Texting to Reduce Summer Melt

May 8, 2020
Springfield To & Through
Texting to Reduce Summer Melt - Goals

As a result of this training, Springfield’s T&T Summer Melt Team will:

- Understand the research behind “behavioral nudging”
- Explore the awesome potential of Signal Vine to automate AND personalize support
- See sample summer melt texts and a live demo of the Signal Vine platform
- Be ready to work with resource material to flesh out a plan for Springfield’s To & Through summer melt texting initiative for 2020
Looking back at Summer Melt

The phenomenon that college-intending high school graduates fail to matriculate in college anywhere in the year following high school.

20% of Students
(10-40% nationally)
What is behavioral nudging and why do I have to do it?
We need solutions that target the hidden drivers of student behavior
Some students don’t APPLY
Some students UNDERMATCH
Some students don’t ENROLL
What happens when we use texting to nudge students?

TEXTING AS AN INTERVENTION

Personalized messaging effectively may turn adolescents' greatest liability during the college choice process - their impulsiveness - into an asset. By providing simplified information and task-specific links, potentially allows completion of required steps in the moment, before students' attention is otherwise diverted.

- Drs. Ben Castleman and Lindsay Page

RESULTS

Summer Melt Research

14% more likely to matriculate to a two-year college

20 percentage point increase in matriculation among students who hadn’t completed the FAFSA

6 percentage point increase in matriculation among students with no college plans

SignalVine
Time for a Breakout:

(1) What have you found most difficult about doing the summer melt prevention work?

(2) What do you find students struggling with the most?
Let’s look at some texts!
WRITE

The Anatomy of a Personalized Text

Hi [Name], this is [Your Name]. Have you signed up yet for the [Event Name] information session? Make sure you do this by [Date].

Register here! [Register Link]
“Hi, [Kerry]. It’s [Ms. Joseph] with a friendly reminder that your health forms for [WNE] are due [August 1]!” - to be sent on July 24 (following up on earlier text(s)s re: doctor’s appt., forms)

“Did [AIC] ask you to fill out a verification worksheet, [Jennifer]?”
○ Yes: “Have you completed it yet?”
  ■ Yes: “Great! Congrats on that key step to starting college!”
  ■ No: “Get [AIC]’s form here: [link to form/email FA office]. Lmk if you need help.”
○ No or idk: “You might want to double check with the FA office: [financialaid@aic.edu]. Lmk if you need help.”
Hi [STUDENT NM]! This is [TRUSTED PERSON]. We want to help you w/ college! Stay tuned for key summer To Dos. Save this #; you can txt us for help!

Hi [STUDENT NM]! Log on to the [COLLEGE NM] web portal for key info: [TINYURL WEBPORTAL] Need login info? Visit [TINYURL IT SUPP]. Need help?
MESSAGE PURPOSE: Have students ask questions about FAFSA or financial aid award letter

Hi [STUDENT NM]! Need help w/ the FAFSA? Questions about your fin. aid award letter, or need more aid?

MESSAGE PURPOSE: Have students sign up for orientation

Hi [STUDENT NM]! Have you signed up for the [INST ABREV] orientation? (Impb c often incl course registration! Last one is [FN ORIEN]. Need to register? [TINYURL REGI PAGE]. Need help?
MESSAGE PURPOSE: Inquire whether students’ college plans have changed

Hi [STUDENT NM]! Still planning to attend [INST ABREV] or have your plans changed? Need a Plan B?

MESSAGE PURPOSE: Reminder about tuition bill release

Hi [STUDENT NM]! The [INST ABREV] tuition bill is coming soon! Need info. about tuition payments? [TINYURL CUSTOMIZED TO INST TUIT PAYMENT PAGE]. Need help with the bill?
Placement Tests & Health Insurance Waivers

MESSAGE PURPOSE: Have students take placement tests

Hi [STUDENT NM]! Remember to take the [INST ABREV] placement tests or get an exemption. Need info? [TINYURL W/ PLACEMENT TEST INFO]. Need help?

MESSAGE PURPOSE: Help students prove that they have health insurance so they don’t get billed for it

Hi [STUDENT NM]! Need help proving that you have health insurance so you don’t get charged for it? Go here [TINYURL HLTH INS WAIVER] Need help?
MESSAGE PURPOSE: check in text

Hi [STUDENT NM]! How’s the college planning going? Need help with anything on this list: [TINYURL INST PRE-MATR CHKLIST]?

