



2019 GEN Z MEDIA REPORT – THE STATE OF POSTSECONDARY MARKETING TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

HOW TODAY'S HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE CONSUMING
POSTSECONDARY MARKETING MATERIALS



Academica Group and Glacier surveyed 1,700 high school students from 250 Canadian high schools in February 2019 about brands and interactions with postsecondary marketing materials. These students primarily came from Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario.

UNDERSTANDING GEN Z

In our conversations with postsecondary recruitment and marketing professionals across the country, we often hear that the needs and interests of current high school students, Gen Z, are different from those of previous generations, making it a difficult crowd to effectively reach. This leads to debate on campuses about whether and how recruitment and marketing tactics and materials should be changing to reach Gen Z. To help inform these discussions, this study presents a preliminary investigation into how today's high school students interact with key media and postsecondary marketing initiatives.

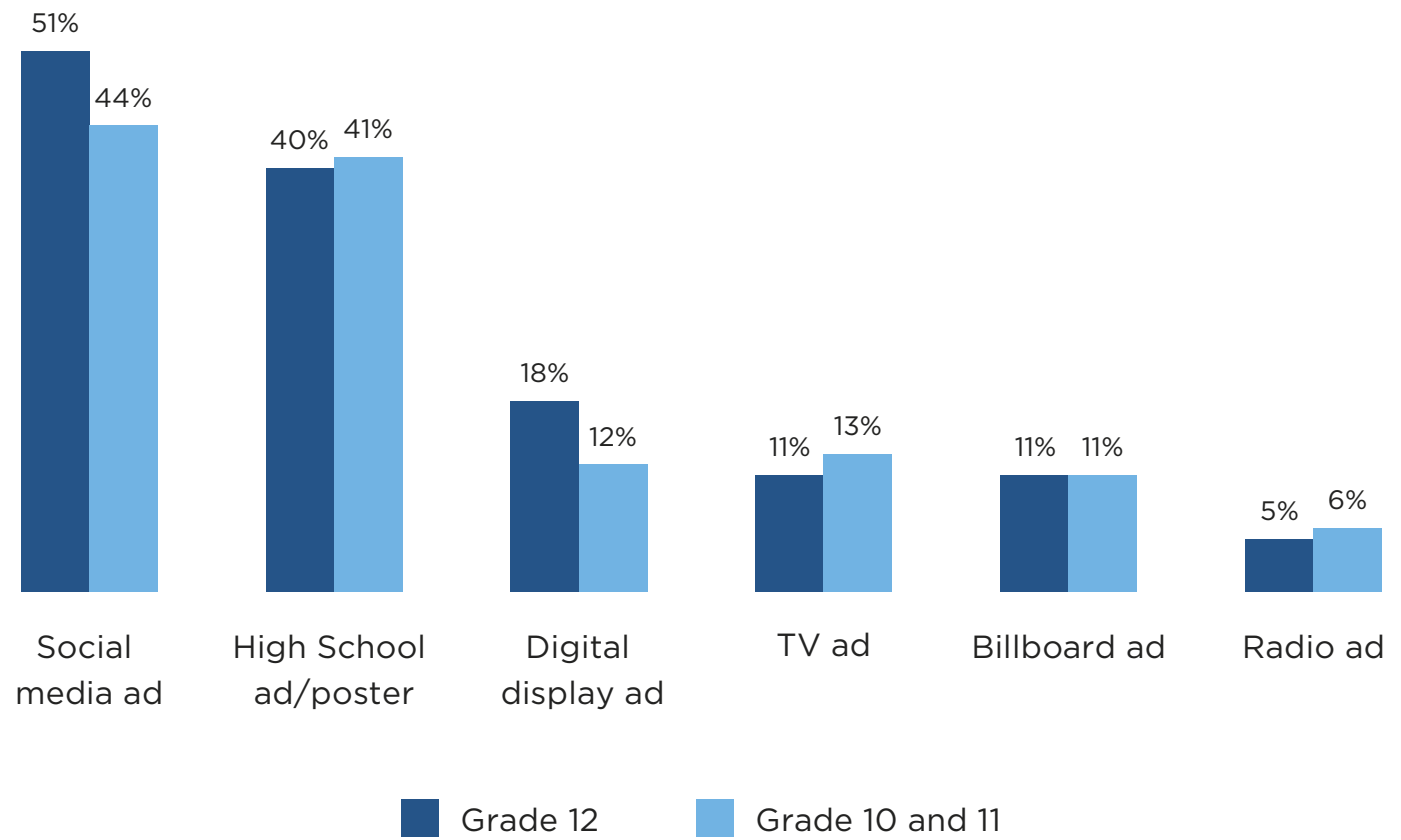


AD RECALL – TOP PERFORMING MEDIA CHANNELS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Students recall seeing postsecondary ads via social media more than any other channel. Among grade 12 students, fully half of those surveyed recalled seeing a social media ad from a college or university (51%), while 40% had seen a university/college ad or poster in their high school.

