Socialization of New Admissions Advisors: Providing Consistency During Training

A capstone project submitted to Southern Utah University
in Partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of:

Masters of Art in Professional Communication

December 2018
Shaun R. Wright

Capstone Chair:
Dr. Jon Smith
Acknowledgements

The culmination of this Master’s degree has been a few years in the making, with my sanity during this time undoubtedly tested. Throughout the duration of my time in this graduate program, aside from my own set of frustrations and joys, I am immensely thankful for the faculty here at Southern Utah University. They are what truly make the difference in the college experience, and I am tremendously grateful for the professors that have assisted me through this process. Through my undergrad and completion of this graduate program I am grateful for all of the professors I have had the joy on knowing.

Having worked in college admissions for the past five years, I have been fortunate to work with some individuals every day that go deep into the trenches with me. I remember the day that Brandon Wright called me and offered me a position on his staff. Now having an office next to him is something I didn’t foresee at the time, but now appreciate beyond measure. I owe a massive thank you to my amazing colleagues that have become more friends than coworkers. I look forward to the days when we are able to not only work through different recruiting events but also the times we get to just hang out with each other.

To the many friends who have encouraged, supported and kept me from quitting, you are the real MVP’s. A special thank you to my seven siblings and their spouses. While we are all spread across the United States, I know they all have been some of my strongest supporters in life, and I know I can show up at any of your homes and be welcomed in warmly. To those 19 nieces and nephews that call me “Funcle” Shaun, this one's for you. You can do all kinds of things, and know that “Funcle” is always going to be your support. So kick the ball, paint that masterpiece, and enjoy that book. You got this!
Last, but absolutely not least, to my parents, Ross and Mary Wright. Thank you for being
the example. You both have taught me to go above and beyond in what I am putting forth
effort. This one time you will hear me say thank you for the life lessons in the garden growing
up. Lessons of perseverance, honesty, work ethic and to not take things too seriously in this life
are some that have been ingrained in me. Thank you.
I certify that I have read this project report and that, in my opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a project for the degree of Master of Arts in Professional Communication.

Project Chair

Jon Smith, PhD
# Table of Contents

- Acknowledgments ........................................................................................................ 2
- Signature page ............................................................................................................... 4
- Abstract .................................................................................................................... 6
- Introduction and Justification ..................................................................................... 7
- Literature Review ....................................................................................................... 10
- Method ....................................................................................................................... 20
- Discussion .................................................................................................................. 24
- Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 29
- References .................................................................................................................. 31
- Appendix A (Glossary of Uncommon Terms) ............................................................. 36
- Appendix B (Code of Ethics) ....................................................................................... 39
Abstract

This capstone project takes an inconsistent word of mouth training of new hires in the Office of Admissions at Southern Utah University and standardizes the baseline training. College admissions is a high-paced career that utilizes emotions, policies and procedures, as well as experience in sales. The majority of recruiters at Southern Utah University work remotely which adds a challenging layer to training standardization. Training needs to be meaningful to begin the socialization process. This project unified resources into one place, providing a “go-to” for all staff. The results display an appreciation and repeated use of the completed project in the first three months the resource has been distributed.
Southern Utah University has seen a rapid and dramatic increase in student enrollment in the past four years with an increase in applications by 150.7%, and in student headcount by 34% since 2015 (Koontz, 2018). This growth has received national attention as USA Today recently ranked SUU fourth in the nation for increase in college applications (Stebbins, 2018). The President of SUU, Scott Wyatt, in the welcome address of the semester, shared the total student population to be 10,196. The next goal is to reach an enrollment of 15,000 students (Personal communication, August 20, 2018).

The growth of prospective students through the admissions funnel is important for the growth of an incoming class. The admissions funnel is moving students from prospective, inquiry, applicant, admitted, deposited and enrolled. Learning the different techniques to move students through the funnel becomes something that needs to be taught and honed as employees work. The parts of the admissions funnel is to be reviewed in Appendix A.

Recruiting an incoming class of college students has its own unique challenges. Challenges from making a good first impression on prospective students, managing multiple appointments a day, and ensuring correct information is given. College recruiters are typically the first individuals a prospective student has contact with for an institution of higher education. It is common for a recruiter in a travel season to visit more than 50 high schools and attend over 20 recruitment events in a recruitment cycle (Hoover, 2016). In the Summer of 2014, the Southern Utah University (SUU) admissions office saw a complete turnover in recruitment staff from Director downwards. In the same following four-years, the full-time staff increased from 12 to 18 members. This is broken down between four processing staff, and 13
recruiters with an administrative assistant. With this turnover in staff and the addition of new employees, proper training is important.

Previous to this project, training and socialization of new employees in the Office of Admissions was done by word of mouth from other employees. This informal process left new hires feeling lost at times and also resulted in many inconsistencies of knowledge regarding systems, practices, and procedures. Inconsistencies in training was effecting how recruiters were completing their jobs, leading to decreased productivity. This previous way for socialization allowed new hires to gain training from other staff and provided opportunities for experienced recruiters to become mentors in their positions (LeBlanc, 2018; Ravensdale, 2017; Sullivan, 2015).

