

# Do it Yourself Marketing Research And Data Analysis



The Knowledge Partnership

Tom Hayes  
November 2016

## Why Marketing Research?

- Because it's the basis of marketing
- Because you are not your consumer (student, parent, alumni, donor)
- Things change



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## Why Not Marketing Research?

- We can't afford it

**\* You can't afford not to do it**



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Marketing research is an investment, not a cost!

- Lifetime value of a consumer
- How many students will you need to attract to pay for the research

## You Are Not Your Consumer

- How many have college degrees?
- How many years have you worked for your institution?
- How many spend more than 40 hours a week?
- How many think about work on the way in?
- How many think about work on the way home?
- How many think about work on vacation?

# Things Change

# The School Picture Quiz!

# Brand Building

- Is a step-by-step process
- Requires knowledge and discipline
- Involves the entire institution
- Major brands spend a lot of money on brand marketing and go to enormous lengths to maintain a consistent voice across all channels



# Phases of Brand Process

	1	2	3	4	5
PHASE	Strategic Review	Brand Audit	Brand Components	Creative Development	Implementation Plans
OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization's Strategic Plan: Vision/Direction/Objectives/KRA's</li> <li>• Current Customers/Products/Partners</li> <li>• Business Model (Operational, Financial, Revenue/Profit Summary)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market Review</li> <li>• Competitive Review</li> <li>• Current Market Positioning</li> <li>• Current Communications</li> <li>• SWOT Analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand Vision</li> <li>• Brand Positioning</li> <li>• Brand Pillars</li> <li>• Brand Personality</li> <li>• Brand Experience</li> <li>• Brand Promise/Slogan, Key Brand Messaging</li> <li>• Strategic Imperatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand Design</li> <li>• Brand Mandatories</li> <li>• Graphic Standards and Guidelines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objectives</li> <li>• Strategies</li> <li>• Target Markets</li> <li>• Tactics</li> <li>• Budget/Resources</li> <li>• Performance Measures</li> </ul>
RESEARCH	Research: Management/Staff/Partner/Key Stakeholder Interviews	Research: Market/Customer Research	Research: Strategic Validation	Research: Market/Focus Group Testing	Research: Performance Measurement



# Research

- Helps determine market perceptions
- Helps understand perceived strengths and weaknesses
- Helps set performance benchmarks
- Helps develop effective approaches

*“The great obstacle to progress is not ignorance but the illusion of knowledge.”*

# Outline Of A Branding Initiative

- Objective Identification
- Research
- Positioning
- Creative Concepting & Testing
- Marketing Planning
- Execution
- Evaluation



## Image and Branding Study *Guiding Questions*

- What makes our college different and better than the competition?
- What are our unique strengths?
- Where do we have competitive weaknesses?
- What niche do we/could we serve in the marketplace?
- What are our current brand associations?
- Are there associations we want to emphasize? Maintain? Lose?
- How should marketing dollars be allocated?



# Establishing Guiding Questions

- “Guiding Questions” are the 5-8 questions you want your survey research project to answer
- They are not actual survey questions
- Imagine they could be the headers on your PowerPoint of the findings
- If you have more than 8, your study probably lacks focus
- Refer to the guiding questions throughout instrument design to avoid mission-creep
- List the guiding questions on all communications regarding the project; include them at the top of every draft of your moderator guides and survey instruments

Many studies try to gather information about too many topics rather than delving deeply into one or two pressing issues.

Identifying a focused set of guiding questions at project kick-off and getting agreement on them is key.

# Managing The Research Process

- Create an internal project team
  - Assist in final decisions about project scope
  - Review moderator guides and survey instruments
  - Vet the research findings and assist with interpretation
  - Participate in devising the brand strategy based on the findings
- Beyond the research project, your project management team can easily segue into living the brand and integrated marketing issues
- Meet with campus leadership and key faculty and administrators often

Branding & Integrated Marketing Teams should extend beyond marketing and communications departments to include faculty, staff and administrators, and should be held responsible for driving tangible results across admissions, communications engagement, and development

# Qualitative Research



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# Qualitative Research

- Focus groups
- One on one interviews

## Qualitative Research (cont.)

- Used to generate ideas
- Used to explore feelings
- Used to back up quantitative research
- Cannot be projected to a larger population

Never Ever, Ever, Ever, Ever

Use Focus Groups to Determine  
Marketing Strategy!!



# Focus Group Basics

- 8 to 12 members of target audience gathered for an open-ended discussion about topic of interest to sponsor
- One of most frequently used market research techniques
- Typically last 1 to 1 ½ hours; no longer
- To ensure accuracy, conduct multiple groups
- ALWAYS audio or video tape
- Typical project has at least four groups
  - Same target audience, same guide, same moderator, same setting, etc.

