

Pennsylvania's Advanced Training and Hiring Marketing Plan



Lehigh Carbon
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



LUZERNE
County Community College



Northampton
Community College

Table of Contents

1. Target Audiences

2. Unique Selling Proposition

3. Positioning Strategy

4. Distribution Plan.....

5. Marketing Materials

6. Promotions Strategy

7. Online Marketing Strategy

8. Conversion Strategy.....

9. Partnerships

10. Referral Strategy

11. Retention Strategies

1

2

3

3

4

5

5

5

6

6

6

1. Target Audiences

Audience Categories

1. Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Eligible Workers

TAA eligible individuals tend to be between the ages of 40 and 55, with work experience in manufacturing. According to the US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA), the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program is a federal program that provides a path for employment growth and opportunity through aid to US workers who have lost their jobs as a result of foreign trade. These individuals may qualify for education assistance to be utilized in programs such as PATH.

Target Demographics

TAA eligible workers typically range between the ages of 40-55, with workforce experience, usually in the area of manufacturing, and typically do not possess any post-secondary training. TAA eligible workers are candidates for up-skilling through advanced manufacturing training.

2. Unemployed, underemployed, and workforce re-entrants

This audience is seeking a new job, career upgrade, or change of career after being displaced from a job. These are highly motivated individuals, many of which will be cultivated through workforce partnerships such as CareerLinks. It is vital to work closely with these partners to ensure they present PATH as an option for these individuals.

Target Demographics

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's January 2016 Monthly Work Stats, PA's unemployment rate is 4.8%, or 306,000 unemployed persons. There are 23,200 discouraged workers, or those who are not in the labor force who want and are available for a job and who have looked for work sometime in the past 12 months, but who are not currently looking because they believe there are no jobs available or there are none for which they would qualify. Discouraged workers are not included in the unemployment count. Additionally, Pennsylvania has a 10.7% underemployment rate, or the number of unemployed plus those people working part-time who would like full-time jobs plus those who have dropped out of the labor market entirely and still want a job divided by the labor force plus those who have dropped out of the labor market entirely and still want a job. Pennsylvania boasts 102,300 people who qualify as long-term unemployed, or unemployed for 26 weeks or more.

3. Employers

Employers comprise a vital area of consortium-wide need with respect to marketing and outreach. Employer relationships represent a key unique selling proposition for current and prospective students. Employer engagement is a key area of focus for this marketing plan.

4. High School Vocational School Students and Recent Graduates, and Parents of those students

The target audience is 15-25 years old. Current high school and vocational school students and their parents will serve as a key demographic in the sense they may be in the process of deciding the best course of education to pursue. Working with guidance counselors and other administrators, the fiscal agent will determine the appropriate venue to connect with this population.

Target Demographics

Between the ages of 15 and 25 years old. A vital secondary target in this area is parents, as they most often play a major role in determining their children's education and career path.

2. Unique Selling Proposition

For Prospective Students

The unique selling proposition (USP) for students needs to resonate in a number of ways. According to the Huffington Post, students choose community college based on several factors, including affordability, flexibility, and the ability to get hired. According to Forbes, the fastest growing jobs in the country, from dental hygienists to veterinary technologists, require only a community college education.

The USP for PATH programs will highlight three factors and benefits: **Finish Fast, Pay Less, and Get Hired.**

*Note: the USP is comparing PATH to our many of our for profit competitors, not to community colleges.

Depending on the program of study, students can finish anywhere from 5-24 months. This timeline is especially important for unemployed, TAA eligible, and displaced workers. Our programs are more affordable than comparable programs, and the financial aid options we offer are favorable. Additionally, the ability to choose a flexible schedule allows students to spread out their education, paying less at once. Similar programs lock students in to a 12-24 program of study. Choosing a community college, for many students, equates to choosing an internship: where do students have the best chance to get a job? This is an area in which having strong, high-profile employer relationships, such as LVHN, St. Luke's and others will come in to play. The strongest selling point we can offer students is the ability to get hired.

A secondary unique selling proposition for students will be geared toward both incumbent workers, and those who are seeking a credential in order to make more money, get a promotion, or another goal. This proposition will highlight the ability to earn a credential that can get a student back into the workforce, or into an entry level job. Promoting the credential as stackable, and able to be matriculated into a bachelor's degree in certain cases will be important as well.

For Employers

Engaging our PATH Pledge Partners and gaining additional employer partners is a major factor in not only driving student enrollment, but growing student retention, and eventually providing long-term sustainability to workforce education programs consortium wide. A key selling point for students is the quality and quantity of employer partners we have. A major selling point for employers will be the quality and quantity of employable students we can provide them.