This professional project focuses on standardizing recruitment training and socialization for new hires. The program encompasses basic training videos on main systems, admission policies and practices, relevant campus policies, and begins the familiarity on the various colleges and offerings at Southern Utah University. The targeted audience for this project is the full time recruiters. The main focus of these recruiters is:

- Assist in the development and presentation of SUU recruitment messages to prospective students including but not limited to: high school visits, regional community colleges, college fairs and other targeted areas.
- Visit high school, attend college fairs, events, and other targeted recruitment events.
- Plan, promote, and execute regional events.
- Communicate with prospective students through email, phone calls, and face to face visits.
To achieve these general duties and responsibilities, bringing new hires to top proficiency is vitally important.

The recruiters also have a team of Presidential Ambassadors who are current students to assist in many of these endeavors. The ambassador’s main responsibilities are providing campus tours, hosting students at Red Riots, and visiting high schools and junior colleges to support the recruitment efforts of SUU. Included in this project are the expectations of these ambassadors. The work the ambassadors complete is in conjunction with the recruiters and professional staff. The completed handbook for this program will be continually updated after the submission of this project. Each year, new policies will be added as needed, as well as information on new majors and options that make SUU a unique college choice.

This project is designed to identify the socialization practice of college admissions. This will be complete by consolidating the information on majors, processes, and frequently asked questions in order to increase the overall productivity of the new recruiters. This project does not look at the onboarding process for new hires such as the gathering of legal documents and discussion of benefits. Such responsibilities are assigned to the Human Resources department.

Some recent hires have been acquired through temporary funding, with options of ongoing funding so long as enrollment goal numbers are reached. In order to set up new hires for success in a stressful position, consistent training is essential. When identifying the areas of knowledge of experienced staff, recently hired and new hired staff, the inconsistencies in training was identified. This project provides areas for base training, as well as opportunities for enhancement in the future so that failure and frustration are avoided. The start of the fall 2018 recruitment cycle had two new recruiters. This brought the need for such a project to be put in
place to initiate a time frame for completion. In previous years there has been a fall high school
tour in Utah, which provided opportunities to train new hires on messaging after learning the
technical portion of the job, such as CRM, BANNER, and GeckoEngage. These systems are vital
to the productivity of a recruiter. Definitions are found in Appendix A.

Due to circumstances out of our control this year the marketing materials were not
received in an appropriate time this year. As a result the start of the fall recruitment cycle was
delayed. The training process took longer to complete, as visits to high schools were
rescheduled. This left gaps in the training schedule, which has not happened previously. It
allowed for recurring training which showed itself to be well received.

**Literature Review**

Recently, an article published in *The Chronicle of Education* described what life is like on
the front lines of admissions. Hoover (2016), performed a series of interviews of Admissions
Counselors throughout the United States. Common lines to describe the level of pressure in this
profession are as follows: “We [have] to be sharks in admissions. If we stop, we die.” “in two
years I have seen nearly all 14 recruitment positions turn over. A lot of them were burned out,
and replacing them has been time-consuming”, “To keep my energy up I do jumping jack in my
[hotel] room. That way I am going to be nicer” (Hoover, 2016, 2-7). All of this is being
completed to fill the incoming freshman class for their institutions.

Working in college admissions can be highly stressful. A typical day for a college
recruiter requires early mornings with event filled days. It is common to visit multiple high
schools a day to meet with prospective students and counselors. While trying to balance emails,
and evening recruitment events. In the back of their head they hear their director pushing them
to collect as much information on students as possible.

**Emotional Labor**

Emotions are a part of the workplace. Many researchers are beginning to study the lives
and roles of emotions for employees in specific organizations (Miller, 2002). Working in college
admissions has a tendency to be time-consuming and emotionally draining. Each employee has
bad days but needs to be able to power through and think of positive things (Sanders, 2013, 88). “The demands are corporate-level, recalling 70-hour weeks” reported Hoover (2016). Arlie
Hochschild (1983) began the study of this by examining flight attendants in *The Managed Heart*.

Hoschild (1983) originally coined the term “emotional labor.” She defined emotional
labor as “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display;
emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value” (p. 6). When interactions
occur when individuals have no deep connection, such as college fairs or high school visits,
there is less emotional labor that goes back and forth (p. 78). Emotional Labor is added upon by
further research. Putnam and Mumby (1993) expounded on this definition as “the way roles
and tasks exert overt and covert control over emotional displays. This is achieved through the
hiring process, socialization and performance evaluations” (p. 37). Going through these steps
allows for the development of an office culture where including feelings and emotions become
a part of reaching the goals.

Emotional labor is distinguished by two defining characteristics. Firstly, the study of
emotional labor identifies the disconnect between the emotions an individual is experiencing
and the emotions that are needing to be displayed (Miller, 2002, p. 586). The disconnect is
classified into two sections: surface acting, and deep acting. Surface acting can lead to a stronger disconnect to convey the needed emotions while performing the needed tasks on the job. Surface acting involves showing inauthentic emotion responses when it differs from their individual feelings (Lee, 2018, p. 1192). Deep acting is when the individuals try to really feel the emotions they are displaying (Hoschild, 1983, p. 33; Miller, 2002, p. 586) and control inner thoughts and feelings to express the needed outward emotion (Lee, 2018, p. 1192).