Focus groups generate qualitative data which means the findings are presented as key themes rather than through the use of statistics, as is the case with quantitative research.



# When To Use Focus Groups

- To understand:
  - Feelings, perceptions, emotions and needs
  - Motivations to have a relationship with us
- Charitable gifts and enrollments are emotionally driven:
  - Highly discretionary expenditures
  - Many spending tradeoffs
- Focus groups are used to:
  - Gather baseline info for survey
  - Gather info that is difficult to quantify - reactions, perceptions, images, feelings
  - Review creative communications, publications, ads, etc.

Focus groups are generally more effective than surveys at exploring emotional drivers.



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## TESC Ad Assessment

Right now, I'm earning my management degree. My college comes to me.



If you always wanted to earn your college degree but felt you didn't have time to go to school, there is a solution – Thomas Edison State College.

At Thomas Edison State College, we offer flexible, high-quality educational programs for adults. You can earn your degree through a variety of academic methods, on your terms. Plus, we'll assess the credits you may have already earned as well as evaluate the knowledge you've gained at work. And, with the help of our outstanding academic advisors, you can develop the degree completion plan that's best for you.

Thomas Edison State College offers 15 Associate, Baccalaureate and Master's degree programs. Our students come from every state in the United States and from 74 countries around the world. Manage your time well.

To learn more or request a Prospectus:  
Call: (888) 442-8372  
E-mail: [info@tesc.edu](mailto:info@tesc.edu)  
Web: [www.tesc.edu](http://www.tesc.edu)

Accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

**THOMAS EDISON**  
A STATE COLLEGE

191 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08609-1176

Thomas Edison State College  
Higher Education.  
For Adults with Higher Expectations.  
[www.tesc.edu](http://www.tesc.edu)

- Reactions generally critical, “corny,” “phony,” “staged,” “outdated”
- Man on left described as “sloppy” and “unprofessional”
- Suggested iPod rather than headphones or “walkman”
- Photo described as unrealistic, “Can you really listen to a lecture while walking, talking, and drinking?”
- Photo not viewed as representative of the College’s students, slightly inappropriate given the headline and copy in the ad
- Recommendation: Discontinue use of photo



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## TESC Ad Assessment

I'm going to college ... and I still have time for the important things.



If you always wanted to earn your college degree but felt taking time off to go to school would turn your life upside down, there is a solution – Thomas Edison State College.

At Thomas Edison State College, we offer flexible, high-quality educational programs for adults. You can earn your degree through a variety of academic methods, on your terms. Plus, we'll assess the credits you may have already earned as well as evaluate the knowledge you've gained at work. And because average time to completion can be as little as 18 months to 2 years, you're rewarded with your degree in less time than you may have ever thought possible.

Thomas Edison State College offers 15 Associate, Baccalaureate and Master's degree programs. Our students come from every state in the United States and from 74 countries around the world.

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**THOMAS  
EDISON**  
STATE COLLEGE

101 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608-1176

- Generated a stronger positive response than any other ad tested
- Participants in all groups were distracted by lack of helmets
- Concerns about safety aside, the ad was praised for its reassuring message that students can attend the College while still having time for a quality family life
- Typical reactions included: “I don’t have to give up my family” and “I can still have fun with my kids.”
- Recommendation: Update photo with helmets and continue to use ad

# TESC Ad Assessment

## Shhhh... Class is in session



It's not your typical classroom. But, then again, you are not a typical student. You have a job that demands most of your time and a life that takes up the rest of it. You have dreams of getting ahead in your career and creating more opportunities for yourself. What you don't have is your degree. Well, we have the solution.

Thomas Edison State College specializes in providing flexible, high-quality educational programs for adults. Our students earn degrees through a variety of rigorous academic methods, including traditional textbook, videotape, audiotape and interactive online courses. You can even earn credit through testing and college-level knowledge acquired on the job.

Not having the time to earn your degree is no longer an excuse. Now all you need is the determination.

Start classes now.  
Call us at (888) 442-8372,  
e-mail us at [info@tesc.edu](mailto:info@tesc.edu) or visit  
our Web site for more information.

Thomas Edison State College.  
You're closer than you think.

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**THOMAS  
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- Participants—in particular, women—responded poorly to this ad
- Female subject looked too “polished,” “made up,” and “coiffed” to represent a believable portrayal of a woman doing online class work at the breakfast table
- Another objection was a perception that the woman’s robe and nightgown had been deliberately arranged to reveal her legs; words like “offensive” and “sexist” were used
- Recommendation: Discontinue use of photo



# Great Qualitative Questions for Branding

- Complete this sentence, “I would have never fit in at [competitor A] because: \_\_\_\_\_”
- What is it about the [college] experience you think you will remember when you are 50?
- [Projective technique] If [college] was a famous person (living or dead), who would it be? Why?
- What values or strengths do faculty in your school share with faculty in other schools?
- If you were sitting on a plane next to a stranger, how would you describe [college]?
- Complete this sentence, “People think [college] is \_\_\_\_\_ but it’s really \_\_\_\_\_.”

