

Final Project Assignment

Apex Advisory Group

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Abstract

The future of artificial intelligence (AI) is making its mark on the marketing industry. Since its establishment in 1964, Middlesex College has been a leader in providing accessible education, continuously enhancing its offerings to cater to its diverse student population. Despite this, the college has yet to fully tap into the transformative power of generative AI in its marketing strategies, which could significantly boost student engagement and extend its reach. At Apex Advisory Group, we specialize in developing and applying generative AI across various sectors, including education. Our expertise lies in leveraging AI to create insightful data and innovative marketing solutions. We are eager to partner with Middlesex College to help it realize its full potential in revolutionizing its marketing approach.

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Apex Advisory Background

Apex Advisory Group, established in 2017 and based in Memphis, Tennessee, is a leading consulting firm dedicated to providing technology and business solutions to diverse clients. Our roots are in delivering comprehensive consulting services to clients within the U.S. and internationally. Over the years, we have expanded our expertise to include healthcare, finance, retail, education, and manufacturing sectors, leveraging technology to address real-world business challenges.

Our core principle is prioritizing our clients by developing long-term, feasible strategies and working with stakeholders to contribute positively to the community. We are committed to delivering AI solutions in legal, ethical, and efficient ways, thereby offering local businesses and nonprofit organizations opportunities to excel in their missions. Generative AI, as defined by Nvidia (Nvidia, 2024), enables users to quickly generate new content based on a variety of inputs, such as text, images, sounds, animation, 3D models, or other types of data.

At Apex Advisory Group, we believe that utilizing generative AI in marketing is essential for maintaining a competitive edge in today's market. Our team of experts, experienced in IT infrastructure, cybersecurity, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and strategic IT planning, is dedicated to helping clients harness AI to create innovative marketing strategies. We have observed that generative AI can significantly enhance marketing efforts, resulting in high-quality and efficient outcomes. By processing large volumes of data and generating meaningful content, generative AI helps organizations develop personalized and impactful marketing campaigns (Nvidia, 2024).

Our mission is to provide customized, cutting-edge technology solutions that enhance efficiency, improve security, and promote sustainable development for our clients. By thoroughly understanding each client's unique business environment, we ensure our solutions meet current technological needs and anticipate future challenges. We have successfully collaborated with numerous businesses across various industries, delivering transformative results and driving growth through the power of generative AI.

Middlesex College Background

Middlesex College, formerly Middlesex County College, was established in 1964 by the Middlesex County Board of Freeholders (Middlesex College, 2024). The college's mission has always centered on providing accessible and affordable education to the residents of Middlesex County, New Jersey. According to the Middlesex College website, their mission is to “provide access to a quality, affordable education for a diverse population, support student success for lifelong learning, and strengthen the economic, social, and cultural life of the community” (Mission and Values | Middlesex College, n.d.).

With a commitment to diversity and inclusivity, the college now boasts a student body representing over 64 countries, reflecting a rich cultural blend. The institution offers over 100 degree and certificate programs across various fields, including business, healthcare, engineering, and the liberal arts. These programs are designed to cater to diverse academic and career aspirations, ensuring comprehensive educational opportunities for all students. Middlesex College supports student success through flexible scheduling, robust academic advising, and numerous support services, fostering an inclusive and empowering community.

With a campus spanning 200 acres and featuring state-of-the-art facilities, Middlesex College continues to evolve and expand its offerings, remaining dedicated to its foundational goal of empowering students and contributing to the community's educational and professional landscape.

By employing generative AI in marketing, Middlesex College can create personalized and impactful campaigns. This technology processes large volumes of data and generates meaningful content, helping the college develop strategies that attract and retain students. By utilizing generative AI, Middlesex College efficiently produces diverse marketing materials, from text and images to videos and interactive media, ensuring they reach their target audience effectively. This innovative approach not only enhances the college's marketing efficiency but also contributes to its mission of providing accessible and high-quality education.

Moreover, Middlesex College can leverage AI to analyze trends and preferences, optimizing marketing campaigns based on real-time data. This ensures that the marketing efforts are not only relevant but also resonate deeply with the intended audience, ultimately leading to higher engagement and enrollment rates. The integration of generative AI in marketing strategies enables Middlesex College to stay ahead in a competitive educational landscape, showcasing its commitment to technological advancement and student success.

