

Overcoming Objections

Why do people have objections?

Fear

Don't understand the program

List types of objections students have:

Time

Money

Family

Credibility

Support

Program requirements

Time to completion

Looking at other schools

Methods for overcoming objections:

Feel, Felt, Found Method

I understand how you feel

Others have felt that way before (I have felt that way)

What other students have found is that (what I have found is that)

Exercise:

Student: I don't want to spend 3 years earning my degree that is too much time.

Create a feel, felt, found statement.

I understand how you feel

A lot of people feel that way too

But what I hear people say after they start their program is that spending that amount of time is worth it because of the content that they are learning. It is very applicable to their work

Use Feature, Advantage and Benefit statements

Answering an objection effectively means addressing benefits. Asking prospects the right questions allows them to respond in such a way that allows them to see the benefits of the program. Sharing feature-benefit statements with prospective students will reinforce their decision.

Exercise:

Student: I don't want to spend 3 years earning my degree that is too much time.

Create a FAB statement.

One of the features about the program is that you will learn things that you can apply direct

Managing Objections

- Maintain a positive attitude toward objections. Embrace them. Show the prospective student that you aren't afraid of the objection.
- Know the features, advantages and benefits that are offered in their program of interest and the university.
- Know your prospective student's needs, wants, and personal goals
- Reiterate to the student how they can reach their personal goals
- Discuss with the student what it would be like if they didn't earn another degree
- S.W.I.F.T (so what's in it for them) Let the student know what they will get out of earning their degree with Walden University

Student-Specific Objections

Write a rebuttal to each of the following objections using Feel, Felt, Found Method or a FAB statement.

Cost – The program is too much money

Time- I will not have enough time during the week to attend school also

Family/Spouse- My wife/husband doesn't want me to go back to school.

Credibility- I that if I switch jobs they will not accept a degree from Walden (online school)

Support- Being online will just not offer the same support as attending a face to face class

Shopping- I am looking at other schools

Review each of the objections discuss how to overcome them

Cost

- The prospective student doesn't have the money.
- The prospective student has the money, but doesn't want to spend it.
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Time

- The prospective student has not clearly thought through the time commitment that is required to earn a degree.
- The prospective student does not think that he or she can fit in the residencies (or field practicum or internship in some programs).
- The prospective student is concerned about the change in lifestyle. (fear factor)

Spouse/Family

- The prospective student will not make the decision.
- The prospective student doesn't have the authority to make the decision alone.
- The prospective student has not discussed returning to school with his or her family.

Credibility

- The prospective student is concerned about how an online degree is perceived.
- The prospective student feels that name recognition is important. "Who is Walden?"
- The prospective student doesn't trust or have confidence in our school.
- The prospective student doesn't trust or have confidence in you.
- The prospective student is concerned about the quality of the Walden faculty.

Support

- The prospective student is concerned about faculty support.
- The prospective student is concerned about the availability of technical support staff.

Shopping

- The prospective student believes there is a better program for his or her needs.
- The prospective student has something else in mind but will not tell you what it is.

Managing student objections

Managing Cost Objections

- Ask probing questions to determine if the prospective student can achieve a higher pay scale or receive a raise with career advancement.
- Discuss financial assistance options, such as federal loans with low interest rates, tuition payment plans, and cohort reductions. (If there is a group of 5 or more students from the same place, we offer 10% off the tuition.)
- Advise the prospective student that Walden's tuition rates are about average compared to other distance-learning universities.
- Remind the prospective student that our programs are convenient and flexible, allowing our students to research topics that relate directly to their current responsibilities, as well as stay in their current jobs while they are in school.
- Discuss the prospective student's motivation and remind the prospective student that he or she can fulfill a lifelong dream of holding a graduate/college degree.

Managing Time Objections

- Advise the prospective student that he or she should expect to spend 15–20 for PhD programs and 5-10 hours per week on Masters programs. Recommend Saturday as the main study day. Reinforce that this is much less time than a traditional program, if they consider the time spent commuting to class, sitting in the classroom, and doing homework.
- Remind the prospective student of the flexibility of getting online whenever it's convenient. If necessary, a student can take one class per quarter. Many of our Ph.D. programs are self-paced and self-directed. In the KAM-based programs, students develop Learning Agreements for each KAM that function as their timeline.
- Tell the prospective student that the residency is often the best part of the program and is often a life-changing experience. The residency is a great opportunity for students to come together face to face—to share ideas and best practices, to meet faculty, to work on their KAMS or dissertations, and to select their dissertation committees.

- Advise the prospective student that at traditional universities, he or she would spend 40 hours per week in residency. The advantage of enrolling into a Walden program is that the student can continue his or normal workweek.

Managing Spouse/Family Objections

- Be careful not to disregard the prospective student's family needs. If the prospective student is concerned, advise him or her to talk with family members immediately. To help with this process, let the prospective student know that you would be happy to talk to his or her spouse, etc.—to help answer questions or raise support for the prospective student's decision to earn a degree.
- Give the prospective student a “deadline” to talk with family members. For instance, “When we talk next week, I can help answer any questions that your spouse may have.” This will let the prospective student know that he or she needs to move swiftly, and not procrastinate.
- Inform the prospective student that our programs are more convenient and flexible for adults with families. Assignments can be done out of the student's home or workplace, reducing babysitting costs.

Managing Credibility Objections

- Advise the prospective student that Walden University is regionally accredited by The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. You may provide the prospective student with the Web site, so that he or she can learn more about the accrediting body:
www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org It is important to mention that this is the same accrediting body for Purdue University, Indiana University and Notre Dame; they are judged by the same standards as Walden.
- Advise the prospective student to visit the Walden Web site and read about the university's alumni and faculty. Some of our alumni are faculty at well-known universities around the world.
- Remind the prospective student that Walden University has been around since 1970. Walden has the most experience providing distance-learning education of any institution today.

Managing Support Objections

- Explain to the prospective student that the program will start with an orientation course designed to help students succeed in the distance-learning environment.
- Tell the prospective student that a personal concierge will handle any IT problems. The concierge will respond quickly to the student's needs and will provide guidance based on the student's request.
- Remind the prospective student that an academic advisor will assist with scheduling.
- Advise the prospective student that a faculty mentor will provide academic advice. The faculty mentor will also help with the thesis/dissertation process.

Managing Shopping Objections

- Be careful when advising prospective students about competitors. Avoid talking negatively about the competition; instead, emphasize things that we do that you know our competitors don't. If the prospective student must shop for different schools, make sure that you emphasize the features and benefits of our program that are particularly attractive to that student.
- Always give the prospective student a "deadline" to follow up after they are done researching the competition. For example, if you know that they are looking at other schools, tell them to do it this week and that you can discuss their questions on X date. (Then make sure you follow up with them on the date discussed.)