The key to great qualitative research is not letting participants get away with easy or politically correct answers to your questions.

# Quantitative Research

# Defining Scope Of Work And Research Plan

- Image and branding research is typically conducted every three to five years
- Could involve studying:
  - General Public
  - Business/Community Leaders
  - Faculty and Administrators of Peer Institutions
  - Parents of Prospective Students
  - Prospective Students
  - Alumni & Donors
  - Current Students
  - Faculty and Staff

Common target audiences are listed here in ascending order by likelihood to respond....  
descending order by cost



# Sample Scope Of Work

## QUALITATIVE

- Prospective parents..... 30 depth interviews
- Prospective students..... Online bulletin board
- Current students..... Online bulletin board
- Faculty, staff, and alumni..... 4 online focus groups each
- Higher education peers..... 30 depth interviews
- Business leaders..... 30 depth interviews

## QUANTITATIVE

- Prospective students..... Online survey
- Prospective parents..... Online survey
- Faculty, staff, and students..... Online survey
- Alumni..... Online survey



# Sampling (1 of 2)

- Generally we are seeking to secure a “representative sample” of our target population
  - Representative sample may be a random sample or, for example, a stratified sample, depending upon the objective of sampling and the characteristics of the population
  - The degree of representativeness of the sample may be limited by cost or convenience
- All else being equal, a larger sample size  $n$  leads to increased precision in estimates of various properties of the population



# Sampling (2 of 2)

- Raosoft-<http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>

Example Sample Size Calculations			
Population Size	Margin of Error	Confidence Level	Recommended Sample Size
2,000	5%	95%	323
5,000	5%	95%	357
10,000	5%	95%	370
20,000	5%	95%	377
100,000	5%	95%	383

# Designing Survey Instruments (1 of 5)

- Keep it focused (answer your guiding questions)
- Exclude interesting but not vital questions
- Pay extremely close attention to design, layout, and perceived ease of completion
- Avoid leading or ambiguous questions; maintain objectivity
- Open with ‘warmer’ questions - simple, interesting, frame of mind
- Progressively narrow the scope of questions
- Place difficult, sensitive, or complex questions toward the end
- Include personal information/demographics last
- Address important issues more than once
- Plan time into the research process for extensive re-writing of the instrument
- Ask the HARD questions
- Avoid instruments that take longer than 10 minutes to complete (whether phone, online or direct mail data collection)


## Designing Survey Instruments (2 of 5)

- Consider the basis of comparison carefully:

- “How helpful were the materials you received from XYZ College?”

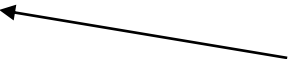
- Very helpful – 55%
- Somewhat helpful – 35%
- Not helpful – 10%

Compare to other colleges or compare individual pieces or tools to each other.



- “On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means XYZ College’s location is very undesirable and 5 means the College’s location is very desirable, how do you rate XYZ College?”

Compare to other colleges or compare additional college attributes.





# Designing Survey Instruments (4 of 5)

## WHAT'S WRONG HERE?

How far is Example University from your home?

- Less than 50 miles
- 50-100 miles
- 100-150 miles
- 150-200 miles
- More than 200 miles

### Problem

- Response options are not mutually exclusive
- Respondent can't answer question
- Better ways to get information

### Solution

Measure distance by home zip code

# Developing Possible Positioning Strategies To Test

- Use internal assessment, competitive analysis, review of strategic plans and existing data and qualitative research to develop possible positioning strategies to test in the quantitative research
- Example for small liberal arts college
  - Work while in school
  - Exceptional, innovative teaching
  - Leadership development
  - Personal Attention (ugh!)
  - Reading and speaking skills
- Brand positionings should be discussed with campus leadership
- The baseline image and branding research is ultimately structured to test concepts related to these positioning strategies

“A brand is a living entity -  
and it is enriched or  
undermined cumulatively  
over time, the product of  
a thousand small  
gestures”

Michael Eisner, CEO  
Disney

# ‘Typical’ Branding Survey Content

- Aided and unaided awareness and other benchmarks that support measurement of brand ROI over time
- Assess your current brand associations/image
- Assess competitor’s awareness/image/reputation & strengths/weaknesses
- Test around possible brand positionings
  - Relevance/meaningful/appeal, credible, differentiating
  - Given the option to attend University A, B, C, which one would you choose?
- Assess your strengths and weaknesses
  - These should be aligned with what is necessary to support various brand positionings
- Test appeal of messages that could support the positionings
- Demographics necessary for analysis