Ad recall for traditional media, on the other hand, is very low.

Ad Recall

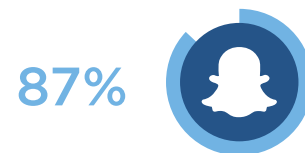
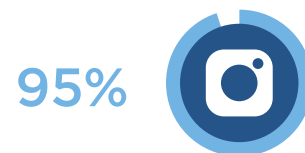


BUILDING YOUR BRAND WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

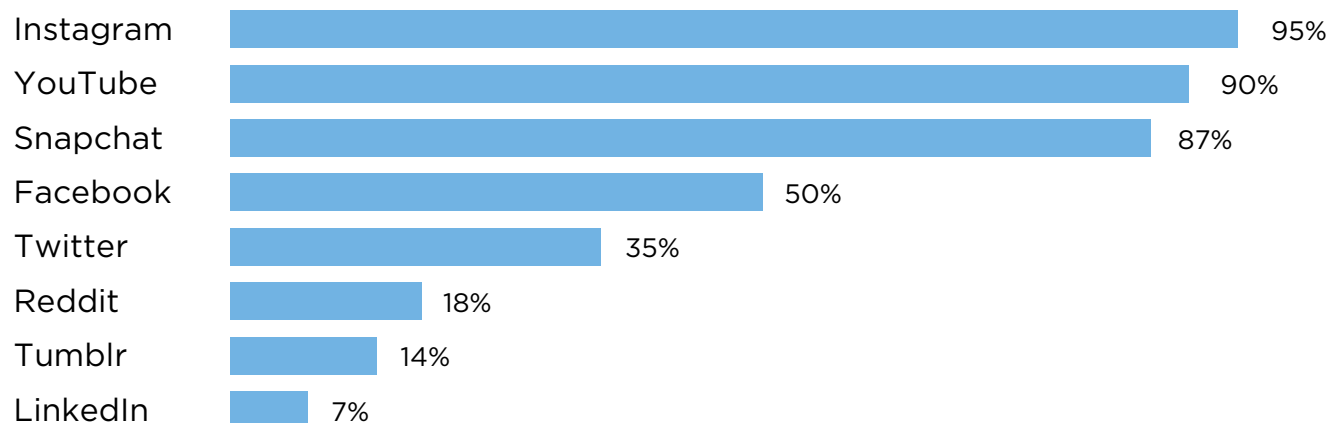
It's now generally recognized that to reach Gen Z where they are, it is critical for schools to engage in social media campaigns.

Our research confirms that Gen Z spends a significant amount of time on social media platforms, but it is important to remember that not all platforms are created equal when a school is considering its marketing buy.

Facebook and Twitter, for example, which have previously been viewed as 'kings' in the social media space, were only used by 50% and 35% of high school students, respectively. Instagram (95%), YouTube (90%), and Snapchat (87%) are significantly more popular among high schoolers.



Social Media Usage



While Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat have consistently high rates of use across high school grades, Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit usage is much more common among students in grade 12 than it is among those in grade 10.

There are two main possible explanations for this:

1







these platforms are on the decline

or

2

these are platforms that students start using at an older age

It is possible that both of these factors are at play.

