Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant

Marketing Efforts

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Brian Walker, President, Statwax

10/14/2021
BY THE NUMBERS

▸ ENROLLMENTS

▸ WRG Enrollments since 2017 (as of Sept. 1, 2021): 51,594

▸ COMPLETIONS

▸ WRG Completions since 2017 (as of Sept. 1, 2021): 27,612

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$750,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>$700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>$2,500,000</td>
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</table>
MARKETING TYPES

▸ Public Relations & Traditional
  ▸ Billboards, print, radio, TV
    ▹ Indy Recorder, La Voz de Indiana

▸ Outreach
  ▸ CHE’s outreach coordinators in field, print materials, events

▸ Digital

NEXT LEVEL JOBS WORKFORCE READY GRANT MARKETING
Digital Marketing: Strategies & Opportunities

Statwax + Indiana Commission for Higher Education
Since the Beginning
Growth & Success
Digital Ads Since Statwax Began
July 2019 - Present

102.81-Million Ad Impressions
WRG ads have been seen by targeted, relevant users within Indiana nearly 103-million times overall.

714,164 Clicks to the NLJ Website
Ads have directly generated 55% of all traffic to the website since July 2019.

31,076 Submitted Applications
More than 31,000 applications came directly from ads - 31% of the total for NLJ.
## Year-Over-Year Growth

### Overall Site Metrics (Aug 1 - July 31)

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Users</td>
<td>170,024</td>
<td>294,644 (+73.3%)</td>
<td>298,431 (+1.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversions</td>
<td>23,245</td>
<td>39,168 (+68.5%)</td>
<td>50,601 (+29.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisted Conversions</td>
<td>9,618</td>
<td>13,597 (+41.4%)</td>
<td>15,407 (+13.3%)</td>
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### Ads Only Metrics (Aug 1 - July 31)

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<td>Users</td>
<td>51,863</td>
<td>173,287 (+234.1%)</td>
<td>145,637 (-16.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversions</td>
<td>2,549</td>
<td>9,438 (+270.3%)</td>
<td>15,268 (+61.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisted Conversions</td>
<td>3,614</td>
<td>6,377 (+76.5%)</td>
<td>6,746 (+5.8%)</td>
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Year-Over-Year Growth

Not reflected: The most recent Aug-Sept 2021 ads performance

- 4,301 applications from ads in just these two months
- Accounted for 49.8% of all NLJ applications
- August 2021 had the most ads-driven apps of all time with ~1,800 (300 more than the previous single-month high)

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Full Digital Coverage

The goal has been to position WRG everywhere digitally that relevant Hoosiers would be reached. The coverage by WRG ads is dominant in comparison to any other higher ed marketing taking place in Indiana.
Full Digital Coverage

Next Level Jobs Indiana - Free Training for Hoosiers
We can help you get started on the path toward a new career with free training. Start Now! Next Level Jobs pays for you to be trained for high-demand, high-paying jobs. Indiana Residents Only. Available up to 2 years. Quick Application Process. 125 Certificate Programs. No-Cost Trainin...
Next Level Jobs Indiana

Time to Build a Better Future.

We can help you get started on the path toward a new career with free training. Start Now!

Next Level Jobs

- Your Tuition Could Be Free
  - Apply Now
- Earn Your Free Certificate
  - Visit Site
- Gain Applicable Technical Skills
  - Apply Now
Rapid Recovery
Rapid Recovery Messaging

Rapid Recovery expands on the Next Level Jobs program by granting eligibility to more Hoosiers and adding new programs in high-demand fields. Next Level Jobs is here to stay, but the expansion is temporary. Apply today to take advantage of the Rapid Recovery initiative.
Key Outcomes & Insights

- **Rapid Recovery ads seen more than 6.4-million times**, generating 41,000+ clicks to the Rapid Recovery site and 4,200+ applications

- Expanded reach to **focus on new areas applicable to the program:**
  - Those searching for RR partners/schools (such as WorkOne or Ivy Tech)
  - Users with certificates, diplomas, or associate degrees already
  - Working Hoosiers with behaviors that indicated an opportunity to up-skill (expanding the previous underemployed outreach)

- Split targeting and messaging based on rural, suburb, or city to **better personalize the outreach**
Ensuring Success

- We leaned on 1+ year of audience insights, search behaviors, and messaging performance to set up new campaigns for the best chance of success based on proven tactics within Indiana.

- Leveraging Statwax’s relationship and knowledge of Indiana-based colleges and universities, we were able to tap into more data and behavior insights on adult learners, past students, etc. to create more targeted campaigns.

- The result: 4,200+ applications at a cost 22% better than we’d been seeing from ongoing WRG efforts.
Key Learnings, Findings & Data
When it comes to initial ads outreach, males are underrepresented in terms of who ads are showing to based on behaviors, searches, etc.

Yet males have historically converted to application about 1% more often than females, creating a narrower gap in applications of **53.42% female vs 46.58% male.**

### Gender Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Undetermined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid Search</td>
<td>27.44%</td>
<td>47.12%</td>
<td>25.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook / Instagram</td>
<td>31.41%</td>
<td>67.93%</td>
<td>0.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display / Video</td>
<td>27.61%</td>
<td>27.04%</td>
<td>45.35%</td>
</tr>
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Engaging Larger Male Audience

Males are generally underrepresented across higher ed, yet those we *do* engage with are converting at a better rate and cost.

Additional efforts to shift more toward the male audience include:

- Launching ads on Reddit (where *reach and engagement have been ~78.3% male so far*)
- Individual search and social campaigns targeting only a male audience, to balance out the natural inclination of platforms to skew toward females when using only behavior targeting
New Landing Page Testing

Statwax is now designing and deploying landing pages for specific traffic.