# Stimulating Participation In Your Survey

- Sell value of research
- Guarantee confidentiality, but not anonymity
  - Utilize backend data as much as possible
- Avoid non-vital questions; long questionnaires
- Use an attractive design and layout
- Use preliminary notification
- Use callbacks/reminder emails
- Use incentives; cash is the universal ‘incentivizer’
  - iPads are no longer good incentives
  - Amazon.com gift certificates work great

Incentives are a critical consideration when working to generate survey response; offer an incentive that your target audience values and be creative.



## Response Rates

- Response rate will be directly linked to your target audience's interest in you and your topic; higher interest level....high response
- Typical response rates to an online survey
  - Purchased list of college-bound students – 2% to 3%
  - Your own prospects – 7% to 12%
  - Your current students – 25% to 35%
  - Your alumni – 15% to 25%
  - Your faculty – 30% to 45%

When you click on a link to complete an online survey, you carry through an ID code which allows the sponsor to link your responses back to all of your customer data

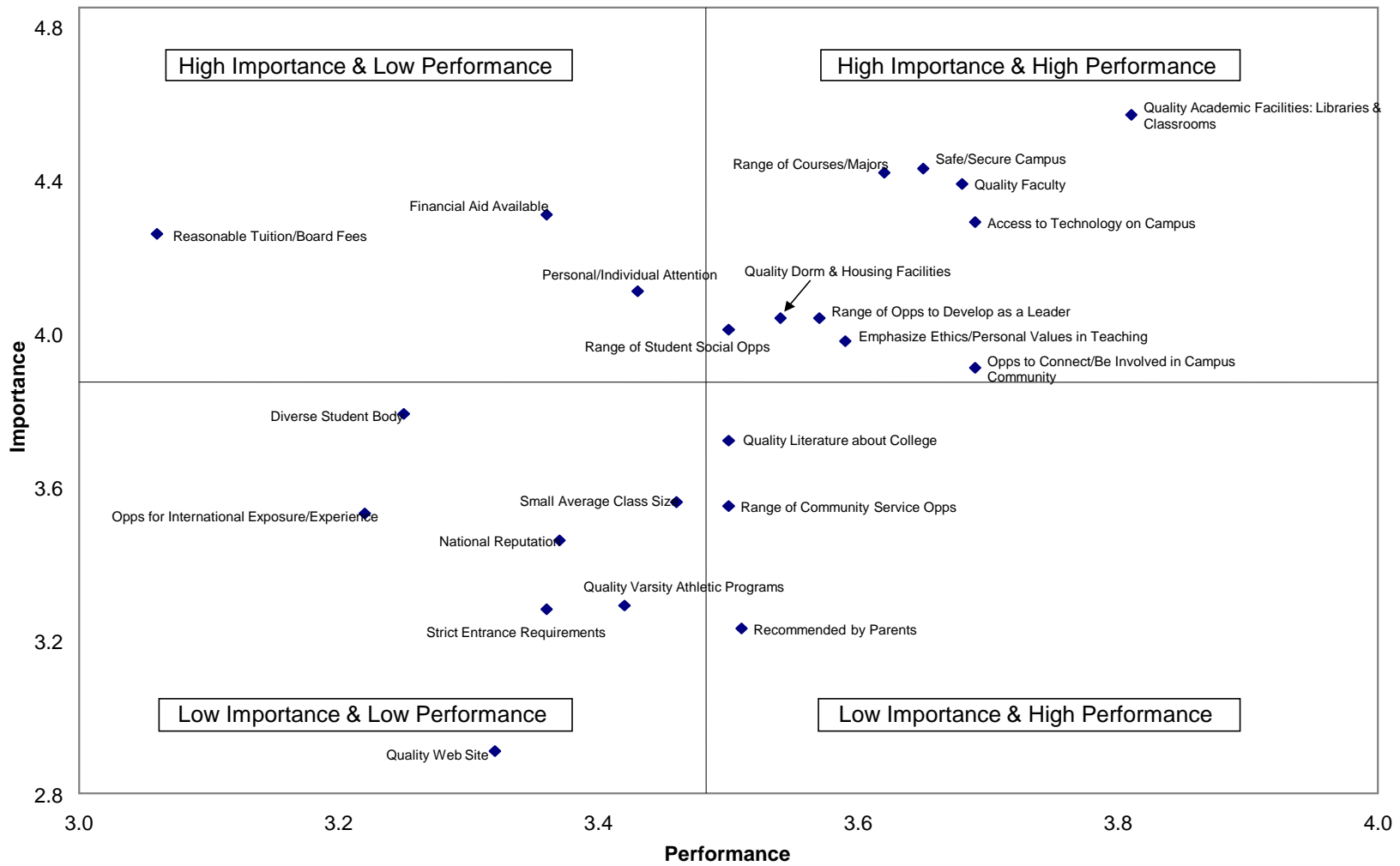
# Reporting the Data

A Picture is Worth A Thousand  
Words

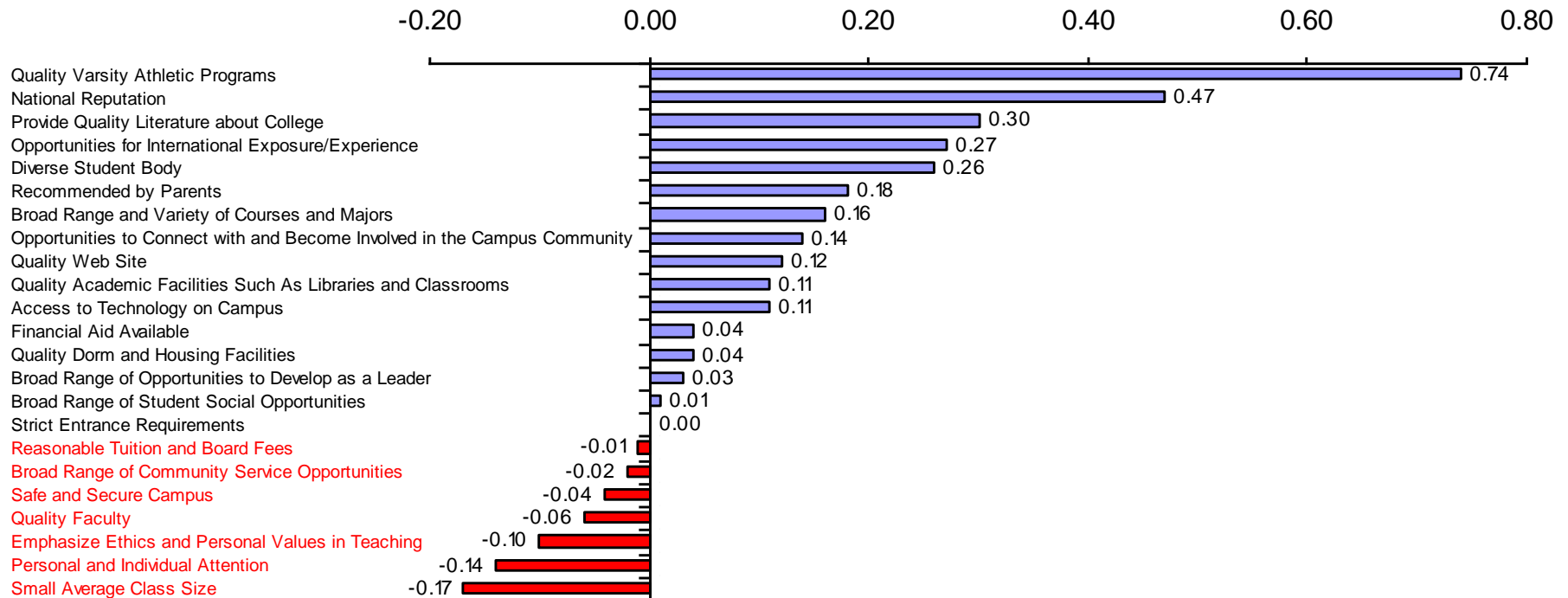
# Importance and Performance Overall Comparison