The second characteristic of the study of emotional labor is the focus on employees in service positions. While Hoschild focused on flight attendants (1983), the research can be applied in other service areas such as college admissions departments (Sanders, 2013), public service employees (Lee, 2018), medical staff in hospitals (Grama & Baias, 2018, p. 16-19) and others.

Work feelings and emotional labor should be considered as true emotions, and not merely an inauthentic emotion that is expected to be portrayed. The strain of emotional labor is strongest when there is a conflict between inner feelings and outward expression of emotion (Hoschild, 1983; Miller, 2002; Putnam & Mumby, 1993). Managing impressions becomes common in masking how one truly feels (Putnam & Mumby, 1993, p. 50).

The treatment of employees can make or break their commitment to the organization or lead to burnout. Some of the common warning signs of burnout have become associated with feelings of boredom, depression, alienation, anxiety, stress, weariness, poor mental health, and feeling replaceable. It was also found that the variations in different burnout scores were directly correlated with frustration with work (Grama & Baias, 2018 p. 17). Looking at college admissions, Maureen Yeung experienced a unique work environment where she “met
people who quit because leadership didn’t even know their names on a staff of 10. When entry-level staff gets treated like they’re replaceable, that’s emotionally draining” (Hoover, 2016, para. 55). Being able to identify emotionally draining occurrences allows for ways to prevent repeat occurrences where possible.

Studies are showing that employees who actively practice deep acting are more committed to their employment and organization of which they are a part (Lee, 2018, p. 1197). It also adds to the influence the leaders have on their teams. Leaders who positively practice emotional labor positively influence their employees acting and performance in their roles (Tang, Gu, & Cui, 2017, 1241). This supports the findings of Putnam and Mumby (1993) that the control of emotions is inseparable while also necessary for life in an organization.

Highlighting the emotional labor that is put forth in college admissions allows for proper candidate selection during the hiring process. By filtering through and hiring an individual who can practice a deep practice deep acting is vital for the longevity of the team. This assists on both the hire and management. Being able to understand the effect emotional labor has on individuals while they complete their tasks of employment prompts an understanding of strain that is felt.

**College Admissions Practices**

The task of admissions offices is to “focus on establishing relationships with potential students by bringing to life what the brand on paper is, and more challenging, articulating why it’s relevant to each, individual student” (Fogarty, 2017, para. 2). It is important to realize the needs of the students, especially since 83% of students consider a friendly campus is more important than the reputation of the university (UB Custom Publishing, 2017). This statistic
shows that students want to feel included and belong at the institution they are going to be attending. With this being said, there is no definite plan or exact combination of occurrences that will guarantee admission from the student point of view (Clinedinst & Patel, 2018, p. 16).

All institutions have their own admissions plan which can confuse those unfamiliar with the college admissions realm. The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) defines the plans and associated information for all institutions who attend the national college fairs. There are three different admissions plans: standard application, early application, and restrictive early application plans (Clinedinst & Patel, 2018 p. 38).

The most common application plan falls under Regular Decision and Rolling Admission. Regular decision is when students must submit application by a specified deadline and are subsequently notified within a clear period of time. Rolling Admission is when a student can apply at any time after the college begins to accept applications until a specified date. Students are notified of a decision as the applications are completed and reviewed (Clinedinst and Patel, 2018, 38).

For incoming new freshman, students can be admitted to SUU based on a set criteria. The application process must be completed with the following steps: an application for admission, application fee, submission of an official transcript with a complete list of classes and grades, and submission of ACT/SAT scores if under the age of 24. Students who intend to transfer to SUU must complete the same application steps and include transcripts from each higher education institution previously attended. If fewer than 24 transfer credits are on the collective transcript, the student must provide a high school transcript as well as ACT/SAT
scores if under the age of 24 (Institutional Policy 6.5, p. 5-6). The respective applications are processed once these steps are complete.

It common for enrollment offices to require management of emotions throughout the application process (Hoover, 2016; Sanders, 2013, 89). These positions in college admissions are typically the first interaction students have with the institutions. They are tasked with hosting events, information sessions, campus tours, represent the institutions at college fairs and hosting a variety special visit programs. If a recruiter is not approachable during these events, prospective students will walk by and not engage in conversation.

Recruiters and admissions staff are vital to the continued existence for institutions of higher learning. Prospective students view admissions representatives as “knowledgeable, pleasant, and ready to answer questions that come their way (Sanders, 2013, 85). However, it becomes challenging to maintain pleasantries when frustrations become more present. Hoover (2016) reported the frustrations of the individuals at the lowest level provide the lifeblood of the institution.

In a series of interviews, Sanders (2013, p. 85) described undergraduate admissions offices. A typical description of admissions offices is chaotic. With some schools seeing upwards of 20,000 prospective students a year. This occurs during various recruitment events. The most common and convincing factor for a student to enroll at a school is the campus tour. The NACAC claims that the top three decision factors for a student to enroll are email communications, website accessibility, and the campus visit (Clinedinst & Patel, 2018, 13). Campus tours provide a “realistic view of life” (Sanders, 2013, 85) and contribute to the most impact on the decision process for an applicant (Clinedinst & Patel, 2018, p. 13; University
Being able to highlight a campus and showing current students engaging in classes shows prospective students what the possibilities are for them while attending.

