

Latest issue      Rates      Subscription      Places to study      About Study Travel

Custom Search

powered by **Google**

July 2012 issue

Contents

- News
- News Round Up
- Inside the industry
- Advisor Survey
- Secondary Focus 1
- Secondary Focus 2
- Tertiary Focus 1
- Tertiary Focus 2
- Vocational Focus
- Direction
- Special Report
- Course Guide
- Spotlight
- Destination
- Regional Focus
- Market Analysis
- Grapevine

Contact Point:

Request information from our advertisers

Digital version

To view this page in the digital issue click on this graphic.



Back issues

- Status Survey
- Download Mediapack
- Get a Free Copy
- Subscriptions
- Calendar of events
- Useful links

Study Travel Magazine  
11-15 Emerald Street  
WC1N 3QL  
London, England  
T: +44 (0)20 7440 4020  
F: +44 (0)20 7440 4033  
Pacific Office  
T/F: +61 (0)8 9341 1820

Other products



# Changing face of marketing



Marketing has been driven to new heights by technology, but offline marketing tools and attendance at trade events remain important. The key for marketers is to shape a strategy that incorporates both old and new into one holistic marketing drive. **Gillian Evans** reports.

With the Internet revolution, marketers have never had so many tools at their disposal – search engine marketing (SEM), social media marketing, viral marketing and e-marketing are the new buzz words in the marketing world. But with the advent of online marketing, there has been a fundamental change: the marketer is no longer in the driving seat; now it's all about the consumer. People are not passive consumers any more; they have a world of opportunities at their fingertips. Audiences have expanded but also fragmented and the new marketing currency is billions of spontaneous one-to-one and peer-to-peer conversations. For all marketers, the challenge is to harness the new tools at their disposal whilst also incorporating more traditional marketing media, to ensure they stand out from the crowd. It's been a big shift for the marketing world.

**The new word-of-mouth**

One of the biggest changes has been the ubiquitous use of social media among populations in most developed countries. "Had we tried to predict ten or even five years ago the direction that successful marketing of English language programmes would take, we could never have imagined the impact of social media and digital marketing on our industry," asserts Martin McDonald from the London School of English in the UK.

What social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, has done is accelerate the impact of personal endorsement. Potential clients have more choice, are able to discuss them with previous clients, and make informed decisions themselves. Therefore, the importance of social media as a marketing tool cannot be underestimated. Nicola Whyley, Business Development Manager at ELC Group in the UK, says that they use Twitter and Facebook to add another dimension to their marketing operations. "[Social media] is often used to highlight the social side of the language travel experience and more specifically excursions, social life, events, publish

Contact any advertiser in the this issue now

The following language schools, associations and accommodation providers advertised in the latest edition of Study Travel Magazine. If you would like more information on any of these advertisers, tick the relevant boxes, fill out your details and send.

Name

Company

Country

Telephone

Email

ASSOCIATIONS / GROUPS

- Alto
- English Australia
- MEI - Marketing English in Ireland
- Perth Education City
- Study Gold Coast
- English in Chester
- Forest Ridge School of the Sacred Heart

ACCOMMODATION

- English Australia

AUSTRALIA

- IELTS
- Perth Education City
- Study Gold Coast

CANADA

- Bow Valley College
- Braemar College
- Centennial College
- College of New Caledonia
- Connect School of Languages
- Georgian College
- Hansa Language Centre of Toronto

StudyTravel news video-watch it [here](#)

FREE FOREIGN CURRENCY TRANSFERS

1978 - 2018

photos, etc. It also allows interaction between the school and the students," she says.

With social media being the foremost channel of communication for the 18-to-25-year-old demographic, it's the ideal marketing tool for the education industry, whose main client base falls into this age category. The beauty of social media is that if people like what they see or hear on Twitter, Facebook or a blog, they will forward it to their friends and create the viral marketing all marketers dream of. Brigitta Alkofer, Marketing Director at Humboldt-Institut in Germany, reports that comments on their Facebook page from former students have resulted in "a lot of new enrolments".

