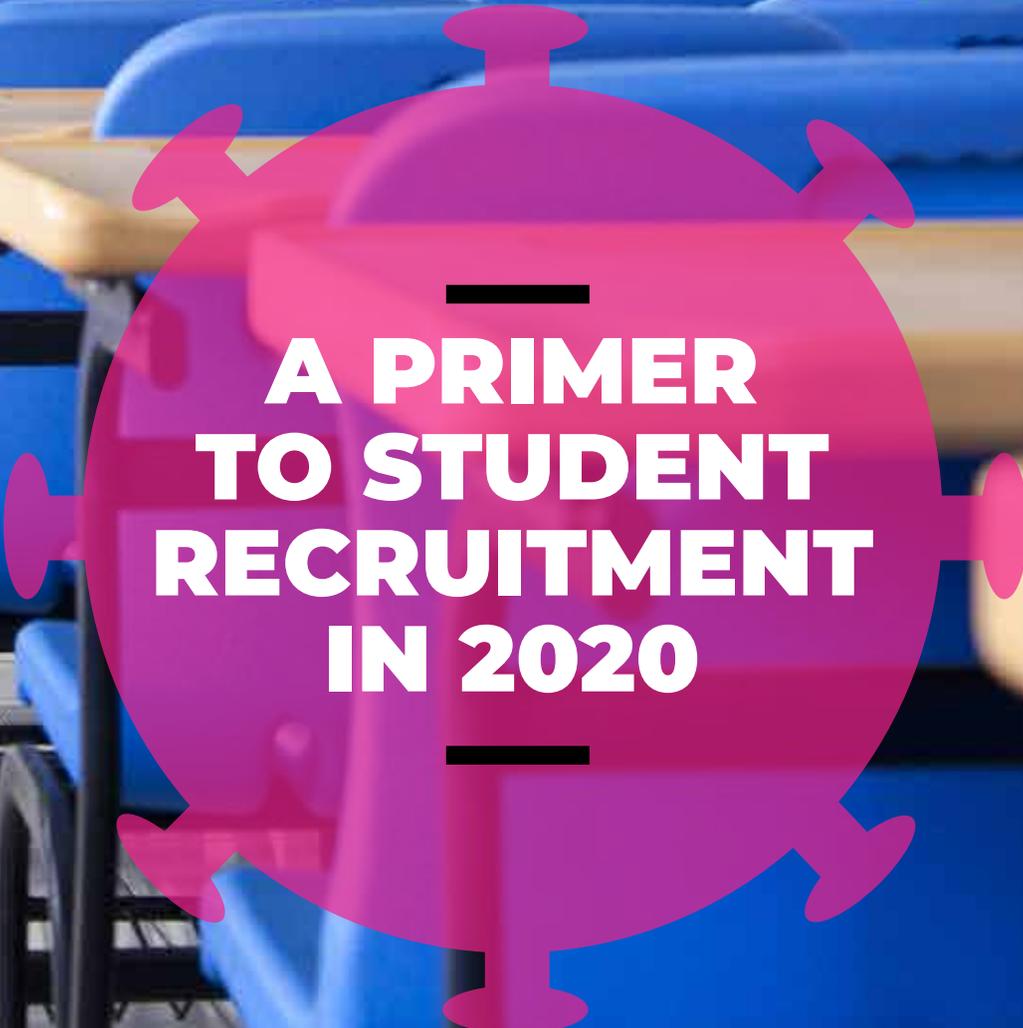
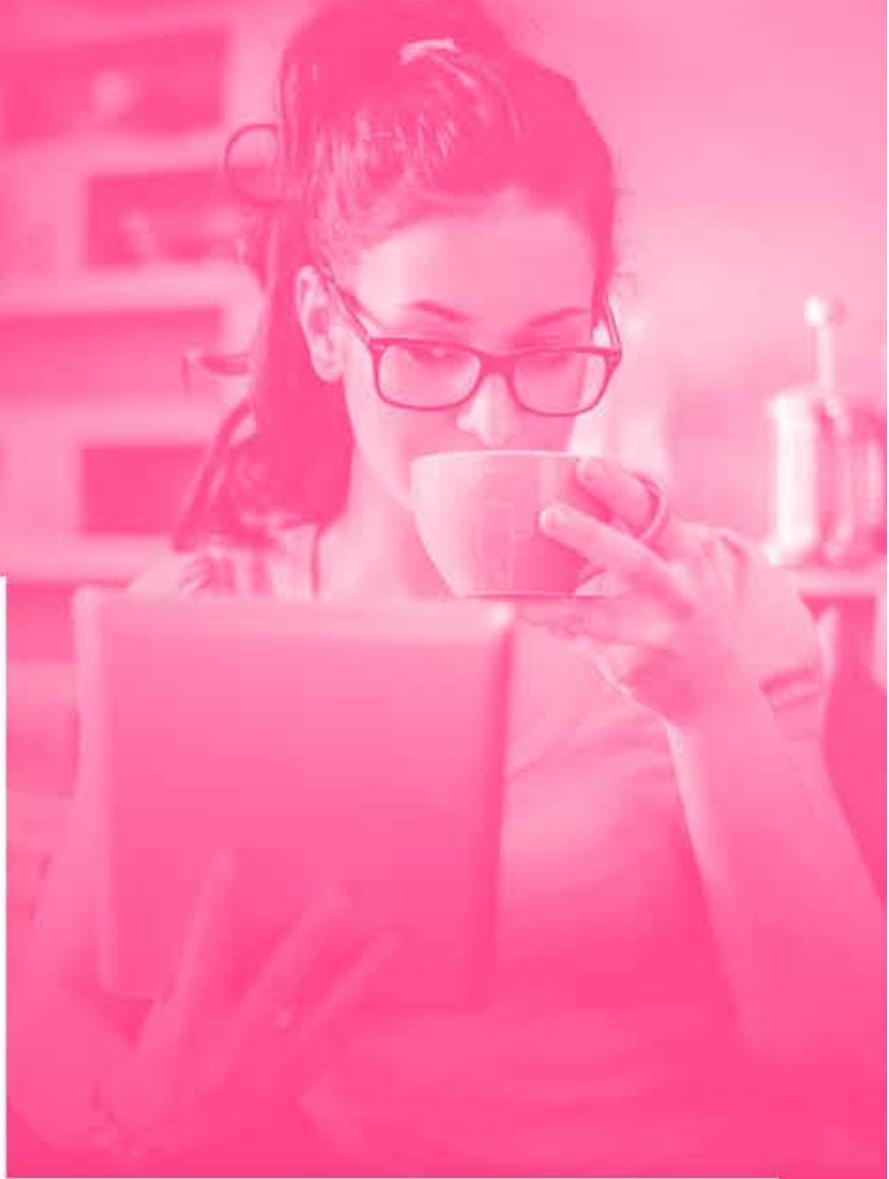