For prospective students making the enrollment decision, the effort of representing the university boils down to a handful of staff, tour guides, and a walk around campus (Sanders, 2013, p. 85; University Business, 2004). For SUU to participate in, not only national college fairs, but also in the Utah Higher Education Day, there is an agreed upon code of ethics that must be upheld and signed by anyone representing the institution. The Utah Higher Education Day is where each institution in Utah goes to a specific high school and presents on their school. These code of ethics are found in Appendix B - Code of Ethics.

Organizational Socialization

Organizational socialization is referred to as the “process through which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors required to adapt to a new work role” (Wanberg, 2012, p. 17). The socialization process is applicable for both new hires and new roles. While socialization is similar to the term onboarding, it covers a wider breadth of knowledge. Onboarding refers to the first day and welcoming, while socialization “more broadly encompasses the information seeking, learning, and other adaptation processes” (p. 18). This process is “not a unidirectional process; members also play an active role in learning the ropes” (Stephens & Dailey, 2012, p. 407). Taking a proactive approach allows for understanding on both the management and new hires experience during socialization.

An important part of the socialization process begins during the interview process. When an individual has prior exposure with an organization before being hired, that exposure can highly influence the amount of “identification” they have when they start.
Dailey, 2012, p. 409). This exposure puts people in a state of readiness, which allows the individuals to connect with the group (p. 415). When diving into the candidate selection and application pool, the company Zapier provided unconventional application processes. Zapier is a company that works fully remote and automates a lot of the day-to-day tasks. Five traits were found to assist their employees to be successful: propensity towards action, able to prioritize, proficient written communication, trustworthiness, and having a local support system (Foster, 2015, p 47). By adjusting interview questions to search for these traits, it can shorten the socialization time.

Taking a socialization approach allows the newcomers to adapt to the new organization, and ask questions quicker (Miller and Jablin, 1991, p. 93). At the same time it also assists how one identifies within the organization. If an individual actively engages with the organization and activities, it allows for the development of positive membership identification and allow for newcomers to be accepted into the organization culture more quickly (Stephens & Dailey, 2012, p. 416).

From study of practices, it is clear that bringing new employees in through a designated process will accelerate the timeframe to not only be a socialized into the culture but also achieving desired productivity quickly (Derven, 2008, pg 49). A successful socialization program assists in retention rates, higher engagement, performance and more open lines of communication (LeBlanc, 2018; Sullivan, 2015). This benefits both the employee and management. The employee feels like they are contributing while management reaches peak productivity quicker.
Industry experts say the days of sink or swim no longer make sense in bringing on new talent (Derven, 2008). Looking at new ways of socialization, many have shifted their programs to be a longer, hands-on training (LeBlanc, 2018; Sullivan, 2015) that is thoughtful and deliberate (Stibitz, 2015). Four tasks have emerged as being critical when bringing on the new employees: open dialogue that includes discussions about roles and responsibilities, matching the hire with a mentor, systemic check-ins, and team involvement.

In order for a new hire to be successful, there needs to be conversations regarding the goals, focusing on the priorities, and pinpointing what success looks like thus establishing open communication (Sullivan, 2015; Stibitz, 2015). When individuals understand their purpose and how it fits into the goals of the organization, it starts the understanding of expectations so accountability is clear (Stibitz, 2015; Lew, 2018).

Matching a new employee with a mentor is vital as for involving the entire team (LeBlanc, 2018; Ravensdale, 2017; Sullivan, 2015). Informal conversations take place allowing for opportunities to expound and explain the culture of the company, in addition to someone explaining the lingo of the organization and the industry (Stibitz, 2015). Having someone that can be a go-to contact is also immediately beneficial. New hires are able to learn about roles in the company (Dailey, 2016, p. 4) and provides the new employee with someone who can answer their questions if they are uncomfortable with asking a manager (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011, p. 56). This allows for informal conversations that facilitates the socialization process.

Establishing set ‘check-in’ times allows continuity beyond the first weeks on the job and is a mutually beneficial process for management and employee. Claire Lew (2018), CEO of Know Your Company, recommends to proactively share progress and goals with superiors. Her
company assists upper management with understanding what is going on at the basic level of the company. Reporting to mentors comes in something as simple as more detailed summaries of projects and messages. When new hires are proactive, it reduces the uncertainty in their assignments, which is another factor in successful socialization (Miller & Jablin, 1991, p. 93; Bauer & Erdogan, 2011, 52). Reducing the uncertainty provides for a clear vision for how to proceed in the new role.

Involving the team allows the new hire to learn about the different roles and positions in the company (Dailey, 2016, p.4). This provides conversations for the transfer of knowledge which highly contributes to the socialization process (p. 13). When new hires begin their own networking, they are able to facilitate their own socialization (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011, p. 54). Taking initiative is positively received, as it shows a desire to understand the tasks.

