

Strategy Document for *College Admissions Assistance*™

**Megan Gerace
Marlia Sylvestre
Alexa Eskinazi**

Table of Contents

Strategy Document for *College Admissions Assistance*[™]1

Megan Gerace 1

Marlia Sylvestre..... 1

Alexa Eskinazi 1

SITUATION ANALYSIS3

Marketing Objectives 5

COMPETITION7

TARGET SEGMENTATION AND JUSTIFICATION10

POSITIONING13

MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTATION15

MARKETING STRATEGIES15

MEDIA STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTATION15

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS.....18

WORKS CITED.....20

SITUATION ANALYSIS

College Admissions Assistance™ was first created in 2007 with the intention of providing educational services that would help focus and transition youths in the leap between high school and college. College Admissions Assistance™ is based out of Arlington, Texas, but reaches students across the nation. College Admissions Assistance™ is currently targeting their potential customers via the Internet, mail, and free workshops, but is looking to change their approach. Due to the need for programs like College Admissions Assistance™ within the Hispanic population, in order to better reach their target audience the company is looking at the best ways to reach Hispanic youths and increase awareness and use of their service.

College Admissions Assistance™ has the monetary feasibility to invest more in media resources. Currently College Admissions Assistance™ uses the Internet, mail, and free workshops to help potential customers gain information about their services. However, these media techniques are slightly outdated and need to be revamped to fit current consumer needs. Additionally College Admissions Assistance™ should look to change the way the consumer may view the service by expanding on the importance of the free workshop and lessening the amount of mail that the company sends out.

There are many strengths to the company. For example, College Admissions Assistance™ uses a 7 Critical College Decisions Program that includes unlimited coaching and assistance, study skills and test taking skills, career coaching and college major identification, college selection, unlimited test prep for standardized

tests, merit aid process, timely reminders to keep students on track, application reviews, application and scholarship essay reviews, award letter reviews, and financial aid coaching and critical document reviews. The program is relatively inexpensive, with different payment plans to accommodate working class families and those with a lower income. Last year's group of students found the program to be very successful with 98% of students accepted by one of their top 3 choices, 92% satisfied with the career path they chose, and an average amount of financial aid awarded of \$25,796.

However, this being said the company has run into some challenges as well. Currently, many potential customers view the organization as a scam that targets minorities and low-income families. This is due to a lack of understanding of the services and, in some instances, due to a language barrier that makes it confusing for some clients to fully understand the contract with College Admissions Assistance™. Additionally, there are competing companies that offer similar services that are targeting similar market segments.

Nonetheless these challenges also provide opportunities for College Admissions Assistance™. While the company tries to reinvent its image among consumer, College Admissions Assistance™ can also start targeting more specific segments such as the Hispanic population. The Hispanic population would make an excellent potential market because the company is already structured in a favorable way to the demographic. For instance, because College Admissions Assistance™ offers resources and guidance for youth from their high school years through their undergraduate programs the company has high value to the Hispanic population.

The number of resources the program provides combined with the monthly payment options provides a great deal of flexibility for clients as well as being an all in one service.

The company addresses many of the problems that the Hispanic population faces today. Currently Hispanics within the United States are lacking in overall enrollment in higher education. Additionally the demographic does not have the guidance to transition into higher education. The Hispanic population also is not generally targeted for educational services. Lastly, a lack of overall awareness of organizations like College Admissions Assistance™ can be seen within the population.

Marketing Objectives

The objectives of College Admissions Assistance™ (also known as CAA) are to [1] better cater to the Hispanic population within the United States today. The company hopes to [2] increase awareness of its services to the Hispanic population specifically. Additionally CAA wants to [3] expand the use of the 7 Critical College Decisions program among the demographic. The company is also looking to [4] augment the percentage of US Hispanics earning degrees in higher education. Lastly the company is trying to [5] bring more attention to the educational needs of the demographic as a whole.

