



The Student Recruitment
Solutions Company

Your Digital Platform for Reaching Students

Relationship-Building: Is It the Key to Converting Leads and Student Prospects?

SEMM November 2018

About the SchoolFinder Group



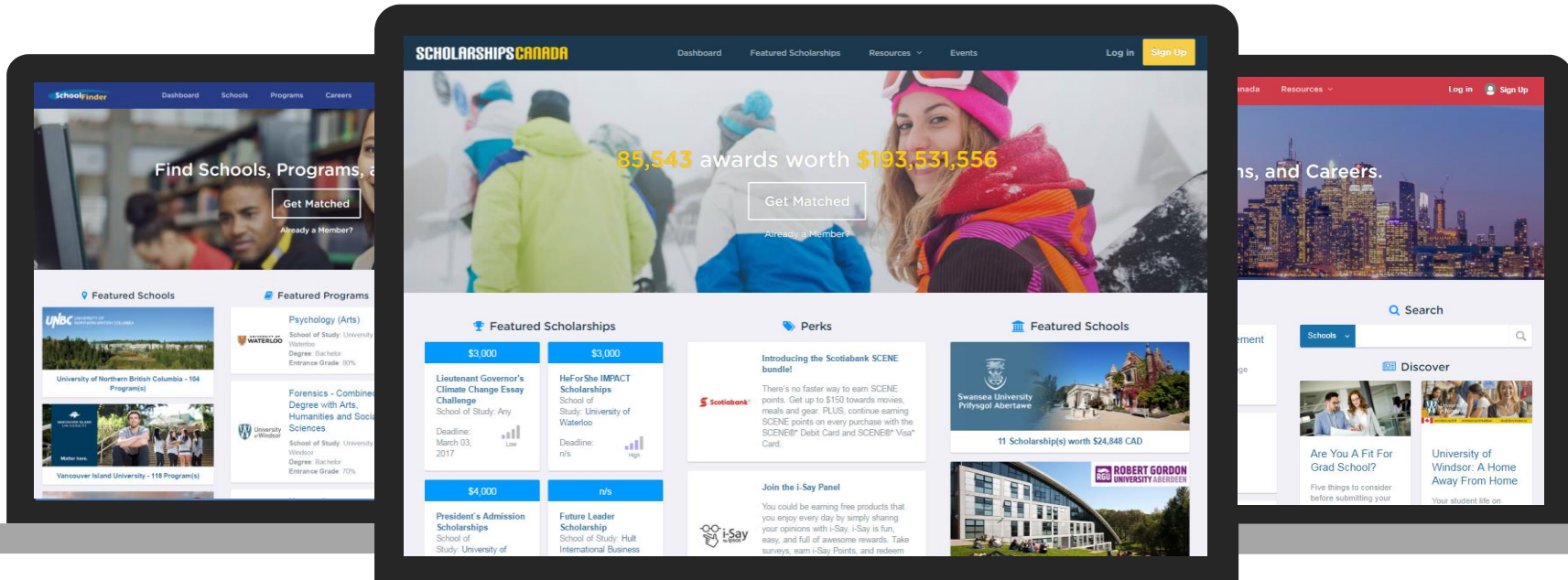
The SchoolFinder Group is **more** than a group of websites; we are your **digital platform** for reaching students. Through opt-in lead generation, email marketing, content marketing and other advertising tools, we make it **easy to market** to the **students** you are looking for.

Our passion for helping students find schools and scholarships has allowed us to develop a community of **over 1.4 million** students, parents and counsellors. With **over 20 years of industry experience** working with hundreds of institutions and organizations worldwide, we are the experts in online marketing and recruitment.

Partnerships with leading education publications, industry associations and the higher education community allow us to spread our message across Canada, and around the world.



SchoolFinder Group Key Platforms



Relationship-Building

Relationship-Building: Is It the Key to Converting Leads and Student Prospects?

In this digital age, we know how important relationship-building is in order to stand out from the crowd, but how important is it really when it comes to converting prospective students?

This session works to deliver an answer to this question. Based on a secret shopper survey of several institutions, as well as student feedback, Chris Wilkins and Lauren Lord of the SchoolFinder Group will lead a detailed discussion on what works, and what doesn't, when it comes to building relationships with student prospects..

