



Case Study

Promotional Strategy for The Architectural Imagination

Using the power of your institution's communications team to drive new learners and enrollments

Executive Summary

HarvardX secured 40,000 additional enrollments in *The Architectural Imagination* course on edX by leveraging the expertise of the Harvard Graduate School of Design communications team. By tapping into its University network of communications professionals who have deep relationships with regional and targeted media, they secured editorial coverage that ultimately drove large enrollments.

Challenge

HarvardX wanted to drive awareness of its new edX course, *The Architectural Imagination*, and ultimately find new learners and increase enrollments. How could they reach new learners and people interested in this subject area? What tools and expertise could they leverage to help achieve their goal of increased awareness for the course, attract new learners and drive enrollments?

Approach

HarvardX and *The Architectural Imagination* course team connected with their colleagues on the Harvard Graduate School of Design communications team. Using their colleagues' expertise, guidance and ongoing relationships, they developed a media outreach plan to target regional and architecture-focused publications. Instead of casting an extremely wide net, they took a targeted approach and leveraged ongoing conversations and relationships in order to secure editorial coverage.

The communications team from the Harvard Graduate School of Design was able to provide support by distributing a media advisory to regional and niche, subject matter-specific publications.

"Collaboration with HarvardX around our online course, 'The Architectural Imagination,' has been a novel and constructive experiment in how we share and communicate the power of pedagogy in the digital age. The HarvardX team was flexible and proactive about placing news of the course in the proper digital channels, helping us reach new and vital audiences. In harmony with the GSD's outreach to media and to the world of design, this calibrated outreach has helped bring new audience segments to our school and our field, and energized those with a natural interest in our work."

– Travis Dagenais, Assistant Director of Communications, Harvard University Graduate School of Design

Additional Information

<https://www.edx.org/course/architectural-imagination-harvardx-gsd1x>

<http://www.bostonmagazine.com/property/blog/2017/01/26/free-architecture-course-harvard/>

<http://www.archdaily.com/803876/harvard-announces-free-online-architecture-course>

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Outcome

Within two weeks, the course was covered in nearly 10 media outlets. This coverage drove more than 40,000 enrollments.

Additionally, once the story received initial media pick-up, more outlets picked it up as well, specifically Brazilian media. This provided a second wave of news stories in Portuguese that drove additional enrollments.

Since promotional efforts were aimed at targeted audiences, they resulted in highly qualified enrollments, leading to a verified certificate take-rate that was nearly three times the average for edX courses.

Learnings

Use the breadth of your university's resources, departments and expertise. Enlist the help of your marketing and communications colleagues who are experts in specific fields to leverage their contacts, relationships and media outreach practices.

Bigger is not always better. Targeted approaches can return large results when you connect with a segmented audience that is extremely interested in your offering.

Media Coverage

- [Arch Daily](#)
- [Architects Newspaper](#)
- [Archinect](#)
- [Builder Online](#)
- [University Herald](#)
- [Curbed](#)
- [Boston Magazine](#)
- [Architectural Digest India](#)
- [BIM Journal](#)
- [Dezeen](#)
- [Sourceable](#)
- [Catracalivre](#)
- [CasaVogue](#)