

CASE STUDY

Optimizing Growth Strategy with Intent Marketing and Strategic Portfolio Planning

College of Business at Balsa University,¹ a Small Private University in the South

- **About:** Balsa University is a private university located in a metropolitan area in the South. Their college of business enrolls approximately 700 students across master's, doctoral, and certificate programs.
- **Challenge:** Balsa's College of Business began to experience enrollment declines after years of strong, steady enrollment due to outdated marketing tactics and a disjointed program development strategy.
- **Solution:** Balsa partnered with EAB's Adult Learner Recruitment to support their growth goals for the College of Business. EAB helped Balsa recruit best-fit students and grow applications through personalized, intent-based marketing. EAB also worked with Balsa to identify programs with the highest growth potential and made suggestions on the positioning of these programs.
- **Impact:** EAB's campaigns doubled application and admit volume during their first cycle of partnership, while EAB's strategic market and portfolio planning services helped Balsa restructure their business admissions requirements, improve program pages on their website, and develop a strategy for future growth.

Impact Highlights

After 1st year with EAB




+22%
Growth in enrollment

+48%
Increase in completed applications




Deploying Data-Driven Targeting and Student Journey Marketing

How EAB Revitalized Balsa's Marketing and Recruitment Strategy

Before EAB Partnership

- 
Limited Staff Capacity
 Balsa's one-person marketing team lacked the resources to execute comprehensive campaigns
- 
Lower-Quality Leads
 Although leads grew over time, lead quality was low as Balsa struggled to identify right-fit prospects
- 
Poor Conversion Rate
 Balsa failed to convert leads into applications due to an outsized focus on top-of-funnel metrics

With EAB Partnership

- 
Crafted Student Personas
 EAB developed in-depth student personas to inform targeted marketing strategy
- 
Determined Best-Fit Students
 EAB used test taker targeting and identified prospective students in key geographic areas to find right-fit prospects
- 
Launched Personalized Marketing at Scale
 Designed highly responsive, multichannel campaigns based on student personas and intent

Impact of EAB Campaigns

After 1st year with EAB

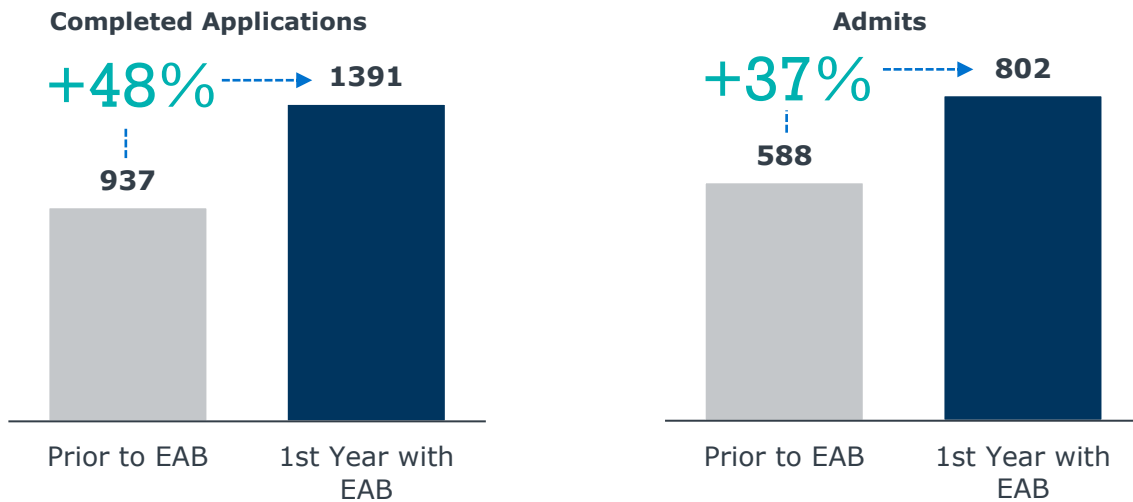
100K+
Prospective students reached via digital ads

564
Applications influenced by EAB campaigns

325
Admits influenced by EAB campaigns

1) A pseudonym

Enrollment Results: Enrollment Grew 22%



+22% Total enrollment growth after 1st year of partnership with EAB

Building a Roadmap for Ongoing Growth

EAB Market Insights and Program IQ Helped Balsa Optimize Programs for Future Growth



BALSA'S PORTFOLIO CHALLENGES

- Determining which programs represented the greatest opportunities for growth
- Identifying curricular changes to make programs more competitive
- Building consensus around changes to their program portfolio

EAB'S APPROACH



Custom Labor Market and Competitor Analysis

EAB analyzed each of the 13 programs in Balsa's portfolio using real-time employer demand and competitor enrollment data



Website and Messaging Assessment

EAB reviewed Balsa's website against 6 top competitors' sites, comparing strength of content, ease of use, and more



Audit of Application Requirements

EAB recommended updates to program prerequisites based on best practice research



In-Depth Workshop with Key Stakeholders

EAB presented actionable next steps to Balsa's Board of Trustees

EARLY IMPACT

- ▶ **Generated list of high-potential programs**, which led to renewed focus on Balsa's general MBA program and guided investment of marketing budget
- ▶ **Updated website** to better position programs using key differentiators surfaced by EAB analyses
- ▶ **Reached swift consensus and identified next steps**, including immediate program improvements and strategies to grow alumni engagement and employer partnerships



We're in a really good position right now. A lot of this can be attributed to EAB."

Executive Vice President, Balsa University