rnl national conference
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## empowering higher education

# Mastering Marketing ROI Through Tactical Budget Allocations in Key Focus Areas

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# Introduction to the Presenters

**Anuja Siraj**

Director of Digital Strategy, RNL
"Expert Strategist"

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Vice President, Marketing Research
"Expert Researcher"

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# Presentation Agenda

1. Objective

2. Current landscape, and Challenges

3. Enrollment Goals & KPI's

4. Identifying Key Focus Areas

5. Tactical Budget Allocation

6. Measuring ROI : The key to Success.

7. Discussions/Q & A

"Marketing is not an expense; it is an investment. The key is understanding where to allocate resources to achieve the highest return."

# Objective

**1**

# Objective

**Marketing ROI :**

**1:** **Visibility is the KEY for ROI**

**2:** **Personalization**

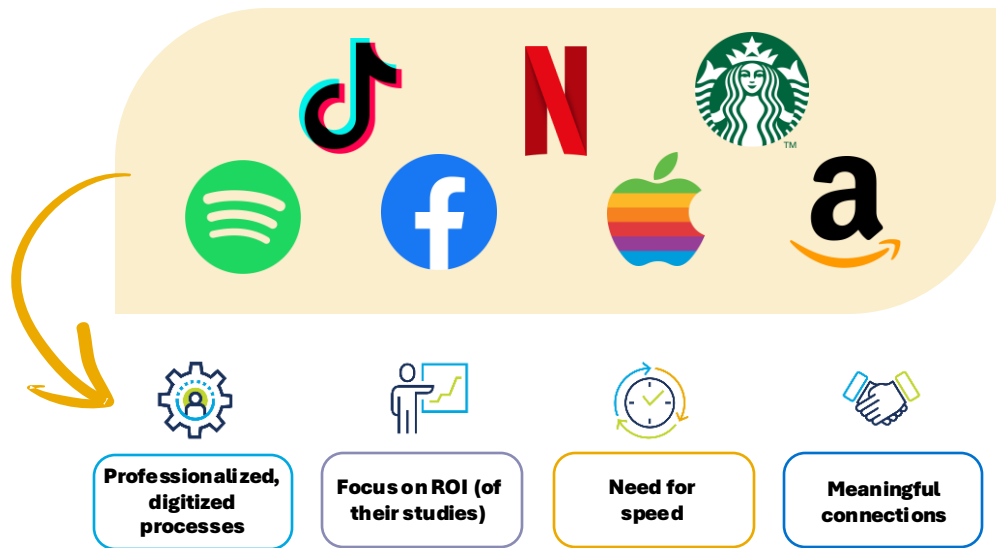**3:** **Budget & Allocation**

# <60%

Marketers report visibility into the performance of the leads generated once they moved from top of funnel to the recruitment and enrollment operations.

# Current Landscape

**2**

# Expectations Have Changed

## Technology (and AI) has changed today's students, and they expect higher ed to keep up.

**Professionalized, digitized processes**

**Focus on ROI (of their studies)**

**Need for speed**

**Meaningful connections**

# Generations Have Shifted

**Graduate and online education is now dominated by Millennials and GenZ.**

## 65%
Percent of graduate students that are Millennials

## 47%
Percent of online students that are Millennials

# Enrollment Goals & KPI

**3**

# Setting KPIs: Working Backwards to create realistic goals

**1. Qualified Leads**

How many did you get?

How many will you need to meet goal?

%

**2. Started Applications**

How many did you get?

How many will you need to meet goal?

%

**3. Completed Apps**

How many did you get?

How many will you need to meet goal?

%

**4. Accepted Apps**

How many did you get?

How many do you need?

%

**4. "Deposits"**

How many did you get?

How many do you need?

