

# Acadia University Uses ezRecruit™ to Recruit Students in the NetGeneration

## INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

### Acadia University

A Canadian university, founded in 1838, located in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. Offers bachelor and master's programs.

### Enrolment

- 3,700 full-time undergraduate students
- 150 full-time graduate students

### Areas of Expertise

Biology, Environmental Science, Geology, Nutrition, Chemistry, Physics, Math, Engineering, Theatre Studies, Kinesiology, Recreation Management, Education, Psychology, Business, Computer Science, Languages, Music and Social Sciences.

### EDGE Solution

ezRecruit™ Enrolment Management Software

### Technical Summary

- Web-based, built in JSP using open-source technology
- Built for Oracle 8i platform
- Five administration levels
- 25 users in admissions, recruitment/ liaison and marketing
- Integrates with existing Student Information System (SIS)

### Benefits

- Improved communication
- Reduced mailing and inquiry management costs
- Accurate real-time reports
- Higher application conversion and enrolment yield ratios
- Multiple-channel communication

*ezRecruit™ allows us to manage our enrolment process the way we should. We can perform tasks with unlimited flexibility and without being bogged down with complicated workflow processes.*

**Mike Holmes, Prospective Applicant Information Coordinator,  
Acadia University**

In March 1996, Acadia University became the first university in Canada to commit itself to building a wired campus by assigning a laptop to each undergraduate student at the beginning of the academic year. Since then, Acadia has received worldwide accolades for its innovation in teaching and technology. In 1999, the university became a laureate of the Smithsonian Institution through the prestigious Computerworld Smithsonian Award. Acadia University has a good relationship with its students and stakeholders, built on a strong brand.

To continue building on this brand, Acadia wanted to demonstrate to prospective students that they could meet the needs of the NetGeneration (prospects born 'digital', after 1982). It was a natural step for Acadia to seek a solution that used the Web. The enrolment management team was also looking for ways to improve all aspects of the recruitment workflow.

Like most universities, Acadia was responding to prospective student inquiries by mailing packages and answering e-mail. Acadia wanted to use the Web to offer prospective students a completely customized experience.

## Meeting the Needs of Prospective Students

Prospective students in the NetGeneration expect more personalized attention because they know it is available to them. With this in mind, Acadia knew they had to communicate with prospective students online. Acadia chose ezRecruit™, a Web-based system that would create not only a front-end student portal which would deliver personalized, targeted information, but also a back-end administration centre, where staff could respond to students, gain access to reports and build one-to-one relationships.

After evaluating enrolment management systems, Acadia selected ezRecruit™, knowing "it would become a single source of information for everyone involved," says Mike Holmes, Prospective Applicant Information Coordinator at Acadia University. "Acadia realized that ezRecruit™ was a system that was designed with students in mind.

The proposal showed us the deep roots that EDge had in higher education and their understanding of the markets we served."

## The Prospective Student Portal - Build It and They Will Come!

Working with the Acadia team, EDge developed an online prospective student portal, Acadia4U

(<https://www.edgeip.com/acadia4U>).

It is designed to collect prospective student profiles, offer personalized information on programs, allow students to book campus tours and apply online. It is also integrated with Acadia's existing Web site and student information system. Since launching on February 5, 2003, the portal has seen over 7,700 students sign in. At the end of August 2003, two thirds of the 6,045 student applications had been completed using the online application. Many tasks such as booking a campus tour, answering inquiries through smart FAQs, communicating and tracking prospects through e-mail have become automated.

ezRecruit™ was immediately successful in streamlining the flow of information between prospects and staff. In the first three weeks after launch, Acadia had 724 prospective students register on Acadia4U. Only 50 of those students requested information by mail. "Imagine if all of those students had sent us contact cards instead: 724 student records for data entry and 724 application / information packages to be sent," Mike Holmes commented. Overall, the workflow has been

streamlined which has led to declining costs, and has enabled staff to respond to mission critical tasks, such as focusing on building relationships with prospects.

## Dramatic Reduction in e-Mail Inquiries

What was equally impressive to Acadia was the reduction in e-mail inquiries as a result of the smart FAQs. In the last three years, responding to inquiries had become a labour-intensive job for the recruitment staff. By using the smart FAQs in ezRecruit™ e-mail inquiries dropped by 90%. In the first six months after deployment, more than 20,000 questions were answered automatically. Mike comments, "Most of the students were using the FAQs and other resources on the site. This is exactly how we had envisioned ezRecruit™ working."

## Information Helps Serve Students Better

Before ezRecruit™, every student inquiry, whether by mail, phone, e-mail or walk-in, was treated as a first-time inquiry because there was no communication history available. Mike and his team knew their efforts were being duplicated and that data entry was inefficient. They wanted to know more about their prospects and applicants. Mike states, "There was no question of getting buy-in from the recruitment team for a Web-based solution. We all knew our

deficiencies in using a static system and we wanted to improve upon them."

ezRecruit™ tracks all communication between students and staff. The system allows the Acadia team to do targeted communication to prospective students. This includes e-mail, letters, packages, open house invitations and tele-counselling campaigns. At any given moment, staff can check the status of the prospect, view their profile, see what questions they have asked and what their education goals are. "This feature is excellent for staff. It makes them much more knowledgeable and comfortable in talking with prospects. Any of the staff can access this data 24/7," says Mike. "I really enjoy the freedom and versatility that this tool gives us, plus the information we can glean through communication history. I commented to my colleague on one occasion about a student whose communication history showed that she had browsed through almost all of the FAQs – that tells me a lot about them and it is information that we could never get before."

Acadia University continues to lead in developing new ways of integrating technology into the day-to-day recruitment processes. Mike concludes, "The system that we have now is truly comprehensive and seems to do everything we envisioned, and we're just scratching the surface of its potential."

## ezRecruit™

Based on customer relationship management (CRM) software, this innovative Web-based solution features many resources and tools, including an intuitive student portal that gives prospective students access to personalized information, FAQs, automated e-mail and mail box, event registration and 24/7 admission applications. On the back-end, institutions can manage the relationship with prospective students using automated e-mail responses, targeted communication, package and inventory control, event planning, reports, recruitment cycle planning and other tools. ezRecruit™ also helps manage the relationships that institutions have with high schools, counsellors and parents.

## EDge Interactive

EDge Interactive brings people, technology and information together to create focused solutions in education. EDge has enjoyed strong growth as a leader in providing information services and software solutions to clients across North America and around the world since 1995. Products and services include e-Tours™, Interactive ViewBooks™, ezRecruit™, Web site design, e-mail marketing and recruiting services. Web sites managed by EDge include: SchoolFinder.com, ScholarshipsCanada.com and StudyinCanada.com.

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