Current Middlesex College Environment/Situation

Middlesex College currently thrives as a dynamic educational institution, adapting to the needs of its diverse student body through various programs and initiatives. The college has expanded its partnerships, such as with the Middlesex County Division of History and Historic

Preservation, to provide students with unique hands-on learning experiences that connect them with local history and community engagement (Middlesex College, 2024).

With Middlesex College operating its marketing processes without the use of generative AI, they have already begun to feel the need for improvement. The article “How Artificial Intelligence Will Change the Future of Marketing” by the Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science cited that “In the future, artificial intelligence (AI) is likely to substantially change both marketing strategies and customer behaviors.”

Furthermore, Middlesex College offers a wide range of degree and certificate programs across fields like health professions, engineering, and creative arts, catering to a broad spectrum of academic and career interests (Middlesex College, 2024). The college also emphasizes workforce development, providing professional certifications and trade courses to equip students with practical skills for the job market (Middlesex College, 2024). Through these efforts, Middlesex College maintains a robust and inclusive educational environment that supports both academic excellence and community involvement.

Apex Advisory Group specializes in modernizing technology systems and enhancing security measures to drive our clients' success using generative AI. Our approach involves delivering practical solutions tailored to meet each client's unique needs. We integrate cutting-edge technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) to ensure our clients not only keep pace with industry advancements but also lead in innovation (How Digital Champions Invest, 2019).

Apex Advisory Group has conducted the initial research and assessment of Middlesex College's background and current marketing strategies and goals. We will provide solutions to improve marketing by using generative AI and explain how it will benefit Middlesex College.

We will further deep dive into each of their problems and issues and address them by employing generative AI in marketing.

Description of Problem/Issue

With today's modern technology, almost every advertisement or marketing is presented to its target audience using Artificial Intelligence. Data collected from billions of people is curated to make the perfect ad for every individual. Additionally, some advertisers are starting to use generative AI to create commercials.

There are some benefits to this: it cuts costs for small businesses with low budgets who cannot afford to produce more expensive forms of advertising. It improves customer analysis and predictability. The time and resource cost of learning your niche for marketing is very large. With Apex's Machine Learning Models for Marketing, the audience reach and customer retention rate could increase exponentially.

On the other hand, using AI does pose some risks when implementing it into the marketing strategy. There is a lot of misinformation or inaccurate information online about where AI gets its data from. This can lead to false advertising or targeting the wrong audience. Another risk is bias. All data collected is not the same and can contain biases toward race, gender, or other factors when targeting a specific audience.

Apex Advisory Group understands that some pros may outweigh the cons (or vice versa) and is willing to implement generative AI with the safety and security of its clients in mind, especially for the education industry.

Impact Problem/Issue is having on Middlesex College

Social

As technology continues to grow, the usage of AI at Middlesex College has and will continue to cause a great deal of social issues. AI is not only a technology but “a powerful force reshaping and benefiting societies by reducing costs and risks, increasing consistency and reliability, and providing new solutions to complex problems” (Hermann, 2021). AI can display a wide range of abilities, such as showing how current trends in marketing affect employees, students, and the general community. The use of AI can also foster a diverse and inclusive culture within Middlesex College.

This focus on social dimensions in the use of AI in marketing enables Middlesex College to gain or establish a positive brand reputation. This, in turn, ensures stakeholder loyalty and trust, which is crucial for business resilience and growth in the long term. AI elevates marketing as the increase in data availability and context awareness allows it to generate customized and personalized offerings and establish and maintain relationships with experiential value (Hermann, 2021).

Not utilizing AI in marketing creates a disadvantage, as AI provides an efficient outlet for placing and pushing out advertisements. Additionally, although the usage of AI is starting to pick up in general business practices, there is a lack of usage in marketing strategies. Marr states, 'Those same industries have a strong need for personalization, better customer experiences, and better predictability of outcomes—the reason you'd use AI. But generally, at a macro level, we are extremely early in understanding and adoption of AI' (Marr, 2022).

Adapting to and gaining an understanding of AI allows Middlesex College to reach and tailor to new audiences and provides an exponential growth, which will not only benefit

Middlesex College but also consumers. Gaining a head start in the trend is highly beneficial, as AI will not only transform technology but marketing as a whole.

Financial

Adopting new technology incurs costs for Middlesex College. Financial challenges include expenses related to infrastructure, research, and data preparation. Implementing generative AI models necessitates high-powered computers and servers, which require regular maintenance and upgrades. Recruiting skilled data scientists and AI experts is essential for developing and deploying generative AI, leading to significant resource allocation.

