Tracking the Life-Cycle of Study Abroad Applicants

How one study abroad office is tracking the life-cycle of study abroad applicants to optimize key touchpoints, make strategic decisions with limited resources and staff, and grow participation.

Campus Profile

The University of Houston (UH) is the third largest institution in Texas with nearly 50,000 students. The UH Learning Abroad office, within the Office of the Provost, is made up of four full-time staff members. They send UH students abroad on faculty-led programs, reciprocal exchanges, through affiliated providers, and on service opportunities. In 2015, they embarked on an internationalization strategy that included growing study abroad participation.

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

120% Increase in participation

In 2018-2019, the UH Learning Abroad office sent 908 students abroad (an increase of more than 120% since 2014!) and are on track to reach their goal of sending 1,000 students abroad by 2020.

In 2017, as a part of their internationalization strategy, UH digitized their study abroad operations by adopting Via TRM as their Traveler Relationship Management software.

The Problem

Prior to implementing *Via* TRM, UH was hosting study abroad fairs and advising sessions for hundreds of students. Yet, they were unable to quantify or act on their outreach efforts. "We really didn't have a way to follow-up with students who attended the sessions, or even know who they were," said Kailey Posterick, a Learning Abroad Advisor at UH. "We knew that we wanted to see the life-cycle and get an idea of who was attending a session and then actually going abroad."

"We wanted to nurture them through the pipeline to encourage them to go abroad. We just didn't have the system in place to do it," continued her colleague and Learning Abroad Advisor, Maggie Mahoney.

> *"We wanted to move them through the pipeline to encourage them to go abroad. We just didn't have the system in place to do it."* Maggie Mahoney, UH Learning Abroad Advisor

UH recognized they needed to identify and track the touchpoints in the life-cycle of their study abroad applicants in order to reach their participation goals by making more informed decisions about their outreach efforts in coming years.

The Solution

To understand the life-cycle of applicants, UH started by streamlining their registration and attendance process for *Learning Abroad 101*, their group advising sessions. With just two Advisors in their office, group advising allows their team to gather students together to answer general questions and meet with many students at once. In 2018-2019, they hosted 45 different *Learning Abroad 101* sessions.

UH now utilizes the **Events** & **Same-Day-Sign-Up** features in *Via* TRM to register students and track attendance at Learning Abroad events. Through utilizing the **Reports** feature in *Via* TRM, they were able to see that of the 192 students who attended a *Learning Abroad 101* session in 2017-2018, 57 of them went abroad.

Of the 192 students who attended a group advising session, 57 went abroad.

That's a 30% conversion rate!
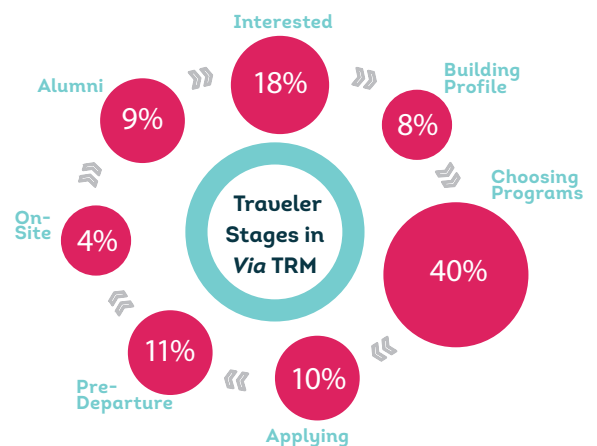
An All-In-One System

With *Via* TRM's **Events** feature, campuses can optimize their in-person events and capitalize on student leads captured. **Because *Via* TRM is an all-in-one system, universities and colleges are able to continue to engage students after the event ends.**

With the **Digital Advising** feature, campuses can take advantage of streamlined, cohesive conversations with students that are tracked in one place.

With *Via* TRM, campuses have the opportunity to bring events, communication, application management, and more all into one system and enable advisors to help can keep study abroad top of mind.

TRAVELER STAGES

***Via* TRM tracks travelers at every phase of the journey abroad through capturing student interest and data prior to the start of the application.** Below is a graph from the 2018 *Via* TRM Market Report, which includes comprehensive data on the the percent of students in each stage of their journey abroad system-wide.

Traveler Stages in *Via* TRM

Interested 18%
Building Profile 8%
Choosing Programs 40%
Applying 10%
Pre-Departure 11%
On-Site 4%
Alumni 9%

Via TRM (Traveler Relationship Management) is next generation software for education abroad. We are on a mission to empower every advisor to engage #everystudent in education abroad through user-friendly, intuitive technology. 🐦 📘 💼 📷 @viatrm