Attribute	Importance	Performance						
		Xavier	A	B	C	D	E	F
Quality Academic Facilities Such As Libraries and Classrooms	4.52	3.81	3.70	4.02	3.51	3.76	3.70	3.61
Safe and Secure Campus	4.38	3.65	3.69	3.70	3.39	3.77	3.25	3.16
Broad Range and Variety of Courses and Majors	4.37	3.62	3.46	3.86	3.33	3.61	3.73	3.60
Quality Faculty	4.34	3.68	3.74	3.92	3.39	3.75	3.48	3.42
Financial Aid Available	4.26	3.36	3.32	3.19	3.35	3.35	3.38	3.44
Access to Technology on Campus	4.24	3.69	3.58	3.86	3.48	3.68	3.65	3.58
Reasonable Tuition and Board Fees	4.21	3.06	3.07	2.66	3.30	3.19	3.25	3.52
Personal and Individual Attention	4.06	3.43	3.57	3.34	3.30	3.56	2.95	3.08
Quality Dorm and Housing Facilities	3.99	3.54	3.50	3.63	3.23	3.50	3.28	3.24
Broad Range of Opportunities to Develop as a Leader	3.99	3.57	3.54	3.80	3.35	3.62	3.35	3.40
Broad Range of Student Social Opportunities	3.96	3.50	3.49	3.64	3.31	3.44	3.68	3.59
Emphasize Ethics and Personal Values in Teaching	3.93	3.59	3.69	3.68	3.39	3.58	3.31	3.35
Opportunities to Connect with and Become Involved in the Campus Community	3.86	3.69	3.55	3.67	3.46	3.53	3.46	3.46
Diverse Student Body	3.74	3.25	2.99	3.15	3.27	3.13	3.73	3.65
Provide Quality Literature about College	3.67	3.50	3.20	3.44	3.10	3.38	3.38	3.29
Small Average Class Size	3.51	3.46	3.63	2.99	3.33	3.44	2.67	3.01
Broad Range of Community Service Opportunities	3.50	3.50	3.52	3.54	3.34	3.47	3.28	3.33
Opportunities for International Exposure/Experience	3.48	3.22	2.95	3.65	2.92	3.19	3.44	3.25
National Reputation	3.41	3.37	2.90	4.30	2.66	3.17	3.69	3.41
Quality Varsity Athletic Programs	3.24	3.42	2.68	4.20	2.95	3.14	3.95	3.77
Strict Entrance Requirements	3.23	3.36	3.36	3.91	2.98	3.43	2.93	2.84
Recommended by Parents	3.18	3.51	3.33	3.90	3.03	3.70	3.33	3.13
Quality Web Site	2.86	3.32	3.20	3.62	3.17	3.28	3.44	3.42

