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2009

# PODi Digital Print Case Studies

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**Project:** Belmont Abbey Attracts Students to Open House

**Vertical Market:** Education

**Business Application:** Direct Marketing/Lead Generation

### Business Objectives

Belmont Abbey is a 130 year-old comprehensive college located in North Carolina and has been ranked as one of the South's Top 50 "All American" schools. One of its methods to engage prospective students is its annual open house, called the "Abbey Experience." The event offers prospective students an opportunity to tour the grounds, meet students and faculty, have lunch in the cafe, sit in on a class, ask questions of a student panel and enjoy presentations by the president, the academic dean and the abbot.

This open house was typically attended by 40 prospective students. Belmont Abbey sought a direct marketing campaign that would:

- Increase attendance at the open house
- Gain information about prospective students to use in future recruitment efforts
- Streamline the RSVP and data gathering process

### Results

The campaign generated the highest response rate of any previous direct mail piece. The response was so great that for the first time, Belmont Abbey had to limit the number of students attending the open house.

Before they shut down the registration landing page, Belmont Abbey received the following responses to the personalized URLs (PURLs)

- Over 100% increase in registrations
- 191 unique visitors to the landing page
- 361 total visits – indicating that several people went to the site more than once
- 11 new people were referred to the site by postcard recipients
- 45 of the students who attended the open house applied to the college

Since Belmont Abbey could only handle 100 students at an open house they had to schedule a second session to accommodate everyone who wished to attend.



In addition to getting more registrations for the open house, Belmont Abbey was able to gather detailed prospecting information on each respondent.

### Campaign Architecture

Belmont Abbey College wanted to try using PURLs as the response mechanism for their annual open house event, the “Abbey Experience.” A customized invitation/postcard was sent to a list of approximately 6,000 prospects inviting them to attend. The invitation gave a PURL for the recipient to RSVP to.

Once on their personal landing page, recipients could indicate that they would attend the open house. The students were also asked to complete a short survey.

Everyone who registered received a personalized thank-you email. The content in the email was driven by the student’s input on the landing page.

Students who visited their PURL, whether they could attend the open house or not, also received regular communications from Belmont Abbey in the form of email newsletters. The content of the email newsletter was customized based on the student’s interests.

### Target Audience and Messaging

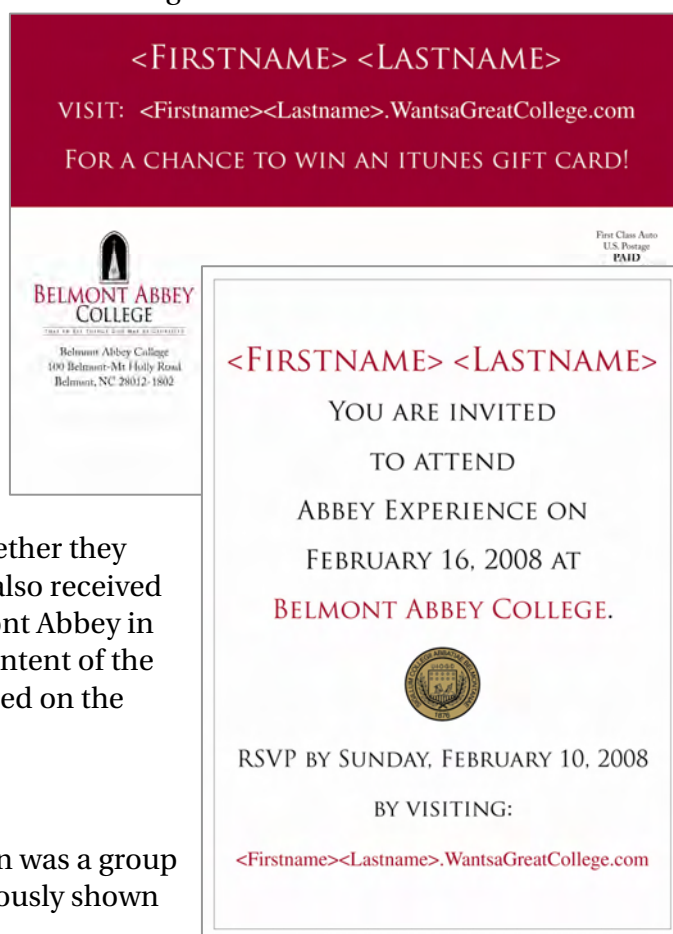
The target audience for this campaign was a group of high school seniors who had previously shown interest in Belmont Abbey.

### Offer

Students were encouraged to visit their PURL to enter a drawing for an iTunes Gift card.

### List

The list came from Belmont Abbey’s house file.



### Creative and Outbound Pieces

The creative on the front of the postcard was designed to look like a formal invitation. The back of the postcard highlighted the offer of an iTunes gift card.

The look of the personalized landing page was designed to seamlessly integrate with the University's Web site.

### Reasons for Success

The personalization in the invitation and the PURL caught the attention of the prospective students. For students who are very digital savvy, registering for an open house online was very easy and convenient.

Attendance for the "Abbey Experience" had been fair in the past; however the college had not been able to capture information about students who were not able to attend. The ability to gain detailed information about each respondent's personalities and preferences, allowed Belmont Abbey to communicate more personally and directly with them, thus ensuring that all future contact to the prospect was relevant and of value. All respondents to the PURL are currently receiving a monthly email newsletter from Belmont Abbey College which incorporates click capture and automated analysis to "custom build" each individual's next issue.



**Welcome Sample.**

You are invited to **Abbey Experience** on **February 16, 2008, from 9am - 2pm.**  
We will treat you to a great free lunch. But we'd also like to treat you to a whole lot more:

- Discover why *The Wall Street Journal* finds what we're doing here so remarkable, they just did a front page article on us [here](#)
- See why the *National Survey of Student Engagement*, the survey where students get to grade their own schools, just gave us some fantastic ratings - thanks to glowing remarks from both freshmen and seniors.
- But mostly come here to meet some great people, have fun and see and feel for yourself why there's no college experience like the Abbey experience.

Just enter your email address and click the "Yes" box if you can make it to Abbey Experience.  
Email Address:

☐ Yes, I plan to attend.  
☐ No, I can not attend.

**My Abbey Experience**  
THE MONASTERY MAKES THIS PLACE A REAL HOME AWAY FROM HOME- YOU'VE NEVER MET ANYONE LIKE THE MONKS OF BELMONT ABBEY!  
- Benjamin Safiranski '06 Theology  
[Story +](#)

**CONTACT US**  
CONSIDERING BELMONT ABBEY?  
» Request More Information  
» Schedule a Campus Visit  
» Now accepting On-line Deposits  
» The Catholic Shoppe

**US NEWS REPORT**  
**U.S. News America's Best Colleges 2008**

**QUICK FACTS**  
Student/faculty ratio - 14:1  
Class size - avg. 17  
Founded in 1876  
Located in Belmont, NC 10 minutes from Charlotte