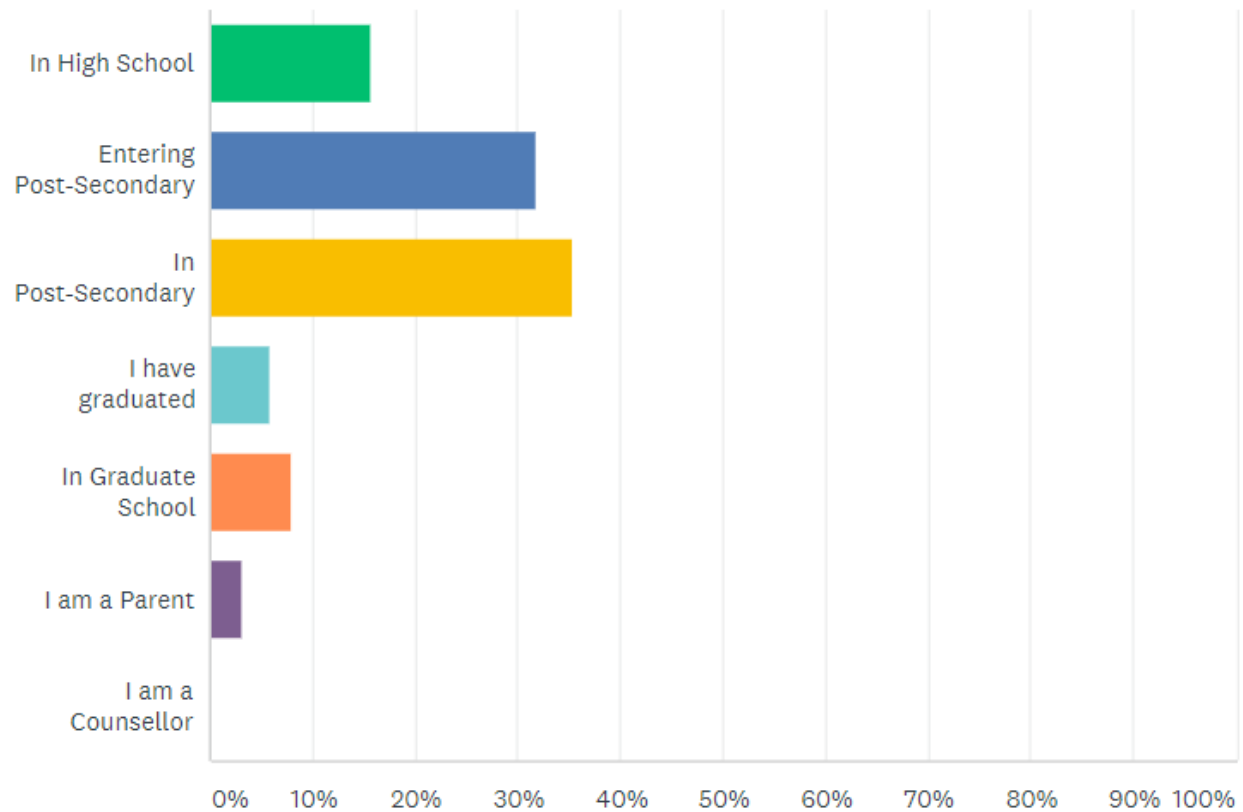
Survey Summer 2018

We surveyed 1,285 students.

Education Stage

How would you describe yourself?