%

**4. Enrolled**

How many did you get?
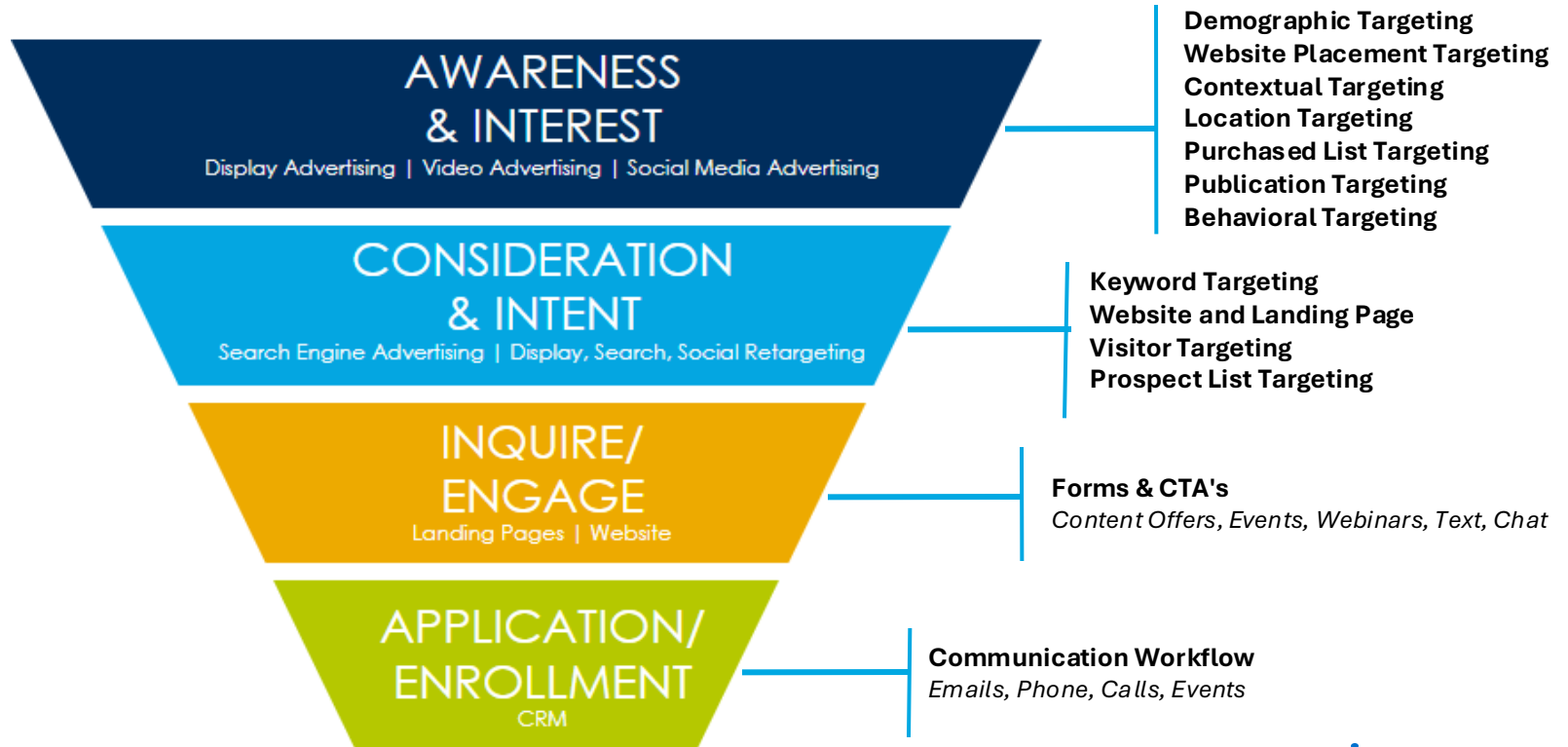
What is your goal?

**How to do it:**
1. Gather current state data for each stage for each program.
2. Calculate percent that moved to next stage.
3. Aggregate percents across all programs in each discipline.
4. Apply percents to plan – starting with goal and working backwards.

*Note: Using your own data – and not "industry averages" – is your best case for current goal setting. Your current percentages reflect the current state of your recruitment operations. Without investment and advances in your recruitment/cultivation operation, you are not likely to significantly change your conversion rates.*

