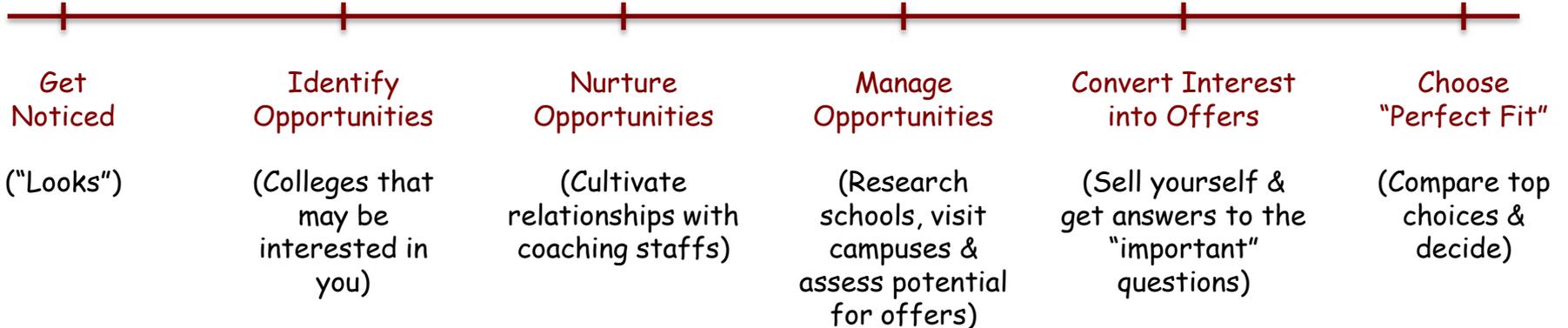
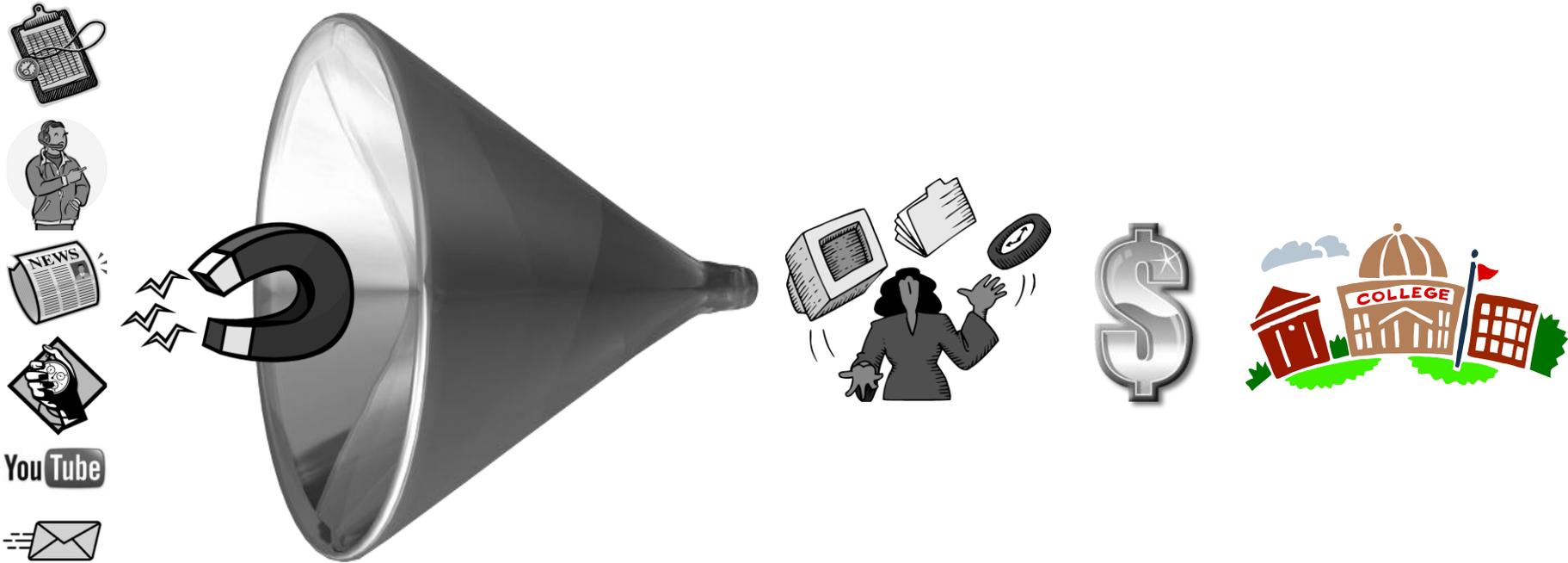


The Perfect College Recruiting Lifecycle



The Perfect College Recruiting Lifecycle

See diagram

Get Noticed

The recruiting lifecycle starts with getting noticed by coaches, or as some might say, getting “looks.” Having coaches know who you are is important. But just because a coach “knows” you or notices you playing well at an event doesn’t mean they’re actively recruiting you. So when you hear a parent say, “So and so is getting *looks* from XYZ State,” take it with a grain of salt. Looks are often misinterpreted as something more than they really are, which at the end of the day, are nothing more than “preliminary evaluations.”