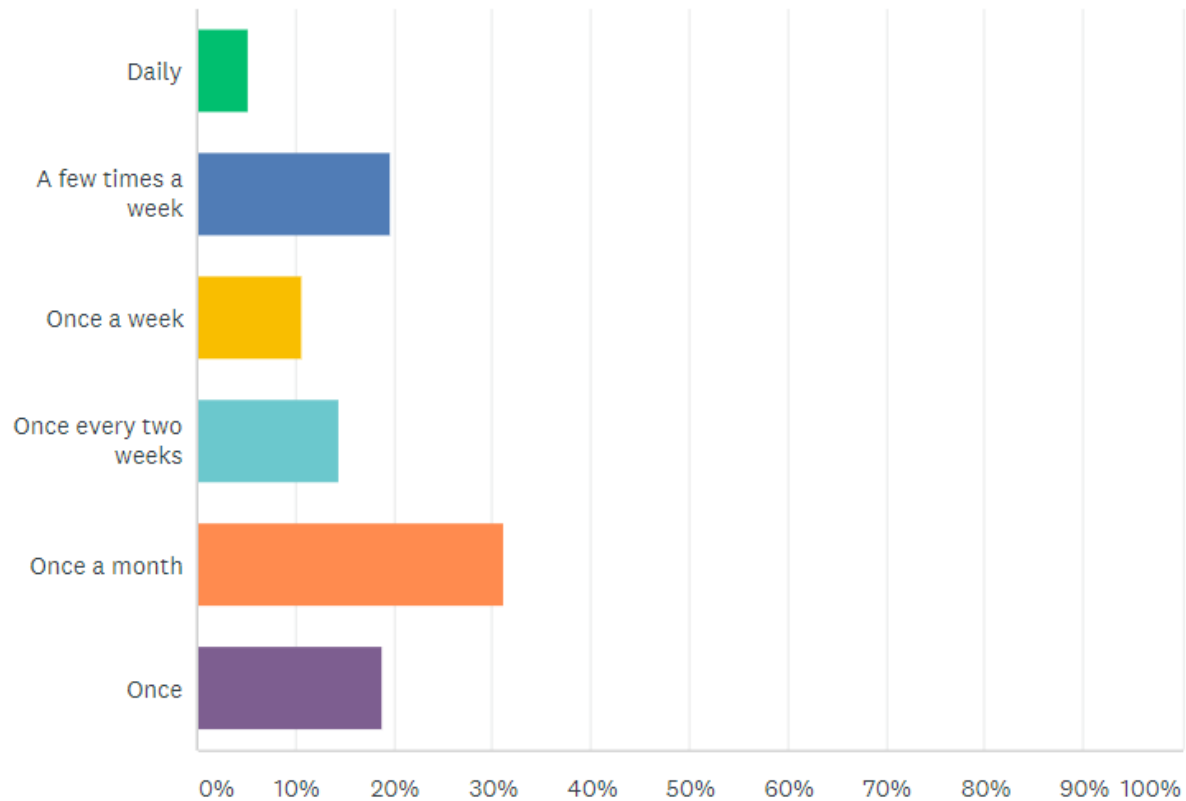
Answered: 1,285 Skipped: 0



Visit Frequency

How frequently do you visit this/these website(s)?

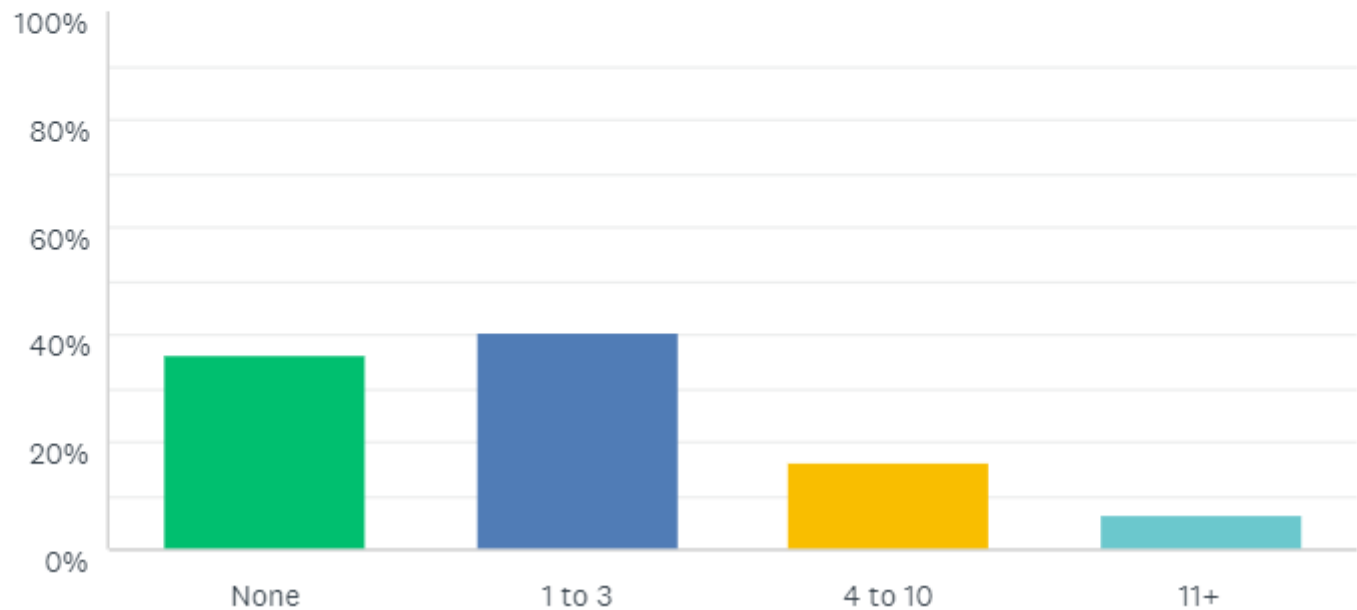
Answered: 1,285 Skipped: 0



Content Consumption

Approximately how many articles have you read on SchoolFinder, StudyinCanada and/or ScholarshipsCanada?