# Digital Lead Generation Funnel
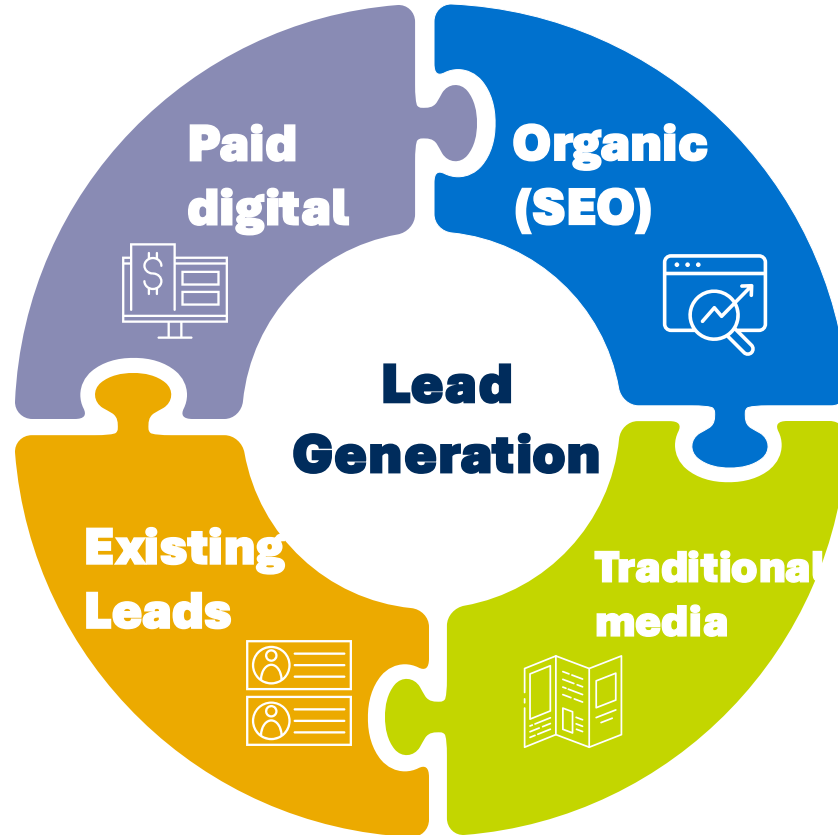
## RNL's Digital Approach

**AWARENESS & INTEREST**
Display Advertising | Video Advertising | Social Media Advertising

- **Demographic Targeting**
- **Website Placement Targeting**
- **Contextual Targeting**
- **Location Targeting**
- **Purchased List Targeting**
- **Publication Targeting**
- **Behavioral Targeting**

**CONSIDERATION & INTENT**
Search Engine Advertising | Display, Search, Social Retargeting

- **Keyword Targeting**
- **Website and Landing Page Visitor Targeting**
- **Prospect List Targeting**

**INQUIRE/ ENGAGE**
Landing Pages | Website

- **Forms & CTA's**
  *Content Offers, Events, Webinars, Text, Chat*

**APPLICATION/ ENROLLMENT**
CRM

- **Communication Workflow**
  *Emails, Phone, Calls, Events*

# Identifying Key Focus Areas

**4**

# Key focus areas: Integrated Media Strategy



Paid digital

Organic (SEO)

Lead Generation

Existing Leads

Traditional media

# Nearly all online learners start with a search engine and digital ads are what they remember
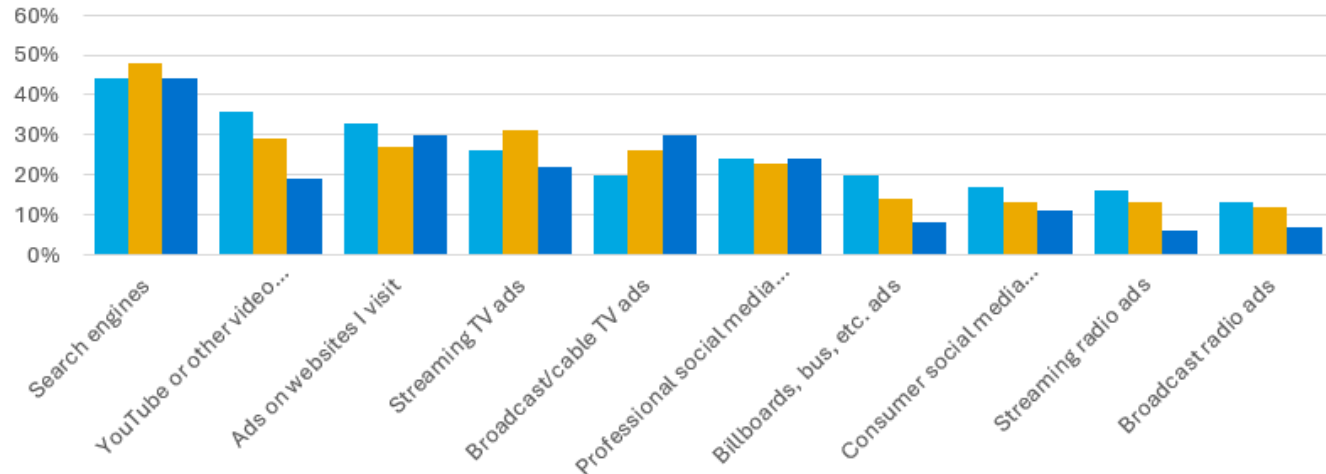
## Search engines

# 40%

begin search on a search engine

# 52%

do a search as their next step

## Top Ad Placements

Where do you recall first seeing ads about online programs?



| Category | 60% | 50% | 40% | 30% | 20% | 10% | 0% |

Bar chart categories (left to right):
- Search engines
- YouTube or other video…
- Ads on websites I visit
- Streaming TV ads
- Broadcast/cable TV ads
- Professional social media…
- Billboards, bus, etc. ads
- Consumer social media…
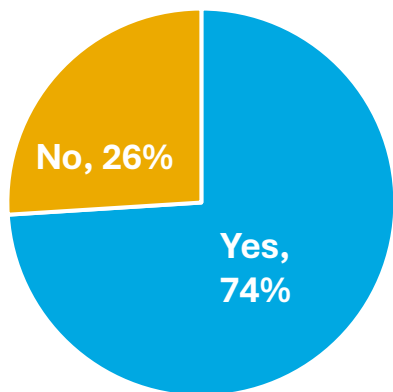- Streaming radio ads
- Broadcast radio ads

