

Attracting more students to study in New Zealand with Marketo Engage

New Zealand is a world-class destination for education, ranked in the top three countries for future skills education by an Economist Intelligence Unit report. Education is the country's fourth-largest export industry, earning NZ\$5.1 billion annually, or around NZ\$40,000 per student. But the industry is under threat as college enrollments drop around the world and competition from other destinations accelerates. It's up to Education New Zealand (ENZ), a crown enterprise, to get the word out and market New Zealand's education industry to a global audience.

Until recently, ENZ operated like a traditional, promotions-based agency, relying on in-person events, brochures, and short-term promotions to engage with prospective students and get them to enroll in one of the country's distinguished educational institutions. However, there was no clear line of sight around which marketing approaches worked and which didn't. What's more, the passionate team members held strong views around what was required for effective marketing, based on tradition and what might have previously worked.

Meanwhile, the global student audience was changing rapidly and increasingly using digital channels. Even though ENZ's StudyInNewZealand website attracted more than one million unique visitors annually, ENZ was not collecting data or tracking interactions with potential students. Students coming in through the top of the digital sales funnel were shared with education providers' websites with limited information and without sufficiently matching their interests to 60,000 study options. To attract highly qualified students, ENZ needed to find more ways to better engage students during every step of their decision-making process about where they would study and which school they would attend.

Objectives

- Increase the number of international students choosing to study in New Zealand
- Turn student interest into action by effectively matching students to 60,000 study options
- Shift from a promotions-based agency to a strategic data-driven marketing business

Increases conversion up to

 **10%**

bringing more higher education students to New Zealand

Generates over

110,000

highly qualified new leads in less than a year

Supports a

NZ\$114 million

impact on New Zealand's economy, translating to more than nine-fold ROI



Marketo Engage helps us understand the entire student journey, from prospect to visa to enrollment, and measure the post-enrollment experience on a one-on-one level."



Euan Howden

Director, Marketing Platforms and Campaigns



To grow their 3% share of the global market for international education, ENZ embarked on an ambitious digital transformation, with the goal of becoming a more strategic, data-driven marketing organization. With a small budget compared to larger countries, they began using Marketo Engage, part of Adobe Experience Cloud, to help make New Zealand an easier destination to shop for education.

"We're revolutionizing how to promote New Zealand as a destination for higher education," says Euan Howden, Director, Marketing Platforms and Campaigns at Education New Zealand. "Marketo Engage when integrated with our Customer Data Platform gives us a detailed, valuable view of every prospective and newly enrolled student, so we can shift our marketing focus from volume to value."

Building personalized digital experiences

ENZ used Marketo Engage to build a new database marketing ecosystem, connecting information on hundreds of thousands of potential students, individual study options, student visa application status, education expo registrations, course inquiries, digital and social media activity, email communications, and more. Every prospective student's interaction with ENZ is either tracked in Marketo Engage or received in real time from educational partners via the Marketo Engage API. Using smart models and algorithms, ENZ built a personalized digital experience that helps prospective students quickly decide on a study option in New Zealand, before looking elsewhere.

"Marketo Engage allows us to deliver highly personalized messages to the right prospective students across multiple channels and languages at the right time, gently nudging them along the conversion journey to studying in New Zealand," says Howden.

ENZ continued their transformation by launching My StudyNZ, a matching service on which students register their profile, study intentions, and location preferences to get algorithmically matched to the top 30 study options matching their needs. A new digital campaign called "Ask New Anything" allows prospective students to ask a chatbot named Tohu questions and often get a video response from an actual student, increasing engagement and ultimately conversions.

Leads are now captured from more than 50 different sources, while automated, email-based lead nurture programs encourage further exploration and action. Engagement scoring tracks all digital responses to identify the top 15-20% of prospective students showing the highest-value behavior.

"Our customer journey is complex," says Howden. "We're not selling a simple product. We're selling a high-value experience that is a major investment during a pivotal period in a person's life. Marketo Engage allows us to actively engage with interested students all the way through that journey, which is a significant transformation for us."

Driving NZ\$114 million in student value

ENZ's lead collection program was tremendously successful. In less than a year, they signed up approximately 110,000 new leads, exceeding their high-end target by nearly 10%. Many of the leads were highly qualified and valuable, with prospects expressing interest in Master's degree and multi-year professional programs. The addition of the My StudyNZ members area to StudyInNewZealand delivered more than 18,000 registrations, bringing in an average of 1,523 new users per month. These highly committed prospects turned out to be the best conversion candidates, driving eventual enrollment more than any other channel.

"Marketo Engage was a game-changer, helping us build a database of leads that will add \$114 million in student value to New Zealand's economy," says Howden. "Our lead collection program and marketing activity cost \$12 million, delivering a 9:1 return on investment."

For the first time, 10% of new student visas for all of New Zealand are coming from ENZ's target locations in India, a milestone for the organization. ENZ's recent Ask New Anything Global campaign has seen a 51% open rate and a 28% click-to-open rate. The chatbot "Tohu" integrates with Marketo Engage via API, allowing ENZ to link to specific Q&As within the bot in their outbound emails. ENZ's educational partners benefit as well, saving time and increasing conversions.

"Our first mover API CRM partner is saving three minutes per lead and seeing 10% conversion to starting an application and 5% conversion to completed," says Howden. "This is on a purchase of up to \$120,000 over a three-year university degree. We've also seen an 814% year-over-year increase in our attributable visa conversion."

Winning big with "fearless marketing"

The scale, speed, and sophistication of ENZ's transition to a modern direct marketing approach earned Howden a Marketo Revvie Award winner in the Fearless Marketer category, as well as one of the Fearless 50 Class. ENZ also scored multiple wins in the NZ Direct Marketing Awards, demonstrating their astounding progress over just three years.

"Marketo Engage is the heart of our operation," says Howden. "It provides the customer view, the logic, and the attributes we need to succeed. With Marketo Engage, we've been able to very quickly achieve amazing results and get more students excited about studying in New Zealand."