Training needs are continually evolving (Lassk, F.G., Ingram, T.N., Kraus, F., & Di Mascio, R., 2012, p. 145; Robinson, n.d.) and, in order to be beneficial, should be analyzed. In order to perform their new roles on the team, “product knowledge is required for acceptable performance but being able to create and articulate innovative solutions could create cooperative power” (Lassk, F.G., Ingram, T.N., Kraus, F., & Di Mascio, R., 2012, p. 144). Having the knowledge and base performance expectations when recruiting can promote successful opportunities for new hires to connect with prospective students.

In professional sales, a common skill is using features and benefits of a product to complete a sale. Features are what is offered, what it can do, and classes you can take, while benefits show the end result (Changing Works, n.d.; Printwand, 2012). The usage of this sales tactic provides direct answers to student or customer concerns.
This ability is also related to committing a student to attend an institution of higher learning. During the recruitment cycle, recruiters learn the basic usage of features and benefits to assist prospective students in their college decision. This personalization resolves concerns of the student while meeting the goals of the institution.

Having a basic training in this tactic allows the presentation of information positively and confidently (Training Course Material, 2012). Highlighting benefits is the most powerful way to present and describe the product available (Training Course Material, 2012; Printwand, 2012). By providing examples of current student experiences to the prospective students, a properly prepared recruiter can share real experiences that are possible when they attend.

**Method**

This professional project focused on the standardizing of recruitment training and socialization for new hires in the Office of Admissions at SUU. The program includes basic training videos on main systems, admission policies and practices, relevant campus policies, and simple training on the various colleges and offerings. To continually ensure this project will be used, simple updates will be made as needed. When identifying the areas of knowledge of experienced staff, and newly hired staff, I was able to identify the key areas with uneven training. Some content in the manual will not be included as it is propriety in nature.

This project is not a rewrite of policies and procedures, but rather a resource guide for the most frequent questions that have been asked by recent hires. The socialization and training process was previously done through word of mouth. This resulted in information being skipped or forgotten about. The completion of this project will ensure that relevant topics are covered.
The training videos have been produced, filmed and edited as part of this project. Audio and visual recordings were completed using the QuickTime screen recording feature, as well as the video service, Zoom, for screen recording on iPads. Editing of the videos has been completed using Adobe Premiere. These training videos cover the main web-based programs that the recruiters currently use. These programs are HobsonsRadius (CRM), BANNER, GeckoEngage, and various applications in the MySUU portal. The videos are between eight to ten minutes in length to cover the basic usage of these programs and are stored on the department shared drive. The video on GeckoEngage is longer as it was recorded during a staff training. Multiple videos for each program have been delivered in an mp4 format. An initial training on these programs occur during the first days on campus. Having these resources accessible afterward in a digital format will allow for the off-site recruiters to refresh themselves.

Videos on Hobsons will include a creation of lists, data collection forms, email templates, and the check-in process for Red Riots. BANNER videos guides will cover the main pages to check on student application process. GeckoEngage is a new service that launched this year that can assist in the data collection and outreach to leads. Some of the applications in the MySUU portal that drive the most questions are Travel, Leave Report, and Admissions Checklist Admin.

In the admissions office, the majority of the staff work remotely. As such, this project will first cover the duties and expectations needed to fulfill the responsibilities while on the road, including the overall outline and direction for the method to manage a territory.
The second section covers many of the quick facts that are needed for a student to fill out an inquiry card. This information covers the profile of SUU, student enrollment, class size, top majors, information on athletics and information on the state and national parks surrounding SUU.

The third section covers the admissions process for incoming students. This covers the four types of students that apply to attend SUU: High school seniors, transfer students, returning students, and non-traditional students. The steps required for each one is different. This breakdown provides the information to answer with confidence all basic admissions questions.

With questions regarding admissions, scholarships are the often quickly followed. The fourth section goes into the timelines for scholarships. Scholarships are found as Academic, Departmental, Leadership and Athletic. Each scholarship has different requirements. Recruiters are expected to understand the academic scholarships as that is the scholarships they work with most frequently.

The fifth section goes over the different responsibilities of each position in the office. This will be used as a guide of territory management and can act as a go-to resource when questions need to be answered quickly. Also included is the resource for whom in processing can answer certain questions. The processing staff, while having the same Director, is in a separate office. A printable directory is located in the manual.

The sixth section goes over the various web based programs that are utilized. This is things such as the Admissions Checklist, DuoLogin, BANNER, the institutional dashboard, travel, GeckoEngage, CRM, and the necessary HR trainings of FERPA and Title IX to fully access the web
based programs. There are also templates of basic emails that recruiters are expected to send out to prospective students in their application pool.

The seventh section goes over the overall messaging. This includes information for presentations, college fairs, and high school visits. This section drives the conversations that take place, and has timelines on what the focus of the year is for prospective students. While many facts and figures are found here, the majority is found in the section on majors. (Content removed for propriety purposes).

The ninth section has basic financial aid training for the admissions office. If a student cannot pay for tuition and living, they are not going to enroll. To combat the financial hurdle, SUU hired a Financial Wellness Coordinator. Essentially, his role is to assist students in finding ways to pay their college expenses. This section has information on creating FSA ID’s, prior-prior year FAFSA completion, and information on the different types of aid a student can receive. While recruiters are not expected to know all of the inner workings of financial aid, a basic understanding is essential to a student flowing through the admissions funnel.