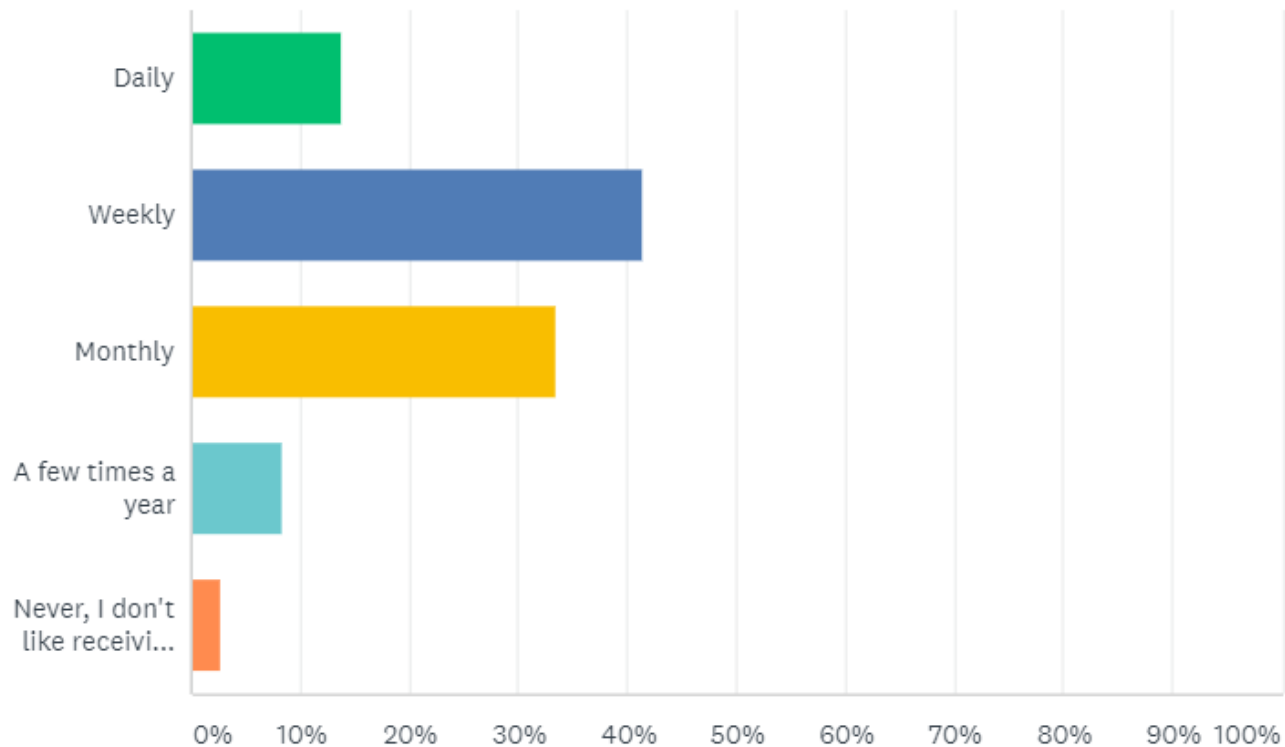
Answered: 998 Skipped: 287



Communication Frequency

How often do you like to receive newsletters from a particular brand or company?