# Importance and Performance - Xavier University



# Performance Gap Between Xavier and College A

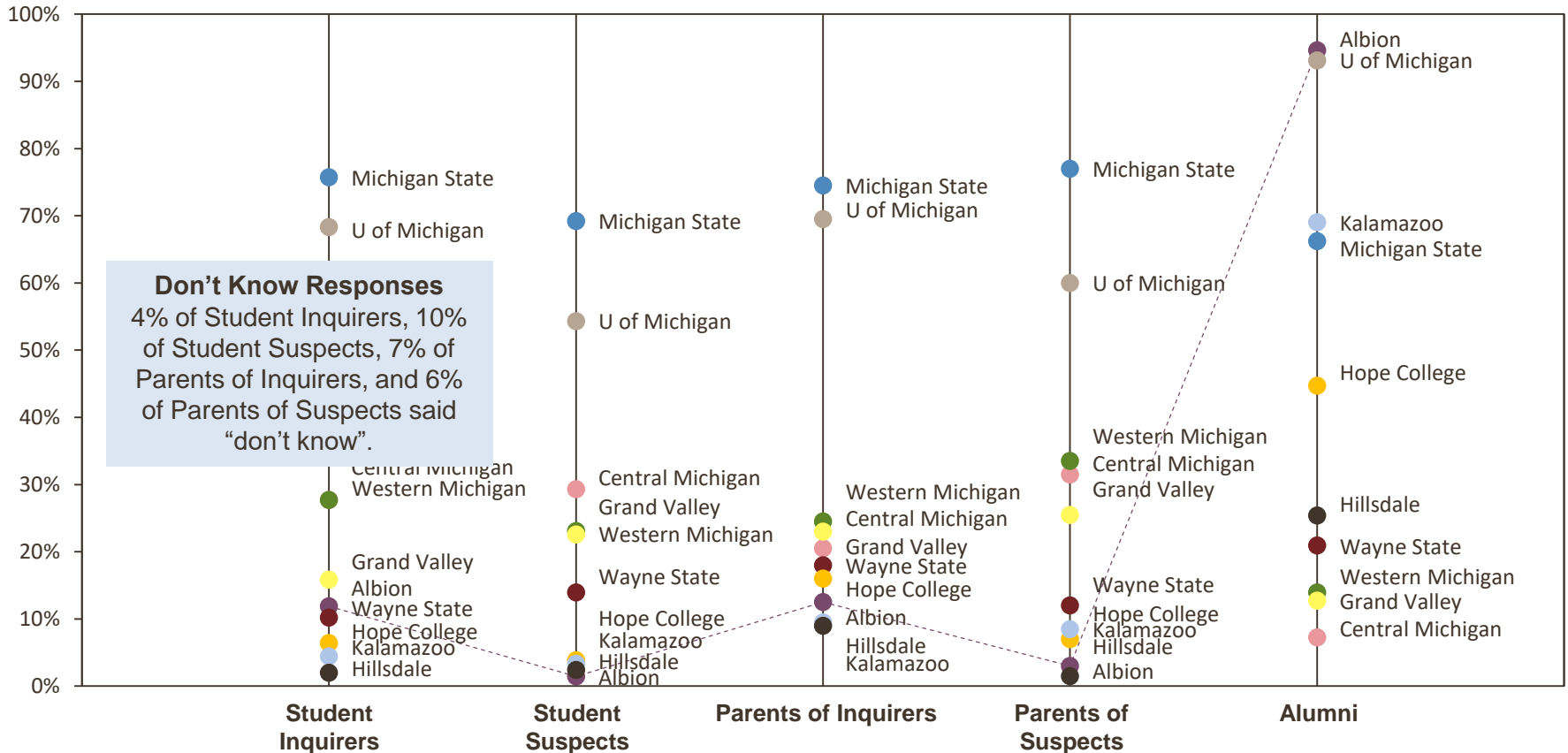




*Excellent Schools in Michigan:* Albion was identified (unaided) by 12% of student inquirers, 1% of student suspects, 13% of inquirer parents and 3% of suspect parents. Alumni identified (aided) Albion as much as UM.