Middlesex College should focus its marketing efforts on creating responsive and robust AI systems to minimize frequent overhauls. AI algorithms can analyze market trends, competition, and consumer behavior to devise optimal marketing strategies. This enables educational institutions to maximize outreach and enrollment while keeping programs accessible to students (McKinsey & Company, 2023). The college could allocate funds towards negotiating maintenance contracts with AI solution providers, ensuring regular updates and technical support. This approach would mitigate the costs associated with familiarizing the institution with new technology. Partnering with AI solution providers would expedite student recruitment processes and reduce marketing time.

Generative AI can streamline administrative tasks and marketing practices, reducing costs for student services operations. AI systems can process large datasets on student preferences, trends, and behaviors, predicting enrollment disruptions, application delays, and outreach challenges (McKinsey & Company, 2023). Middlesex College would enhance its processes, leading to cost-efficient and improved student services. AI can help educational

institutions reduce operational costs and increase administrative efficiency. Additionally, AI can optimize enrollment management by improving forecasting accuracy, lowering administrative costs, and minimizing the risk of low enrollment periods (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

Moreover, generative AI can mitigate operational risks and enhance responsiveness to market demands.

Technological

While the use of generative AI offers numerous advantages, Middlesex College, like many institutions, must address challenges related to the reliability of the data that generative AI models depend on. One significant issue is ensuring that the data used by these models is both accurate and comprehensive. Generative AI models in marketing require a high degree of precision and completeness to achieve successful outcomes. To mitigate this risk, organizations should invest in high-quality data curation, ensuring diversity in data sources and cross-validating with a variety of overlapping datasets (How Digital Champions Invest. (2019)).

Investing in high-quality data curation also involves hiring professionals skilled in data science and machine learning to optimize marketing strategies and enhance engagement with the target audience. By leveraging generative AI, Middlesex College can customize marketing campaigns, forecast enrollment trends, and improve student outreach initiatives. This advanced approach not only enhances communication with prospective students but also helps the college remain competitive in the rapidly changing educational landscape. Additionally, generative AI can aid in creating compelling content and automating repetitive marketing tasks. This allows the marketing team to concentrate on strategic initiatives (How Digital Champions Invest. (2019)).

According to McKinsey, effective implementation of AI can significantly boost economic growth and productivity. This highlights the importance of accurate data and robust AI strategies (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

Regulatory

Being current with laws applicable to the employment and usage of works created by artificial intelligence is paramount. Middlesex's implementation of AI marketing guarantees its clients' legality. This includes compliance with regulations governing privacy, explicit or inappropriate content, discrimination, and transparency of data usage.

Regulating AI to filter out unreliable sources or sources considered harmful or dangerous for generative advertisements or other data is crucial. As AI grows, its ability to analyze vast amounts of data, predict consumer behavior, and optimize ad campaigns has transformed the marketing industry. However, as AI's role in marketing expands, so does the need for regulation to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability" (Lewis, 2024).

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is at the forefront of introducing regulations to protect consumers. As fraud becomes easier with the use of AI, the FTC is trying to limit the use of AI-related tools to deceive customers (Quaglino, 2024). With AI becoming more prevalent, users can impersonate companies, celebrities, and politicians, and use deceitful marketing strategies to lure and take advantage of consumers (Quaglino, 2024).

AI's impact on marketing is significant, but it also introduces challenges that require regulatory oversight. At Middlesex College, a top priority needs to be regulating and monitoring AI. The use of false marketing and other deceitful methods can deceive consumers, leading to dreadful consequences.

Ethical

Ethical considerations are a paramount topic in AI, as it is a key component in business practice and technological organizations. As AI continues to grow, many different ethical issues begin to arise. As AI becomes more complex, many individuals may not be able to tell the difference between content generated by AI and content created by an individual. Over time, laws and regulations will be passed requiring companies to clarify the use of AI. However, at the moment, regulations are fairly minimal.

AI in marketing at Middlesex College can be highly beneficial, as it may recommend products that help fit consumers' needs. It can improve performance, boost efficiency, and generate positive business outcomes (Kenan, 2023). Although it has its upsides, there are also many ethical concerns. When it comes to marketing, especially on a college campus, consumers may feel deceived or feel that AI marketing isn't authentic when they view promotions or content created by AI.

Furthermore, businesses tend to push the boundaries of ethics in search of profit, often prioritizing sales over transparency and consumer well-being. Similarly, politicians tend to craft their messages to appeal to voters' deepest fears and biases. AI can also use manipulative tactics to exploit individuals' vulnerabilities and desires, swaying consumers to make purchases that aren't in their best interests (Clark, 2024). Therefore, it is a top priority to minimize these issues and be as transparent as possible. This helps consumers feel more comfortable and builds trust.