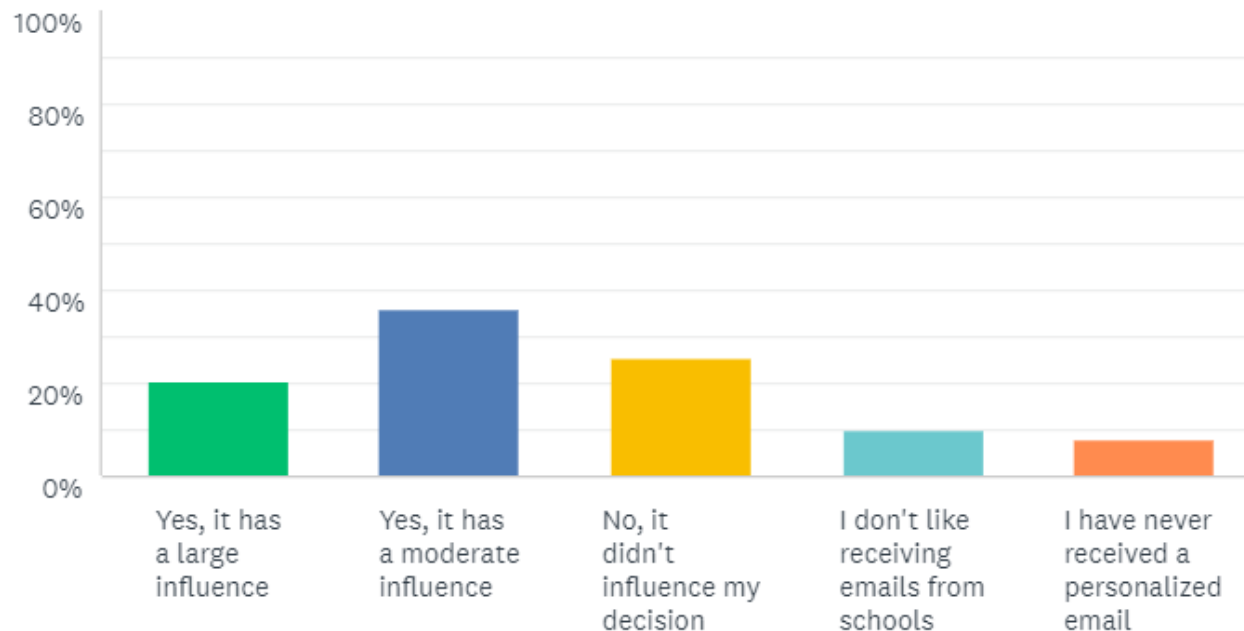
Answered: 427 Skipped: 858



Email Impact

Does receiving personalized email from school(s) that you are interested in influence your decision process?

Answered: 950 Skipped: 335



Responding to Email

The SchoolFinder Group will generate over 120,000 student information requests over a year.

We secret shop schools periodically and typically get a response rate from 75% to as low as 25%.

We also get lots of “less than perfect” missives in response to our requests.

Case in Point

On Oct 3, 2018 at 1:27:06 PM, I secret shopped an institution on StudyinCanada.com.

Details

First Name	Chris
Last Name	Wilkins
E-mail	cwilkins@edgeip.com
Date of Birth	January 9, 2000
Address	123 Main St
City	London
Province/State	
Postal Code	Postal/zip
Country	United Kingdom
Country of Citizenship	United Kingdom
Phone	4168170403
Field of Study	Business/Commerce, General, Business/Commerce, General
Selected Province	
Expected Start Date	10 2019
Comments	
Level of Study	Undergraduate Studies

Case in Point

This is what I received ...

on November 21 ...

yesterday ...

49 days after my request.

Case in Point

Hi Chris,

My name is RECRUITER NAME and I am the International Admissions Counsellor at The SCHOOL University. If you have any questions about our programs, applying for admission, or any questions about SCHOOL in general, I would be happy to help you!

I just wanted to take a moment to thank you for your interest in SCHOOL and to provide you with some information on our university. To help you discover SCHOOL for yourself, [download a copy of SCHOOL Viewbook](#).

SCHOOL is a Christian University dedicated to outstanding academics that integrates personal faith and learning, fostering vibrant community. SCHOOL offers a wide variety of degrees, including Bachelor Degrees in Arts, Science, Commerce Music and two After-Degrees in Education. SCHOOL also offers several pre-professional degree options.

The SCHOOL community is currently made up of XXX students; a student population large enough to offer competitive sports teams, international educational experiences and a host of clubs and activities, yet small enough that professors know their students individually. SCHOOL professors are one of our school's greatest resources. They have chosen to work at SCHOOL so that they can personally invest into the lives of each of their students. With our small class sizes and a student to faculty ratio of 11:1, our professors are able to tailor their instruction to their students and to serve as academic, emotional and spiritual mentors.

Case in Point

No Images / branding

Hi Chris, **Personalized**

My name is RECRUITER NAME and I am the International Admissions Counsellor at The SCHOOL University. If you have any questions about our programs, applying for admission, or any questions about SCHOOL in general, I would be happy to help you!

I just wanted to take a moment to thank you for your interest in SCHOOL and to provide you with some information on our university. To help you discover SCHOOL for yourself, [download a copy of SCHOOL Viewbook](#).

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Wait ... I am interested in Business!

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Any UK students at the school?

Case in Point

Christian discipleship is lived out in a variety of ways at SCHOOL, including weekly chapels, small groups, student led worship and prayer times and mentoring through ministry coordinators. There are also numerous ways for SCHOOL students to get involved. Our students have the opportunity to live life together in residence, where students make lifelong friends as they laugh, play, pray, share and grow with one another. All students can take part in SCHOOL campus community, whether it be through our competitive athletics teams, student government, travel abroad programs, student led clubs, chapel, music groups, social justice initiatives and missions experiences.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any further questions or concerns. I so look forward to working with you in the future! **The best way to contact me is by email**, but I also welcome you to contact me by phone or by booking an in-person appointment.

Warm regards,

Case in Point

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I am an international student ...

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any further questions or concerns. I so look forward to working with you in the future! **The best way to contact me is by email** contact me by phone or by booking an in-person appointment.

I am interested in applying in 2019 – next steps?

Warm regards,

Word count ... 379 words!