S U R V I V I N G C O R O N A



**A PRIMER
TO STUDENT
RECRUITMENT
IN 2020**

Authored By:
getmyuni.com
iosignite.com
extraaedge.com



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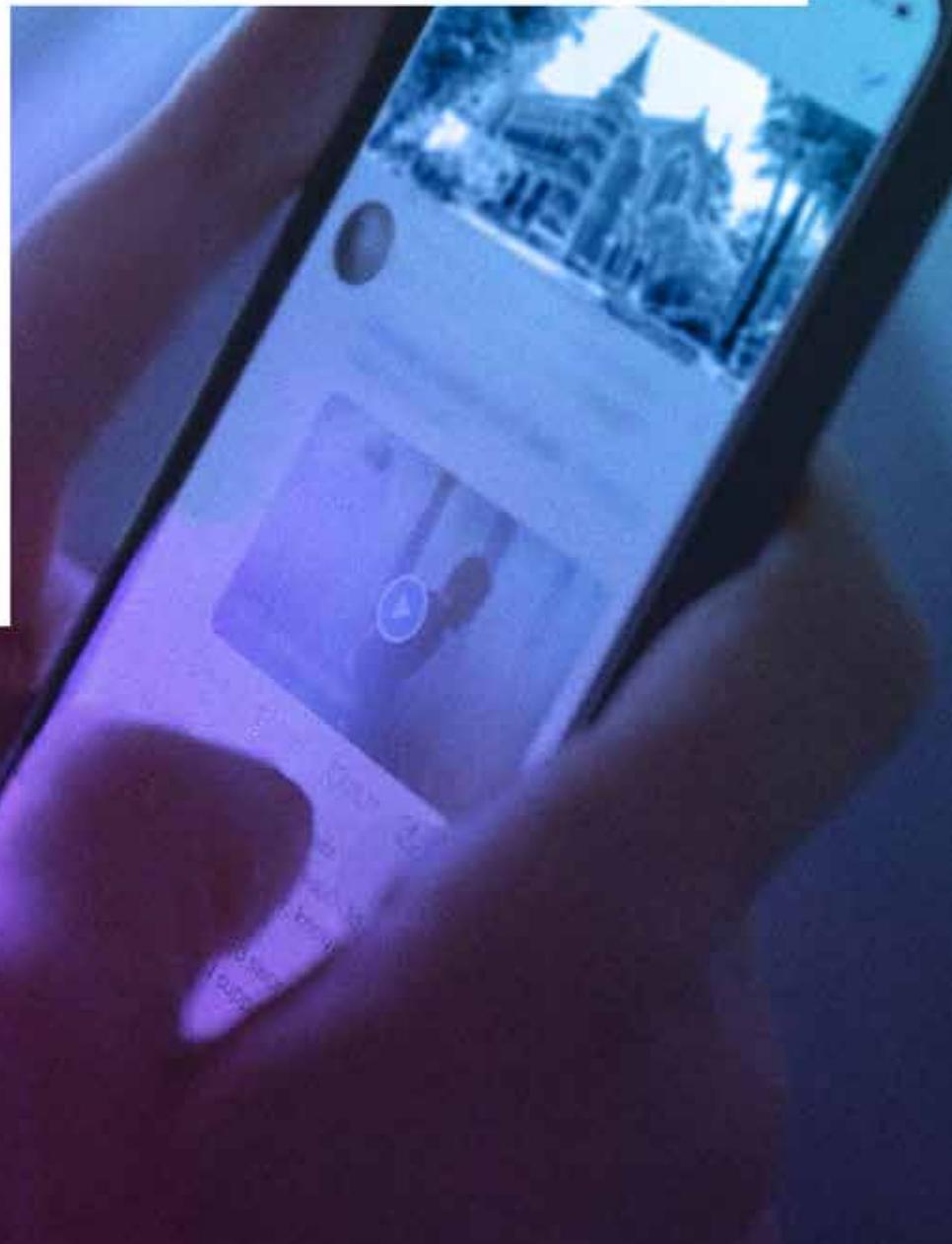
Things won't change as much as they will accelerate.

While other crises re-shaped the future, COVID-19 is just making the future happen faster.”

The coronavirus pandemic (COVID 19) is the perfect example of a Black Swan event. What characterises Black Swan events is that neither can they be predicted nor their impact cannot be accessed, till the event and its consequences actually unravel. The pandemic has forced people to embrace “the new world” - a world which entails running our lives from the boundaries of our homes. Large, established industries have taken a big hit in their business & may need to recalibrate their business models. Luckily, the impact on education has many positive undertones and there is a clear silver lining to it. Online education is booming, but traditional education institutes are still playing catch-up, by having to embrace technology at a breakneck pace.

This seismic shift in the industry overnight has obviously had an impact on traditional education institutes & moreover the student enrollment teams everywhere, including in India where teams are still grappling with the reality and figuring what's next. This impact has been felt even more acutely by millions of prospective students and their parents, who are now shrouded in uncertainty about their child's education - something which is considered the most important decision of an individual's life. This accelerated by the delay in boards & other entrance examinations. While we'll be attempting a separate piece around what a student should be doing at this point in time, this particular piece is addressed to institutes who are smarting over what will transpire over the next few weeks and what is it that they should do to ensure that the admission season should be smooth and less rocky than it currently is.

Similar to other categories, there will be a flight to quality and brand building. Power will rest with a small number of Brands and many Small Colleges may perish.





Over the last couple of weeks our teams from our respective firms ExtraaEdge, Getmyuni & IOSIGNITE have been discussing these issues with over 100+ admission teams. We have collated the key issues with the collective wisdom of our companies for the greater benefit of the education admission teams & key stakeholders. We present them below.

10 Key Issues:

Social Distancing : Regional colleges and universities previously overly reliant on walk-ins have experienced a screeching halt to any enquiries. A lot of regional universities also relied on local ATL marketing such as OOH and BTL activities such as events at nearby high-schools, scholarship tests, all of which have temporarily halted in this lockdown environment. Admissions teams have been forced to move to a pure inside sales model from a traditional field sales model.