Peggy Marion, Director of Marketing at Rennert International in the USA, relates that they use their Facebook page to post student profiles and videos, which generate considerable interest. In fact, one recent video profile resulted in 59 "likes" on a student's page in Sweden. "That is great word-of-mouth!" she exclaims, adding, "The beauty of social media is, if you have a good product and satisfied customers, then they will post spontaneous, unsolicited testimonials."

For a relatively new school like Kurus English in South Africa, social media can help to put them on the map. Johannes Kraus, Director of the school, enthuses, "Our blog has been very useful in showing all the cultural elements and encounters our students experience."

Mara Muller at ILSC in Canada says that social media not only acts as word-of-mouth but also creates a community. "Our use of Facebook provides added value for our current and potential students by offering them an online community to connect with, and we see many students sharing their arrival date once they've registered, and reaching out to other students before they arrive," she explains. "I think our partners [advisors] see this is a valuable tool, and something that helps them sell our school and our ILSC community to students."

Videos are another facet that are used more and more in the promotion of language schools as they are easy to produce and are able to convey the excitement and adventure of a study trip overseas. "Anyone can have a fancy brochure with good-looking models; however, videos are a far more accurate method of stating the facts about the school's location and facilities," says Richard Brown at Browns English Language School in Australia. "Students are becoming far more discerning in today's society, which is brilliant news for those educational providers who focus on quality."

While social media is predominantly used by education providers to communicate with past and future students, it also has a role to play in the relationship between education provider and advisor. Lesinda Leightley at LAL London in the UK says they use social media by tweeting about events and posting them, along with pictures, on Facebook. While they encourage advisors to check out their Facebook page to see what students have been doing at the school, they are increasingly communicating with advisors on LinkedIn, the world's largest business-related social media site, and Leightley believes this will become increasingly important in B2B relations in the future.

### Web advantage

Arguably the biggest transformation in marketing tools has been the shift from printed brochures and advertisements to the web. Frederic Parrilla at Clic IH in Spain observes that the web has become increasingly important while traditional advertisements have far less impact.

Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced  
 Omnicom School of Languages  
 Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology  
 St James Assiniboia

York University English Language Institute  
 iMandarin Language Training Institute

### CHINA

Camp Beaumont

### ENGLAND

English in Chester  
 Embassy CES  
 International House London  
 INTO University Partnerships  
 Kaplan International Colleges  
 London School of Business & Finance  
 Queen Ethelburga's College  
 Stafford House  
 St Giles International  
 University of Essex - International Academy  
 Wimbledon School of English  
 Alphe Conferences

### EVENTS

Cambridge Esol

### EXAM BOARDS

IELTS  
 Trinity College London  
 TOEFL Educational Testing Service  
 Active Language Learning

### IRELAND

Centre of English Studies  
 Clare Language Centre  
 English Language Academy ELA  
 Galway Cultural Institute  
 Galway Language Centre  
 Language College Ireland  
 University College Cork Language Centre

Alkofer agrees, “[Our] website is, for very obvious reasons, the most important marketing tool: it is relatively cheap, available all over the world, it reaches new clients who have never heard of us before through search engines, it is always up to date – whereas the brochures become outdated after some months – and it reaches millions of users. It has obviously taken the place that 20 years ago our intensive brochure mailing campaigns took.”

While the web is a crucial tool for reaching future students, it is also used extensively by education providers in their B2B relations. Andrew Green, Director of Kings Colleges, says their website is a vital means of providing agents with more detailed information, with a specific agent zone allowing them to access further information and downloads. “We ensure the website contains sufficient information as to be a useful tool for agents as well as direct students,” he adds.

