

# MARSTRATS CASE STUDY

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### Challenge

Truman State University is a public liberal arts and sciences institution, located in Kirksville, MO, with an enrollment of approximately 6,000 students who are primarily full-time degree-seeking undergraduates. Truman prides itself in providing a high-quality liberal arts and sciences education at an affordable price. There was an immediate need to increase applications for a fall semester, with a goal of achieving 6,000 applications. Truman had about 10,000 names in the database; the goal was to increase this to a minimum of 15,000 names in the database. The goal was for 50% of the increase in names to come from the St. Louis area. While Vice President, Recruitment at MediaCross, Inc., Connie Risby developed the strategy and wrote the RFP to win the project and she managed the program.

### Solution

- ▶ **Research.** We utilized both primary and secondary research to define key messages.
  - First, we reviewed research that has been conducted by Truman to define their positioning, target audience and competitive difference: Missouri's only public liberal arts university.
  - Second, we conducted primary research via an online "Brand Survey" with approximately 50 Truman freshmen and 50 mothers of Truman freshmen students to evaluate/validate the current positioning and source additional perceptions/attitudes about Truman. We focused the survey a sampling of mothers from the key counties in the St. Louis area: St. Louis City, St. Louis County and St. Charles County.
  - Key findings of the research include:
    - Truman is Missouri's only highly selective university.
    - Truman seeks to recruit the "serious" students who would choose a rigorous academic school over one that has a reputation for parties and big time sports.
    - Truman is very affordable.
    - Truman is a "public alternative to the private college."
    - Truman graduates are top recruits for graduate schools and businesses.
- ▶ **Creative.** The message we developed focused on the "personal" and "individual attention" students receive at Truman vs. being one of the crowd (at other universities).
- ▶ **Media.** We utilized radio, outdoor and print to reach both target audiences: high school students and "parents" of potential students.

### Result

The program delivered the results needed: increasing the names in their database by 50% (5,000 names) from the St. Louis area.