Building Relationships With Email

- Timely – within 24 hours is good
- Frequency – one email is not enough, try 5 – 10
- Context counts – pretend you are talking to a new friend
- Impact matters – images are good
- Keep it short – long messages won't get read, max 50 words
- One (or maybe two) simple calls to action
- Personalize
- Pay attention to the subject line
- Content is important



Why does content matter?

- People are very wary of advertising!
- The average person sees **3,000 to 20,000 ads** and brand messages per day – *Forbes*
- Developing amazing/valuable content is a great strategy to have your audience trust and listen to your story
- Content marketing costs **62% less** than traditional marketing and generates **3x as many leads** - *DemandMetric*



Creating a value exchange

- Creating amazing content is all about **creating value** for your audience
- People care about themselves, not you – so provide them with something that is of **value to them**



Content marketing is NOT selling

- Your content should not be an advertisement; it should NOT be about YOU
- Nobody wants to be directly sold to



Stop selling.
START HELPING.

- Zig Ziglar



Fighting friction is about improving people's lives. It's about **helping people** fulfill their hopes, dreams, aspirations and their mundane day-to-day goals.

There needs to be content, and tools, and experiences to **help improve people's lives** one small step at a time.

Jeff Rosenblum



What to do instead of selling...

- Build a value exchange!
- Your content should be **authentic**, **relatable** and **valuable** to your audience's life
- Purpose of valuable content is to build trust and loyalty before selling
 - a) What problems are your audience trying to solve? Answer them and they will thank you!
 - b) When it comes time for them to make a decision, there will be a positive response towards your brand

Develop your brand voice and authenticity

Having a **brand tone** and **voice** helps develop personal relationships with your audience

- Consider brand voice throughout the entire content process

Authenticity is the key to building trust

- Be truthful and authentic in the information you provide and the interactions you have with your audience

“Tone is important to attracting the right demographic, but the right content is also crucial to keeping them interested.” – Kelly Samuel, Forbes



What's working on the Discover platform

Based on Google Analytics **page views** and **time spent on page**, these are some of the **best** performing articles:

1. Tips to Win Scholarships and Awards
2. Finding the Right School For You: 5 Factors to Consider
3. Twelve Student Survival Tips to Eating Well
4. Essentials for Succeeding at University
5. How to Deal with Living Away from Home



Twelve Student Survival Tips to Eating Well

By RBC
Modified on August 25, 2017

Here are 12 ways to eat like a boss on a student



I was a victim of the Freshman 15.

I had lived with my parents up until university and my diet ranged from boiling water to calling the pizza delivery service. Adding to the fact that I was on a tight student budget, my first year was home for Christmas.

Finding The Right School For You: 5 Factors To Consider

By Concordia University
Modified on September 21, 2017

your future self!



Factors come into play when it comes to choosing WHERE to

With over 46,000 students, we still manage to keep 75 per cent

feeling at home?
Get the inside scoop.

city (or a town, depending on the size of your destination), your education or your professional prospects? (Lacquarelli Symonds, 2017). It's also uniquely well-suited

Fresher's Guide To Managing Your Money

By Cardiff Metropolitan University
Modified on August 30, 2017

Cardiff Met student blogger Lorna shares some tips.



One thing you'll have to learn whilst at university is how to manage your money well. It'll mean you don't have to go running to Mum or Dad and you'll learn how to become self-sufficient to a certain extent. So here I am to share with you how I've been managing my money!

To start, don't throw away all your money during your first few weeks of university. A lot of students spend a lot when school first starts and end up scrimping for the rest of the year. So plan ahead and allocate more money for when you first start - your first food shop will cost a lot as you'll need to get all your basics in, and you might also need to buy anything you forgot to get over summer.

At the beginning of the year calculate how much money you'll have each week - split your yearly student funds by how many weeks you need that money to last (whether that's just for term time or for the whole year including the holidays). Then you'll have a rough amount of how much you can spend each week without having to get a job or ask for help from family. Each week I made a list (albeit a rough one) of what I was spending so I knew if I was under or over my weekly budget.

Here's what's not working so well...

