

# Equalizing the Playing Field: Increasing Your Internet Lead Conversion

by Mitch Talenfeld, Barrie Waisserberg, and Maggie Rund / [MDT Direct](#)

**T**he number one reason many schools have a low Internet conversion rate is because they were not the first school to contact and court the prospect. Yes, they may have sent an email or made a call to the prospect in the first 24 hours or even within the first hour of receiving the lead, but guess what? By this time there's a good chance the prospect has already heard from three or four other schools. In today's competitive environment, a school needs to respond in seconds!

The Internet is rapidly changing the way we communicate, and, thus, the way we do business. Prospective students who once picked up the phone as a direct response to your school's advertisement, such as a television or newspaper ad, are now responding by going directly to the Internet for more information. While "surfing the net" to learn more about your school, the prospect is suddenly bombarded with countless advertisements and "Request For Information" teasers from other schools. Ironically, the immediate interest you generated with your marketing dollars just invited in the competition.

Herein lies the problem with the Internet lead: the competition. You

end up being one of *many* schools that the individual has expressed an interest in.

Before we go any further, our question to you is this: "Do you even know who your competition is?" Years ago, a school could easily answer that

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question: the traditional college, the local community college, the secretarial, automotive or HVAC schools that have been around for years. Today, we as a society are only advancing in our use of technology and Internet use. The answer is not so black and white. Unlike yesteryear, all schools are now competing on a national and worldwide level. The line between traditional and trade/technical colleges is quickly fading. The ability to offer online classes versus on-campus classes has had a huge impact on school enrollment. The smaller fish have been thrown into the BIG pond with the bigger fish and different species.

This is the reason why the hottest topic on today’s education seminar circuit is, “How to Increase Internet Lead Conversion.”

The simple answer is you must fight technology with technology. The admissions team with the best lead follow-up system wins.

**Effective Lead Follow-Up**

What is the major component of the

most effective lead follow-up system?

Immediate contact with all prospects, which, in today’s world, requires the use of technology. You want to be first in line—speed is the key and computers provide the high speed necessary.

Luckily, there are systems now available (and affordable) that can help any school, big or small.



**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.



**BARRIE WAISSBERG** is the director of marketing at MDT Direct. Barrie has a Masters Degree in Marketing and Management. She has been with MDT Direct for seven years, working closely with the industry’s top leaders. Barrie creates specialized marketing programs for MDT Direct and its clients, helping everyone stay on the leading edge of today’s trends.



**MAGGIE RUND** is the MDT Connect product manager. Maggie has extensive telemarketing and call center experience. She has spent the last seven years working specifically with admissions in the for-profit school sector. Maggie brings to MDT Connect her expertise in developing and managing in-house call center activity as well as her complete understanding of the numerous problems plaguing admissions departments today.

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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*Imagine if...*

- Every lead that came in from the Internet was called for an interview within seconds of when the prospect asked for more information.

Your admissions rep would have them on the phone while they are still on the Internet. He or she would direct them to your Web site; engage them in conversation; build their interest in your school; *get that appointment.*

- An admissions representative never had to dial the phone for themselves again, and management had absolute control over who was called, when they were called and how often they were called.

Your admissions team would have the support they need with a computerized call strategy for lead follow-up.

- You could make sure that your admissions people made three or four times more contacts and spoke to three or four times more prospective students every hour they spent on the phone.

Your lead to appointment percentage would increase, which in turn would increase your lead to start percentages.

- Management could listen to any inbound or outbound admissions

call to ensure a quality and professional presentation.

No more wondering, "What is going on?" Pick up the phone and listen.

- You could control all of this from wherever you were, across the office or across the country, and had real-time reports at your fingertips. Then imagine you could have

all of this without a major investment or capital outlay and the system could be up and running in a matter of days, not weeks or months.

This technology is no longer available to just those who can afford elaborate telecommunications systems or call centers whose business it is to have sophisticated software. Today, there is affordable, user friendly and effective technology available that dramatically improves conversion rates, forever changes the way a school works and reworks their existing leads and lowers cost per lead across the board. For little more than it costs for outbound phone calls, anyone can equalize the playing field with their own call management system.

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