

Driving Enrollment Growth at Olivet Nazarene University with Mongoose

Overview

Olivet Nazarene University (ONU), a private Christian institution in Bourbonnais, Illinois, has integrated faith and learning into its programs for over a century. Serving more than 3,700 students, ONU strives to create a personalized, supportive environment for prospective and current students alike. In 2019, ONU adopted Mongoose's platform to enhance communication, streamline the admissions process, and foster a sense of belonging among prospective students. Since then, Mongoose has played a pivotal role in ONU's record-breaking enrollment growth and improved operational efficiency.

Challenge

Before implementing Mongoose, ONU's admissions team faced significant challenges in managing communication with prospective students. Admissions counselors relied on personal cell phones to send texts, raising privacy concerns and resulting in untracked communications. Traditional methods, such as email and phone calls, failed to consistently engage students, especially first-generation applicants unfamiliar with the college admissions process. ONU needed a centralized communication platform that could simplify outreach, support large student pools, and align with the university's mission of delivering a personalized, approachable recruitment experience.

Solution

ONU chose Mongoose's centralized texting platform to revolutionize its admissions communication. Integrated with Ellucian Recruit, the platform enabled ONU to manage large pools of prospective students, send tailored messages at scale, and track interactions seamlessly. Alli Carpenter, Associate Director of Recruitment & Communications at ONU, shared:



Mongoose allows us to meet students where they are and communicate in a way that's approachable and friendly. It helps students feel like they belong here.

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Implementation & Impact

ONU adopted Mongoose in 2019, transforming how the admissions team engages with prospective students and improving overall efficiency.

Key Outcomes

Record-Breaking Enrollment

In 2023, ONU enrolled its largest freshman class in university history. ONU was also recognized as one of the top ten spots for enrollment growth among schools in the North American Coalition for Christian Admissions Professionals (NACCAP). Personalized, timely communication powered by Mongoose was instrumental in achieving this milestone.

Streamlined Admissions Counseling

Admissions counselors managed communication with thousands of students efficiently using smart messaging, templates, and CRM integration. Alli noted:



With over 4,200 students assigned to one counselor, Mongoose ensures no one is overlooked while making communication feel personal.

Improved Student Engagement

ONU used emojis, photo attachments, and personalized messaging to humanize the admissions process. "Students realize they're talking to a real person, not a robot," Alli explained.

Enhanced Recruitment Campaigns

Targeted texting campaigns supported initiatives such as scholarship opportunities and event invitations, achieving consistently high response rates.

Key Outcomes, cont.

AI-Powered Chatbot

ONU's chatbot provided instant support for prospective students and parents, **addressing 80% of routine inquiries while escalating complex issues to staff.** In one case, the chatbot helped resolve a campus visit registration issue, improving both the user experience and operational processes.

The Mongoose Difference

Insights Into Controllable Activities

Mongoose provided ONU's leadership with actionable insights, such as the volume of texts sent by individual admissions counselors. These metrics helped improve team strategies. Alli shared,

“ Mongoose makes it easy to track activities and have data-driven conversations with counselors to improve strategies and outcomes.

ALLI CARPENTER

Personalized Texting at Scale

The platform's smart messaging and templates allowed ONU to send tailored messages to large groups, saving time while enhancing engagement.

Seamless CRM Integration

Integration with Ellucian Recruit ensured that communication records remained up-to-date, enabling targeted, data-driven messaging.

Approachable Communication Style

ONU incorporated emojis, images, and personalized details into its messages, creating an inviting tone that resonated with students and aligned with the university's mission.

AI-Powered Chatbot

The chatbot ensured students and parents received timely answers to routine questions, while staff focused on personalized, high-touch interactions.

Future Plans

Looking ahead, ONU aims to expand its use of Mongoose to further enhance recruitment and admissions processes. The university plans to implement drip text campaigns, allowing for automated, step-by-step communication to keep students informed about important next steps throughout the admissions cycle. ONU also plans to enhance outreach to international students by integrating WhatsApp, enabling culturally responsive and accessible messaging that meets their unique needs.

Conclusion

Mongoose has become an essential tool for ONU, enabling the university to achieve historic enrollment numbers and deliver a personalized admissions experience. By fostering meaningful connections, simplifying outreach, and ensuring efficient communication, Mongoose supports ONU's mission of integrating faith and learning while helping every student feel like they belong. Alli concluded:

“ Mongoose has been a game-changer for us. It's efficient, approachable, and helps us connect with students in meaningful ways.

Mongoose Conversation Intelligence Platform

Learn more

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