Based on Google Analytics **page views** and **time spent on page**, these are some of the **poorest** performing articles:

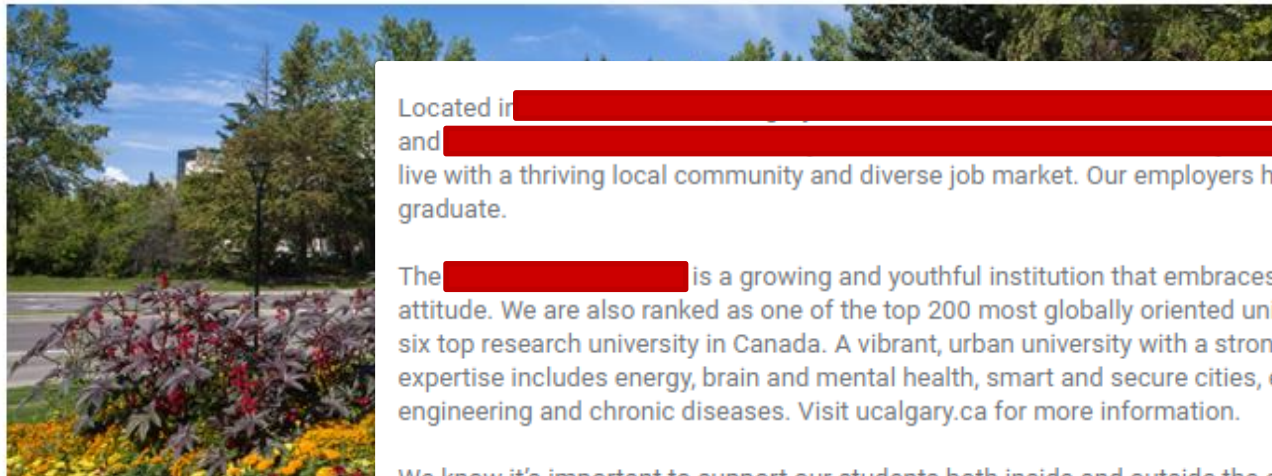
1. Let **XYZ** Help Get You into the School of Your Dreams
2. **XYZ** Offers Some of the Best Entrance Scholarships
3. You're Set Up for Another Great Year at **XYZ**
4. Pick the University that Best Fits Your Needs
5. Get Set for Success

Here's what's not working so well...

Pick the university that best fits your needs

By [REDACTED]
Modified on October 11, 2017

[REDACTED] is a top Canadian institution offering incredible student experience



Located in [REDACTED] It's Canada's energy and [REDACTED] city is a safe, fun place to live with a thriving local community and diverse job market. Our employers hire our students before they even graduate.

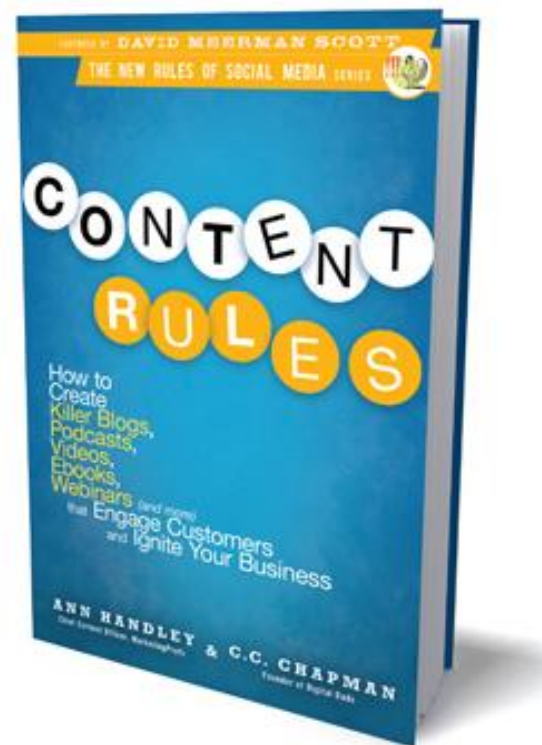
The [REDACTED] is a growing and youthful institution that embraces change and opportunity with a can-do attitude. We are also ranked as one of the top 200 most globally oriented universities in the world and are the number six top research university in Canada. A vibrant, urban university with a strong sense of community, our research expertise includes energy, brain and mental health, smart and secure cities, earth-space technologies, biomedical engineering and chronic diseases. Visit ucalgary.ca for more information.

We know it's important to support our students both inside and outside the classroom. As a [REDACTED] student, you can take advantage of the many free programs and services provided on campus to help you achieve success. Make the most of your student experience by joining a club (there are almost 350 to choose from) or finding activities and events that interest you. Calgarians also live an active lifestyle, and as a student, you'll have access to all kinds of fun activities, indoor and out. Visit [REDACTED] to learn more.