Overall, College Admissions Assistance™ is a highly capable organization that has the ability and opportunity to target a segment that is in great need of its services. Since College Admissions Assistance™ is an all in one service it should have

great appeal for the Hispanic population within the United States. Additionally, because of the flexible payment options already offered by the company, CAA will be able to reach a broader group of potential consumers. This is especially beneficial for the Hispanic population because Hispanics within the United States tend to earn lower incomes than their non-Hispanic counterparts.

COMPETITION

In the 2011 State of the Union Address, President Obama highlighted the need for better access to education for the Hispanic population. Consequently the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics partnered with the Department of education to form policies and or organizations to improve education for the Hispanic population. The demographic is currently the largest and fastest growing minority group within the United States but also has the lowest educational attainment levels (“Winning the Future” 2). However, although strides have been made to close the educational gap among Hispanics and Non-Hispanics within the United States, there is still a clear deficit for the Hispanic population.

There are many educational services in existence today. However, there are few that specifically target the Hispanic population. Among those that do are the Eastside Promise Neighborhood Program located in San Antonio, Texas, the Proyecto Pastoral at Dolores Mission located in Los Angeles, California, and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, an international organization of colleges based out of San Antonio, Texas. These three organizations are the biggest competitors with College Admissions Assistance that target the Hispanic Population.

President Obama first created the Eastside Promise Neighborhood Program in 2010. The program is intended for youths within the San Antonio community and works to help children enter Kindergarten, transition from middle to high school, and eventually obtain a postsecondary degree, certification, or credential. (“Promise Neighborhood” The 10 Results) Although the Eastside Promise Neighborhood Program offers many of the same services as College Admissions Assistance™, it is

limited to the San Antonio Community. As a result, the company may find fewer opportunities within the San Antonio community, but otherwise can still target the majority of the market.

Proyecto Pastoral at Dolores Mission is a not for profit organization that is working within the Pico-Aliso and Boyle Heights district of Los Angeles to provide training, education, and social services within the community. The organization currently serves over 2500 children, youth, and families through the programs that they offer. Today the not for profit has two centers, La Guarderia and Centro de Alegria which provide low cost early childhood education services designed for students in Kindergarten or older. The organization also offers a program called Imaginado Mañana Pico-Aliso Community Team Outreach or IMPACTO that provide academic assistance, educational enrichment, and parental support. However, much like the Eastside Promise Neighborhood Program, this organization caters only to a specific community. This decreases the amount of competition for the target market because College Admission Assistance™ provides many of the same services but wants to connect with the Hispanic population as a whole instead of focusing its efforts on one community.

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities seems to pose the largest threat to College Admissions Assistance™. Today the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities is associated with upwards of 400 colleges and universities in the United States, Puerto Rico, Latin America, Spain, and Portugal that collectively enroll more than two thirds of the Hispanic student population within the United States (Qué es HACU?). However, while the statistic looks

impressive, HACU has partnered with less than 10% of colleges within the United States. This gives College Admissions Assistance™ an opportunity to partner with many of the remaining colleges and universities within the United States. However, College Admission Assistance™ must increase awareness of its services in order to effectively take advantage of this opportunity.

TARGET SEGMENTATION AND JUSTIFICATION

Since 2012, every month for the next two decades 50,000 Hispanics will turn 18. (Hispanics in America) "The lack of educational attainment among Hispanics is one of the biggest crises in the American labor force with far- reaching implications for the economy," states Craig Torres, a writer from Bloomberg Businessweek. As reported by the National Center for Education Statistics, 14 percent of Hispanics 25 and older had received at least a bachelor's degree in 2011. This statistic is implying that Hispanics should have help with education from companies like College Admissions Assistance [here on known as CAA]. CAA has the potential to help Hispanics across the nation succeed.

"Hispanics make up about 18 percent of all youths in the United states between the ages of 16 and 25 (Mitchell, Marissa)." A key insight to our proposal is targeting a market of Hispanics ranging from age 16 to 25. We believe that this specific demographic will channel Hispanics striving for a degree or certificate in higher education. In addition, we not only chose this target for educational purposes but also to target career- seeking individuals. Another key insight objective for this age margin is to help students gain admissions to college and be successful in the ensuing four years rather than simply getting students accepted into colleges and universities.