There are multiple ways for athletes to get themselves noticed. Attending college camps, combines, and tournaments where coaches will be present may garner some “looks.” Completing online college prospect questionnaires and sending introductory emails to coaches may help, too. Creating a YouTube video and connecting with college coaches on Facebook may get your name out there. Many athletes sign up with a scouting organization or a profiling service to help increase their looks.

Basically, the more you get your name out there, the better. And if your only goal is to “get looks,” then your college recruiting lifecycle can STOP here. “Looks” that become nothing more than that are dead opportunities. So if the goal is to eventually convert looks into offers, then there is a great deal of work to be done still. And if you decide to seek help and hire a reputable company to assist you, just be sure that you know what you’re getting for the investment. If all you’re getting for your fee is a bunch of “looks,” it might not be the right program for you.

Identify Opportunities

You can tell when a “look” becomes an opportunity. If you have initiated contact with 20 college programs, and coaches from 7 of these schools have expressed sincere interest in you, then these are the 7 that you can identify as potential opportunities. Understand that opportunities can surface and then disappear. Coaches can appear interested, and then stop sending mail altogether. So you have to keep working at it, and you must be able to tell the difference between “mailing list” level interest and the type of interest coaches show prospects that are high on their wish list, or depth chart as we call it.

For example, if you receive a standard, mass-produced letter at your school, then you’re probably on a mailing list at this point. But if you receive a hand-written note, mailed to your house, directly from the Head Coach, then chances are your recruiting value is much higher. If you make a campus visit and they give you the standard tour, then you might not be very high on their depth chart. By comparison, if they roll out the red

carpet and treat your family to a private tour, then you may be one of their top prospects.

Nurture Opportunities

Cultivating relationships with college coaches is arguably the most important part of the entire lifestyle. At SAS, we've written volumes on this very subject, and it's pretty simple actually. People want to do business with those they trust. And it's no different in college recruiting. Coaches recruit prospects with talent and grades, but they offer scholarships to the ones in which they've built confidence and trust. So when you've identified legitimate opportunities, you have to work to keep it alive.

Most student-athletes who start to experience some recruiting activity make the costly mistake of becoming a spectator. After all, coaches are interested and they're going to stay interested, right? Not necessarily.

The fact is, coaches evaluate and court hundreds of prospects for every one offer they extend. So to sustain interest, you must engage coaches on a more personal level than those with whom you're competing. And I don't mean telling coaches how great you are or sending them newspapers articles that feature you. I'm talking about cultivating relationships. Nurturing these opportunities. I'm talking about communicating on a level that separates you from others. Not sure how to do this? Read this article featured in our blog back in February 2011... [Athletes: Stop marketing, start nurturing.](#)

Manage Opportunities

The recruiting process can be a juggling act. School, practice time, games, homework, trainers... the schedules kids maintain these days are incredible. On top of that, college recruiting is a 365-day job for coaches, so it's critical to have an established plan in place to stay organized. If not, you run the risk of falling through the cracks and losing outstanding opportunities. At SAS, a major component of our program is helping athletes & parents stay on top of their correspondence, efficiently research schools, and assess current level of interest. This guidance is invaluable to our athletes, and is often the difference between getting offers and being dropped for another prospect.

Convert Interest into Offers

To land offers, you must sell yourself. You must separate yourself from the competition by making it personal. If you're in the market for a new car, it's pretty easy these days to find the exact sticker price. So who you buy from often comes down to the dealer with whom you're most comfortable; the one you made the best "connection" with.

The college recruiting process is no different. In fact, it works both ways. You are going to ultimately choose the coach and program you feel most comfortable with, and so the coach needs to do a great job establishing that connection with you. On the flip side, coaches will ultimately offer scholarships to the players they "like" as well. So keep it personal from start to finish. When you reach out to a coach, make sure your emails are

addressed to the actual person. Want to turn off a coach in a hurry? Send a mass “Dear Coach” letter. Another good idea is to send hand-written letters. That’s one of those “lost arts” that makes a wonderful impression. Even if it’s a 1-sentence “thank you for your time on the phone the other day,” coaches remember the kids who stood out from the pack. Also, call the coach and ask if you can call again next month. Find out the coach’s birthday and send him/her a short email on that day. Become friends on Facebook and follow the coach on Twitter.

Choose the Perfect Fit

You’re going to be attracted to schools for various reasons, and while everyone has their own unique set of priorities, the most important thing to remember here is that the school you attend should be the best fit for YOU; not anyone else. This is about your future, not what sounds good when you’re talking to your friends. This is about your experience, not where your mom or dad went to school. Just because a team has flashy new uniforms doesn’t make them a great fit!

If you want to read a helpful article on this, go here... [Five mistakes athletes make when creating their college list.](#)



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