

Chapter 11: Enrollment Strategies

Learning Objectives

- Gain Understanding of Advanced Call Flow
- Learn Questions to Ask about Motivation
- Understand your Role Statement
- Expand Understanding of Trial Closing
- Examine the Benefits of Enrollment
- Learn About Value-based Selling
- Learn Questions to Move to the Application
- Learn Questions Gain Agreement to Start
- Explore Common Areas of Concern
- Learn Effective Voice and Email Messages
- Understand Solid Appointment Setting

Introduction

Effective enrollment strategies are key approaches that help establish rapport, understand student needs, present options, and overcome areas of concern. They are designed to increase the EC's ability to help students find that earning their degree is a priority with great value.

When multiple strategies are internalized by enrollment counselors, a library of approaches becomes available that can be accessed "on-the-fly" depending on individual student situations.

The most successful enrollment counselors realize the importance of always working to increase their ability to help students, which in turn increases their confidence to overcome any obstacles to enrollment.

Successful strategies result in high contact, high conversion, accomplished goals, happy counselors, students and alumni.

The following pages are not an inclusive list of all approaches available to assist students in their decision to enroll. Counselors will work with their Enrollment manager, peers, and attend ongoing training to increase ability and grow a library of approaches. There are also outside sources of training in these areas, including books, audio programs, seminars, speakers, and more that counselors may choose to attend personally for ongoing professional development.

Included in this chapter is:

- 1) The FERN Approach - call flow, helps establish student needs & return on investment, creates urgency to avoid past inaction

- 2) Feature and Benefit Approach – value-building approach, WIIFM, matches specific needs to features & benefits of GCU

- 3) Value Building Approach - value-building approach, reduces cost, focuses return on investment, student objectives

- 4) The "Ben Franklin" Approach - closing technique, compares pros & cons of a decision to enroll at GCU, creates urgency

- 5) Overcoming Areas of Concerns - removes roadblocks, includes an approach, feel, felt, found & set-aside

- 6) Closing - closing techniques, create urgency, ask student to take action, commit to next step, moves student forward

- 7) Effective Messages & Appointment Setting - prospecting approaches, maximizes daily effort, builds pipeline, generates inbounds

The FERN Approach

Use the FERN technique to uncover a student motivation, the need for earning the degree and paint a picture of two futures: with a degree and without a degree.

Frustrations – “What’s the problem?”

- How long have you been thinking about returning to school?
- What has kept you from finishing your degree before now?
- Where would you be if you would have earned your degree ___ years ago?
- Has something happened at work that reminded you how important this is?
- What have you lost by not having a degree?
- What has not having the degree meant for you?
- How has not having your degree affected your life/career?
- How much has not having your degree cost you?

Effects – “What’s the effect of not solving the problem?”

- What options do you have in your career future without your degree?
- What will happen if you do not get a degree?
- Where do you see yourself in _____ years without a degree?
- How will you feel continuing in your present position without a degree or a chance to live up to your potential?
- What are your thoughts about downsizing in your industry and being in a job market without your degree?

Rewards – “How will you be rewarded if you do solve the problem?”

- Why is now a good time?
- What is motivating you forward now after _____ years?
- What does having a degree mean to you at this time in life?
- Where will you head in your career with your degree?
- What opportunities open up for you with a degree?
- How will life or your career be different once you graduate?
- Where do you see yourself with a degree? How does that make you feel?
- Do you know your estimated income once you become a GCU graduate?
- What would it mean to you to finish the degree you started _____ years ago?

Next step – “So, this is what you need to solve the problem?”

- Summarize the student’s needs and clarify F-E-R.
- Show the student you were listening.
- Thank them for sharing their personal information.
- Help them paint a picture of how a degree will benefit them.
- Agree with them that the outcome will be positive.

This approach requires good listening skills and control of the conversation. If you have not established enough rapport with the student or the student does not feel you are trying to help them, this approach can be condescending. Painting a picture in real terms, with a level of detail that allows the student to reflect on what life has been like without the degree and what it would be like with a degree can be a very powerful motivator to move forward. At the end of this approach, move the student to take the next step, reinforcing they are making a good decision to move toward the more successful future with a degree.