All respondents

- Albion
- Michigan State
- U of Michigan
- Central Michigan
- Western Michigan
- Grand Valley
- Wayne State
- Hope College
- Kalamazoo
- Hillsdale



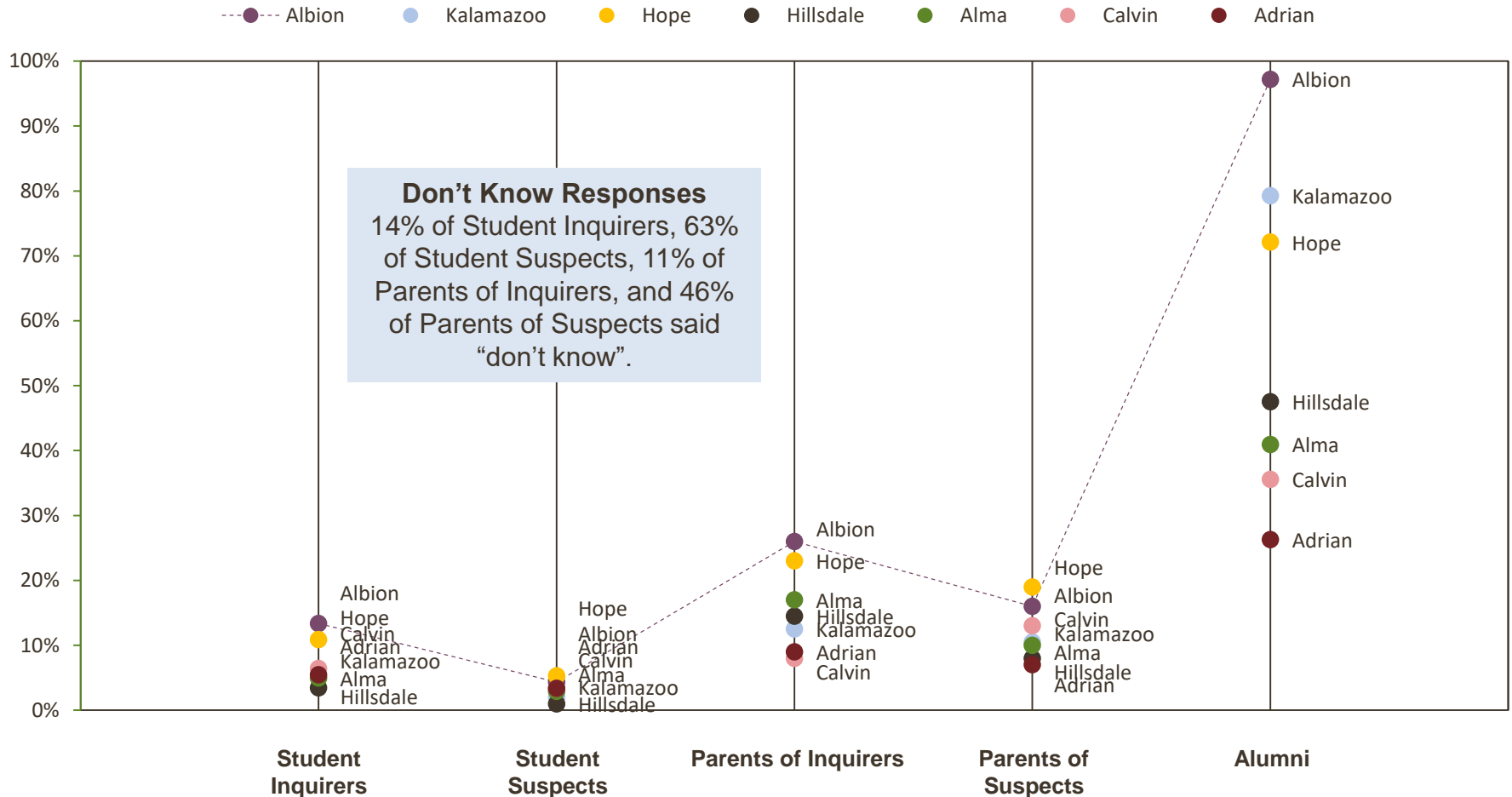
**Don't Know Responses**  
 4% of Student Inquirers, 10% of Student Suspects, 7% of Parents of Inquirers, and 6% of Parents of Suspects said "don't know".