# Online learners click on digital ads and they do so because the ads resonate with them

## Clicked on Digital Ads

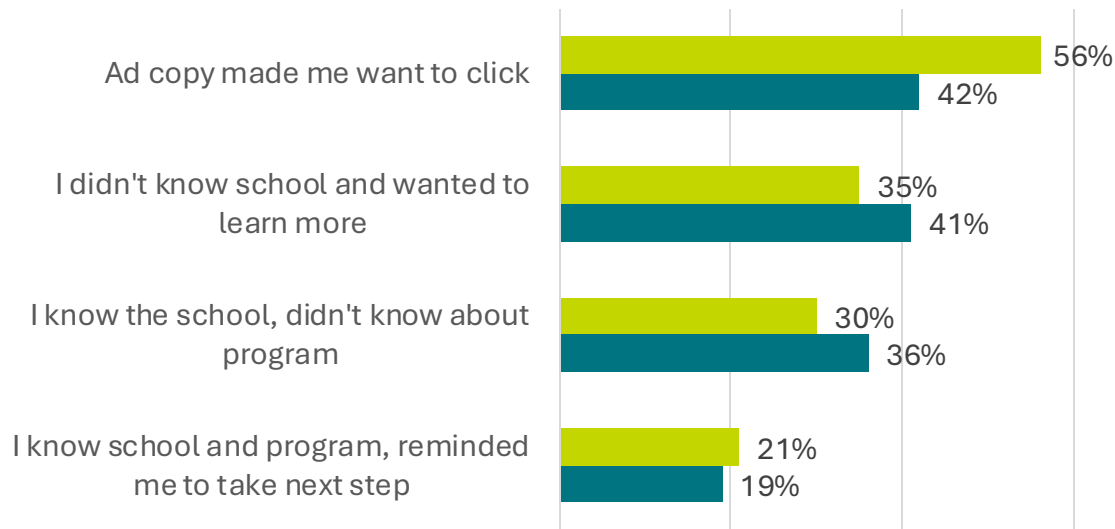Did you click on digital ads during your search?

No, 26%

Yes, 74%

- Yes
- No

## Reason for Clicking

Why did you click on a digital ad?

| Reason | Graduate | Undergraduate |
|---|---|---|
| Ad copy made me want to click | 56% | 42% |
| I didn't know school and wanted to learn more | 35% | 41% |
| I know the school, didn't know about program | 30% | 36% |
| I know school and program, reminded me to take next step | 21% | 19% |

- Graduate
- Undergraduate

# Focus areas: Organic/SEO, Paid, Traditional

How are marketing dollars being allocated across these focus areas?



Open house/Event marketing, 16%

Institutional/ brand awareness, 29%

Program-specific marketing, 55%
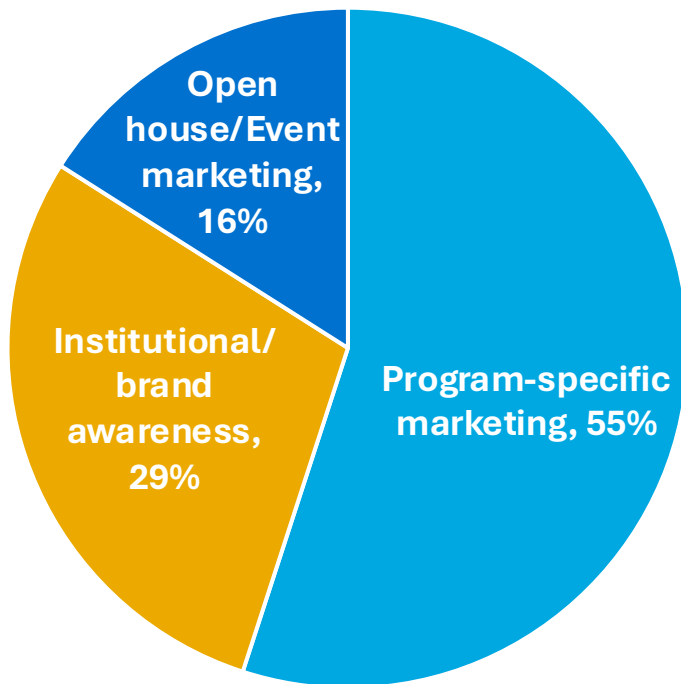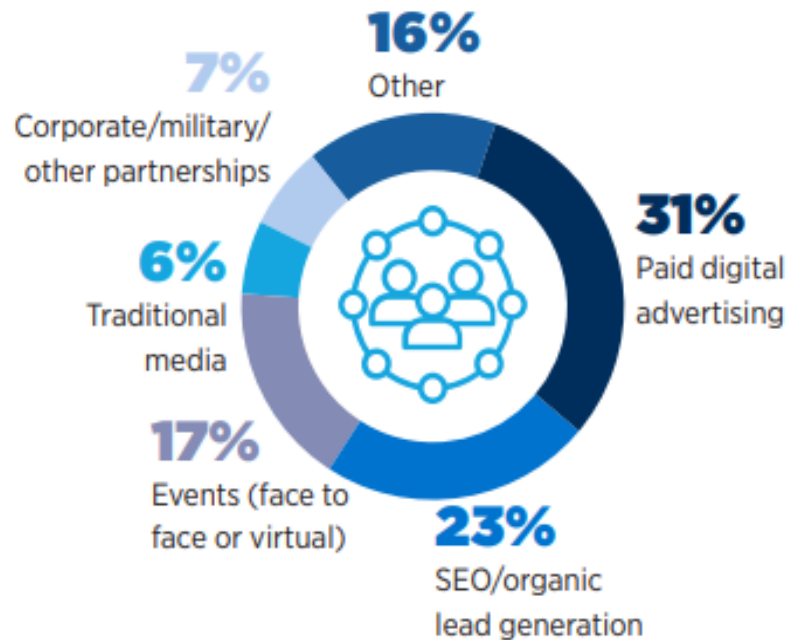
# Allocations and Lead Sources. Do they Match?