Visiting campus is important in a student enrolling as shown in the research above. Section ten expounds in the ways a student can visit as well as the expectations of the Presidential Ambassadors (Content removed for propriety purposes).

When designing this project, it needed to be set as if the hires have no experience in college recruitment. New hires may not have any previous knowledge or interaction with the institution. This will provide an identical baseline of understanding for all new hires.
SOCIALIZATION OF NEW ADMISSIONS ADVISORS

Discussion

The culmination of information standardizing the recruitment training has been positively received by, not only the recruitment staff, but also the management. Being able to have quick reference guides has increased the efficiency of the work. One recruiter said:

“The refresher that happened during Dean’s days was great. I got reminded on the systems and what they can do to help me bring in students. I remembered I created an email template when I first started but I didn’t remember how. The walk-through was just what I needed to send out an email to all of my inquiries about our application day at their high school.” (personal communication, November 19, 2018).

This project saves the time of multiple people not having to undergo step-by-step on the phone with someone trying to piece together what they said.

During a staff meeting in October, a recent hire commented on the following:

“[I am] creating lists to email the prospects and inquiries that I am coming to their school on a certain day and to sign up to come visit with me. I have found that the high school counselors are not great at letting the students know I am coming so I am reaching out personally” (personal communication, October 9, 2018).

His experience coincides with the previously mentioned context from the literature of being proactive to meet the needs of the institution. This action showed an understanding of how to use the resources
SOCIALIZATION OF NEW ADMISSIONS ADVISORS

Having a standard base of knowledge has proven vital in the few months this program has been implemented. During this semester, a new program was purchased called GeckoEngage. This is a companion program that is meant to add to the CRM we are currently using to manage students through the enrollment funnel. Utilizing this program has put more responsibility on the recruiters to understand where their leads are sourced. In previous years, this was managed on the backend without them knowing. Using GeckoEngage has required the recruiters to update and manage their data on their own, which keeps them accountable. One veteran recruiter said during an online training:

“This looks easy, and is easy to use. Being able to gather the information using a QR code is so interesting and smart! Kids can just pull up their phone and fill out their information on their own device. I don’t have to lug around 10 iPads into a high school any more” (personal communication, September 26, 2018).

During recruiting events, a collective feeling for staff is exhaustion November is one of the busiest months for SUU admissions. StepUp Utah is an outreach initiative conducted by the Utah System of Higher Education. This initiative works with public colleges and high schools to allow high school students to apply for admission to at least one college or university during school hours. Many high schools request college representatives to be present. During the busiest weeks of November, a common day schedule includes a visit three high schools, host an open house, and oversee a Red Riot that following weekend.

When talking about the exhaustion and emotional strain during the month of November one recruiter said:
“I have never been more exhausted than I am right now. I feel like I can’t get enough sleep and there is not enough coffee in the world to get me going. It is getting harder to get a genuine smile for the tours that come in. It is affecting my personal life as well. When I get home I find myself getting agitated at the littlest things, that normally don’t bother me.” (personal communication, November 14, 2018)

This candid expression shows the reality of the emotional drain. The length recruiters are going to reach the enrollment goals is getting harder to reach.

The emotional labor that is put into college recruiting is massive. The completed manual goes to assist the emotional labor by providing the support the recruiters need. Printed and updated information is vital, especially with having up to date information. The complete program also teaches the norms through the socialization process which also includes how to survive through emotional conflicts that arise. The socialization process also influences how the entire team processes this drain.

The socialization process is constant and begins on day one. Our Director of Admissions says to new hires, “welcome to a team of thorough breeds” (personal communication, August 13, 2018). By identifying how we see ourselves as a team, it shows new additions how we feel about our group. At the same time, it illustrates what we think of the recent hire. At the start of this fall recruitment cycle, one recruiter had just completed his first recruitment season. When asked for his thoughts, he said:

“This is my second professional job. I worked in a customer service for an online company before I got in this role. When I heard that statement, it rang true. I
looked around me and I knew I was surrounded by individuals who love the job.

It told me that we are all on the same page. [We] have the same vision, goals and plans. It’s a true statement and a positive work environment. I know no matter what the team has my back.

“I may feel emotionally drained some days. Doing 6 presentations a day was horrible, but I don’t feel burned out. There are those days where I work almost 16 hours that I hate the job, but I feel that the team has taught me more than just what it takes to be a recruiter. I know I can call anyone at any time and they will be there.” (personal communication, August 15, 2018)

His/Her remark summarizes the goal of the socialization practice of the job as a recruiter in admissions. Being able to withstand the emotionally-draining days and stand united with your coworkers in completing the job.