	GRADE 10	GRADE 11	GRADE 12
	97%	94%	95%
	88%	88%	92%
	87%	87%	87%
	34%	47%	57%
	25%	33%	39%
	10%	17%	21%

HOW GEN Z ARE RESEARCHING POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

While reaching Gen Z where they are is half the battle, ultimately all marketing initiatives need to be driven by a clear sense of who the target market is, where they are in the recruitment funnel, and the goal of the given marketing initiative. Driving prospects to a website is a common tactic, and institutional websites are also the top way that high school students research their postsecondary options. Fully 82% of students said they had used university/college websites, while nearly half had used social media/online forums to research institutions (49%).

YOUR WEBSITE IS KEY

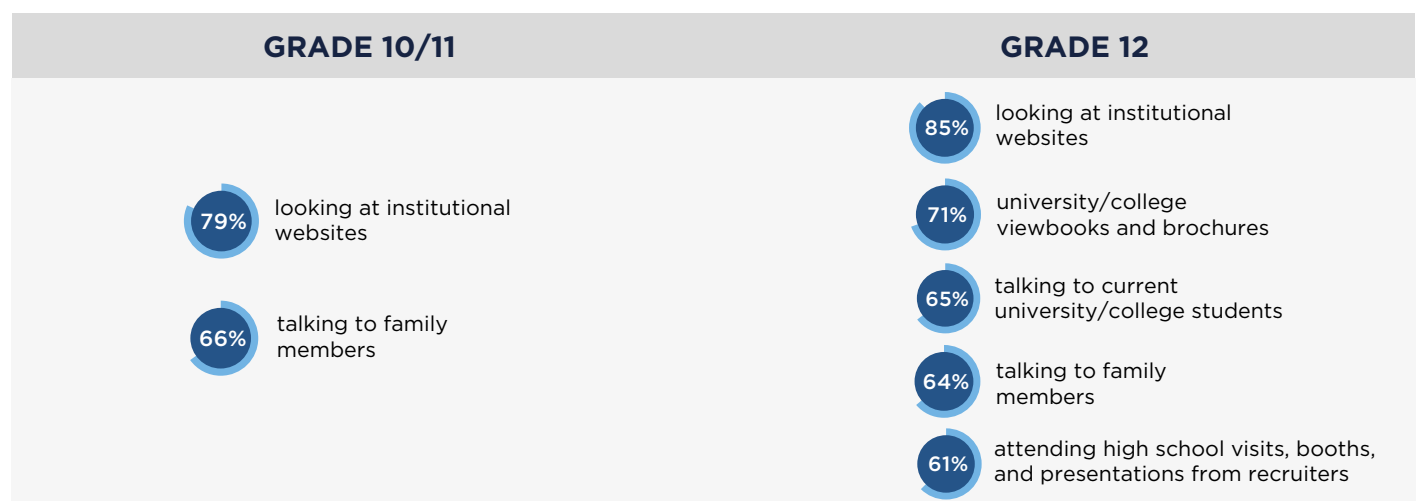
82%
use university or
college websites



49%
use social media
or online forums

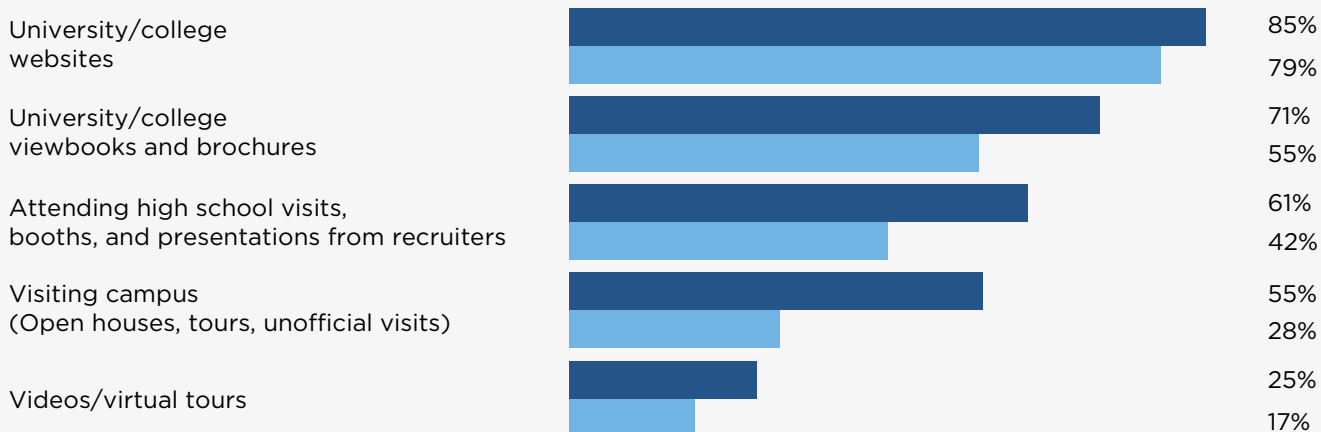


Looking at the full range of ways students examine their postsecondary options, we found that students in grades 10 and 11 who have started thinking about their postsecondary options are relatively cursory in the ways they