

# MDT Direct: A Focus on the Future

with Mitch Talenfeld, [MDT Direct](#)

In the last 10 years the marketing world has been turned on its head as marketing directors from schools around the country have been challenged by the enormous growth of new advertising mediums. Once upon a time, marketing campaigns could be successfully executed through a handful of mediums, mainly TV, radio and print. Today, a marketing campaign's success has become dependant on the intimate understanding of the ultra-fragmented world of the Internet. What complicates things even further is that this accelerated fragmentation is dictated by the fickle behavior of the millennial generation. The explosive growth of trendy social and entertainment Internet sites like MySpace, Facebook and YouTube, coupled with bizarre Internet jargon featuring words like "wiki," "blog," and "avatar," has many marketing directors scratching their heads. Further compounding the confusion is attempting to track and manage leads in some sort of organized way. It's enough to ask, "How do I keep up with all the changes?" Ft. Lauderdale-based advertising agency MDT Direct may just have the answer.

A full-service direct response agency, MDT Direct has kept on the cutting edge of the latest technological trends and has introduced some of the leading Web-based prospect generation, tracking and

follow-up programs to the education industry. For Mitch Talenfeld, president of MDT Direct, it's all about giving their clients a leg up on the competition—and it shows! Their ability to recognize the latest and greatest has helped the company build marketing partnerships with over 300 colleges nationwide.

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So how does MDT cope with the ever-changing face of the media world? "Stick to the basics," Talenfeld recommends. "You have to embrace the fact that changes are only going to happen faster and faster, and recognize that you'll never be able to digest it all. Identify the opportunities that mesh well with the core workings of your school and seize them."

They're good words to heed from a company that has executed that philosophy to a T. MDT Direct was founded in 1996 as a boutique ad agency focused on delivering customized design and printing solutions for direct mail and insert campaigns. Firmly rooted as a direct response agency with a bottom line mentality, the company began exploring technological solutions

that could help their clients specifically quantify the success of their programs.

“Ztrac was an innovation that came about approximately five years ago, and it’s revolutionized the advertising

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industry,” Talenfeld explains. “For the first time ever it gave schools the opportunity to electronically track and record all their inbound telephone calls. No longer was there any question over which ad was working and which

was not. All phone leads got recorded and catalogued right there for you to see. It literally transformed media buying from an art to a science.”

MDT Direct’s pursuit of core, cutting edge marketing solutions for their clients has recently led to the launch of their latest lead follow-up system, MDT Connect, a Web-based call center solution with the potential to transform a stale admissions team into a top tier recruitment machine.

Talenfeld refers to it as, “...a multi-million dollar call center system for a few hundred dollars a month. What makes the system so amazing is that it gives smaller budget schools the opportunity to compete at the same

level, or even higher, as large budget schools who have invested millions to install the hardware for an in-house call center program. And, what makes it even better is that large budget schools can save money using it, too! It doesn’t matter whether you have one admissions rep or 100, the only infrastructure you need is a phone line and a computer with Internet access.”

If initial response is any indication, MDT Connect will follow in the footsteps of their previous flagship product, Ztrac, and will be offered along with other product lines, including MDT Direct’s ARRO (Appointment Response and Results Optimizer) program, which allows schools to upload daily lead data for an automated series of “touches” to prospective students within days of their initial contact. These “touches” feature phone blasts, direct mail pieces, and emails that are personalized for the specific interest of each individual.

“Variable data has taken over the direct mail industry. You can no longer stand out in the mailbox clutter with a mail piece built with general information to appeal to a large audience. Today, you have to make it personal. I can describe the millennial generation in one word—me. It’s all about me! And the only way you’ll be able to engage a person with a “me” mentality is by catering to their specific set of interests.”



**MITCH TALENFELD** is president of MDT Direct, and MDT Tracking, Inc., an exclusive dealer of the Ztrac electronic call tracking system and MDT Connect, the ultimate Outbound and Inbound Call Management System on the market today. He has been involved in advertising and marketing for

over 25 years. Known for his ability to plan and execute complex marketing programs, he is widely recognized in the business community through his involvement in the direct marketing industry.

MDT Direct and MDT Tracking work with over 300 schools and colleges nationwide, helping them to improve their advertising, communications and admissions effectiveness. By combining the use of traditional direct marketing techniques with some of today’s cutting-edge technology, MDT has raised the bar in the world of traditional school advertising.

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The ARRO program's strength is its ability to automate the personalization process. If a prospect is interested in a paramedic class, the ARRO program will follow up with that lead with direct response pieces that use text and graphics that speak directly to that person. Automated personalization can be broken down by program of interest, age, gender and more. The customization is virtually infinite.

For Talenfeld, developing and cultivating new products and services is just one dimension of being "the best and most reliable," a corporate creed infused into every company decision and each employee action.

"That's what it's all about for us—always striving to be the best and most reliable ad agency in the education industry. Everything we do comes down to that goal. It's a daily discussion here." It's a goal that MDT Direct takes seriously, and, surprisingly, Talenfeld isn't tight lipped on his winning formula.

"It all comes down to three things: Passion, People and Products. Passion is what starts it all. We have a sincere passion to help students find their way to higher education. It's personally fulfilling to know that you change lives for the better."

As for MDT Direct employees, Talenfeld considers his staff to be the

company's #1 strength. He takes pride in the fact that the company hires smart and motivated professionals, especially ones who understand the evolving technological landscape.

"There isn't another agency out there that knows and focuses more efforts on admissions marketing than MDT. We have to continually strive to develop better products and services.

We're constantly updating our software systems to make them more beneficial to our clients," Talenfeld says. "So it truly is a sum of those parts: Passion, People and Products. If you've got those three working together, you're well on your way to being the best and most reliable, and I sincerely believe we do."

The bottom line is that it's easy to get lost in the fast-changing world of technology, and recognizing the right products and services for your school is often difficult. That's why it's nice to know there's always a place to turn for a little guidance.

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