Along with ethics come biases. If the data used in the AI algorithms is biased, it may reflect systematic prejudices and biases present in their training data. This can lead to the exclusion of certain groups and the presentation of harmful stereotypes (Clark, 2024). On a

college campus where every student should feel included, eliminating or minimizing biases is crucial.

As stated, transparency is a key component of ethics and needs to be taken seriously, especially given the enormous amount of consumer data being utilized. Many individuals may feel exploited due to a lack of transparency. To address these concerns, consumers should be informed about how their data is collected and used, and they should be able to opt out of AI marketing if they wish. Due to the lack of regulations, data is often collected and used without notice, which is a major issue in implementing AI in marketing. This lack of transparency is a concern for Middlesex College.

Options Discussed by Middlesex College Executive Management Team

Middlesex College's executive team has explored several strategies to tackle our current challenges. Firstly, we aim to upgrade our technology infrastructure with advanced digital tools, including artificial intelligence (AI). This will enhance cybersecurity and support effective online learning environments (Middlesex College, 2024). AI will be pivotal in improving data analysis and decision-making processes across administrative and academic functions (How Digital Champions Invest, 2019). We also plan to expand our academic programs by introducing new degrees in fields like data science and cybersecurity. AI will be used to develop innovative curriculum and teaching methods (Bughin et al., 2018). This includes creating interdisciplinary programs that blend AI technologies with diverse skill sets. These programs will meet evolving job market demands.

Additionally, strengthening partnerships with local businesses and industries is crucial. This initiative will provide students more opportunities for internships and job placements in

AI-related fields. Improving student support services is another focus. AI-powered tools will enhance academic advising, counseling, and financial aid programs to better support all students. Lastly, Middlesex College aims to collaborate with community organizations to foster local AI development and provide practical experiences that prepare students for AI-driven careers.

Major Stakeholders' Positions

Students are the primary beneficiaries of Middlesex College's educational services. Their concerns include the quality of education, availability of resources, affordability, campus safety, and career support services. Student bodies within Middlesex College are interested in using generative AI to empower the college's marketing. This technology can better meet student concerns by offering personalized, efficient, and supportive educational experiences.

Faculty and staff focus on working conditions, academic freedom, research opportunities, professional development, and fair compensation. Their engagement and satisfaction directly affect the quality of education and institutional reputation. Faculty believe that leveraging generative AI can enhance their satisfaction, improve working conditions, and ultimately bolster the institution's academic reputation and educational quality.

The administration is responsible for strategic planning, financial management, policy implementation, and overall operational efficiency. Their priorities include ensuring financial stability, maintaining accreditation, and fostering a positive institutional culture. The administration team suggests that by implementing generative AI technologies, Middlesex College can achieve greater operational effectiveness, ensure financial stability, maintain accreditation standards, and foster a supportive institutional culture aligned with its strategic priorities.

The local community and businesses benefit from the college's role in workforce development, cultural enrichment, and economic contributions. Their interests include partnerships, internships, and collaborative projects. Local community representatives understand that with generative AI, Middlesex College can strengthen its role in workforce development, cultural enrichment, and economic contributions. This fosters mutually beneficial partnerships and enhances community well-being.

Government and accreditation bodies are concerned with regulatory compliance, educational standards, and public accountability. Their focus is on ensuring that Middlesex College meets accreditation requirements and contributes to national educational goals. By implementing generative AI technologies, Middlesex College can strengthen its relationship with these bodies, ensure compliance with regulatory standards, enhance educational quality, and demonstrate its commitment to meeting national educational goals effectively.

Donors and sponsors are interested in the impact of their contributions, transparency in fund usage, and the college's strategic direction. They seek assurance that their investments yield tangible benefits for the institution and its stakeholders. Sponsor groups understand that by leveraging generative AI technologies, Middlesex College can enhance donor satisfaction, ensure effective fund utilization and transparency, align donor contributions with strategic priorities, and ultimately strengthen partnerships with donors and sponsors to support its mission and initiatives effectively.

Analysis

Problem/Issue

Middlesex College's current struggle with outdated marketing strategies, compounded by their reluctance to adopt generative AI, contrasts sharply with the evolving landscape where AI-driven technologies dominate advertising (Smith, 2020, p. 45). In today's digital era, AI enables advertisers to meticulously personalize content based on vast datasets, enhancing customer analysis and lowering costs for small businesses (Apex Advisory Group). This capability not only optimizes marketing efficiency but also improves audience engagement and retention rates through targeted campaigns tailored to individual preferences.