Our USP for targeting employers will be: **Better Trained, More Highly Skilled Employees.**

Securing employer partnerships and commitments, regardless of the level of that commitment, hinges on what is in it for the employer. For example, in the sports world, when soliciting sponsorship opportunities to companies, the most vital part of the pitch is the value the company is receiving. It is imperative to continuously provide value for employers that partner with PATH, and to maintain a pipeline of employer partners as a method of attracting students that are not incumbent workers.

3. Positioning Strategy

Our positioning overall is that of programs have the backing of community college education, but providing curriculum to students that is comparable to technical or trade schools. As a result, we should position ourselves as a more affordable, shorter duration option to our competitors from a fiscal agent standpoint. Individual school's position will vary, as noted below.

Lehigh Carbon Community College

LCCC ultimately is an easier sell to prospective students who do not have time to pursue an associate's degree. These students will be incumbent workers, individuals who are unemployed or underemployed, trade effected, recently laid off or downsized, or those seeking a career change. Many of these individuals are looking for their quickest way back to the workforce, as they are likely to have others depending on them. Additionally, recent high school graduates with little interest in a drawn out educational process will benefit from LCCC program's short duration. Students seeking a patient touch related healthcare career will be of particular interest.

Luzerne County Community College

The demographics of Luzerne County and other northern counties make Luzerne unique in both course offerings and marketing approach. Being that Luzerne does not offer any healthcare related courses, marketing efforts can be very specific in nature in terms of imaging and messaging. A mixture of imaging representing non gender-specific professions is important.

Northampton Community College

Northampton offers slightly longer programs than LCCC, in relatively the same market, creating an interesting dynamic. Northampton's programs are well suited for those who want to earn a diploma. Recent high school graduates, individuals with work experience seeking an enhanced skill set, and those seeking to matriculate to a bachelor's degree will have specific interest in Northampton. Additionally, students seeking a back office medical career will be a focus. As is the case at all schools, strong employer partnerships will be of particular interest to prospective students.

4. Distribution Plan

The PATH distribution plan stems from a variety of partners and stakeholders, as outlined below.

1. Mass Media
 - a. Web
 - b. Digital Media
 - c. Social Media
2. Traditional Media
 - a. Transit advertising and other public platforms
 - b. Radio
 - c. Newspaper
 - d. Television
3. Grassroots
 - a. Trade shows
 - b. Job fairs
 - c. Networking events
 - d. Industry events
 - e. Employer partnerships
4. Third Party
 - a. CareerLink and WIB referrals
 - b. Job developer referrals
 - c. Faculty referrals
 - d. High School administrators

- e. Employer training programs

5. Marketing Materials

Marketing materials are vital to attracting attention to PATH. Marketing materials will range from bus advertisements to student/employer specific pamphlets and one-sheets. A list of proposed marketing materials is below. Please note this list is subject to change based on need.

- One sheets printed on card stock (1,000 for each school)
- Website enhancements including background image and exploring enhanced template
- Trade show and job fair marketing materials including table spread and backdrop
- Professionally printed and bound employer engagement decks (11x17 coil bound on heavy stock)
- Professional printed and bound PATH catalogs for prospective students
- Re-designed promotional folders for meeting purposes
- Revamped school by school program sheets
- Video marketing via advertising and website
- School specific marketing materials for use at industry events

6. Promotions Strategy

Due to the timeline and finality present with the PATH grant, promotions will be a major focus through final enrollment on September 30, 2017. The fiscal agent will employ a number of promotional strategies, as outlined below, as recommends each individual school employs its own promotional strategies to leverage the schools' relative fame. The fiscal agent will assist in any capacity needed with each school's marketing and outreach efforts. Please note, the following lists are subject to change.

PATH Fiscal Agent Promotional Strategies include:

- Press releases
- Mass transit advertising
- Digital and Print Advertising
- Social Media
- Tradeshow and industry event marketing
- Third Party promotions (CareerLinks, etc.)
- Online targeted advertising
- Advertising on established job search sites (Career Builder, Indeed, Monster)
- Television exposure where possible
- Advertising in local career and business publications

College Specific Promotional Strategies Include:

- College specific PATH social media outlets
 - See following page for detailed explanation
- Integration with college's marketing practices and campaigns
- Targeted advertisements specific to each college's programs
 - Online
 - Print
 - Traditional
 - Radio
 - Television

- Readily available student and employer specific marketing collateral
 - Flyers
 - Program sheets (should be the same as college's program sheets for all other majors/programs)
 - Detailed brochures and presentations

College Specific Social Media

While it is vital for the fiscal agent to maintain a social presence in today's climate, it is more imperative that each school promote its programs through social media outlets. The reasoning behind this approach is multi-faceted.