This approach is richer and more effective if the EC briefly shares from a real experience a time when they also looked back, forward and around to see where they had been, where they were going and what it was going to take to get there.

Imagine you are piecing together a mirror. It helps them to better see themselves, their goals and the path to achieving them.

Feature & Benefit Approach

Features describe an experience and benefits describe how they make it better or different. Understanding the features of GCU and how they benefit students is important to a student's decision-making process. Committing these feature and benefit relationships to memory are important to successful counseling at GCU. Our features make us different and benefits are why your student chooses us over other schools. Below are some features and benefits for GCU:

- Feature: Christian University
Benefit: All programs are values-based
- Feature: Traditional Campus
Benefit: We are a traditional University with NCAA sports, campus housing, student life and thousands of students attending our main campus
- Feature: Regionally Accredited
Benefit: Your credits transfer to regional Universities and the quality of your education has been thoroughly reviewed and acknowledged
- Feature: Quality Faculty, most are doctoral degree holders; working in the fields they teach
Benefit: You learn from industry experts who provide proven, real-world solutions to your work-related challenges
- Feature: 8 week classes
Benefit: Accelerated pace means you earn your degree more quickly so you can achieve your career goals sooner
- Feature: Classes are offered three semesters per year; Summer, Spring & Fall
Benefit: Staying focused & on schedule, some finish degrees in only 18 months
- Feature: Concierge and Exceptional Customer service
Benefit: Friendly, GCU representatives are available and contact you to answer any questions you may have throughout your program

Feature: One of the fastest growing universities
Benefit: Growing resources help you accomplish your goals and our students' success is becoming nationally and internationally recognized

Feature: Ken Blanchard College of Business
Benefit: Name recognition, significant experience, proven Blanchard curriculum, relevant industry learning and a high standard for excellence.

Feature: Courses are designed for working adults and are tailored to advance your career
Benefit: Focus on courses that will allow you to perform better in your current job, or train for a new one.

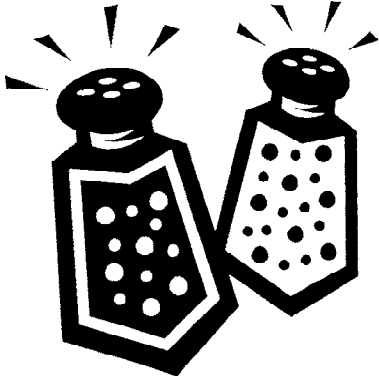
Feature: Classes are offered one at a time
Benefit: Studies show that adults learn best when they focus on one subject at a time

Feature: Delivery system is Angel
Benefit: A very reliable licensed program, Angel helps you learn through ease of use, online archiving, discussion boards and interactivity.

Feature: Same quality education you can expect from campus programs
Benefit: The same level of quality education you would receive in a GCU classroom combined with the convenience of taking classes online.

Feature: Asynchronous learning format
Benefit: Allows you the ability to learn according to your time schedule. You also have the ability to interact with other students online through message boards and one-on-one professor feedback. You won't ever be called out in class & will have time to articulate responses.

Feature: All student resources are 100% online
Benefit: From book buying to accessing the University library, all student resources are available 100% online from our student website. You'll never have to wait in line or waste time searching for information you need.



Using the Features and Benefits Approach, you will first establish rapport and learn about what the student is looking for in online education. Build a list as you discuss educational experience, work history and why they are looking at online of any potential features the student is seeking. Even ask what they may not have liked about their previous school or what they would like to see in an online program of their own design.

You will almost always find we have what they need. Even though it is easy to get excited in this approach, do not quickly fire back benefit statements after each question or statement the student makes, be patient and you will have an opportunity to impress them with our benefits.