## How are marketing funds allocated across broad channels?

- **15%** Other
- **5%** Corporate/military/ other partnerships
- **11%** Traditional media
- **11%** Events (face to face or virtual)
- **21%** SEO/organic lead generation
- **38%** Paid digital advertising
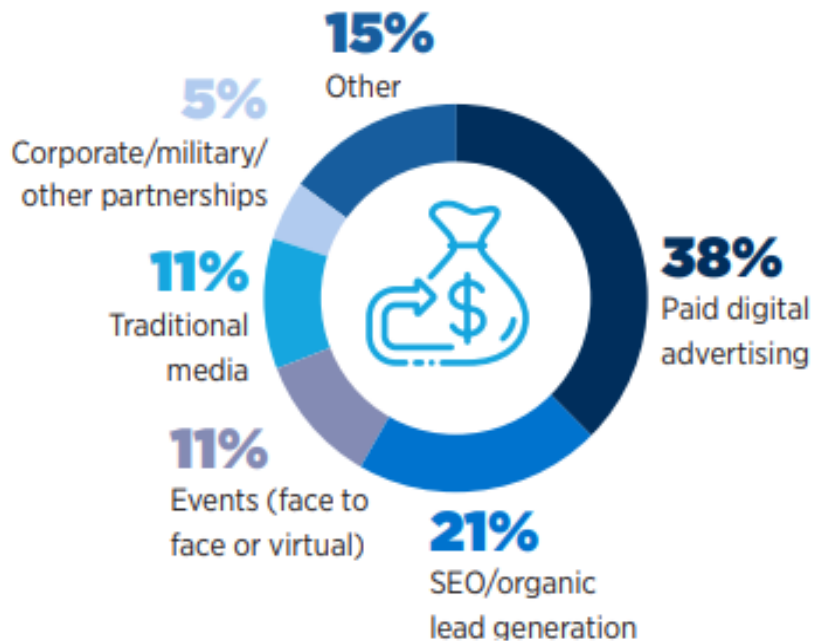
## Where do leads/inquiries come from across broad channels

- **16%** Other
- **7%** Corporate/military/ other partnerships
- **6%** Traditional media
- **17%** Events (face to face or virtual)
- **23%** SEO/organic lead generation
- **31%** Paid digital advertising