Pages are tested against the main website to identify areas of incremental improvement.
New Landing Page Testing

The first design iteration is **beating the main NLJ website by 1.72%** on conversion rate to applications.

At current monthly ads levels, that new page - if used exclusively for ads - **would have generated an additional 978 applications since August 1.**
Key Audience Learnings

- Some of the **best-performing audiences**: those who had visited WorkOne locations, those searching for food assistance, and those searching for college application information.

- **Lowest-performing among key audience segments** has been those searching for education financial aid:
  - With cost considerations being the main obstacle in higher ed right now, this could speak to the need for more money-specific messaging and awareness-building around *what* WRG is.

- Highest volume of outreach has come from an audience of **traditionally underserved or underemployed** - lower household income levels, more rural locations, those seeking housing assistance, etc.
Moving Forward
New Projects & Opportunities
A Multi-Step Journey

Nearly one-third of applicants coming from ads required *at least* two ad clicks/website visits before deciding to apply.

**Takeaway:** leaving ad spend to just targeting brand new users for the first time is leaving a lot on the table. Without continued remarketing and higher investment in multi-touch strategies, data suggests that many users would not ultimately convert.

28% of your conversion journeys had at least 2 ad interactions before conversion

- 1 interaction: 72%
- 2+ interactions: 28%
A Multi-Step Journey

Branded search volume has steadily increased to new sustained highs compared to where it was in 2019.

**Takeaway:** higher-funnel efforts like display ads, paid social media, and video ads are driving more interest over time. The result is more users seeking out NLJ or WRG by name thanks to sustained created interest that ads have produced.
Search Engine Optimization

SEO affects the areas that your website is visible that are not paid ads.

Growing non-paid search traffic by optimizing SEO means bringing in additional volume at no additional spend, leading to net overall application growth.
Search Engine Optimization

- Improve technical SEO foundations
- Optimize page and user experience
- Develop content funnels and landing pages
Persona Building

Personas help distill prospective students into buckets of similar behaviors, demographics, and traits.

Knowing the key personas and their makeup means better knowing how to create and optimize targeting of marketing campaigns.

More personalized marketing = more success at a better cost.
Analysis and modeling of all available data helps build personas based around past applicants and enrollees.
Persona Building

- Analysis looks at these common data and behavior trends to create a singular persona with common thoughts, needs, behaviors, and interests.

- All items can be translated into ad tracking settings, ideal messaging, follow-up marketing requirements, and more.

- And everything is based around actual past applicants and enrollees.
The State of Higher Ed & Marketing
COVID’s Impact & Looking Forward

Higher ed enrollment is on a one-year decline 7X worse than the previous year.

Program type preference is driving trends and marketing needs (associate’s vs certificate, etc.)

1 in 3 prospective students are continuing to delay enrollment plans (gap year, no college, etc.) despite vaccine availability and reopening plans.

The digital research journey is changing and expanding - prospects want different information in different ways than ever before, and pain points to address are changing.
Google Higher Ed Trends Study: **70% of surveyed students desire at least some online modality** even after COVID is past.
Digital Drives Awareness

A 2019 study looked at the **most- to least-remembered marketing content** among current U.S. students.
A Change in What’s Important

Google Prospective Student Study: Most Important Factors in Choosing an EDU Program

- **Stackability:**
  - Would lead to additional education or training in the future

- **Value:**
  - Better value
  - More benefit to my job or career advancement

- **Relevance:**
  - Required in my field of work
  - Better fit for my personal needs
  - More applied/relevant to my work

- **Streamlined:**
  - Faster
  - Cheaper
  - More convenient

Source: Strada August 2020
A Change in What’s Important

39% of prospective students prefer “skills training” as their education within the next six months
   24% prefer non-degree credentials
   23% prefer either Associate’s or Bachelor’s degrees

Geographic boundaries are lessening - Edu searches involving a specific city are down 9% YoY

Prospects are searching modality first, program second
   Searches involving “online” are up 21% YoY
   More Gen-Z prospects search first by academic major than by school name, rankings, or location
Tapping into the Adult Market

Google Prospective Student Study: Adults Returning to School in 2021-2022

Share of US Adults planning to start / return to school in the next year:
- 32% A25-34
- 32% A18-24
- 21% A35-44
- 14% A45-54
IN-Based Audience Research

**Generation Z**

- Want to be “living in the moment” right now, despite still trying to find their feet and figure out their future
- Cost is a huge barrier to further education
- However, stats about long-term ROI of education will be lost on them, as they aren’t considering that piece in the moment

*Source: VOX Global audience analysis study*
IN-Based Audience Research

Parents

- Cost as a major consideration is heavier in Indiana than nationally among parents
- Receptive to messaging about the “deal” of post-secondary education
- Value family life - for some, education is something that takes their child away from home and must be messaged accordingly

Source: VOX Global audience analysis study
IN-Based Audience Research

**Adult Learners**

- Practicality is a major need in higher ed solutions - many are working their first jobs and over half have children.

- Younger members of this group (25-34) align more with Gen Z needs and findings, while the 35+ group aligns more with the Parents research.

- The older the adult learner, the more likely they are to value affordability and be impacted by messaging on how Indiana makes edu more affordable.

*Source: VOX Global audience analysis study*
IN-Based Audience Research

**Takeaways:**

- We must engage the parents as well as the students, but through totally separate outreach and campaigns with different messaging and goals.

- In our younger audience targeting, we must stress more immediate impacts and values - there is skepticism around the concept of going to school just because it has long-term worth.

- Older users (a core focus area for WRG) are more financially-driven when engaging with messaging. Campaigns should continue to push affordability, long-term ROI/potential earnings, etc.
Thank You!