin or website that lists available scholarships. Some campuses even have a staff member or counselor in charge of getting scholarship information out to students or parents. You can also request to award the scholarship recipient during an event at your business or the high school and invite special guests and/or the media to participate.

Colleges & Universities:

Contact the office of Financial Aid of the college(s) in your area to inform them of your scholarship. Depending on the appeal and breadth of your scholarship, they may decide to inform the entire student body as opposed to only students receiving financial aid (which on average is 70% of the student population).

Scholarship Search Engines:

There are a number of search engines where you can post your scholarship(s). Their requirements vary, and it can be time consuming entering the required data and information; however, it is well worth the investment in the long run. Links back to your business website from these sites are golden.

The Application & Contest

Filling out scholarship applications is a fact of life for students seeking scholarships. Unfortunately, there is no generic form or format—each scholarship has its own methods and required information. Make sure the application is professional and meets the goal you aim to accomplish in collecting their information.

The minimum requirements are those you will need for sending the winner(s) their scholarship awards: name, address, phone number, email address and high school or college/university attending. It is recommended to send the check to the college/university (Office of Financial Aid) on behalf of the student.

Contest:

This is the hinge-pin in this interactive process. Designing a contest that requires participants (aka, scholarship applicants) to produce a personal video and/or write an essay that promotes a business, its products, and/or services is vital to success as it requires the applicants to spend some time researching your business online and/or offline. What they produce also provides a glimpse of your brand's image, as well as potential content for future use.

The Gift that Keeps on Giving (The Results)

Once you have selected the winner(s) and have sent check(s), it is time to tally the real data to determine the return on investment (aka, Marketing ROI.)

And here is what to review.

- i. Page views on the page designated for the scholarship
- ii. Unique visitors to your site
- iii. New leads received
- iv. Development costs (from website enhancements, landing pages, etc.)
- v. Scholarship award amounts
- vi. New Facebook fans

Your program most likely generated a good number of new traffic, leads and fans during the contest period. Note: If they know you will be offering another scholarship, they are more likely to remain your fan.

Your Appetite to be Creative & Stand Out:

When you sit down and add it all up, you should be able to determine if the offering justified the time and financial investments.

In the world of marketing, it is increasingly difficult to measure cost effectiveness without a correlating result in sales. And too, most marketing experts will tell you, you must run a campaign a number of times in order to derive measurable results.

Creating awareness has never been as easy as it is now with social media marketing. Successfully harnessing the potential of social media is like trying to jump aboard a speeding bullet train at full speed. It may not be a silver bullet, but it can definitely get you to the next level and beyond in a really short period of time.

The question is: Are you ready for the ride?

About Emineo Media

Emineo Media is an interactive marketing and web services firm. We approach each project as if our own success is mutually dependent upon the success of our client. Our commitments to service and quality are demonstrated in the work we produce.

With over 25 years collective experience in education, education finance, sales, marketing and technology, Scott Tubbs and Orlando Espinosa promoted a bilingual loan and outreach program that provided resources to colleges and universities around the world, and access for students and families through scholarship opportunities and financial literacy workshops.

With a passion for technology, leadership and education we have applied our talents and experiences in our approach to seeing businesses maximize their presence across social media channels and optimize their interactive marketing strategies.

For more information about our products and services, visit us online at www.emineomedia.com.

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