Offline consultant or White Elephants : Just like the white elephants, local education consultants this year will not be of much use. Universities in India resort to working with a large number of offline consultants who would liaise with students by “buying” data illegally and then “selling” them to the colleges rather than genuinely helping them make the right choice. Since there are no face to face interactions anymore, these consultants would be unable to drive any significant enrolments for universities

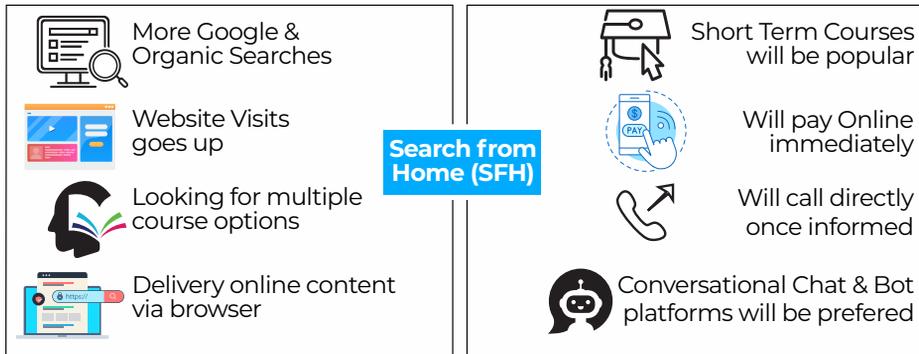
It's all internet :

With all other avenues completely shut, students & parents are looking for courses & learning opportunities from home (SFH) and hence, online decision making is thriving.

STUDENTS SEARCHING FROM HOME



WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ADMISSION BEHAVIOURS



1. More Google & online portal searches
2. Website & Landing Page traffic goes up - hence college websites are now critical
3. Students will now explore hybrid options i.e. completing the first semester online, followed by an option for subsequent semesters
4. Will expect digital forms and convenient options to pay fee online - requiring colleges to set up their payment infrastructure
5. Prospects & parents expecting swift response to their online queries or conversational bots to get information on enrolment.



“ *Online Courses will not eclipse classroom learning. Instead Tech companies will collaborate with colleges and universities to offer unicorn companies to investors.* ”

Branding Rocks: Brands who have previously spent extensively are still thriving in this environment, whereas smaller standalone colleges who had mostly an offline recruitment strategy are finding it hard to get any traction. Institutes who don't have cash to sustain 6+ months of a dry period may in fact see themselves perishing. Whereas, this is the time for universities and larger brands to double down. It's time to invest slowly but consistently on brand & online presence.

The Post graduate paradox : People who had jobs but were thinking of pursuing an MBA education may not do so. On the other hand, some folks may see this as a great time to upskill but rather than investing in a full-fledged PG degree, may invest in online courses / short term courses with a shorter commitment time / lower cost and wfh option. The other reason why post grad may flourish is because most if not all companies will be on a hiring freeze for the better part of this year. Hence, students graduating this year will certainly have a tough time getting placed. This is an ideal time for them to get their post graduate degree instead.

