

Session Title:	How to market courses that just won't grow
Speaker(s):	Penny Eccles
Chair:	
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Speaker/Institution Bio/Information:	Marketing Partnership. Previous Director of student recruitment and marketing. Worked at 7 institutions.
Overview/Aim of session:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify reasons for low growth 2. Accept your competitor set 3. Plug the leaks 4. Identify academic champions 5. Don't wait for the strategy – DEFINE the strategy
Workshop Content	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spend time to find the reasons for decline. Rarely given enough time to think. Identify what is going on. Identify why. Subject may just be in decline – students don't want to study anymore. New subject area launched badly. 10% of new courses flew. Instant success = sustained success. If you haven't had instant success with a new course, it probably won't come. Long sales process for courses, no budget assigned. Very small % of 100 HE professionals said new courses get budget attached – destined to fail. Can focus on new shiny course, and take eye off the ball with more reliable courses. Strategically carve out time. 2. Who is your competitor set. 47% of HE professionals felt the SLT had a sense of their competitor set. How can we market if we don't know who we are actually competing with. SLT sometimes have an idea of who they would like to compete with. UG easy answer with UCAS tracker – see who competitors are for each subject. Data is there, use it! Stealing strategy – only way to grow is to steal market share from competitors. Unless honest about where to steal them from, could spend resource trying to steal from the wrong competitors. Plot subject areas on map – competitor growth/decline vs market share. Effective way to communicate problem with department. Any subject areas below decline line – maybe these subjects are a warning sign. Top right corner high growth and competitor share – be cautious as may have a niche area – if there isn't anything else to gain from it – may have squeezed the sponge, nothing more to gain from them. Bottom right hand corner – sector beating niches – everyone else

struggling but you are doing well. Lots of applications, but not getting firm choices – low/medium tariff institutions – Hums, accounting, politics – most applications going to higher tariff institutions – empty trolleys – not worth spending time and money. Bottom left corner – low share and in decline in sector – need a lot of money to get out of this – leave them alone – we work in service to institution, not to individual subjects – better served looking in other areas. Caterpillars – top left corner – market in growth, seeing demand from students – computing, law, psychology, criminology – you have a small share of the market. Give them the time and energy and they will become butterflies. Not marketing to save them – change their product – how to make their course appealing. Review real competitor set. Is course offering more attractive than theirs. If its no – what can they do about it. This can be a hard conversation. Need to move the caterpillars from top left to top right. Find you caterpillars. Treasure chests – business management, nursing, still big subject areas – need time and energy – currently in decline but worth the investment.

3. Leaky hosepipes. Every institution operates as a leaky hosepipe – get as many leads as possible – lose them at certain places – 28 frequent places. Gain more by looking at where you leak students in the journey – students meet in outreach – precious drop of water – added to the CRM journey – less personalised, started as a personalised journey. Special trail of personalised communication will convert better. Interview process – cleaner more attractive to attend, follow up comms. Pre-enrolment leak – work hard for 18monthsh to get as many students as you can, confirmed, 10% leak before enrolment – spend more time of 10% - focus on clearing and spend money on this – if focus on 10% rather than clearing will see the biggest gains.
4. $\frac{3}{4}$ of marketing partnership work now is with academic colleagues. Unless product is right, marketing wont be worthwhile. 5 areas that academics are irreplaceable. 1 – product – can change their course, it is our quality process, they can make change. 2 – academic outreach, strategic, converts at higher level, advise where best to spend their efforts and who is best to send. 3 – open day talk, are they all where you want them to be – mostly a bit mixed, could make a large change to the courses. 4 – applicant day session. 5 – thought leadership – their personal brand, how to spread the word with their subject area, how can they share with their key contacts, do we ever run an academic briefing session. This is the biggest area to grow the courses. Called DBD applicants across the university on other programmes – spoke to them and promoted their programme – pulled applicants across to their programme. Understand academics are stretched, but find the right academic champion – a lot can be overcome. PG – 1:1 relationship with academics, so crucial for conversion – likelihood of that happening low – don't always see it as part of their remit. If you can't find an academic champion – just leave it – its not worth your time and energy.
5. 'Have to wait for list of priorities from above' – make your list of priorities – you probably know more that your executive team on

	<p>where investment is needed. Build confidence in your expertise – you define the strategy and recommendations. If you wait for a strategy – wrong priorities may be set for the wrong reasons, could be still looking at wrong priority sets, wrong subject areas. Put forward your recommendations when you have done the thinking and mapping exercise. Need to be wise with resources. Be confident in your approach.</p>
<p>Case Studies/Examples:</p>	
<p>Scenarios/Roundtable discussions:</p>	
<p>Questions and Answers:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is you have a good caterpillar and no academic champion? State your case. Find people who have a lightbulb and work with them. What is in it for them. • Should we check in with the good academics and focus on others? If you have a champion, easier to say get on with it, always something they can be doing better. Look for areas where they can grow. Double down on academic champions, and allow them to grow before you get new ones. • How often should we review caterpillars and treasure chests? Annual review is important, work our where we are. Nursing, used to be top right or left, now bottom left, some things move, doesn't mean they should be abandoned. Everything is annual. Strategic working, not operational. Long game and stick with it. • How to get new courses on board to align with promotional timeline? Use the same slide with calendar, reiterating when courses need to be in the prospectus and promotion by. Cost per acquisition can be £2000 per lead close to clearing, further away is £300 in the cycle. Constant reminder of cycle. • Aggressive marketing is never a leaflet or a pen!! • What would you recommend for personalised post outreach activity? Find out what is being sent to these students, marketing teams sometimes don't realise how important outreach is. You build the connection with them – what is your role when you follow up with them? Open Days, other events and activity? Outreach is the secret weapon! You are the spark. Do the comms come from you. CRM is not that hard – could they have a photo of you. Special line to you in clearing. Special relationship is neglected.
<p>Summary Key takeaways:</p>	<p>Asses and diagnose the problem. Accept competitor set and where you are going to steal from. Plug the leaks in your hosepipe – the students are already there. Academic champions – nurture them. Don't wait, create! Your strategy.</p>

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