Another objective we found is that it is more practical to target Hispanics earning a lower income. According to the US Census Bureau, Hispanics median income in 2010 was \$37,759 (US Census Bureau). College tuition and fees has

increased by 439% since 1982 (Measuring Up 2008) and are expected to keep increasing over the next few years. We found that Hispanics tend to have a lower income which is why we want to reach out to Hispanics in a lower financial bracket. "Affordability was the top reason for not completing a college degree (Alonso-Zaldivar, Ricardo and Tompson, Trevor)." Among other things, this key insight gives options to students with the flexible payment program; that allows customers to around 150 dollars per month for CAA's services (College Admissions Assistance).

We found it easiest to aim our target market at high density Hispanic areas (HDHA) such as: Los Angeles and San Diego, California, Miami, Florida, Houston Texas, and Denver Colorado. "Nearly half (45%) of the nation's Hispanic population lives in just 10 metropolitan areas, according to tabulations of the 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) by the Pew Hispanic Center, a project of the Pew Research Center" (Motel, Seth). Holding the nation's largest Hispanic population at 5.7 million, we expect Los Angeles to place a huge role in our target segmentation (Motel, Seth).

The final characteristic that we look for in our target market are successful students in high school mentorships. This particular segment relates to our campaign because Latinos want to be "worthy of Orgullo Hispano, also known as Hispanic Pride (Campbell, Jessica)." To be involved in mentorships allows one student to pass on the vision of her culture to the next person. Our main idea of targeting mentorships is based on longevity. They prove that "relationships 1 year or longer are most likely to lead to positive outcomes in youth (Small, Stephen)." In addition to longevity, these programs offer regular opportunities for participation for students which will gear our segmentation.

Above all, our goal is to help Hispanic students gain admissions and succeed at a career. Breaking down barriers like "Hispanics are among the least formally educated minority groups;" underlines the concentration and justification of why we are specifically targeting Hispanic youth ranging from the ages of 16 to 25 (Ferner, Susan). Richard Fry, an education researcher at the Pew Hispanic Center, reports "Aspirations for higher education are very strong among Hispanics, but there's a yawning discrepancy between aspirations and actual attainment" (Alonso-Zaldivar, Ricardo and Tompson, Trevor). CAA will help knock down information barriers that block Hispanics from gaining the education they deserve. "Fifty-four percent said their own parents either did not expect them to go to college, or did not care either way (Alonso-Zaldivar, Ricardo and Tompson, Trevor)." To reiterate, we are looking to target Hispanic youths, between the ages of 16 and 25, who are in a lower financial bracket, and are looking to be or are currently involved in a mentorship program.

POSITIONING

In a similar approach for all distinctive markets, a unique positioning must be created for College Admissions Assistance™ in terms of reaching the Hispanic target market. Luckily for CAA we have not seen any college preparatory programs that focus solely on the transition period from high school to college for the Hispanic population, at least on a national level. Thus allowing CAA to break into the market at their own speed and allow for the development of a large Hispanic following, without the rush to compete with cheap attempts to gain Hispanic consumers.

By focusing on the true nature of the Hispanic family, rather than cheesy stereotypes, which often only work on the short term level, we hope to help CAA develop a long time standing with the Hispanic community, thus creating a long line of repeat customers within this target market. We hope to position CAA as a tool to advance families and ensure that those who utilize the program will get the most out of life, not only after graduating college, but also in the day-to-day interactions a college student will encounter regularly.

So not only will we position CAA to appeal to the college student, in terms of being successful later in life, we hope to position CAA to appeal to the immediate family of the student in question. CAA will connect to the family, and highlight how higher education will benefit the family unit as a whole, not just the student. Further showing how a small investment now will yield a large payout later.

With all this in mind, the position we hope to develop for CAA will create a feel that will truly bring awareness to the importance of higher education in today's world for an even playing field for the Hispanic community. Also we know this

positioning for CAA will show how the impact is greater for all those involved in the decision making process during the schooling and after completion of said higher education.