GCU Feature and Benefit Statements:

My Story

Value Building Approach

Adding value from a prospective student's perspective is a matter of helping them assign measurable value to the details or benefits of the GCU Online education. The details that make a positive contribution to the student can be in terms of time or money, or in terms of making the experience richer, easier, more satisfying or simply more valuable than that of the competition. These are all reasons for a student to enroll.

At the beginning of a student experience with GCU, some of the value is perceived value. As the EC, it is partly your responsibility to see that perceived value becomes actual value. This is in relation to your timely and professional follow-through, customer service and the preparation of the student in terms of expectations and the actual walk-to-class support you provide.

When value-building, you are promoting a result. As a result of our features, students have excellent experiences. As a result of our growth, our degrees are becoming well-known. As a result of our partnerships, our school of business teaches industry-proven curriculum. Each of these types of results has value. Why do you feel our programs or educational experience is worth more?

Selling on value requires EC's to justify and highlight exactly how much a student will benefit from our school. The student must assign a value to each benefit. The benefit can be in terms of time saved, return on the overall education investment or in terms of convenience. This consultative selling approach can result in students who are ready to start the program before they even know how much it costs! In other words, the student thinks "of course I want to start, it sounds so valuable, it must be worth the cost of tuition."

Also, if a student is only buying on price, they must brush aside fears that cheap may also mean invaluable, and an investment as important as education is not worth that risk. Students are looking for a program that will meet their needs, deliver on their goals & provide great value. Fortune is in the valuable.

Culture of Convenience

In addition to value offered by the University, the Enrollment Counselor also offers great value to students. First, you offer knowledge of programs, the online system and application processes at the base of an arduous climb toward their degree. Study these things and become an expert. Second, you offer a clear path and urgency. Students need assistance climbing the hill, support them to complete the application process so they are eligible to start with the next session. Third, you provide students with professional follow-through to maintain momentum and motivation as they approach the climb. Poor follow-through with students sets poor habits for what is expected of them in class. Your students need you to show them the way, just as you will expect them to show you the good habits that help them be successful. Fourth, you set clear expectations of how students attend class. If your students are looking for easy, remind them that easy is not always valuable.

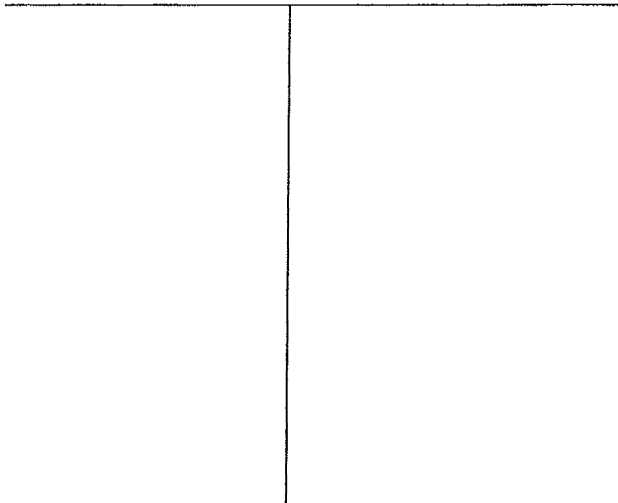
Counselor and TEAM Benefit Statements:

Remember that you are a very valuable and powerful part of your students' futures. If power can be defined as the ability to influence change, then value can alter behavior and provide motivation, a sense that something unexpected can be accomplished.

The “Ben Franklin” Approach

People list many reasons they are not able to finish the typical college program of course, time is usually the biggest factor. It is difficult and inconvenient to arrange a busy work and home life around a rigid classroom schedule. With our online program, however, that isn't a problem because our classes do not meet at a certain time in a particular place. Students are learning 100% online so they choose when and where to take the classes. Downloading lectures, readings and assignments whenever and wherever there is Internet access.

Do students still have reasons or excuses to decide not to attend? If they did not, everyone would be in school earning a degree. Ben Franklin used the following method when making a difficult decision. Ask your students to take out a piece of paper and draw a T. On the left, write "+" and on the right, write "-." Then help them create a list of good reasons to attend school and earn their degree. Once the list is about 7-8 long, ask them if they can think of any others. Next, ask them to go ahead and list all of their reasons not to move forward down the other side.



