

## The First Academy

### IDEAS

Since 1987, the First Academy has shared their Christ-centered college-prep program with thousands of students ranging from K4 through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. When approached with the challenge of developing a marketing plan to increase enrollment, evök recognized the opportunity to co-brand their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and highlight their continued success as educators to raise awareness of the First Academy and their Virtual School. In targeting such a niche market, strategically showcasing their achievements to the community of Central Florida allowed the First Academy to stand out among its competitors.

### WORK

Before developing any marketing materials, evök forged the foundation for the brand by creating a 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary logo to be used on all new and existing pieces. As an integrated marketing communications plan that is comprised of several components, this ensured that each element of the campaign was developed cohesively. The components included:

- 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary logo and brand standards guide.
- Banners, flyers and yard signs.
- Online media buy inclusive of a search and banner ad campaign.
- Email campaign, microsite and landing pages.
- Print, outdoor and direct mail ad campaign.
- Social media and public relations management.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary promotion was executed with a top to bottom approach, initially targeting students, staff, faculty and alumni to utilize their reach to extend efforts to prospective families. After customizing Facebook, Twitter and YouTube with new graphics, icons and background images, these social media platforms were utilized to generate buzz through online communities.



Content for these pages focused around the campaign theme, "A Year of Thanks," where fans and followers were encouraged to post what they were thankful for. While interacting with users, the First Academy used these responses to choose a person to highlight each month such as a teacher, student, parent or alumnus. Additional content included highlights of past accomplishments such as college graduations, careers, mission trips, charities and alumni marriages, and interviews with current students and alumni to relive fond memories, funny stories and pay tribute to inspiring faculty members and peers. To further promote the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and drive traffic to the social media outlets, Facebook ads were created with messaging geared specifically to prospective families.



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The largest component of the promotion consisted of a digital media campaign including the development of customized 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary landing pages to further generate awareness and track the effectiveness of other media. Highlighting past achievements and the success of the First Academy, the page incorporated a calendar of events, student/alumnus spotlights, historical information and 12-month digital journal documenting the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to be used as a documentary for future celebrations.



Open Houses provided the First Academy with the opportunity to showcase their campus, students, faculty and school accolades to prospective families, allowing them to personally experience the First Academy difference. Marketing materials were developed to drive prospective families to attend an Open House while raising awareness and ultimately increasing enrollment:

- A digital billboard was created for one of the most traveled roads in a 20-mile radius to the First Academy and strategically displayed to coincide with the Open House dates.
- Personalized direct mail pieces were mailed to prospective families of the Central Florida community.
- Custom e-blast invitations were distributed to faculty and potential and prospective families in two waves, one served as the announcement of the open house date and time, followed by a reminder email.
- Print ads were placed in national magazines, such as American Baby, Disney Family Fun, Parenting: Early Years, and Parents, using a “post-it” note element to increase the exposure of each ad placement.
- A targeted Pay-per-Click campaign was utilized to increase awareness of the open houses for all prospective families searching online using keywords such as “Christian School Orlando,” The ad spend directly correlated with enrollment periods and went up and down throughout the year.

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## RESULTS

With the placement of digital and print media, in the first month alone, website traffic increased by 169 percent. As a result, the First Academy had an increase in Open House and dedicated tours and appointments, which allowed them to capitalize on their above average conversion rate and increase enrollment.

By utilizing an integrated marketing approach to celebrate the First Academy's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, evōk successfully increased enrollment and raised awareness among prospective families and the community of Central Florida.



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