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# Is Social Media the New Higher Ed Recruitment Catalog?

By [Stefanie McLeod](#) in [Advertising & Marketing](#) [Higher Education Marketing](#) [Social Media](#)



For colleges looking to pull their next class from so-called “Generation Z” (i.e., those born in the mid-1990s to mid-2000s) it’s imperative to not only keep pace with these technologically-driven successors to millennials – but to stay ahead of them. This target isn’t likely to respond to home mailings and physical brochures the way their parents might. They’re going to turn to what they turn to for virtually everything else: social media. A [2014 study by Uversity and Zinch](#) found that 73 percent of high school students believe colleges and universities should have their own social media presence, and nearly two-thirds said they’ve used social media to research more about higher education. So how can higher education institutions leverage these platforms to reach prospective students?

1. **Create separate profiles for major functions.** Separating profiles for what your university or college offers will create more accessible content for students who won’t spend time searching for information on one massive profile. Some examples of profiles that should be separate are: clubs and organizations, housing and dining, school newspaper, libraries, alumni groups, emergency notifications and athletics—even the school mascot.
2. **Don’t believe the anti-hype about Facebook.** Despite concern Facebook is becoming less popular, it remains the number one social media platform for teenagers aged 13 to 17, the prime higher education demographic. Use your institution’s Facebook page to promote upcoming events and showcase campus culture.
3. **Don’t expect them to read *War and Peace*.** According to a [recent study by Sparks & Honey](#), Generation Z’s attention span has decreased to *eight* seconds, down from 12 seconds in 2000. The most successful marketing to them is done in short snippets, so utilize the succinct nature of Twitter to catch their attention.
4. **A picture’s worth a thousand words.** Unlike millennials, Generation Z prefers to communicate primarily through images, icons and symbols rather than text. Sixty percent of 13- to 18-year-olds use Instagram on a regular basis. Your school can promote events and sports, highlight campus life and showcase faculty through this visually driven channel.
5. **Start a conversation.** Generation Z values peer opinions above all other influencers, including those of their parents and guidance counselors. Engage them in a dialogue on platforms that allow interaction with other prospective students as well as current students.

Is your institution prepared to think outside the box—and inside an app—to recruit Generation Z? Follow these steps, and usher in the next generation of entrepreneurs and leaders to your college or university. Read more about Generation Z’s characteristics [here](#).



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