Marketing and Recruiting for AT Programs

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Learning Objectives

1. Principles of Marketing
   Describe and apply marketing principles to AT programs.

2. Recruitment
   Evaluate recruitment and marketing initiatives for AT programs.

3. Improving Diversity in AT
   Develop strategies to recruit diverse students to AT programs.
Principles of Marketing

Describe and apply marketing principles to AT programs.

Evaluate your program

1. Product – What makes your program unique? What are your brag points? Is it current and relevant?
1 | Principles of Marketing

Cost Matters

2. Price – How affordable is your program? How can you make it more affordable?
   a. Scholarships/Non-resident tuition waivers
      1.) Don’t call them tuition waivers
      2.) Raise funds for scholarships (honor someone if you can’t find a donor)
   b. Reduce the number of credits/semesters
   c. 3+2 options
   d. Identify affordable housing for students
   e. Can you accommodate athletes?

1 | Principles of Marketing

Promotion, Place, and Packaging

3. Promotion – evaluate the effectiveness of your messaging
   a. Which strategies have had the greatest return?
   b. Which ones should be revised or discontinued?
4. Place – the university which houses your program (and local area)
   a. What is special about your university?
   b. Why would students enjoy living in that area?
   c. Where would students realistically come from?
5. Packaging
   a. Are your materials visually appealing?
   b. Also refers to the individuals representing your program?
      1) Are they professional? Friendly? Inclusive? Diverse?
      2) Need to recruit/hire/retain diverse faculty
Principles of Marketing

Positioning and People

6. Positioning – Perception of your program
   a. What is your program’s reputation? How do others talk about your program?

7. People – Everyone associated with your program
   a. Alumni & Friends – Stay in touch! Guest lectures, feature alumni on social media, alumni parties
   b. Preceptors – preceptor awards/recognition
   c. Faculty
   d. Administrators & Advisory Board
   e. Students - Don’t misrepresent the diversity of your program

Your brand is what other people say about you when you’re not in the room.  

-Jeff Bezos
Recruitment

Evaluate recruitment and marketing initiatives for AT programs.

Your Website – Top Priority!

- Website updates – FREE!
  - What is the purpose of your website?
    - Information for current students or prospective students?
    - Consider a Canvas/Blackboard site for current students
  - How easy is it to navigate?
- Do you have an FAQ page?
- Do the websites of feeder programs on campus (or at other universities) mention AT as a graduate program?
- How old are your photos – take lots of new, good photos!
  (Students can help with this too)
Recruitment

Marketing Ideas – general awareness

- Sideline tent ($6K)
- Bus ads ($1-3K)
- Ads in student newspaper (very affordable)
- Movie Theatre ads ($3K)
- Student Planner ad ($1K)

Bus ad - $3200 (3-6 months)

MSAT Billboards Oct. 2023

Athletic Training
1st in Utah!

weber.edu/MSAT Weber State University

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6,192 | 3,369 | 912

Total Blips | This Week | Yesterday
Recruitment

Marketing Ideas – general awareness

• Social media presence – FREE!
  • Must post often
  • Posts about your students, alumni, your sports teams, NATA, interesting research, your university, your city, faculty, staff, preceptors, etc.
  • Posters sent to local ATs ($1/poster)
  • Join WFATT as an institutional member - $150

Recruitment

Marketing Ideas – targeted marketing

• Brochures for each university you market to
• Marketing materials for different countries/languages
• Guest lectures/recruiting on different campuses - $-$$$
  • Free over Zoom
• Guest lectures for intro classes on campus – Free!
Recruitment

Marketing Ideas – targeted marketing

- Facebook/social media ads
  - Very affordable for local marketing ($5/day)
  - Cost can vary and depends on size of area and targeting efforts

- Graduate Fairs – can get pricey (avoid online grad fairs)

- Concurrent/Dual Enrollment (CTE) Courses – might make money for you... (Intro to Sports Medicine, FA/CPR)
  - Add a module about the profession, your program, and your university

- Brochures targeting HS guidance counselors
  - In Spanish and English if relevant in your area

- Career Days at high schools/colleges – Free!
  - Have an activity and get your students involved
Recruitment

**Digital Ads - Geotargeting**

- Cost varies widely ($2-20K)
- Identified Exercise Science-type programs in bordering states
- Searched course schedule to determine which building classes were in
- Identified longitude/latitude of building with Google maps
- Anyone walking in the building received our ad.