As technology continues to grow, colleges like Middlesex College will continue to have a great deal of social issues, financial, technology, regulatory, and ethical issues as they adopt to establish marketing strategies. Middlesex College requires it to comply with regulations governing privacy, explicit or inappropriate content, discrimination, and transparency of data usage. Adapting to and gaining an understanding of AI allows Middlesex College to reach and tailor to new audiences and provides exponential growth, which will benefit Middlesex College. Generative AI can streamline administrative tasks and marketing practices, reducing costs for student services operations. AI-powered tools will enhance Middlesex College's marketing campaigns, counseling, and financial aid programs to better support all students.

However, the integration of AI in marketing comes with inherent risks such as misinformation and bias in data collection, which can lead to inaccuracies in targeting and potential ethical dilemmas. Despite these challenges, Apex Advisory Group recognizes the transformative potential of generative AI, particularly within the education sector, where

personalized engagement is crucial for attracting prospective students. By emphasizing safety, security, and ethical considerations in AI implementation, Apex aims to mitigate risks while maximizing the benefits of advanced technology for their clients, aligning marketing strategies with modern standards, and enhancing competitive positioning.

Options

To tackle the marketing challenges they face, Middlesex College has a few options. They can stick with their current strategies that don't use generative AI, which keeps things familiar but means they miss out on AI's advantages like personalized marketing and better targeting based on real-time data (Johnson, 2021, p. 78).

Another choice is to partially bring in AI technologies. This could improve efficiency and personalization somewhat, but it might not fully unlock AI's potential compared to fully integrating it.

The most ambitious option is to fully implement generative AI in their marketing strategy. This would involve investing in advanced AI tools and possibly partnering with tech experts. While it requires significant upfront investment and adjustments, it promises long-term benefits like attracting more students and staying competitive in the education market (Johnson, 2021, p. 78).

Middlesex College needs to weigh these options carefully, considering costs, readiness, and how well each aligns with its marketing goals. Apex Advisory Group's expertise in AI implementation could help them navigate these decisions effectively, ensuring AI enhances their marketing efforts without overwhelming them.

Recommendations

Apex Advisory's analysis of Middlesex College's current marketing plan exposes a few flaws that our firm thinks it could fix. Being able to reach any and every audience is our goal, but making our advertisements personalized so they appeal to everyone is even more important. We have evaluated the current Middlesex College marketing strategy and discussed the various options of implementing AI for marketing within Middlesex College with their executive management team and listened to their major stakeholders positions. We found that the Student bodies within Middlesex College are interested in using generative AI to empower the college's marketing. This technology can better meet student concerns by offering personalized, efficient, and supportive educational experiences. Faculty believe that leveraging generative AI can enhance their satisfaction, improve working conditions, and ultimately bolster the institution's academic reputation and educational quality. AI can conduct tactical data analysis faster than its human counterparts and come to fast conclusions based on campaign and customer context (Kumari, 2021). Without generative AI, Middlesex College has not had any significant growth in enrollment or other important factors in its success.

At Apex Advisory we believe that implementing generative AI into a company marketing strategy Here are some recommendations our firm is making to the client to increase the college success:

- Implement generative AI to create target marketing advertising to different demographics to increase the diversity of students
- Create a committee to generate funding for the development of the school's AI marketing, which includes investing in hardware, software, and employees such as data scientists and IT specialists

- Retrieve data from reliable sources to ensure reliable and accurate advertisements, including avoiding misinformation and targeting ads to the wrong demographic
- Post advertisements across multiple social media sites to keep up with industry trends ensuring that advertisements are attractive to both prospective students and potential future faculty

Finally, we recognize that in a college as large as Middlesex College, it may be difficult to implement AI in marketing immediately. We are proposing a one-year planning and preparation phase so that Middlesex College can plan for implementing the AI for marketing. In this timeframe, we recommend Middlesex College create funding for implementing AI in marketing, educating the staff in understanding and usage of AI, upgrading infrastructure to handle AI-based tools, and processing large amounts of data. With the guidance and recommendation from Apex Advisory along with effective phased planning from Middlesex College, our team is confident that the AI can be implemented for marketing within Middlesex College. This will bring enormous benefit to the marketing aspect of Middlesex College which will in turn benefit the student population and the overall community.

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