research these options, with looking at institutional websites (79%) and talking to family members (66%) being their most common approaches. By grade 12, the picture is much different: institutional websites (85%); viewbooks/brochures (71%); talking to current university/college students (65%); talking to family members (64%); and attending high school visits, booths, and presentations from recruiters (61%) are all widely used information sources for grade 12 students who are researching postsecondary options.

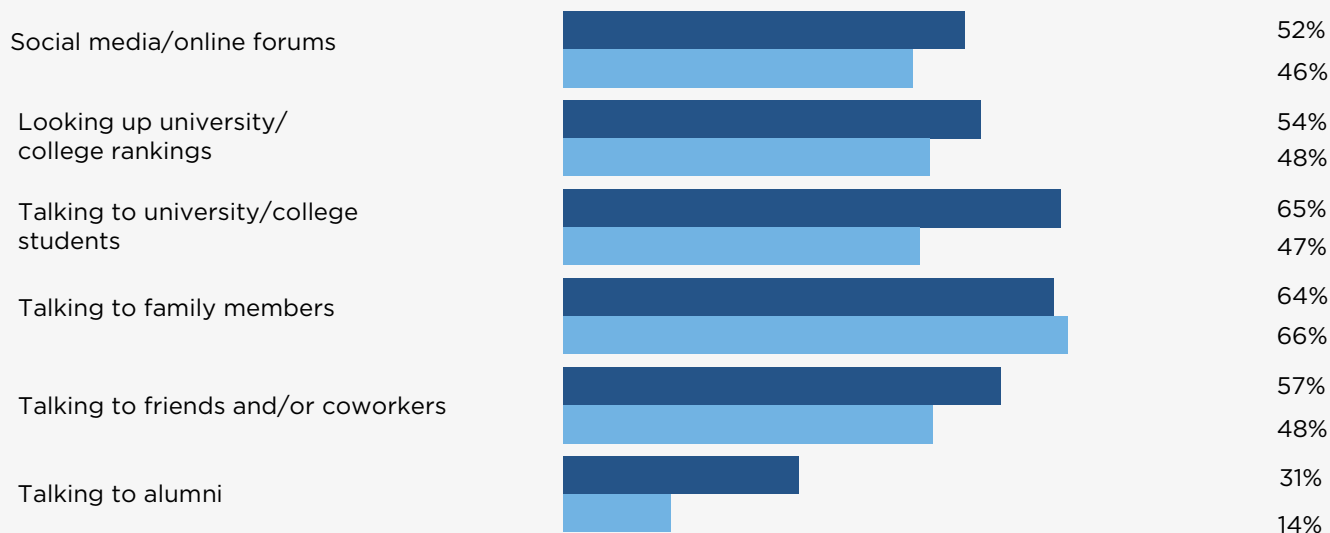


This shift from cursory “grazing” on postsecondary marketing materials in grades 10 and 11 to a more engaged approach in grade 12 makes the case for schools to develop a tiered approach to marketing to high school students, with materials targeting grade 10 and 11 students focusing more on building awareness and materials targeting grade 12 students more focused on engagement and conversion. It is important to remember here that the differing rates of social media platform usage among grades 10-11 and 12 (along with the nature of digital engagement on these platforms) can help inform this strategy as well.