Undoubtedly we feel that this position will also allow for some spill over in other markets. Positioning CAA as a program that reaches all scopes in terms of success in the transition from high school to college, will be a message that all can relate to, thus broadening the awareness overall. A goal of CAA's currently, in fact we are just merely tailoring the current position to accommodate the strong family ties and the thought to live in the moment, both strongly associated with the Hispanic community, to reach the new target market of Hispanic teens and young adults. (Korzenny and Korzenny)

MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

MARKETING STRATEGIES

So in order to tackle the media strategy and implementation, we must first break down all of CAA's objectives in order to create a marketing strategy, thus creating a general outline of how to achieve each goal. Our objectives can be broken into three distinct areas of focus. First is the gaining awareness phase, which is then subdivided between showing students how CAA's program can benefit them and then altering the remainder of the student's family how higher education can not only benefit the student in question, but the family as a whole. This phase is followed by the enrollment phase, which is the part of the campaign that focuses on increasing enrollment of Hispanic students in College Admissions Assistance™ program. And then the last step in the campaign and the final goals have to deal with the overall improvement and increase in Hispanics that have higher education degrees and those pursuing high education degrees.

MEDIA STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

So in order to gain more awareness in the first phase of the campaign, we have subdivided the two audiences in accordance of their level of involvement and their specific needs. The first subdivision is the student, where we focus on showing how this program developed by the College Admissions Assistance™ can benefit them. We hope to disperse this message on a digital platform, utilizing in mobile application advertising, digital television show streaming commercial

advertisements and interactive website, where the student can test the program to see how this can aid in the process transitioning between high school and college.

College Admissions Assistance™ needs to reach farther than digital also, it needs to connect with Hispanics in high-density Hispanic areas. We found it important to position CAA in medium that high percentage of Hispanics enjoy on an everyday basis such as popular television channels and famous magazines. Allowing CAA to be relatable to our audience subdivision, the student.

We found that Hispanic television is the most useful in promoting the awareness of CAA. "The number of Hispanic households with TV sets increased 3.1% in February 2011 from the year before (Guskin, Emily and Mitchell, Amy)." We see CAA ads on channels in which our target segmentation views. We are placing CAA advertisements on English and Spanish- speaking networks to attract all Hispanics ages 16-25; rather than narrowing down our target market. In addition to TV becoming the acculturated media genre, it is also inexpensive. A top-rated Spanish TV show, Sabado Gigante, a 30- second spot costs \$11,500, compared with an American show at a price of \$360,000 (Lieblich, Julia).

So in addition to reaching this subdivision digitally and via the television we see the utilization of print promotion as a viable method to further the campaign. "Hispanic- interest magazines grew 18% in 2011 (Bavilian, Emma)!" So for the campaign CAA should be promoted in English-speaking magazines like Seventeen but also in Hispanic related magazines—much like Cosmopolitan's newest edition, Cosmopolitan Latina. We chose both English and Spanish- speaking method to create a wide opening to our audiences while staying in their comfort zone.

Now moving on to the second subdivision of awareness, the immediate family of the target market. See as the Hispanic culture tends to live life under the view that you live for today and tomorrow is not guaranteed, we often find that the immediate family of Hispanic students are not willing to make the investment in higher education for a better paying job in the future. (Korzenny and Korzenny) So with this part of the campaign we plan to tackle that thought directly. Here we wish to add to the endorsement page, testimonies from family members of all nationalities including the typical Hispanic family members, explaining how the program and the completion of college as a whole for their student assisted and elevated their student but their whole family. Also commissioning advertisements in the typical parenting magazines in the same fashion as before looking into both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking magazines.

The next phase of the campaign is to increase the actual enrollment of Hispanics in the CAA program, so to do this we are including discount codes in the advertisements focused towards the Hispanic student and immediate family depicted in the prior phase. Also to encourage enrollment we hope to make the CAA program more attainable and user friendly by implementing and launching a mobile application that allows the student to access all of the program's tools anywhere from a smart phone or tablet computer. The application serves as a further encouragement to enroll in CAA's program.