MESSAGE PURPOSE: Reminder about tuition bill

Hi [STUDENT NM]! The [INST ABREV] bill is due [TUIT DUE]. Need info about payment options? [TINYURL TUITIONPG] Need help w/ the bill?
MESSAGE PURPOSE: reminder about the first day of the semester (& move-in date if applicable):

Hi [STUDENT NM]! Can you believe the first day of classes at [INST ABREV] is [DATE]?! So proud of you and excited for you!
Blended messaging: the beauty of AI in SV!

**WHY BLENDED MESSAGING® WORKS**

Find the students who need individual support

Automate personalized messages and responses for these students.
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**WHY BLENDED MESSAGING® WORKS**

Find the students who need individual support

- Automate personalized messages and responses for these students.
- Use automation to identify these students, then reply with personalized, timely, support.
What questions do you have?
Some texting “pro tips” (from us & SV):

- Be **personalized** and **college-specific**.
- Nudge **action**.
- Be **time-sensitive**. (1-2x within 10 day window of deadline recommended.)
- Be **concise** (no more than 320 characters).
- Be **frequent enough** to keep students engaged, **but not inundating**. (Original SV/uAspire SM study was only 10 texts & suggested 3-5/mo. best.)
- **Limited use of MMS or gif images** can be fun for students (e.g., show actual one for Congratulations on decision to go to college, or [actual?] Yes!/dancing image when they text back Yes in response to completing verification or successfully waiving health insurance).
Dear [Name],

Know you are interested in continuing on for your bachelor’s degree after attending [Name of Institution]! Go to https://www.mass.edu/masstransfer/ to get inspired or learn more. It includes a mapping tool so you’ll never lose credit or time!

A college degree can change your life, but rising costs can sink your dreams. Following an A2B Map greatly reduces the sticker price of a State U or UMass bachelor’s degree, enabling you to achieve your college dreams with lower student debt.

**HERE’S THE PLAN**

1. **Start at a Community College**
   The new A2B Maps lay out a set of freshman and sophomore courses in your major so that the credits you earn at your Community College are guaranteed to transfer to a State U or UMass campus and count towards a bachelor’s degree.

2. **Earn an Associate’s Degree**
   Graduate from your community college with at least a B average and you’ll have guaranteed admission to a State U or UMass to complete your junior & senior years—with no application fees or essays.

3. **Finish at a State University or UMass Campus**
   With four UMass campuses and seven comprehensive State Universities all around the state, plus two specialty colleges in Massachusetts College of Art & Design and Massachusetts Maritime Academy, the perfect place for you to finish your bachelor’s degree is waiting.

4. **Launch Your Career with a Bachelor’s Degree!**
   A2B Maps are available in dozens of the most popular majors, including ones like STEM, Business, and Education that are in high demand among Massachusetts employers.

Maximize Your Savings: Go Full-Time & Finish on Time!

- Take the Commonwealth Commitment and pledge to stay full-time with a 3.00+ GPA as you follow an A2B Map. On top of MassTransfer benefits, you’ll shave thousands of additional dollars off your degree sticker price through a combination of special savings offered only to Commonwealth students.

A2B Maps
Quick poll: how ready are you feeling to do this texting initiative this summer?
Next steps/HW for the Summer Melt Team

- Use school data and exit survey to build out the spreadsheet for SV.
- Have user training by Signal Vine staff.
- Decide on number and focus of the “program” texts you will use this summer.
- Think about how you want to balance texting and “in person” connections - “drop in” hours for more personalized help?, events (e.g., Zoom session for students from all three HSs who will be attending WNE)?
- Consider whether/not you want to try to gather any pre/post info from students (even as simple as rating 1-5 on how ready they are for college).

And remember that WE WILL BE WITH YOU through this, so ...
Preview of Coming Attractions:

1) Fit & Match #1 next Friday, 10 am
2) Ongoing support through the summer
Thank you so much!

Doreen Kelly-Carney,
dkellycarney@gmail.com

Diane Scott, dlynnscott@gmail.com