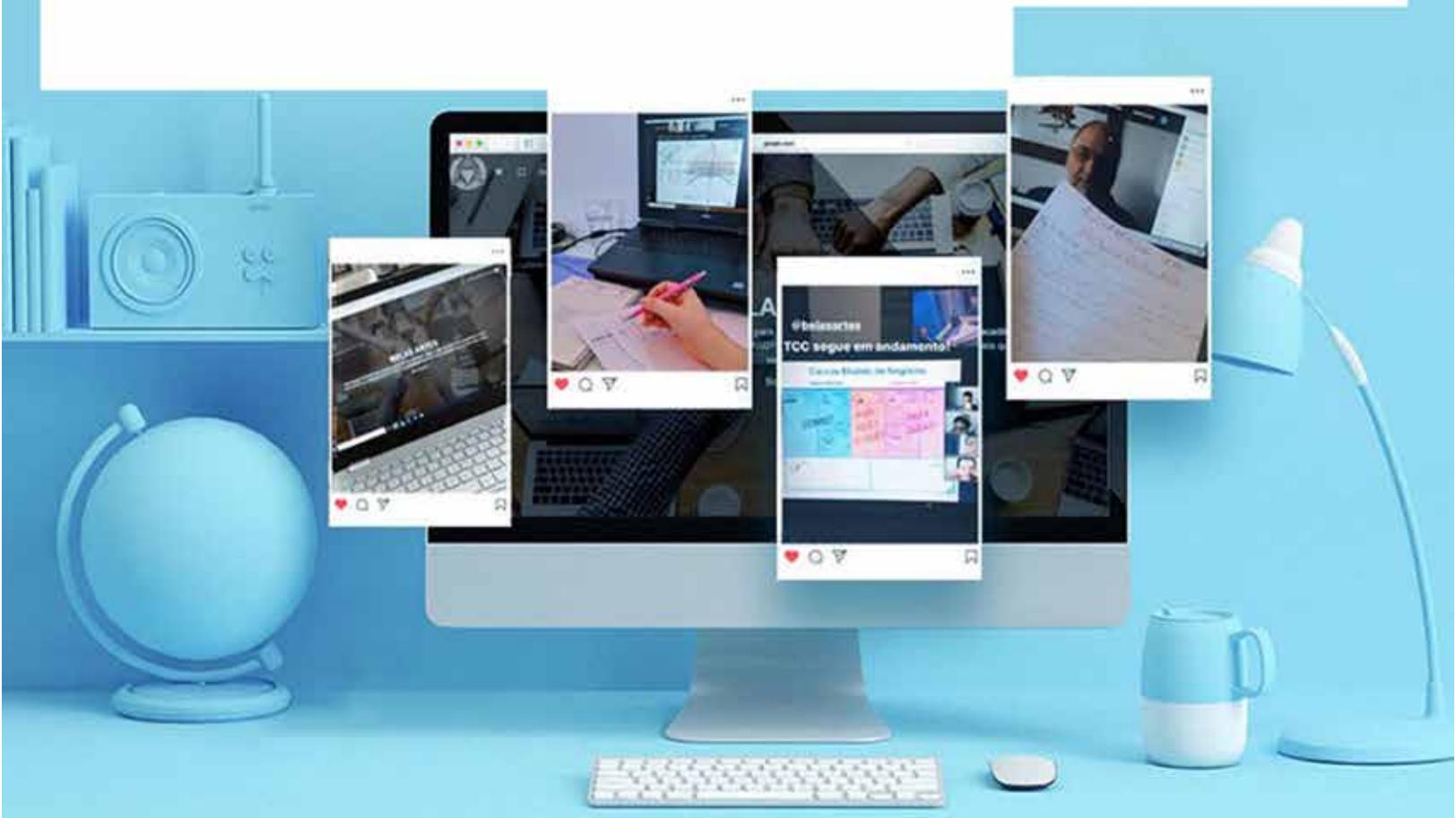
Think Local Act Local: Events like Covid drive irrational fear, which may manifest itself in students opting for local colleges as opposed to moving to another city/state. While this is still speculation, it may be something education institutes may want to hedge against by aggressively marketing locally albeit digitally.



Drop in UG Number : In case the lockdown extends longer than anticipated i.e. into June / July a small percentage of students seeking UG degrees may also choose to defer their decision for a year due to financial or other reasons.

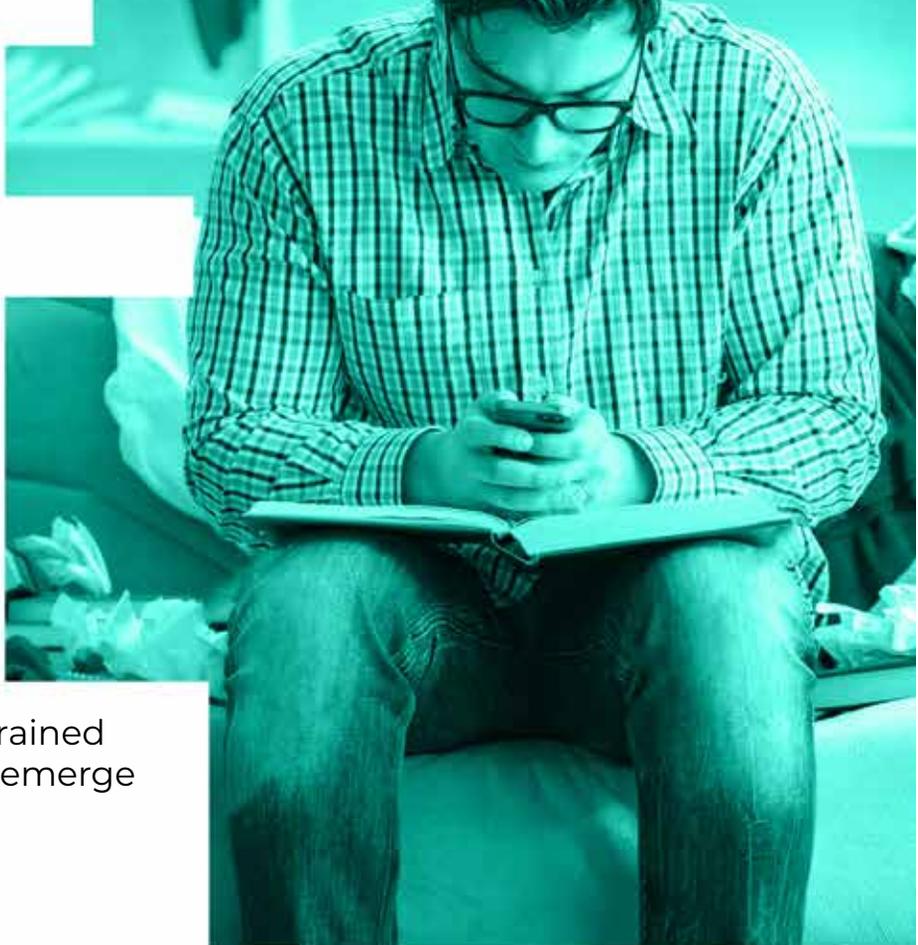
Rise of new competition: Competition is changing, it has been for a few years but this pandemic will benefit online learning platforms immensely. Your biggest competition is not from a college or a university but from Coursera, Upgrad and the likes. It will be fool-hardy to ignore and not include this insight while working on your admission strategy. What's worse is that you will have to compete with them on their turf. These companies have a well chalked out digital strategy and agile teams that understand tech better than any college admission team out there. Get all the help you can and start thinking digital first.