Other Marketing Ideas

- Booths at campus events (Health Fairs, Block Party, Spring Carnival, etc.) – Usually FREE!
  - Get your students involved!
- Use National AT Month to have your students promote the profession AND your program! – Free!
  - Social Media posts
  - TikTok Videos
  - Public Service announcements
- Develop an undergraduate program that feeds into your master’s degree (or a pre-AT track in another program)
Recruitment

Other Marketing Ideas

- Advertise through the NATA and/or ACSM
  - $2-3K/3-month banner ad
- Articulation agreements with other universities
  - FREE!
- Respond quickly and kindly to inquiries – Free!
- IPE! – Free!
- And, you need to do it anyway!
- Take a minute at the beginning to educate other students on the AT profession and your program

Swag

- Can get expensive – shop around
- Don’t give something to everyone who walks by or is in a class presentation – make them earn it
- Get some swag from your college/division to give away
- Check with athletics for leftover swag
- Consider something that makes them think AT, or at least medical
- Avoid swag that will end up in the trash
- Be inclusive & thoughtful
Recruitment

**Funding your marketing efforts**

- Funding from your Dean – benchmark what other programs receive
- Work directly with your university’s marketing department
  - Press Releases
  - Display materials you can borrow
- Recycle content/layouts from other graduate programs on campus
- Differential Tuition
- Student help – tours, staffing tables, take photos, etc.
- Nominate your students, faculty, and preceptors for awards
- Student award nomination that resulted in a university commercial & billboard
  - [https://youtu.be/3yhyrQ1GzT8](https://youtu.be/3yhyrQ1GzT8)

Improving Diversity in AT

Develop strategies to recruit diverse students to AT programs.
Increasing Diversity

The AT profession demographics do not mirror the U.S. population

- As of Oct. 2023, ~18% of all certified ATs were diverse (non-white)
- ~32% of AT students are diverse
  - NATA Membership database, accessed Nov. 2023
- In the U.S., ~41% of people are diverse (non-white)

Every member of the AT Strategic Alliance has made Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion a priority, but the work has just begun.

AT student demographics do not mirror the U.S. population

- 59% of the U.S. population is white
- 76% of undergraduate AT students are white
- 72.4% of master’s degree students are white
  - CAATE Analytics report 2019-2020

Must increase the number of diverse students in AT programs to increase the diversity of the profession.
Nearly 100 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are recognized by the Department of Higher Education

“...any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency…”

“HBCU graduates are leaders in every field and include barrier-breaking public servants, scientists, artists, lawyers, engineers, educators, and business owners… disparities in resources and opportunities for HBCUs and their students persist, and the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted continuing and new challenges for HBCUs.”

1st was Cheyney University of PA (in 1837)

Increasing Diversity

HBCUs prepare a large percentage of African American college graduates

• 20-25% of BS degrees in STEM
• 50% of African American female STEM PhDs
• 70% of African American medical and dental degrees
• 18% of African American BS degrees in Nursing

• Only about 10% of health professionals belong to racial/ethnic minority groups
• Currently only one CAATE-accredited professional program at an HBCU (Bethune-Cookman University in Florida)
Increasing Diversity

Hispanic-Serving Institutions

- Accredited public or private nonprofit institution of higher education
- At least 25% of the undergraduate students are Hispanic or Latino FTE
- 559 total HSIs in the US
  - 234 2-year institutions
  - 325 4-year institutions

Tribal Colleges and Universities

- Accredited public or private nonprofit institution of higher education
- Primarily in the Midwest and Southwest
- 38 TCUs in the US
  - Offer associate’s, bachelor’s, and master’s degrees
Recruitment

Marketing efforts should intentionally target diverse students

- Build mutually-beneficial relationships trust with HBCUs, HSIs, and Tribal Colleges and University
- Guest lectures on both campuses
- Invite faculty/staff to sit on your advisory boards
- Develop articulation agreements – remove barriers for students
  - No GRE; 3+2; Flexibility for students who need to work
  - Financial Aid Office – who specializes in grad students?
  - For International students – observation hours
- Respect the quality of the undergraduate education received
- Establish that your institution and program are inclusive, supportive learning environments

Increasing Diversity

Student Retention

- Have returning students serve as mentors to new students
  - Reach out before they arrive on campus to answer questions/give tips
- Communicate with students regularly after admission
  - Parking permits, housing, how to register, drug tests, background checks, immunization requirements, orientation schedule, how to get a job on campus, what kinds of clothes to buy, etc.

Resources!

- Connect students with resources on campus
  - Mental Health resources
  - Laptop/hotspot loans
  - Writing Center/Support
  - Computing Support
  - Student Health Center
  - Student Food Pantry
  - Childcare
  - Diversity Center/Support
  - Disability Services
Conclusions

• Determine what makes your program unique and how to convey that message to prospective students
• Marketing efforts should be intentional to target specific groups with a specific message.
• Be intentional about tailoring recruiting strategies to attract and retain diverse students to your program

References

Thank you!

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