# Tactical Budget Allocation

**5**

# Marketing Budget Allocation Strategy

**Marketing Budget**
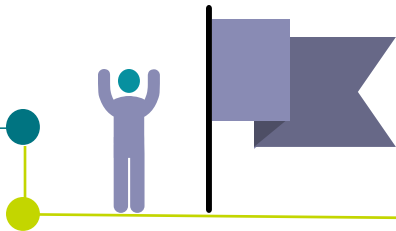
1 **Campus Goal**

**Student Personas** 2

3 **Channel Mix**

**Tactics** 4

# Channel Strategy

Based on the institutional goals, discovery, and
program requirements, we plan and strategize to
develop an integrated media strategy,
and corresponding creative assets needed to generate
inquiries through  compelling campaigns that engage
the right students at the right time on the
right channel.
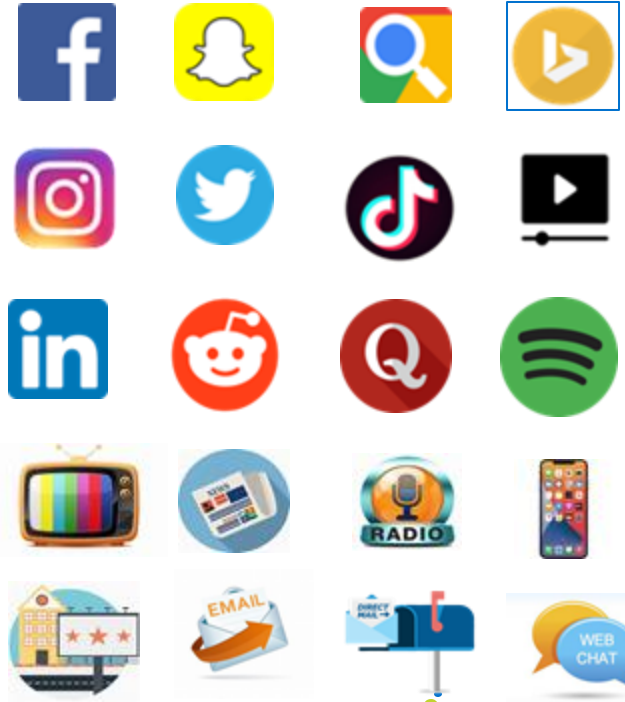
# Budget Allocation Strategy
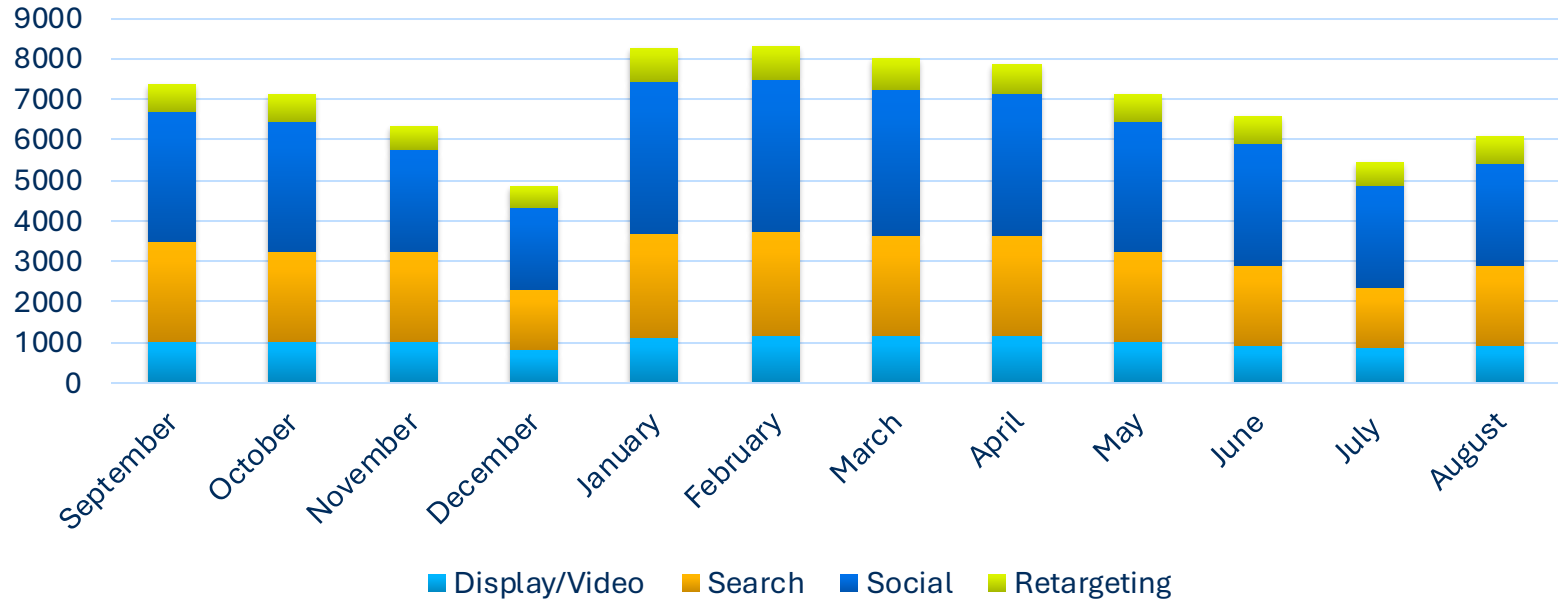
*We can scale based on recruitment goals, start dates, geography, target audience, and budget direction.*

# Measuring ROI: The KEY

**6**

# Full Funnel Visibility

## Marketers

**58%**

YES

**42%**

NO

## Recruiters

**30%**

YES

**70%**

NO

# What does that visibility include?

What insights are included in your visibility?