The work from home conundrum: Education institutes, unless professionally managed still have archaic student CRMs and dialling infrastructures. In a country where the final conversion is largely counsellor driven, if the admission teams are not adequately equipped to be able to perform with the same efficiencies as in office, institutes are likely to see a dip in numbers. A full stack CRM, calling tools & auto drip marketing software are now a mandatory prerequisite.

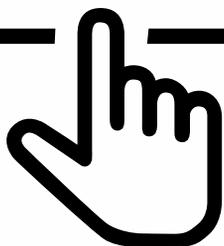


Offline Counselling to take

a backseat : With the current situation fuelling the advent of video calling & tools like Zoom, Google Meets gaining a lot of precedence, physical counselling may get substituted by video based counselling. Most American Universities over the last few years had already switched to Video based Counselling over the last decade. Indian Colleges will now have to double down on their effort and adapt quickly. Integration of CRM with Zoom powered by a new age counsellor trained in video counselling etiquettes will emerge & stay for good.



NOW WHAT?



As they say every dark cloud has a silver lining and so does this event. With a delay in all the critical entrance exams, boards and other critical events, admissions would be easily pushed out another couple of months which gives institutes ample time to come up with a strategy to make sure they don't miss out on this year's enrolment cycle.

News Sources



NEET UG, JEE Main Postponed: How to prepare In Lockdown

NEET exam has been postponed amid the...

ndtv.com



CBSE postpones board exams in view of Covid-19 outbreak

"While maintenance of academic calendar..."

economictimes.indiatimes.com



List of Exams Postponed Due to COVID-19 (LATEST)

Here you can get latest information about...

aglasem.com

The last couple of weeks have been extremely interesting. We have been inundated with requests around what can be done to salvage this admissions season. So, apart from our vanilla admissions product, we are also actively working on multiple new products to serve the needs of universities.

— Upneet Grover, Founder, Getmyuni



Institutes should immediately focus on the following strategies going ahead:

10 Prospective Solutions:

Be prepared for delays, but don't defer decision making: How long will it take for India and the world to get back to normal is still muddled with ifs and buts. Your admission teams should be prepared for delays in the admission cycle as exam dates get pushed. New norms may come up regarding admissions and we may see universities coming up with guidelines over admissions based on Grade 11 marks or new virtual exams. The admissions department should be prepared for these uncertainties and be flexible enough to quickly adapt.

Invest in online channels of student acquisition: Universities should swiftly invest in building online channels that can drive enrolments. This includes but is not limited to online publishers such as Getmyuni, Collegedunia, Shiksha and others. Investing in getting a strong digital team onboard who can not only liaise with these large media publishers but also invest in google, facebook and other digital channels is now a necessity.