Open ended for all audiences except alumni. Chart shows mentions >20% for at least one audience. Sponsor not revealed for prospects/parents.  
 Question Wording: (All Audiences Except Alumni) When you think of excellent colleges and universities in Michigan, which six come to mind first? / (Alumni) When you think of excellent colleges and universities in Michigan, which SIX of the following come to mind FIRST? (select up to 6).



# Excellent Private Schools in Michigan: Albion was identified (unaided) by 13% of student inquirers, 4% of student suspects, 26% of inquirer parents and 16% of suspect parents.

All respondents



Open ended for all audiences except alumni. Chart shows mentions >20% for at least one audience. Sponsor not revealed for prospects/parents.

Question Wording: (All Audiences Except Alumni) When you think just of excellent private colleges and universities in Michigan, which six come to mind first? / (Alumni) When you think just of excellent private colleges and universities in Michigan, which SIX of the following come to mind FIRST? (select up to 6).



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### EXCELLENT SCHOOLS IN MICHIGAN

RESPONDENTS WHO INDICATED ALBION AS AN EXCELLENT COLLEGE IN MICHIGAN



### COMPARED TO COMPETITORS

#### FAMILIARITY



#### ACADEMIC QUALITY



Ranges based on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all familiar (average) and 10 is very familiar (excellent)

### IMAGE AND REPUTATION



### INTEREST IN APPLYING

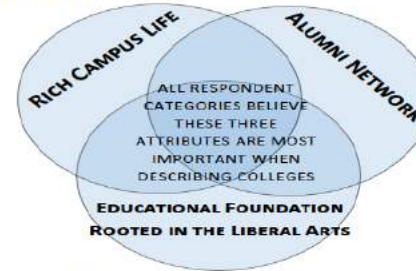
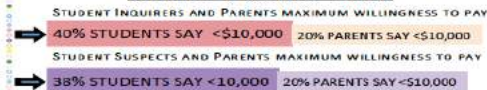


RESPONDENTS WHO INDICATED ALBION AS THEIR TOP CHOICE IF ALL SCHOOLS COST THE SAME



\*This number goes up to 11% for out-of-state

### OUT OF POCKET COST



### DESCRIBING ALBION

#### MOST APPEALING

SMALL SCHOOL SIZE  
ACADEMICS  
LOCATION

#### MOST UNAPPEALING

SMALL SCHOOL SIZE  
COST  
LIMITED PROGRAMS

#### MOST AGREED/DISAGREED STATEMENTS



### ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

ALUMNI WHO INDICATED THEIR STUDENT AND ALUMNI EXPERIENCE AS EXCELLENT





## How Much Will It Cost?

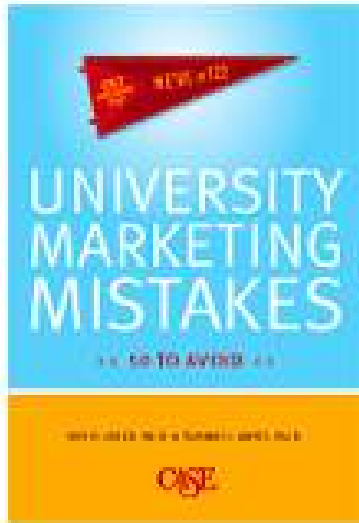
- Cost influenced by:
  - Objectives and intended use of data
  - Number of audiences you choose to study
  - Method of data collection
  - How much qualitative and quantitative research is done
  - Amount of work you are able to do internally
- In-house vs. Outsourcing
  - Need for credibility/buy-in?
  - What expertise exists internally?
  - Can internal provider be objective?
  - Can internal provider meet ambitious deadlines?

Simple survey development and analysis costs between \$20,000-\$35,000, depending on sampling frame and research method.

A comprehensive image and branding initiative can cost \$100,000 to \$300,000 for research and strategy development.

## Why Marketing Research?

- Because on the whole.....knowing is better than not knowing!



# Thank you!

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