INSTITUTIONAL DRIVEN TOOLS



WORD OF MOUTH & EXTERNAL TOOLS



Grade 12 Grade 10 and 11

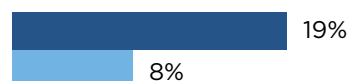
It's also important to consider the relative impact of various marketing tactics when allocating your school's marketing budget and resources. When asked what sources of information had been the most useful in researching schools, the greatest proportion of grade 12 students selected university/college websites (28%). However, while only 55% of grade 12 students indicated they had visited a postsecondary campus, fully one-third of these said it was the most useful activity they had undertaken.

Most Useful Research Tools by Grade

University/college websites



Visiting campus



Talking to university/college students



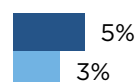
University/college viewbooks and brochures



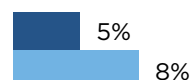
Attending high school visits, booths, presentations



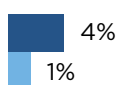
Talking to family members



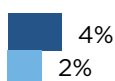
Talking to friends and/or coworkers



Social media/online forums



Talking to alumni



Looking up university/college rankings



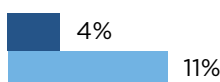
Videos/virtual tours



Other



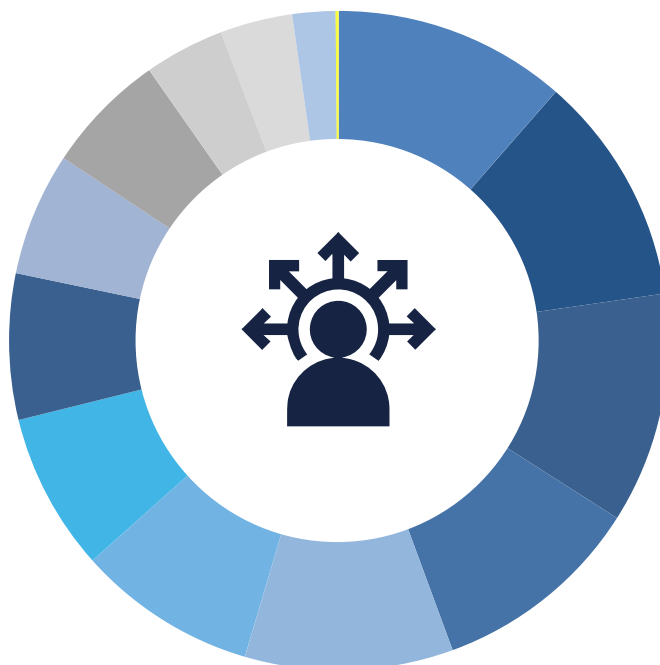
Don't know/Not sure



Grade 12 Grade 10 and 11

[illegible]

Key Decision Factors



67%	■	Reputation in my specific program of interest
66%	■	Overall academic reputation
66%	■	Student life on campus
60%	■	Location
59%	■	Graduates have good careers
51%	■	Cost of attending
45%	■	Reputation for teaching
42%	■	Financial supports/scholarships
35%	■	Proximity to home
35%	■	Co-op/Work integrated learning
23%	■	Study abroad options
21%	■	Friends/family have studied there
12%	■	Transfer opportunities
1%	■	None of the above

TAKE ACTION



Given Gen Z's habits and interests, it is critical for institutions to have a modern marketing strategy. Our study shows that many traditional media channels (billboard, radio, TV) are largely irrelevant for high school students, while targeted media such as social media and direct high school media are thriving. Now more than ever, institutions need a strategy that meets today's high school students on the right platforms, with the right message, at the right time. The difference between a pair of eyes on an advertisement and an interested applicant may come down to how all of these elements are brought together.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT'S WORKING (AND WHAT ISN'T) AT YOUR
INSTITUTION, TALK TO GLACIER AND ACADEMICA GROUP TODAY



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