Taboo to Trendy: Working with Agents

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Getting to Know One Another

- How many years of experience in international education do you have? 1-3? 3-5? Over 5.
- How many people in this room use agents to recruit international students to your campus?
- What countries is your office targeting for recruitment?
- What challenges are you encountering in increasing the number of international student applicants and/or students on your campus from your targeted regions?
- What strategies have been successful when working with agents?

What Is An Agent?

- An education agent is an individual, company or organization that provides educational advice, support and placement to students in a local market who are interested in studying abroad.
- **Educational referral agents and representatives:** This type of agent represents a selected number of educational institutions, often specializing in a number of programs and destinations. Usually an agreement has to be in place before agents in this category will start representing an institution.

What Can Agents Do For You?

- Represent you to potential students on a year-round basis.
- Provide you with up-to-date and reliable market information and tell you which programs local students are currently seeking.
- Distribute your promotional materials on a regular basis.
- Advertise in targeted local student media on your behalf.
- Represent you at local student fairs and exhibitions.
- Pre-arrange appointments and speaking opportunities for you.
- Provide you with a local office infrastructure when you visit the area.

QUESTION

Before considering using an agent your institution should ask the following question:

How do we bring what we are offering to the attention of those interested in buying? How can we successfully penetrate a market?

Activity

Write down your institutions top 5 selling points:

Questions to consider:

- What is your institutions niche market?
- What are your institutions selling points?
- What makes your institution different?

Ethical Issues

- Good agents-bad agents
  -Specific examples (overcharging students; double dipping; false advertising)
- Representing your Institution
- Student Quality
- Quality Assurance--AIRC (American International Recruitment Council)
  - Japan
  - Korea

It's All About Relationships—The Institutional Role

- Developing personal relationships
  - Build on trust and openness
  - Provide regular updates
  - Stay in touch
- Meet your agent
  - Visit their storefront
  - Invite them to visit your school
- Ask for references

Sample Agreements

http://www.nafsa.org/resourcelibrary/default.aspx?id=8839

Justifying the costs

- Return on Investment
- Compare cost of recruiting international students to domestic students
- Articulate your position

References

- The American International Recruitment Council
  - http://www.airc-education.org/
- Japan Associate of Overseas Studies
  - http://www.jaos.or.jp/english
- Korean Overseas Study Association
  - http://www.kosaworld.org/
- NAFSA: Assocation of International Educators
  - Knowledge Community: Recruitment, Admissions, and Preparation at www.nafsa.org

Thank you!

Questions?