Virtual Facelift: Undoubtedly, walk-ins and face to face consultation sessions with counsellors is not what 2020 admissions will be about. With more and more students taking their decision based on their online research, it is imperative for a college to take control of their greatest digital asset. Now, may not be the time to go for a complete overhaul of your website but is certainly the time to build a new admissions 2020 microsite to assist students make decisions. This site should ideally be a virtual tour of your college and give the student the exact walk in experience, be equipped to excite and educate the student about the college. If you have done a video shoot or a photoshoot in the past few years, those pictures will come in handy, if not plan for one as soon as the lockdown is eased.

Rework the fee structure: As time goes by, the reality of the financial toll will begin to surface. The economic impact of the lockdown may contract our GDP by a few percent and leave millions jobless and several in extremely difficult financial situations. For a country already coping with a slowdown this is going to be a knock-out punch. Businesses and sectors relying on discretionary spends will be severely impacted. Wage cuts, job losses, extended periods of low economic activity are expected. Several industries like tourism, entertainment could get wiped out for the foreseeable future. 'Brick and Mortar' colleges despite being part of non-discretionary spend will also see challenging times because of the broader doom and gloom. It is good to start preparing for this and laying out a plan. Whether you work out a scholarship scheme for those affected by COVID or a staggered payment of first year tuition fee, strong loan tie-ups or short-term relief will drive decisions.

Invest in intelligent CRM which can enable teams of WFH counsellors to be effective:

It is critical to stop working on excel sheets or other ad hoc tools and invest in quality CRM solutions like extraedge, leadsquared or nopaperforms.



STUDENTS SEARCHING FROM HOME



WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ADMISSION BEHAVIOURS



Phone calls & Telephony super important

Drip Marketing will become the norm to outreach

CRMs mobile led will be the backbone of business

Whatsapp strategy will become super critical

WORK FROM HOME (WFH)

Google Adwords & FB Ads spend goes up 

Online Application + Payment Gateways critical 

Website should be optimised for mobile 

Chat & Bot infrastructure will be the new normal 

1. Phone calls & Telephony driven by smartphone technology stack will be critical.
2. Drip Marketing will become the norm for outreach via email & SMS.
3. Powerful CRMs will become the backbone of admissions.
4. Every institute will need to have a WhatsApp strategy.
5. The spent on Adwords, FB ads will increase as a function of increased social time utilization.
6. Payment gateway, mobile-friendly website, online application form along with payment gateways are new mandates.
7. Conversational Platforms will be the new way to interact with the new prospects



A new Technology Stack will be needed for the new work for home admissions teamsew trends e.g. powerful CRMs, mobility for inside sales teams along with a strong outbound communication software to maintain the brand communication & recall will be here to stay even post COVID 19 subsides.

Abhishek Ballabh - Co-Founder ExtraaEdge



Get going with video-based counselling and admissions : Invest in video-based counselling solutions wherein students can speak with and meet your college counsellors online and complete their admission formalities online itself.

Work on institutions' communication & social strategy : This is the time when brands will be remembered for their actions within the community (we have made several Brand Manuals and defined core beliefs and values, now is the time to put them in practice). If there is an upside to what is happening now more than ever, brands can (if they act in the right way) gain brand advocates for the future. Rest assured, once this is over there will be a honeymoon spending period. Brands that act right, now will enjoy the benefits of doing the right thing for their customers, their staff and their suppliers. Make sure you know what your institution stands for and have a clear and crisp message for all stakeholders. If you haven't already talked to branding consultants to figure out the USP of the college and build communication guidelines which will not only help you reach out to prospective students but also woo them. Remember 100% placement and top-notch infrastructure in your advertisements will not cut it this year-round.

Educational institutions may remain shut till late August.

At IOSIGNITE we have been long advocating the importance of streamlined communication. Having a communication strategy chalked out enhances all your offline and online marketing efforts. Open for all approach will not help you during these uncertain times. Understand your target audience and communicate in a language they understand.

***Jay Bagri,
Chief Rethink Officer,
IOSIGNITE.***



Technology Stack needed for WFH Admission Teams

Team Chat



Meetings



Task Management



Online Classroom



CRM & Marketing Automation



Document Collaboration



Cloud Telephony



Video



Team Monitoring



Invest in getting an online learning platform ready to go in case lockdown extends, at least for the first semester : While large universities are already prepping for this worst case scenario, it wouldn't hurt to get your online play ready. Should things not get better fast, universities should be prepared to be able to run their classes online, at least for the first semester completely online. Investing in a good solution to take your academics online e.g. Thinkific, WizIQ, Google Classroom will be the first step.



“Colleges will dramatically increase their spending on technology and outsource entire programs.”