1. Audiences will be more easily acquired by social media accounts directly associated with established brands such as the consortium schools.
2. After September 30, 2017, marketing initiatives from the fiscal agent will cease, and any following built will disappear
3. Students are more likely to understand social media posts relating to programs at specific colleges if those posts come from the college themselves, rather than an umbrella account established by the fiscal agent

7. Online Marketing Strategy

Fiscal Agent Online Marketing Strategy

It is important to remember our target audience is varied. That said, the fiscal agent's approach to online marketing will be extremely targeted, keeping in mind that mobile browsing and social media have taken over as the predominant form of web browsing among younger demographics.

Targeting Younger Audiences

In order to effectively reach younger audiences, targeting mobile users via social media platforms like Twitter is important. Younger demographics are far more likely to view advertisements via phone than almost any other medium. That said, it is important to target decision makers in their lives, as well. For those who have graduated high school, or are over 18, the likelihood of them making their own decision is higher than those still in high school. In order to target high school or vocational school students. We will make a concerted effort to target parents of high school age students in order to further influence younger demographics.

Targeting Older Audiences

Based on our first enrollment period, the average age of students consortium wide is between 27 and 35 approximately. As previously stated, younger audiences are more apt to view advertising view mobile device. An influencing factor in our target population is the fact that they are unemployed or under employed, and may lack the means to afford an internet capable device; additionally, older populations are less likely to browse the internet via computer, tablet, or smartphone. In order to reach these audiences, we will approach advertising in a much more traditional sense. Platforms will include print advertising, newspaper advertising, radio advertising, and assistance from CareerLinks and WIBs, as those who are in more urgent need of a career are likely to view those outlets.

8. Conversion Strategy

Conversion strategy relies heavily on prospective students goals. Conversion will be defined, for the purpose of this marketing plan, as enrolling a student in a program. That said, creating conversions relies heavily on the value proposition for prospective students. Our programs provide value in a variety of ways, including short duration of programs, affordability and financial aid options, and the ability to earn a credential which carries weight in their industry of choice. Communicating these values is dependent upon marketing and outreach efforts consortium wide, including advertising strategies laid out in this plan, as well as student touch points such as career coaches, program managers, job developers, and more.

9. Partnerships

Industry Partnerships

A variety of industry partnerships already exist in the form of employer partners, workforce partners and public sector partners. Enhancing and leveraging those relationships is vital to driving and sustaining enrollment, retention and placement after the grant ceases. Data collection, partner touch, and B2B activities such as in person meetings and presentations are required to further enhance these partnerships, and acquire the knowledge necessary to build new partnerships based on industry and company needs.

10. Referral Strategy

Referrals

Marketing and advertising are the first step to driving enrollment. A bigger picture look at the needs of the grant to promote itself sees the need for referrals from outside sources. We must consistently and proactively communicate with those sources to ensure they have the tools necessary to communicate details about the PATH programs to prospective clients. Outside referral sources include:

- CareerLink Offices and WIBs
- High School guidance counselors
- Professional staffing agencies
- Economic development agencies
- Career and vocational technical institutes
- Grassroots and word of mouth marketing
- Veterans affairs and other advocacy groups

Since we cannot offer discounts or special offers for referrals, relying on public sector referral sources requires personal and collaborative relationships with these parties.

11. Retention Strategies

Retention is one of our most important goals. For example, CareerLinks are judged based on how many workers they are able to place. Retaining and placing students from our programs are of utmost importance to them, and the main barrier between CareerLinks recommending us to students as opposed to private technical schools. The same can be said for employer relationships. If we are not producing graduates that have the skills our employer partners are seeking, we are failing employers and students.

Our strategy for retention is ever changing, and will fluctuate based on industry need. For example, an influencing factor on choosing where to attend school is an alumni network and its strength relative to other colleges. Community college alumni networks are likely to be somewhat weaker than four year institutions. Our employer partnerships will serve as a defacto alumni network, meaning, if students see the ability to form a relationship with a prominent employer in their area, the prospect of attending a consortium school becomes much more attractive than perhaps a technical school with weaker partnerships.

Retention starts from the first contact with a student. Our wrap around services like career coaching and job placement assistance, to our employer partnerships will be key in student retention. Our ability to provide employers with skilled, workforce ready employees will be vital in retaining employer partners by providing value to them.