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

The first marketing goal was to better cater to the Hispanic population within the United States today. This is a goal that must be dissected in order to be thoroughly achieved. CAA must cater to the various parts of Hispanic population that play a role in the deciding factors whether a student will continue education or not. So in order to evaluate CAA's reach to all facets of the Hispanic family—all with various levels of buying power, we must look at how each responds to the message put out by CAA. This can be achieved through customer evaluations, focus groups and even test runs in high-density Hispanic areas.

The second marketing objective was to increase awareness of its services to the Hispanic population specifically. With CAA's campaigns to specifically target the Hispanic population we would have to look at the effectiveness of those campaigns in particular. How many click-through's did we have on in-application advertisements, how many QR codes were scanned in the Hispanic focused magazines and newspapers and various other traceable results from the aforementioned positioning of the product provided by College Admissions Assistance™.

The third marketing objective was to expand the use of the 7 Critical College Decisions Program among the demographic. This objective will be the easiest to monitor for the simple fact that whilst creating a profile for the program, users will be asked to identify what race they are objectively. So with one click of the mouse CAA will be able to monitor whether or not there is an increase of Hispanic use of the program due to the efforts depicted in this strategy.

The fourth marketing objective was to augment the percentage of US Hispanics earning degrees in higher education. And going hand in hand with the prior, the fifth marketing objective was to bring more attention to the educational needs of the demographic as a whole. Both are goals, which CAA has recognized as long-term, thus is measuring our effectiveness in this objective in particular may prove to be slightly difficult. So with that in mind CAA would not necessarily know their direct impact on these figures as relayed by the United States Census Bureau, without some serious number crunching on CAA's part. However we would be satisfied just with the mere increase knowing that CAA had some impact on this increase, which should be visible through the accomplishments of other marketing objectives such as what percentage of the College Admissions Assistance™ customers that are classified as Hispanic and their success in the program.

WORKS CITED

- ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, RICARDO , and TREVOR TOMPSON . "Despite Strong Belief In Higher Education, Hispanics Often Don't Make It To College: AP/Univision Poll." Breaking News and Opinion on The Huffington Post. Huff Post College, 29 July 2010. Web. 18 Nov. 2012.
<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/07/29/despite-strong-belief-in-_n_663329.html>.
- Bazilian, Emma. "'Cosmo Latina' Takes Aim At Bicultural Readers | Adweek." Adweek " Breaking News in Advertising, Media and Technology. Adweek, 13 Mar. 2012. Web. 20 Nov. 2012.
<<http://www.adweek.com/news/press/cosmo-latina-takes-aim-bicultural-readers-138864>>.
- Bureau, U.S. Census. "Hispanic Americans: Census Facts " Infoplease.com." Infoplease " Free Online Encyclopedia, Almanac, Atlas, and more " Infoplease.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Nov. 2012.
<<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/hhmcensus1.html>>.
- Campbell, Jessica. " Mentoring program pairs Latina students and strong role models | GothamSchools." GothamSchools - Breaking News and Analysis of the NYC Public Schools. Open Plans, 22 Mar. 2012. Web. 18 Nov. 2012.
<<http://gothamschools.org/2012/03/22/mentoring-program-pairs-latina-students-and-strong-role-models/>>.
- "College Admissions Assistance :: Home Page." College Admissions Assistance :: Home Page. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Nov. 2012.
<<http://www.caaconnect.com/index.php>>.
- "College Admissions Assistance." *College Admissions Assistance*. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 Oct 2012. <<http://www.caaconnect.com/index.php>>.
- "Eastside Promise Neighborhood." Eastside Promise Neighborhood. N.p., Jan. 2012. Web. 8 Nov. 2012. <<http://eastsidepromise.org/>>.
- Farner, Susan. "Assessing the Educational Needs and Interests of the Hispanic Population: The Role of Extension." The Journal of Extension (JOE) . Journal of Extension, 1 Aug. 2005. Web. 18 Nov. 2012.
<<http://www.joe.org/joe/2005august/rb2.php>>.
- Gould, Jens Erik. "Bridging the Hispanic achievement gap." *PODER360*. N.p., January 2012, Web. 22 Oct 2012.
<http://www.poder360.com/article_detail.php?id_article=6249&pag=2>.