In the fall of 2018, two new full-time recruiters were hired to work remotely. During their initial time on campus, they “felt like drinking from a fire hose. So much information that [they are] trying to keep straight and can’t seem to stay on top of it all” (personal communication, August 16, 2018). During the first week of their employment, they each received a copy of this project. Below are their email responses when asked for their feedback on this project:

“When I read through this before I started, I was overwhelmed. I was an ambassador while I was a student so I thought I knew the job. That first week, learning all about the backend processing was overwhelming. I was scared to ask questions that first day. You all knew me. I felt like I should have known more as
a student. Before we left for the ambassador retreat, I needed more information on how to use the CRM and BANNER. Sitting with them after, I was able to play around on the program [which] made everything so much clearer. There is so much more to this than I originally thought.”

While having relative experience is helpful it is not overly necessary. The previous hire was able to focus on learning the procedures, and not the programs.

“So when I came in, I was wanting to hit the ground running. Getting the roadblock of having to wait for my email to get made was so frustrating in the moment. Now I totally get it. The information that I was shared made sense as it was all sensitive information.”

“Coming in with little experience with SUU was daunting. That first day I was on campus was eye opening, and I just needed to take it all in. I was wondering why [people] were taking so many notes. Now I am glad that people took those notes since I studied them in my free time, and reference them frequently.”

“The entire staff is welcoming, and wanted to know who I was. I have weekly calls with different people just to chat. I definitely feel as part of the team now.”

(personal communication, November 19, 2018)

This project, and the personal communications that occur during the conversations to fulfill the duties of these positions show that need for a socialization in the workplace. Over half of the recruiters of SUU work remotely. Providing that inner network and support for staff in mixed environments improves the retention overall.
The culmination of this project was summarized in a discussion with a hire within the past 18 months. This hire worked on campus around many resources that were more difficult to utilize while working remotely. After this project was assigned to him, the following feedback was given:

“I didn’t even know half of this stuff. I just acted like I knew what I was doing so nobody trained me on things. I mean I did spend some time with some guys up north at a college fair but that was about it. Whenever a student called and needed something to be looked up, I would just take down their information and number. I would then walk down to processing and figure it out then call them back. Dude, I need you to spend more time showing me this stuff.” (personal communication, August 30, 2018)

This feedback shows the inconsistency in the training that was happening previously. This project is able to fulfill a need. (Content removed for propriety purposes)

This project has been successful for, not only the new hires that started this recruitment season, but also those who have been on the team for many years. This project could be enhanced in the future by continually keeping it up to date. With the goals of SUU growing, the next step would be to create a general guide strictly for policies, as well as specific sections on issues for residents and non-residents.

**Conclusion**

Unifying and standardizing the training for admissions representatives has shown to be successful by interactions reducing frustration while increasing the organizational socialization in the office. Conversations with senior staff, new hires and management have all conveyed
positive outcomes and feedback. The project has standardized the initial training while also providing opportunities for follow-up training. This ensures a prolonged socialization process that will continue as new people are hired.

The completion of this project not only defines the expectations of new hires, but also requires them to actively participate in the socialization process. This supports the research of Stephens and Dailey (2012) to establish an active role in learning the position and not just observing (p. 407). This training involves the entire staff and allows them to identify with the organization (p. 416) while also accelerating productivity (Derven, 2008, pg 49).

Learning from others teaches the benefits of deep acting and controlling emotions (Putnam & Mumby, 1993, p. 41) while performing the duties of the job. While frustrations are typical (Grama & Baias, 2018, p. 17), they are managed by creating a strong bond during socialization process.
REFERENCES


Dailey, S., (2016). I’m new...again: Reconceptualizing the socialization process through rotational programs. Communication Studies, vol 00(00), 1-26.


Lassk, F.G., Ingram, T.N., Kraus, F., & Di Mascio, R. (2012). The future of sales training:
Challenges and related research questions. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, 32*(1), 141-154. Retrieved from

service employees. *Social behavior and personality, Vol. 46*(7), 1191-1200.
https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.7265.

LeBlanc, R., (2018). The onboarding opportunity: Smarter ways of training new hires improve

Lew, C., (2018). How to have a good relationship with your boss when you’re working remotely.
Retrieved from https://blog.knowyourcompany.com/how-to-have-a-good-relationship-with-your-boss-when-youre-working-remotely-f82c0fbc423


Access Date 11/20/2018.


Stebbins, S., (2018). The top 100 college, universities where student applications are on the rise in the US. Retrieved from


SOCIALIZATION OF NEW ADMISSIONS ADVISORS


IRm4BTmoWWnB1cBHI#v=onepage&q=the%20oxford%20handbook%20of%20organizational%20socialization&f=false
Admissions Funnel - The process by which a student becomes a prospect, inquiry, applicant, admitted, and committed. Working a prospective student through the funnel allows for targeted communication on what is most important at that time.

Admit - A prospective student that is admitted to an institution

Applicant - A prospective student that starts an application for an institution.

BANNER - the short term for Internet Native Banner. Banner is the system that manages the student through enrollment, graduation, and after.

Counselor Connections - Process of making connections with high school counselors in a recruitment territory. Recruiters are responsible for sending information and materials to these schools.

College Fair - Many fairs are sponsored by NACAC or various chapters. A representative staffs a table and visits with students that stop by. High exposure, as many area high schools are invited to attend.

CRM - Customer Relations Management. This program is run through Hobsons Radius. The CRM keeps track of a students progress through the admissions funnel.