| Category | Percentage |
|----------|------------|
| By Program | 94% |
| By Channel | 63% |
| By Cost | 33% |
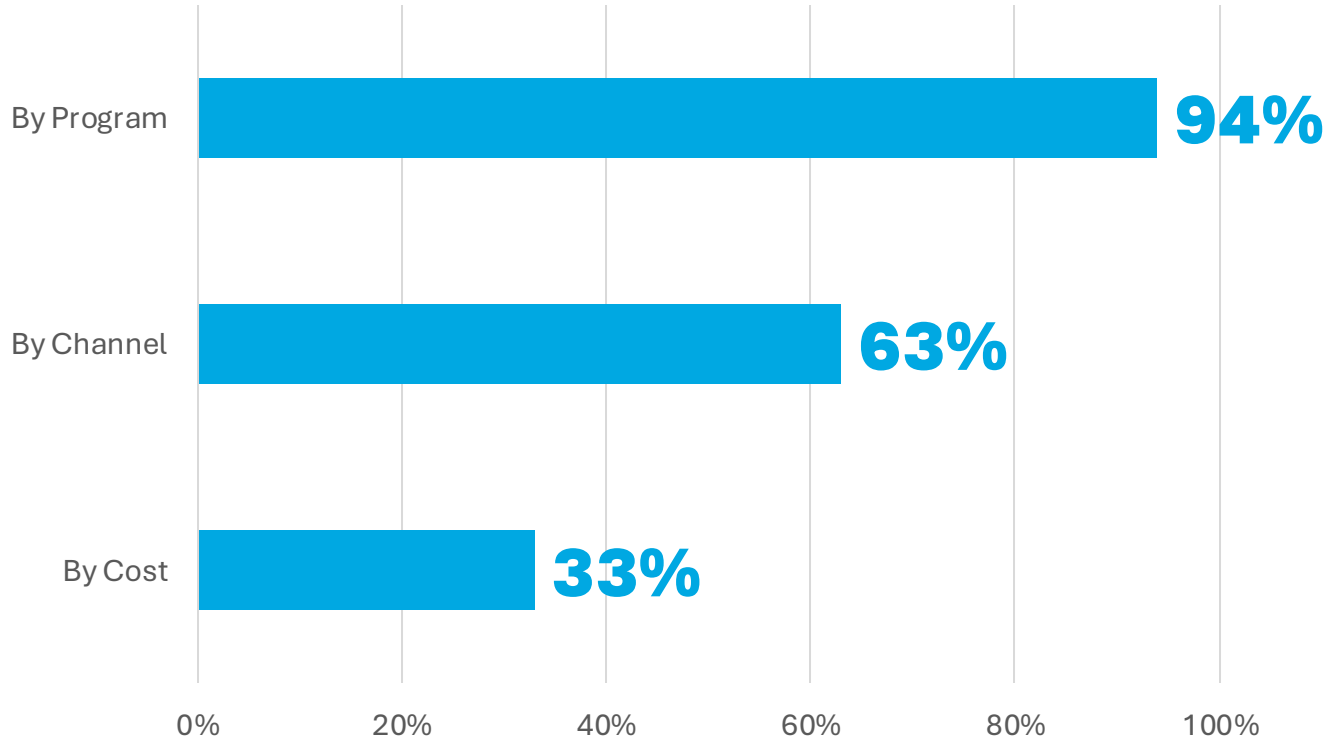
# Measuring performance and ROI

**How do you assess the effectiveness of your marketing spend?**



| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **82%** | **65%** | **59%** | **44%** | **27%** | **31%** |
| Meeting enrollment targets | Number of leads | Quality of leads | Cost per lead | Net revenue targets | Happy stakeholders (faculty, administrators, etc.) |
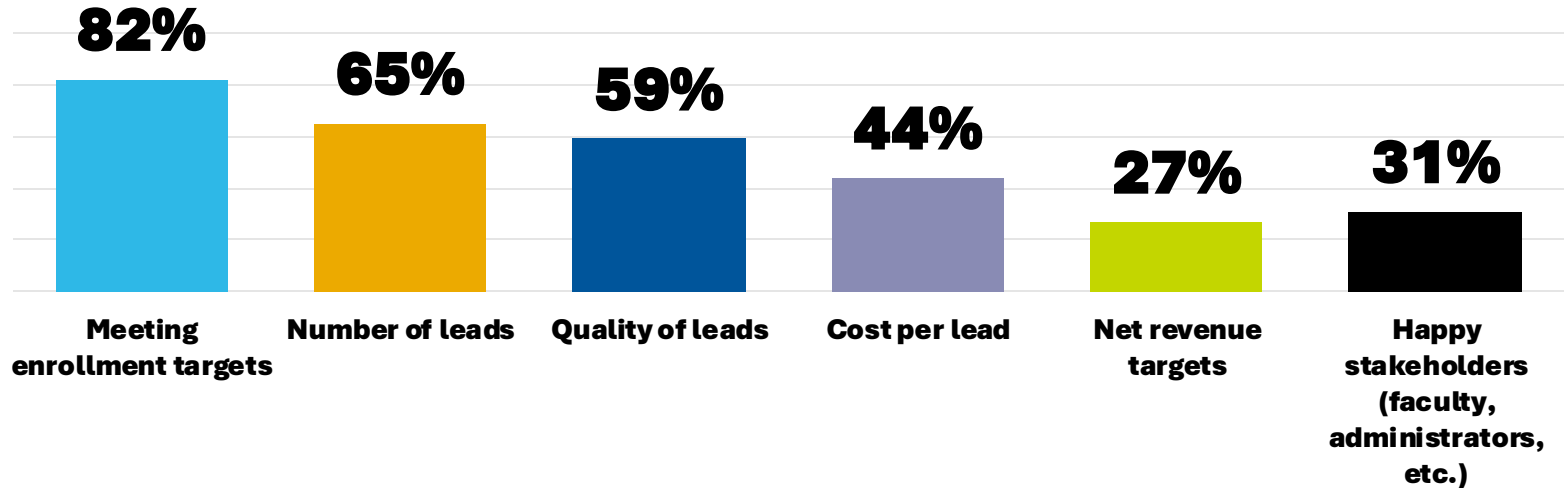
# Year-over-Year Performance