Guskin, Emily, and Amy Mitchell. "Hispanic Media: Faring Better than the Mainstream Media | State of the Media." *The State of the News Media* 2012. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 Nov. 2012. <<http://stateofthemedias.org/2011/hispanic-media-faring-better-than-the-mainstream-media/>>.

"HACU Scholarship Program Recipients Announced." Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. N.p., 1999. Web. 10 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.hacu.net/hacu/default.asp>>.

Korzenny, Felipe, and Korzenny, Betty Ann. *Hispanic Marketing: Connecting with the New Latino Consumer*. Second Edition. Abingdon, Virginia: Routledge, 2012. Print.

Liebllich, Julia. "If you want a big, new market try reaching U.S. Hispanics (Fortune, 1988) - Fortune Features ." *FORTUNE Features* . CNN, 11 Nov. 2012. Web. 20 Nov. 2012. <<http://features.blogs.fortune.cnn.com/2012/11/11/if-you-want-a-big-new-market-try-reaching-u-s-hispanics-fortune-1988/>>.

Mitchell, Marissa. "Shaping identities: Young Hispanics don't fit into distinct categories Â« Beyond The Border." *Northwestern News21: A Parent's Quest*. Knight Foundation, n.d. Web. 17 Nov. 2012. <<http://northwestern.news21.com/identity/shaping-identities-young-hispanics-dont-fit-into-neat-categories/>>.

Motel, Seth, and Eileen Patten. "Characteristics of the 60 Largest Metropolitan Areas by Hispanic Population | Pew Hispanic Center." *Pew Hispanic Center - Chronicling Latinos Diverse Experiences in a Changing America*. Pew Research Center, 19 Sept. 2012. Web. 18 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/09/19/characteristics-of-the-60-largest-metropolitan-areas-by-hispanic-population/>>.

Pew Hispanic Center "Latino Youths Optimistic But Beset by Problems." *Pew Research Center*. December 11 2009. Web. 22 Oct 2012. <<http://www.pewhispanic.org/2009/12/11/latino-youths-optimistic-but-beset-by-problems/>>.

"Proyecto Pastoral at Dolores Mission." *Proyecto Pastoral*. N.p., 2 Nov. 2008. Web. 20 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.proyectopastoral.org/>>.

Small, Stephen. "What research tells us about effective youth mentoring programs." A WHAT WORKS, WISCONSIN FACT SHEET. The University of Wisconsin. University of Wisconsinâ€“Madison/ExtensionÂ Â , Wisconsin. 1 Jan. 2008. Lecture.

"This Is Americas Changing Electorate." *Hispanics In America*. Resurgent Republic, 2012. Web. 12 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.hispanicvoters2012.com/>>

Torres, Craig. "Hispanic Workers Show 80% Without College in U.S. Crisis - Businessweek." Businessweek - Business News, Stock Market & Financial Advice. News from Bloomberg, 14 Nov. 2012. Web. 17 Nov. 2012.
<<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-11-14/hispanic-workers-lack-education-as-numbers-grow-in-u-dot-s-dot>>.

Martinez, Magdalena, and Edith Fernandez. "Latinos at Community Colleges." *Deepblue.lib*. University of Michigan, April 6 2004, Web. 21 Oct. 2012. Vol 2004, Issue 105, pg 51-62.
<<http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/2027.42/34683/1/116ftp.pdf>>.

Nora, Amuary, and Gloria Crisp. "Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research." *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*. 24. (2009): 317-353. Web. 22 Oct 2012. <doi:10.1007/978-1-4020-9628-0_8>.

"Winning the Future." Whitehouse.gov. N.p., Apr. 2011. Web. 28 Oct. 2012.
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/WinningTheFutureImprovingLatinoEducation.pdf>.