With the web being an important cog in the mechanisms of a company’s marketing operations, many providers are investing heavily in revamping their websites. Rennert International is changing its website to include easy-to-find information, slideshows, a blog and other social media links that will translate to different electronic devices, including desktops, laptops, smartphones and tablets. It will also include an enhanced agent support section. Explaining the reasons behind their website investment, Marion says, “Most of our students are in the demographic that has grown up with the Internet and uses it as a preferred medium for social interaction, research and purchasing. Our agents are based around the world and the Internet is the easiest, most efficient means of communication. Therefore, the Internet is of paramount importance in marketing. With an eye to the future, we are using the Internet in all of its forms, and transmitted through many different devices, to reach both agents and students.”

McDonald at the London School of English relates that over recent years they have invested heavily in their website, and they are now reaping the rewards. “[Our website] is used by agent partners and clients and is the ideal shop window for our business, providing relevant content which can be updated as and when required,” he says. “As our target market recognises that the definitive resource about every aspect of our business – from courses, costs, accommodation, visa advice and social events – is our website, the need for print media diminishes, with obvious cost-savings for the business and the added benefit of reducing our carbon footprint and saving trees.”

Although most websites do include an online booking facility, rather than pushing advisors out of the recruitment picture, educator websites often encourage students to book via their advisory centre. Marion relates, “It is possible to book a course directly from our website but this feature is mainly for the benefit of our agent partners, and we find that they are the ones most likely to use it. Even if a potential course participant chooses our school and a course from the website, they are likely to use an agent to book it. The complex paperwork, particularly that generated by the visa application process, means clients are often more comfortable engaging an expert.”

In a bid to ensure advisors are not sidelined by clients, the Humbolt-Institut website operates a “backlinking” feature. Alkofer explains, “If a student finds our website through an agent’s link, the agent gets the full commission for that student, even if he/she signs up directly, as we backtrace where the enrolment came from. Also, if an agent can provide us with the name of a student that he/she has

Clubclass Residential Language School

MALTA

Malta Tourism Authority  
 Maltalingua Ltd.  
 CNN International Language School

PHILIPPINES

EIEN Power  
 Global Standard  
 MDL Cebu Language School  
 Paradise English  
 International House - Sevilla CLIC

SPAIN

Xul Comunicación Social  
 EF International Language Centers

SWITZERLAND

Eurocentres International  
 Malta Tourism Authority

TOURIST BOARDS

California State University San Marcos

USA

ELS Language Centers  
 Forest Ridge School of the Sacred Heart  
 University of California San Diego  
 Zoni Language Centers

Send

Reset

advised, we pay him/her the full commission, even if the student chose to sign up with us online via our website without obvious agent traces.”

### **End of print?**

There is no doubt that websites have pushed ahead of printed brochures and advertising to take the gold medal in the marketing tools league table. As Rainer Epbinder at the Goethe-Institut in Germany points out, “Print products [used to have] a huge relevance, but nowadays their importance is diminished because of the omnipotence of online marketing, especially of social media.”

However, many education marketers still believe in the power of print. “[A brochure] is something people can carry with them and leave on their coffee tables,” says Leightley at LAL. “It also works for countries where the Internet isn’t that reliable.” Like Leightley, Andrea Pala, Principal of Language Studies International Auckland in New Zealand says their brochure is their most important tool because “it can go everywhere”.

Muller suggests that a printed brochure can still make the biggest impression on a potential client. “The web is a busy place, and it’s easy to get distracted when you’re working with electronic materials – an electronic version can easily become ‘out of sight, out of mind’. Of course, you can still file away a printed version and forget about it, but I think it has the ability to hold your attention a little bit longer, and printed materials are easy to make notes on, mark pages, and circle things that interest you.” Green also emphasises the importance of their brochure. “The traditional brochure is still very far from dead and is still the core tool by which we market via agents. We believe that it is desirable – and in some ways the easiest – way to convey the personality, quality and positioning of a brand through the medium of print but that this needs to be allied to modern media channels in an holistic marketing mix.”