Now ask, "How many + do you have? How many - ? Ok, I want you to feel comfortable and confident with your decision to start school and would not be setting you up for success if you do not feel that way, now if you are ready, let's discuss each of your concerns so you can make a well-informed decision. Deal with each concern and find agreement on GCU being the ideal college program. Depending on how much of this has already been discussed, simply present the list to summarize, without further comment.

Closing

Regardless of which approach you may use to help a student make a decision to enroll, closing never happens at the end of the conversation. Closing is a process that takes place from the first call to the walk-to-class, and truly could be said to extend throughout the entire time the student attends GCU until graduation. Closing is simply how we help people make decisions that are good for them. The student needs to feel confident and comfortable.

However, when simplified, remember that closing is a conclusion, the sum of all things the student has encountered about Grand Canyon University and not simply a statement at the end of the conversation. Some of those statements are included below:

Alternate Choices Close

"Will you be starting your program alone in the Spring or do you have a friend who would also like to begin Online?"

Comfortable/Confident Close

"Since you seem to feel comfortable and confident about moving forward, let's complete the application together now."

Isolation Close

"Is there anything else you'd like to ask? If not, I can help you plan your schedule and we can find when your first course will start."

Suppose Close

"If we address all of the concerns you have today, is there any other reason, other than yourself, you could not start in the Spring semester?"

Access/Technology Close

"Are you traveling out of the country or will be without Internet access any time in the next 3-5 months? No? Ok, are you ready to take the next step? Let's take it together." "Do you have access to your computer or a fax machine right now?"

Permission Close

"Actually, I cannot do much more to help you until I have your permission. I mean, I really want to know that you are committed and ready to make this happen for yourself, if you are, then with your permission, I will help you take the next step and stay on you if you need it from the application process all the way through the 'door' to class for the first time."

Reflexive Close

..Student .. "Do you offer financial aid?" "Is that the way you plan to finance your education at GCU? .. Ok, then the next step is to request your PIN and complete the FAFSA application. Would you like me to point you in the right direction? Actually, if you search on your own, some students stumble on to pay sites, but the FAFSA is free. I can help show you the way."

.. Student .. "Can I start in the Spring semester" "Do you want to start then? Ok, then we really need to get your application complete and transcripts requested right away, can you go online with your computer now?"

Indecision Close

"Indecision often costs more than moving forward, aren't you ready to get back on track for your goals and feel good about where you are headed?"

Can't Say No Close

"One thing I have found in working with other students is that students can't really say 'no' to me about starting school. You see, if you decide to say no about starting school, you aren't saying no to me, you are saying no to the benefits you shared with me about starting school. I'm here to help you take the next step, is it ok for me to show you what to do next?"

I Wish I Would Have Close

"When was the last time you said you wish you had done something long ago? For example, investing in real estate in the 1990s or buying stock on the open market. In both cases, you had to take a risk to see the benefits. Aren't you ready to say 'I did' instead of 'I Wish I would Have' again?"

Ball in Their Court Close

“What other information do you need to make your decision?” Students will typically ask for application steps. “Let me ask you, what do you think your next step is at this point?” Students often expect to complete an application to move forward even early in the decision-making process.

Invest in Yourself Close

“In moving forward, I know it will be a challenge, but as an investment in your future, I know this decision will be a good one for you. The smarter the investment, the greater the return and you are your own best asset, if GCU is a good fit for you, let me help you take the next step.”

Addressing Areas of Concern

Concerns are a normal part of the enrollment process and without voicing some concerns, most students would never move forward. Take time to understand your student's concerns, clarify them, question them and then provide an answer to their concern.

Feel, Felt, Found

"I see/understand/hear how you feel, in fact, I know many students/others/teachers/alumni that have felt the same way. What I/they/we have found is that when you/I/they/we really thought about it/evaluated it/started the class, we did well/understood/like it, etc."

