



## CASE STUDY: UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON

### BUSINESS CHALLENGE

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Expand the existing research program to evaluate and improve brand perception, with the ultimate goal of ranking as a Top 50 university in IPSOS' National Student Survey by 2015.

Competition among academic institutions is fierce, and the University of Northampton very much feels the pressure as it competes with nearby universities with more financial resources. With the UK government's whitepaper on education and higher fees due to come into effect in September 2012, optimizing the university's enrollment is a pressing concern that requires immediate action, and possibly even transformation.

To achieve its objective of ranking as a Top 50 university, the UN needs to optimize the current student experience to ensure satisfaction, among other needs. Prior to Spring of 2012, the university's research program consisted of focus groups with existing students.

The University of Northampton determined that to succeed, it needed to understand current students' satisfaction drivers, measure performance against these key drivers and detect changes in sentiment in real-time. Further, they looked to gather feedback from prospective students as well as key influencers in the enrollment decision-making process, including parents, faculty, advisors and alumni.

### CLIENT:

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**Industry:** Marketing Research

#### **Client Profile/Background:**

A university committed to investment in the student experience, improvement across all aspects of the school, and development of its social media program.

The University of Northampton, a higher education establishment situated in the heart of England, offers various subjects at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. As part of the University's new strategy, it aims to be the top university in the UK for social enterprise by 2015. This social enterprise strategy is based on a desire to be distinctive, forward-thinking and responsible.

The University of Northampton needed to look beyond its current research program to get a better read on student satisfaction.



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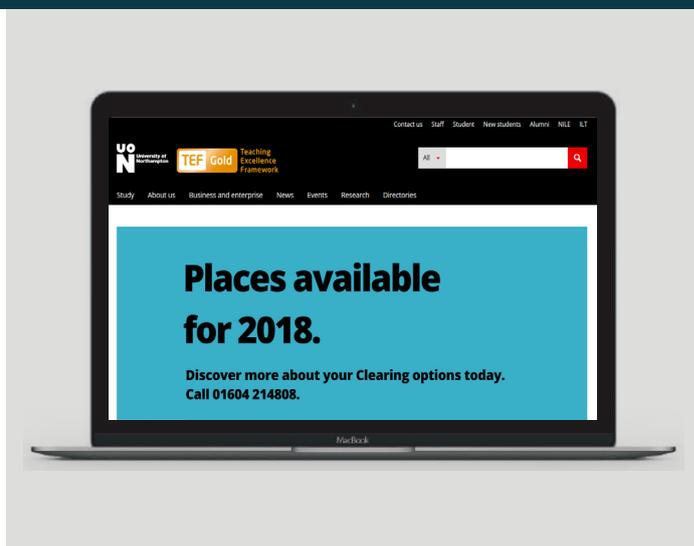
### SOLUTION

Encouraging on-site listening and offering incremental research opportunities by leveraging social media.

The University of Northampton planned to strengthen its research program to include ongoing quantitative research, expand its respondent-base and deepen qualitative insight.

Recognizing that its audience is more mobile and socially engaged than ever, the university opted to tap into the social channels, particularly Facebook, already being used as an inherent form of communication. The University of Northampton's Facebook page is designed to serve as a primary communication channel for students, faculty, alumni, fans and friends providing them with essential information that would have, until now, only been available on the University website or notice-board.

The University of Northampton's market research department approached Toluna to create the branded, University of Northampton "Connect-UN" community using Toluna's PanelPortal Connect™. PanelPortal Connect integrates a Panel Portal branded community web portal within Facebook fan pages to provide a forum for onsite discussions amongst members, polls, and surveys all within a single, integrated platform.



### IMPACT

On-site 'listening' shapes quantitative surveying

On-site discussions have helped shape follow-up surveys (uncovering new key drivers), resulting in a change to our ad campaign from profiling successful alumni to a focus on future employment possibilities.

Social media community platform encourages broader participation from 'key influencers'.

Varied feedback on a multitude of topics including ad campaign and messaging, events on campus, courses and offerings, and more.

Unsolicited feedback amongst community members, such as; "Who is taking x class?"

To read more about the University of Northampton please visit [www.northampton.ac.uk](http://www.northampton.ac.uk)