

Discovering the hidden gold with GMAC GradSelect Early Profile leads

Sometimes taking a risk pays off big. When the University of California, Irvine (UCI) Paul Merage School of Business was asked to participate in a pilot program to test the effectiveness of GMAC GradSelect Early Profile leads, they said yes immediately. (“Early Profile leads” refers to candidates who express interest in joining the GradSelect search service but haven’t completed background information questions.)

The school’s marketing team approached this as a unique opportunity to connect with candidates at the top of the funnel. With a minimal investment of \$2,000, they purchased a set of GradSelect Early Profile leads located in California with a plan to experiment. Because the risks were low, they got creative.

Panning for candidates with “why business school” messaging

In October 2019, UCI launched a 10-email drip campaign. Eight of the emails were focused on the benefits of pursuing a graduate business degree. These topics included:

1. Masters versus MBA – which is right for you?
2. How a graduate business degree can drive your career forward
3. How to balance business school and life

Emails were sequenced every 14 days and if a candidate took any action, they were moved to one of the school’s other nurture channels. If the candidate did not take any action they received the series again, this time with different subject lines. It was easy for UCI to track ROI, because the campaign was only sent to the GradSelect Early Profile leads.

“This campaign was similar to panning for gold,” Levi Eastwood, Director of Marketing and Communications, said. “Early Profile leads were like golden flakes that emerged from the straining process.”



“We have never seen success like this.”

The overwhelming success of the campaign completely surprised UCI, and it continues to surprise them with new leads still coming in from the second round of the 10-email drip campaign.

Though the email open rate of 5% was lower than UCI's average open rate of 10-20%, the click through rate was considerably higher (7% versus the average 2-3%).

Twenty-nine of those who clicked through opted into a specific degree channel, five applied, and one was accepted (to the Masters of Professional Accountancy program).

“We have never seen anything like this before with top-of-the-funnel leads,” Eastwood noted. “The campaign resulted in higher quality leads than we anticipated. And, as a marketer, I could easily track the ROI, thus proving that this investment resulted in 29 middle-of-the-funnel leads and one enrolling student.”

\$2,000 spent

**29 middle-of-the-funnel leads
and three enrolling students.**

280%

**higher click-through rate
than average**

**\$50,000 degree
+ \$750 collected in app
fees = \$50,750**

2,500% ROI