

Enhancing Student Engagement and Enrollment at Minnesota State University Moorhead

Overview

Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM) is a dynamic institution committed to fostering a strong sense of community and student success. Facing challenges in effectively reaching and engaging prospective students in a competitive higher education landscape, MSUM turned to Mongoose to transform their communication strategies. Since 2017, MSUM has leveraged Mongoose's innovative conversational engagement platform to significantly improve student engagement and support enrollment goals.

Challenge

MSUM's previous texting tools were inadequate for meaningful student engagement. Generic five-digit numbers and bulk message blasts resembled retail promotions more than personalized communication. As Tom Reburn, Director of Admissions, explained, "It felt like signing up for coupons from the grocery store. It didn't create dialogue." The need for a more effective solution was clear: one that could foster genuine, two-way conversations with prospective students and integrate seamlessly with their CRM.

Solution

After evaluating various options, MSUM chose Mongoose for its ability to provide personalized, conversation-based messaging. Mongoose's platform stood out due to its integration capabilities, user-friendly interface, and focus on creating meaningful interactions rather than one-way broadcasts. Tom emphasized the importance of authentic communication:

“ We needed a solution that could turn a segment or group message into customized, one-on-one conversations. Mongoose allowed us to do just that.

TOM REBURN

Implementation & Impact

Since implementing Mongoose in 2017, MSUM has fundamentally changed how they engage with prospective students. The admissions team uses Mongoose to send personalized messages at key points throughout the recruitment process, ensuring that students feel supported and informed.

Key Outcomes

Increased Student Engagement

By focusing on personal, direct communication, MSUM saw a substantial increase in student engagement. **The university found that if a student exchanged 16 or more texts with MSUM during their recruitment journey, there was a 85% chance that the student would enroll.** Tom explained:

“ It's not just about sending information; it's about creating conversation. Even if the student says 'no,' that's better than no response at all because it lets us know where we stand.

Improved Enrollment Conversion

Data revealed a strong correlation between text message engagement and enrollment likelihood. **Students who texted back five times were 70% likely to enroll, but those who engaged in more extensive dialogue (16 or more texts) were almost certain to join MSUM.**

Enhanced Event Participation

MSUM used Mongoose's platform during large in-person recruitment events by displaying a shared inbox number on-screen and encouraging students and families to text questions. This approach allowed for real-time interaction and personalized responses, improving the overall event experience. It also provided a private channel for students to ask sensitive or specific questions that they might not feel comfortable voicing in a public forum.

Effective Visit Management

For individualized campus visits, the team used Mongoose to send day-of reminders and check-in texts, improving show rates and allowing for on-the-fly adjustments. Tom noted,

“ Simple check-ins like ‘Are you still planning on coming?’ significantly boosted our visit attendance.

TOM REBURN

The Mongoose Difference

Authentic, Empathetic Conversations

Unlike other texting solutions that often feel impersonal and intrusive, Mongoose empowered MSUM to engage in authentic, empathetic two-way conversations with prospective students. The platform's design prioritizes dialogue, allowing the admissions team to respond to individual inquiries and build genuine relationships. Mongoose offers best practice templates to help craft messages that resonate, while intelligent AI-enabled messaging ensures each interaction is timely and relevant. This capability transforms routine communication into meaningful exchanges, making students feel heard and valued, which ultimately fosters trust and strengthens their connection to the institution. Tom shared,

“ Mongoose helps us create conversations that truly engage students and show that we're listening.

One-to-One Messaging

The ability to transition from segmented messages to one-on-one conversations was crucial. Mongoose enabled MSUM to address individual student needs effectively, whether through automated follow-ups or personalized responses.

Dedicated, Real Phone Numbers

Using real, ten-digit numbers made the texts feel personal and authentic, significantly improving response rates compared to the previous system.

Integration with CRM

While the initial decision to choose Mongoose was not based solely on compatibility with MSUM's CRM (Radius by Campus Management), the integration capability has since become a vital aspect of their communication strategy, allowing MSUM to get more value from their CRM. “We're now able to track engagement data directly within our CRM, making it easier to understand and act on student behaviors,” Tom stated.

Future Plans

MSUM is expanding its use of Mongoose to include chatbot capabilities on their website, with plans to implement AI-driven chat support for the entire university. This initiative aims to provide prospective and current students with 24/7 access to information and support, further enhancing the institution's commitment to personalized, student-centered communication.

Conclusion

Mongoose has proven to be an invaluable partner for MSUM, enabling the admissions team to engage students in a meaningful and effective way. By focusing on personalized engagement rather than generic notifications, MSUM has not only improved their enrollment outcomes but also set a new standard for how institutions can use technology to build stronger relationships with their students. Tom added,

“ For us, Mongoose is the best texting tool out there. It allows us to connect with students authentically and be a resource when they're ready.

Mongoose Conversation Intelligence Platform

Learn more

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