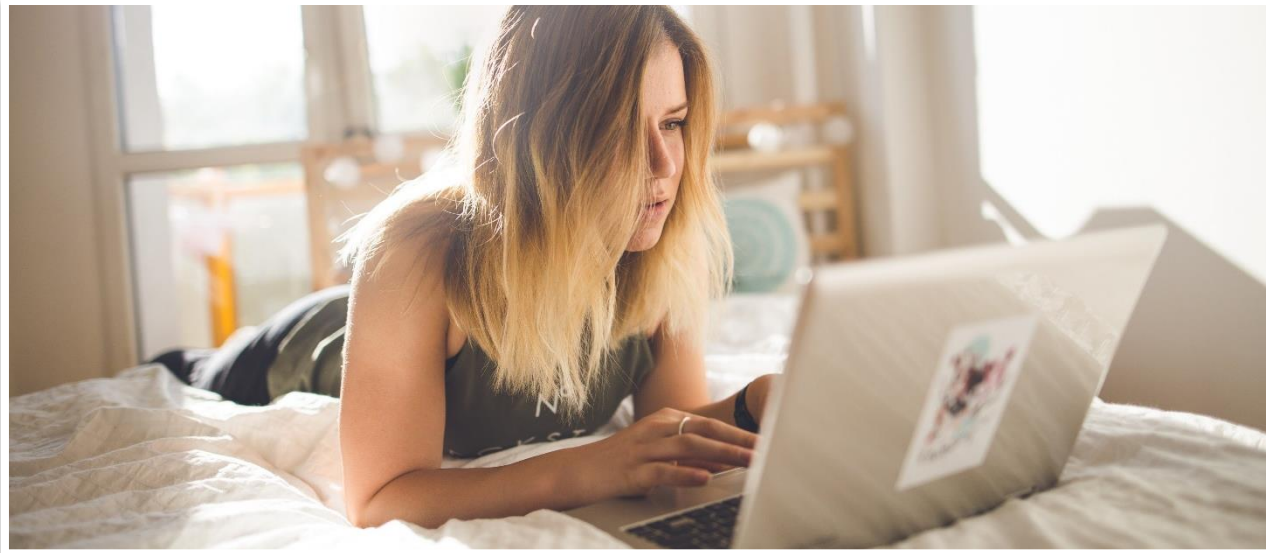
Six characteristics of a good content idea

1. True
2. Relevant
3. Human
4. Passion
5. Original
6. Surprising



The title matters!

- So, you've made a valuable piece of content – that's great! But **don't forget about the title!**
- The title is the **first thing** your audience will see, and it **determines** whether or not your piece will be **read**



5 tips for writing better titles

1. **Ensure accuracy in your title** – don't create expectations you can't fulfill
2. **Make your title pop** - include things like alliteration, strong language and numbers
3. **Ensure your title resonates** – speak your audience's language
4. **Keep your title short** – under 70 characters or 8 words is best practice
5. **Create a list of a few titles** – you can then ask around and select the best one

Titles that have worked well

Titles that have performed well across the SchoolFinder Group Sites:

3 Unlikely Places to Find Scholarships

The 10 Best Programs in Canada

Scholarships Can Make Studying Abroad a Reality: Here's How!

6 Things to Know About Canada Before Moving Here

Hit Paydirt with these Lucrative Student Summer Jobs!



ENGAGE

YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Once they're in, it's time to engage!

- Inform your audience why they should care at **the start**
- Ensure your content provides your audience the **answers they're looking for** and how they can **apply the information**
- Create content that elicits an **emotional response** – relatable and shareable!

Styles of content that perform best



How-To's and Tutorials

Answer your audience's questions directly!



Controversial Posts

Take a stance on a subject your audience cares about



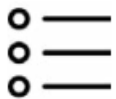
Stories

Great way to engage, elicit emotion and clarify your message



Guest Articles

Be relatable with student-written content



Lists

Easily addresses your audience's needs



Video

Engage your audience with video

Where to get content ideas?

Try gathering content ideas from these sources!

- Chat with existing students and prospects
- Ask your student-facing colleagues
- Monitor search and social media keywords
- Scan industry news and non-industry related news
- Go behind the scenes
- Engage in social listening
- Repurpose existing content



Most pressing questions about the selection process



Costs and Scholarships



Admission Requirements



The Right Fit

Students' other most pressing questions:

- What jobs can I get after taking your programs?
- Why should I choose one university over another?
- How important are extracurricular activities?
- How can I learn more about the culture of the university?

What information do you wish universities and colleges would provide to make your search easier?

In addition to more responses regarding costs and admissions:

- **Jobs, career paths** (and courses required)
- More information about **co-op programs**
- **Student life**
- **Testimonials** from current/former students
- Peer-to-peer **discussion boards**



Writing tips for content success

A lot can be done to improve your content by the way it is structured and written. Try following these tips:

- **Avoid** writing in the **passive voice**
- Use **exciting** and **unique verbs** in your article
- Keep your article lively by **breaking it up**
- **Edit** your work!

Thanks!



Get in Touch

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