

Talent Sikat

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Subject: 3rd Case Study

Caroline grew up in Manhattan Beach, California and attended Mira Costa, a public high school. The beach community is made of super successful and competitive families that live in a bubble 30 minutes from downtown Los Angeles. Both of Caroline's parents are educated in the Midwest - her dad went to Northwestern and mom to University of Illinois Champaign Urbana.

Caroline is the life of every party and someone who takes soccer and volleyball very seriously. Caroline was ranked at the top of her in middle school and continued her excellence at Mira Costa High School. When I met Caroline and her family, a referral from one of the most successful Wealth Management companies - UBS, she was entering her sophomore year and her brother Jack was in 9th grade.

Caroline took every Honors course available through 10th grade and prior to 11th grade completed 3 AP classes. Caroline started 9th grade in Honors Algebra 2, Honors Spanish 3, and Honors Chemistry. She took Algebra 1 and Geometry, Spanish 1, & 2 and Biology in Middle School and so did many of her peers. Frankly, in our first meeting as a family at their home, I walked away so impressed with Caroline because she did not act as though she knew she was super smart, an excellent athlete and the leader of her friend group. Because I have worked with 35+ students from Mira Costa before her, I knew the quality of the education and competitive nature of the families despite living in a laid back beach community.

The start of 11th grade, Caroline and her family had already visited 12 colleges in the Midwest and East Coast. Each of those visits we set up for the family to provide Caroline a reasonable feel of the size of different schools the location, urban, residential, college town and rural. Caroline was ranked number 1 with 16 others in unweighted GPA - 4.0 and 4th in the class with a 4.4 weighted GPA. Why 4th because 3 others took 1 additional Honors course instead of the Art requirement as a 9th grader. Caroline still had All A's in every class both weighted (Honors and AP) and unweighted College Prep classes like Art and PE.

Caroline was not only the leader of her group of friends, many athletes, cheerleaders and smart people at her school but all students as she made sure that the way she wanted to be treated she treated others that way too. Additionally, since Caroline was 2-3 years ahead in her coursework she had many friends that were ahead of her in school. My focus with Caroline was her Personal Brand. I knew she had great grades and was a Varsity Athlete in two sports but we had to consider what was it that would make Caroline stand out versus her peers and others applying to the best colleges in America?

Caroline has a huge heart and wanted to do something that would impact other communities where kids had a lot less than she. Caroline and I brainstormed and came up with the idea that she could start an organization at her school that would collect Sporting Goods equipment for Los Angeles inner city High Schools. Caroline's recollection of playing City schools in Soccer and Volleyball was the athletes were as good but the lack of quality fields and equipment was a huge problem.

Starting with her friend group in 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade she organized a campaign in Manhattan Beach, Hermosa Beach, El Segundo, Redondo Beach to market to the locals that a group of students will be visiting a six block section of your town on a particular day, mostly weekends, to pick up ANY new and old sporting goods equipment and that the organization, Opportunity Zone, would clean up and refurbish the gifts from each family and home and then provide Los Angeles inner city schools with better equipment than they had today.

Caroline's group of 60 volunteers started on a Saturday in October and completed their mission in February. The massive amount of equipment provided was so significant that her parents had to lease a 10,000 foot warehouse to refurbish, store and prepare to deliver the equipment donated. Additionally, Caroline and her posse raised enough money from within their peer volunteer group to purchase from Dick's Sporting Goods and Sports Authority and 50 full sets of 15 practice uniforms for Soccer and Volleyball to provide to different schools in the LA City school system. The project did not stop in Caroline's 11th grade year but continued through 12th grade and

Talent Sikat

throughout her college years.

During the summer between 11th and 12th grade we all sat down as a family to discuss where Caroline wanted to apply to college. On the list was both her parents alma maters - Northwestern and the University of Illinois, Stanford, Harvard, Vanderbilt, Emory (to play soccer), Brown, Duke, U Virginia, U Michigan, UCLA, UC Berkeley, Princeton, Pomona College (to play soccer) and Williams (to play soccer). Next decision was what is the Right Fit college or university for Caroline. She had a 4.6 GPA with 11 AP classes, 3 College Classes taken and prefect grade while being ranked number 4. She has a 1530 SAT and 35 ACT score. Mom and dad wrote down their list of colleges in order that they believed would be the best fits for Caroline after visiting all the colleges in the list. Caroline did the same but she ranked them as to her favorite to least favorite.

We All had a discussion about what schools and why certain ones were better than others for Caroline who wanted to be a Business or Engineering major. Furthermore, what was most important to Caroline was attending a Rah Rah school where the heart beat on campus was who her school would be paying on Football Saturday and who the Basketball, Volleyball, Soccer teams were playing during the week. Caroline wanted to have FUN at school and not have to study all the time. She knew that Graduate School was in the picture right after her undergraduate years to become either a Doctor, Sports Psychologist, or an Entrepreneur.

Now that we had a list of schools and already began writing her Personal Statement used for each school, it was time to decide which schools do we apply Early Action, Early Decision and Regular Admission to take advantage of her amazing profile. Frankly, Caroline's number 1 school she wanted to attend was the University of Michigan. Why? She wanted the huge Rah Rah environment, a chance to apply to both the Ross School of Business and school of Engineering, while having an option of paying U Michigan Club Soccer and Volleyball. Caroline knew several kids from our practice that went to U Michigan and crushed it academically and had a fantastic social time with not much stress. Caroline wanted the same.

Decisions were made to apply Early Action (non binding to U Michigan) Regular Admission to all other schools. We all knew she would be admitted to U Michigan with her grades, scores and extra curricular involvement. We put all of her applications together with the Personal Statement and Supplementary essays and push the button to apply on the appropriate date and wait and see what happens. University of Michigan should admit Early Action kids by December 15th and all others we would her form them by April 1st.

When December 15th came and Caroline opened her admission portal to U Michigan she and all of us were surprised she was DEFERRED. To me that was fishy so made some calls to my contacts on campus. What I found was a troubling trend across all colleges that the Admissions teams were making decisions on students not based on their credentials but were internally were weighting if the student would really come to their school if admitted. Preposterous because how can a school make a decision if you want to attend their school without speaking to them. In this case UM felt Caroline was most likely using the UM as a safety school and that she must have applied to so many other more competitive schools that she will take one of those admits over UM. Consequently, she was Deferred.

I explained the decision to Caroline and her family before Christmas and asked if I could tell my folks at UM that Caroline's first choice is UM and if they admit her she will come? The answer was Absolutely. I made the call and by January 6th Caroline had her acceptance letter. Just for shits and giggles she kept her other schools alive after sending her Dorm deposit in to UM. Caroline on or around April 1 was admitted to Northwestern U Illinois, Harvard, Brown UC Berkeley, UCLA, U Virginia, Emory, Pomona, Duke and Stanford. Waitlisted at Williams and Princeton.

Sometimes it take an advocate to push the students narrative across to the university. This and many times before and after the same success occurred.