The Set Aside

To set aside an concern and cover it later, simply acknowledge the concern, give it some value and say that since it is important to the prospective student, you will definitely spend time talking to them about it today. (e.g. Tuition)

The Six A's (A+A+A+A+A+A)

Agree, Add, Ask:

When a student likes a benefit we have, let them know that you noticed that they like it, ask why or how much and then add your own feelings about that benefit or the feelings of other students to reinforce their positive feeling.

Acknowledge, Adjust, Ask:

When a student raises a concern, the worst response is to quickly overcome it. Instead, acknowledge what they said and make sure you understand where they are coming from, then offer a good reason for the student to change their mind. FFF is a form of Acknowledge and Adjust.

Areas of Concern Examples

I don't have time to earn my degree.

Questions: Do you control your own schedule? Tell me about it. Do you see any changes in your schedule over the next six months? Are you able to consider the moving around some priorities to move this goal to the top? There are two ways to make more money in the world, work more or get paid more. Only $W \times T = \$!$

Answer: so what you're really concerned with is how to best use your valuable time, right? That's what a lot of GCU students are concerned with...and although earning a degree is a commitment, you may find it surprising to know it takes a lot less time than you think. Most of our students are working adults like you. That's why GCU offers courses specifically to help meet the busy lives of it's students. Classes are offered one at a time so you only have to focus on one subject at a time. Could you see yourself being successful with this kind of schedule?

I'm not ready to go back, I was never good at school anyway.

Questions: What are your plans now? Are you concerned about whether you will be a good student? If I could help you learn the system, I'm confident you could handle the work if you made it a priority.

Answer: If I explained how you can be successful in GCU's program would you start school? Many students feel the same way about returning to school. However, our programs are specifically designed to meet the needs of the adult learner. Our courses are offered one at a time and the assignments and curriculum all take into consideration the fact that you haven't been in that "college" atmosphere in a while. You'll have a support group of students, faculty and of course me to help you through every step of the way.

It's too expensive.

Questions: Do you have other schools or opportunities you are comparing to GCU? Is the price the deciding factor for you? Can you afford not to move forward?

Answer: How much were you expecting to pay for college? Many people have thought the same thing about our programs, but after researching the competitors you'll see we are very reasonable. In addition, can you afford not to go back to school? With the recent research on how much more money you're apt to make after you earn your degree, isn't it time to get started now. You're concerned about earning a valuable degree, right? Well, don't get caught up in spending all your time and money on Jr. College or a community college. You'll soon find that the cost of attending GCU is much more reasonable – and time efficient.

I heard your faculty isn't qualified.

Questions: What do you know about our faculty training? Are you aware of the qualifications required to teach at GCU? Are good relationships with your teachers the most important thing to you?

Answer: You want to learn from the most qualified instructors, correct? You bring up a good question. All our instructors are not full-time traditional tenured faculty, because we know that having instructors who are currently working in the fields they teach will have a greater impact in the classroom. Adults want to be able to immediately apply what they learn in school to their jobs. In addition to real-world work experience, our instructors must go through a rigorous training process where they are evaluated by other faculty and business professionals – before they are allowed to teach. All our instructors are master's prepared and many have PhD's.

I think I'll wait until next year to start my degree, can you just send some information?

Questions: Have you been researching schools already? If you continue to wait, what are the chances your life will get less busy? If I send you information, what will your next step be?

Answer: While I can understand where you're coming from, I think what your asking is how is starting my degree now going to help me, right? Well, most students will tell you that the sooner you start your degree the sooner you'll be done and on your way to earning a higher salary, getting that promotion you want, or just satisfying that life long dream. If you're committed to reaching your goals, which I know you are, then you won't put your goals on hold.