Dean's Days - Event that occurs during the fall before the recruitment cycle begins. Deans of the different colleges and other invited departments are invited to present to the admissions staff on new things and features of their colleges. This assists the recruitment staff to provide up to date information while on the road.

Deposited - A student that has committed to attend an institution.

Enrolled - A student that has signed up for classes, intending to pay tuition.
GeckoEngage - internet based system that was purchased as an add-on feature for the CRM.

Provides recruiters with more responsibility throughout the admissions funnel.

High School Visits - Admissions recruiter contacts high schools and set up a time to visit with students who are interested and counseling offices. Time and travel intensive.

Inquiry - A prospective student that reaches out expressing interest in an institution.

Leads - how a prospective students’ information is gathered, from college fair, campus tour, etc.

Matriculated - A student that has paid tuition, or set up a payment plan.

NACAC - National Association of College Admissions Counseling. Biggest organization of more than 13,000 professionals from around the world dedicated to serving students transitioning from secondary to postsecondary education.

Open House - evening events that allow prospective students to spend time with admissions and college programs.

Prospect - A prospective student whose information is purchased.

Recruitment Cycle - in this context, it goes from September to August. Helping students based on what their needs are, providing information regarding applications, providing information, and guiding prospective students through the funnel. Recruitment cycle starts each fall.

Red Riot - A weekend overnight experience hosted by Southern Utah University Admissions office. At these events prospective students between the ages of 16-18 are invited to visit campus for the “Ultimate student experience”. Prospective students get academic information, a campus tour, and activities the time they are on campus. Prospective
students stay in the apartments of Presidential Ambassadors and are able to full college experience.

Regular Decision - Students must submit an application by a specific deadline, and are then notified in a clear period of time.

Rolling Admission - Student can apply at any time the college begins to accept applications until an application closing date. Students are notified of decisions as applications are completed and reviewed.

UACRAO - Utah Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. This organization shares information, offers networking opportunities, and advocates for Offices of Admissions, Registration, Recruitment, Records and other opportunities in student services.

Utah Higher Education Day - Sponsored by UACRAO. This is a designated day that all post-secondary institutions in Utah are at the same schools on the same day. This occurs once a year and goes to the majority of high schools in Utah.

Territory - a geographical region that is assigned to a recruiter. This aides the incoming student workload.
CODE OF ETHICS

1. Representatives must present clear and accurate information concerning their institution or agency while avoiding ambiguous, questionable, or false information about competing institutions or agencies. Ambiguous or false claims about accreditation, “national rankings”, or guarantees of employment upon completion of education or training are not acceptable.

2. Only designated school officials with expressed authorization to represent their respective institutions shall participate during the Tour program. Others may accompany designated institutional representatives if they are all well trained and if they abide by the same principles and regulations expected of all UACRAO members. Individual institutions are responsible for anyone representing them. UACRAO reserves the right to limit participation of individuals if participation is deemed detrimental to the good of the council and its purposes.

3. Representatives should refrain from all disparaging comparisons of any other agency or institution, secondary, post secondary, or similar institution including their programs, locations, personnel, and services.

4. Discounts on tuition or other fees will not be offered for an immediate enrollment.

5. Representatives will not insist or pressure students to make immediate decisions to enroll, or make substantial down payments because of few openings.

6. Representatives shall provide service to students by assisting them in matching their interests, and abilities to the appropriate institutions that will enable them to best achieve their educational and career goals.

7. Representatives should present themselves in a professional manner when working with students, their family and their school.

TOUR REGULATIONS

1. Representatives will attend all scheduled programs during the tour, unless prior communications has occurred with those host counselors where an institution will not be visiting. In case of emergency or illness, the representative scheduled has the responsibility of contacting the Host counselor as soon as he or she will be unable to attend as well as the opening presenter.

2. Representatives are expected to be on time (arrive and immediately check in with the opening presenter [or their school won’t be announced] and then, if time allows, prepare their individual room for presentation) and stay until the program has been completed.

3. Appropriate items to distribute to students include brochures describing an institution and its programs, catalogs, applications, pens or pencils, and other items containing factual information. Gimmick items such as calendars, shop bags, t-shirts, jackets, buttons, key chains, bumper stickers, posters, headbands, lanyards, decals, candy, and the like may not be distributed during the Tour day.

4. To encourage Tour attendance, no home visits or follow-up visits to the high school will be permitted within 1 week prior to or following the Tour day.

5. Representatives are individually responsible to arrange for any special audio-visual needs at the high schools. Further, representatives will be courteous when using these materials, especially in fair setting where multiple schools are located in one room and the use of these items [for example high volume] may cause a disruption to other concurrent presentations.

6. No transactions involving the exchange of money shall be permitted.

7. Contest such as drawings and lotteries are prohibited.

I, the undersigned, as an institutional representative of ____________________________, do hereby agree to abide by the above noted Code of Ethics and Tour Regulations and understand that failure to do so by any representative of our institution may result in sanctions including but not limited to, removal from Tour participation and/or removal from UACRAO

Print Name ___________________________________________ Date ______________________

Signature __________________________________________________