Can use capabilities built now to enter into completely online degrees :

Universities who would have built their online education vertical now, would be best poised to use the same stack / infrastructure to be able to go completely online if and when their university is granted to go ahead deliver degrees and education online.

Content Marketing is the new norm: A content strategy which can assuage parents of all the large questions / issues they may be having around your readiness to complete the entire admissions process online and in the worst case deliver education online. Invest in WhatsApp sessions, webinars and keep in constant touch with your students and their parents. Such universities will see themselves winning over others who may not be.



These are strange times & requires radically new admission strategies to navigate and those who don't adapt quickly may perish. Most of the suggestions mentioned above will be helpful and productive even when things are back to normal. This paper has been co-authored by

Upneet Grover, Founder & Divya Kathuria, Head of Sales, Getmyuni.com

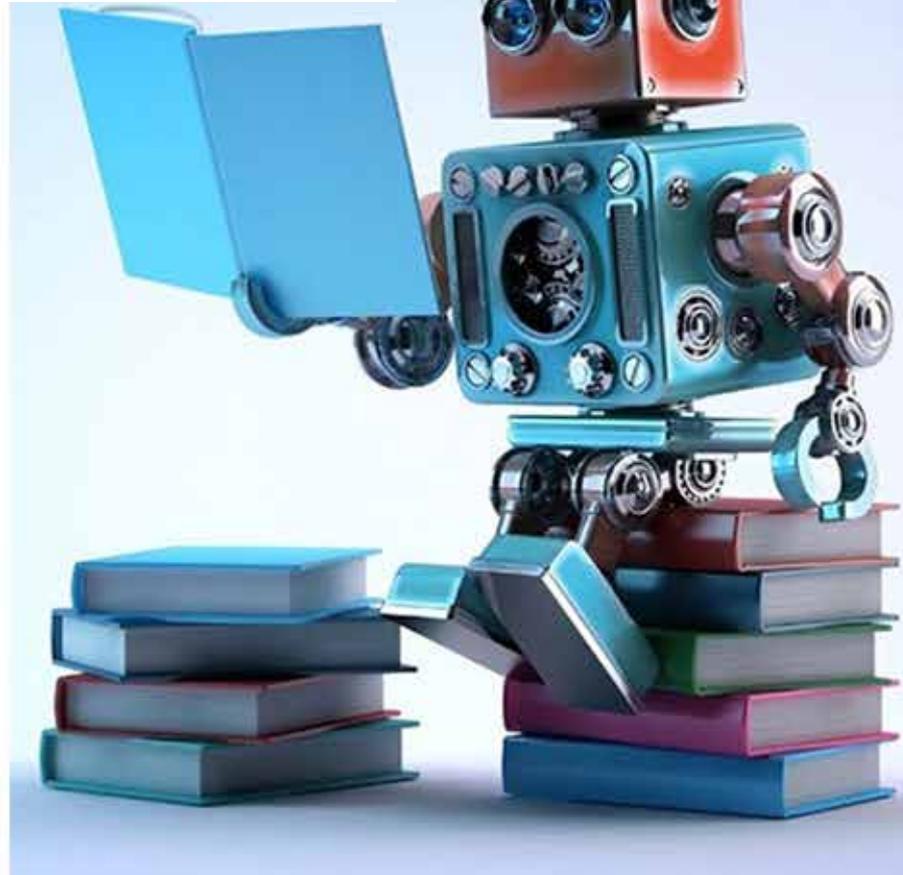
- Getmyuni is one of India's largest admissions marketplace, driving over -10K admissions to over -200+ universities and colleges. They own and operate 3 products getmyuni.com, ieltsmaterial.com and thecollegemonk.com. They can be reached at +91- 78389 39348 or divya.kathuria@getmyuni.com.

Jay Bagri - Founder of IOSIGNITE

- A 360 degree hybrid creative agency working with education institutions since 2016 on their branding and communication. You can reach us at talk@iosignite.com or +91-9874766366 for further details.

Abhishek Ballabh, Co-founder ExtraaEdge

- ExtraaEdge is a venture backed, award winning Admission & Marketing Automation CRM software helping 150+ education institutes increase, manage & predict their admissions. They are building the future of education marketing via the power of data science. He can be reached out at aballabh@theextraaedge.com or www.extraaedge.com for any further questions.



A new trend will take the centerstage called Inbound Marketing fueled by organic content. This has already played out in the SMB market led by the likes of software giant HubSpot & the Inbound Academy.