Leaving Effective Messages

- Never ramble!! Leave messages that are 30-45 seconds long and always give the prospective student at least 2 good reasons to call back.
- Speak at a fast pace when leaving a voicemail, but slow down and speak clearly when leaving the contact information.
- Keep calling and try to actually speak to the person. Try to find out when he or she will be available.
- Email the contact letting them know that you would like to call at a specified time. Set up an appointment in your outlook Calendar.
- When following through on a fax or e-mail, feel free to ask if they received your fax or e-mail. Always say something like, "I am just following up on my e-mail about..." Go into a few exciting points about your topic. This is a good refresher to your student.
- Never leave the same voicemail twice. Always change your message to include another great point about why they should want to talk to you today.
- Practice by leaving yourself a voicemail. If you get bored listening to yourself then you know that you are in trouble.
- Call your Enrollment Manager once a month to leave a new message that you would leave for your students.

Remember, your voicemail is the first impression a student has of you. If it is filled with verbal talent, enthusiasm and knowledge, they will like you!

For your voicemail greeting, share a point of value to let them know when you are normally "on campus" and that you are excited to return their call.

When you are away, let your students know when you will return to campus and set your "off campus" email and voicemail greetings.

Sample Voicemail Scripting

Hi, _____, this is _____ from the College of _____ at Grand Canyon University. I'm calling to help you move forward with earning your degree. I would like to go over with you how our program works, the cost, and how soon you can graduate. Many students don't even know they can earn their degree in less time than they expect and do it 100% online. I'll be here on campus until _____ pm. Please call me at _____. I look forward to helping you achieve your goals. Have a great day!

Hello _____, this is _____ with the _____ at Grand Canyon University. I'd love to talk with you about our online degree programs, including the cost, time involved and how convenient it actually is to earn your degree online. Give me a call back when you return and we can look at your program and financing options so you have a realistic idea of whether or not this is possible. My number is _____ and I am on campus from _____ to _____, Monday through Friday. Look forward to speaking with you soon! I'll be sending an email so you have all of my contact information.

Hi, this is _____ calling from _____ at Grand Canyon University. This message is for _____ and I understand you needed some help from me regarding our programs. I'd love to speak with you so we can determine what information you may need to get a good idea of how the program works, how much it costs and how soon you may be able to graduate. I look forward to speaking with you soon! You can reach me at _____ on campus from Monday through Friday until _____ pm.

Voice Messages & Greetings

Introduction Message:

Voicemail Greeting:

Introduction Greeting:

Effective Email Messages

When using email, try to always ask a question that requires a response, either in the subject, body or at the end of the email. This gives the potential student something to take action on right a way.

Keep the question simple and use it to

- move the student forward in the process (i.e. Did you complete the MPN, if so, email me and I'll review it for you. The next step is the _____),
- find out if they are still on track (i.e. Subject: Did you complete your next step?)
- or to restart contact (i.e. Since we talked last, I was wondering, did you talk to your employer about reimbursement? If not, give me a call, I have some information for you that may help with that).

Even the best email communication is not substitute for voice to voice contact with your prospective students.

Remember, when prospecting that all email messages must first be approved by marketing. Be sure to send your messages to your manager so they can receive approval. Your manager will also be able to provide you with pre-approved email messages.

All emails should have the University or a Director approved auto-signature.

Email Guidelines

Sending Spam

Sending unsolicited commercial email is not authorized and can result in immediate termination. Unsolicited commercial email is also known as spam, junk email, and bulk email. More importantly, we do not want GCU to have the reputation as a source of spam.

Marked as Spam

There are many occasions when a prospective student will “mark” or “flag” an email message as being spam. This may result in all future messages being blocked from certain internet domains (aol.com or yahoo.com). When someone marks an email as spam, some of the larger internet providers, such as AOL and Yahoo, will send this message back to the administrators of the GCU systems. If we determine it is spam, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

How can this happen?

Some may select the message as spam if they do not wish to communicate with GCU any longer. It is more likely that software or the user may unknowingly select an email if they receive a large amount of spam messages. They could select all emails and then scan the sender’s name for recognized emails. When this occurs, it is very easy to miss an email sent by GCU.