### **Personal contact**

Notwithstanding leaps in marketing technology, there is still no substitute for face-to-face contact, both in B2C and B2B marketing. “While technology is certainly changing the face of marketing and changing how we connect with one another in the world, successful marketing in our industry is still about people and relationships at its root, while the many other tools we use help support and complement our direct, person-to-person efforts,” states Muller. As well as advertisements in STM, which, “give us market exposure and recognition for both students and potential business partners”, they often attend industry and student fairs. “Most of our advertising is designed to speak to both B2B and student markets; however, students normally book through an agency rather than coming directly to us.”

Marion agrees. “Nothing in your marketing arsenal is more important than meeting with customers face-to-face, getting to know them and their businesses and exchanging information. Nothing will build trust more effectively than extending your business relationships beyond acquaintanceships to true partnerships. For this reason, Rennert International has increased its attendance at tradeshows and sends more staff members to a larger number of overseas markets.”

While marketing has re-invented itself over recent years, one thing remains constant: product quality. Summing up, McDonald says, “It is almost impossible to imagine the potential [of marketing] as technology develops. However, some universal fundamentals will not change: delivering the

highest quality products and services, managing and exceeding our partners' and clients' expectations and ensuring that we continue to deliver what we promise."

---

## New look

In a crowded market place, where prospective clients can flit from one image to another at the mere click of a button or sweep of a touch screen, grabbing the consumer's attention is paramount. It is no longer enough to just provide a great product. It is necessary to show the consumer how your product will improve their lives.

In the education industry, some corporate identities have been accused of being somewhat stuffy. But in recent years, many educators have been keen to shake off this label and step into the limelight in brand new attire. Plymouth University in the UK has been one such educator. Last year it re-branded with a new corporate identity: "With Plymouth University". In this way it has taken the idea of studying "at" Plymouth University and changed it to "with" to make the experience more personable and collaborative.

In the language teaching arena, many schools have also been freshening up their look. Martin McDonald at the London School of English says that to mark their centenary year and recent rebrand, they ran a series of advertisements in Study Travel Magazine featuring dictionary definitions of words that they felt defined their business, such as "communication".

"We felt that the time was right to move away from the traditional image of happy, smiling students to something a little more ground-breaking, and we have had an excellent response from agent partners all over the world," says McDonald.

Wanting to keep a young vibrant image, Clic IH in Spain rebranded three years ago to keep apace with technological changes. According to Frederic Parrilla, their new look was chosen to "get closer to the social media logos and [use] trendy bright colours".

The London School of English also took steps to rejuvenate its image last year. "Our research showed that an overwhelming majority of UK language schools use quite conservative tones of blue in their logo, just as we had done in the past," recounts McDonald. "Like some of the most recognisable global brands, we felt that we needed to stand out from the crowd by 'owning' a colour. After careful consultation we chose a bold lime green, which we feel differentiates us in a crowded marketplace."

Many other schools have found the need to change their corporate identity after acquisitions and expansion. "We rebranded to Kings Colleges in 2009, following the acquisition of the group by Prime Education," relates the school's Andrew Green. "This was in response to the fact that Kings was at the time presenting itself to market in a disjointed and confusing way, with separate logos, brochures and websites for each UK school and a tired feel to the brand."

Similarly ILSC Education Group rebranded in September 2011 to reflect its global expansion. "ILSC Education Group's first school opened in Vancouver 20 years ago, and our former logo had a very North American West Coast feel. As well, the name International Language Schools of Canada

has been replaced with ILSC Education Group,” explains Mara Muller.

---

## Integrating old and new

“We have sought to integrate print and web in a more holistic approach, for example incorporating QR codes into printed brochures which allow access to richer multimedia content to support the specific message, says Andrew Green at Kings Colleges. Quick-response (QR) codes are increasingly being used by educators on their print advertisements. They can be scanned by mobile devices, such as smartphones, and then link the user to online content. In this way the user is directed, for example, to a website, without the need to type out URLs. Rainer Epbinder at Goethe-Institut reports they have started using QR codes to target “the wishes of our mobile-interested clients”, and he believes this will become an increasingly important method.