## Program + Channel Performance



Legend: Search, Facebook, Display, RT, LinkedIn, StackAdapt

Categories: Business Analytics, Data Science, Comp Sci, AI, Cyber

## Cost Per Lead Trends



Legend: CPL's Previous Year, CPL's Current Year

Months: Jan, Feb, March, April, May, June, July, August, Sept, Oct, November, December

Discussions Q/A

6
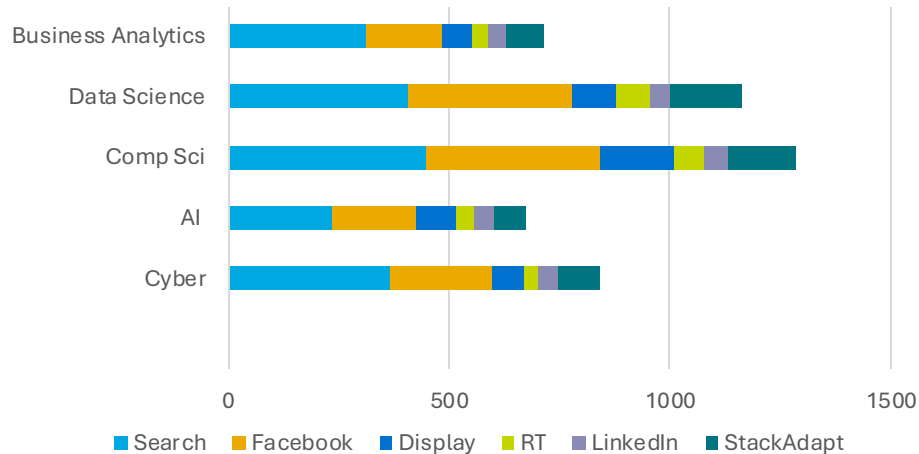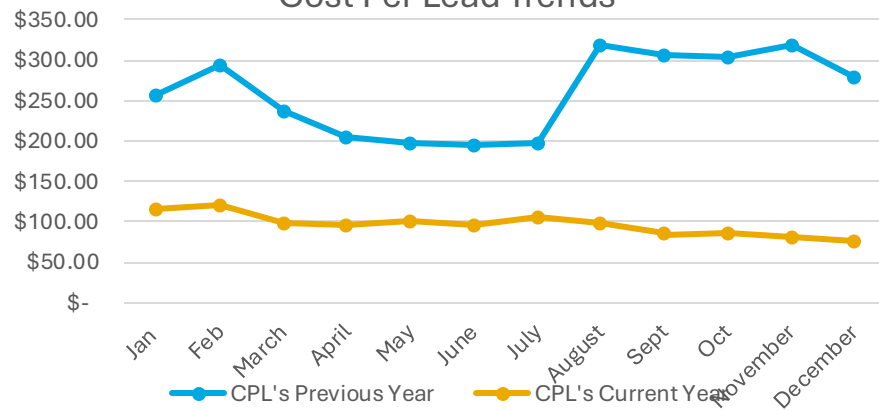
## Complimentary Consultation

# RNL's 2024 Online Student Recruitment Report

**Consult Goal:** We want to help you succeed. Your RNL expert will guide you through a discussion matched to your areas of interest and provide insights on how RNL helps institutions ensure that:

1. Recruitment and admissions processes align with expectations.
2. Program promotion addresses student aspirations and concerns.
3. Marketing matches how and when students search.
4. Program structure and features meet student preferences.
5. AI is leveraged to enhance speed, personalization, and other expectations.

Sign up for a tour of the report today.

# RNL's Complete Solutions for Graduate and Online Enrollment

Find everything you need from strategy to course design to recruitment. Learn more at: **RNL.com/Enable**

**Strategy & Consulting**
- Opportunity Analysis
- Strategic Enrollment Planning Consulting
- Recruitment Consulting
- Financial Aid Consulting
- CRM Solutions Consulting

→

**Research & Market Insights**
- Program Prioritization and Positioning
- Price Sensitivity Analysis
- Academic Program Demand
- Financial Aid Modeling

→

**Instructional Design**
- Course Development
- Course Assessment
- Course Revision
- Instructional Consulting

**Lead Generation**
- Media Planning
- Content and Creative Development
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Digital Advertising
- Website and Analytics Solutions
- Personalized Video

→

**Recruitment and Conversion**
- Engagement Marketing
- Lead Qualification
- Transcript Collection
- Enrollment Coaching

→

**Student Success & Retention**
- Student Success Consulting
- Satisfaction Surveys
- Retention Analytics

**RNL Envision:** Higher education's leading full-funnel reporting platform

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# schedule a quick consultation

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# Thank You

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