

The College Communications

COOK BOOK

#cookbook



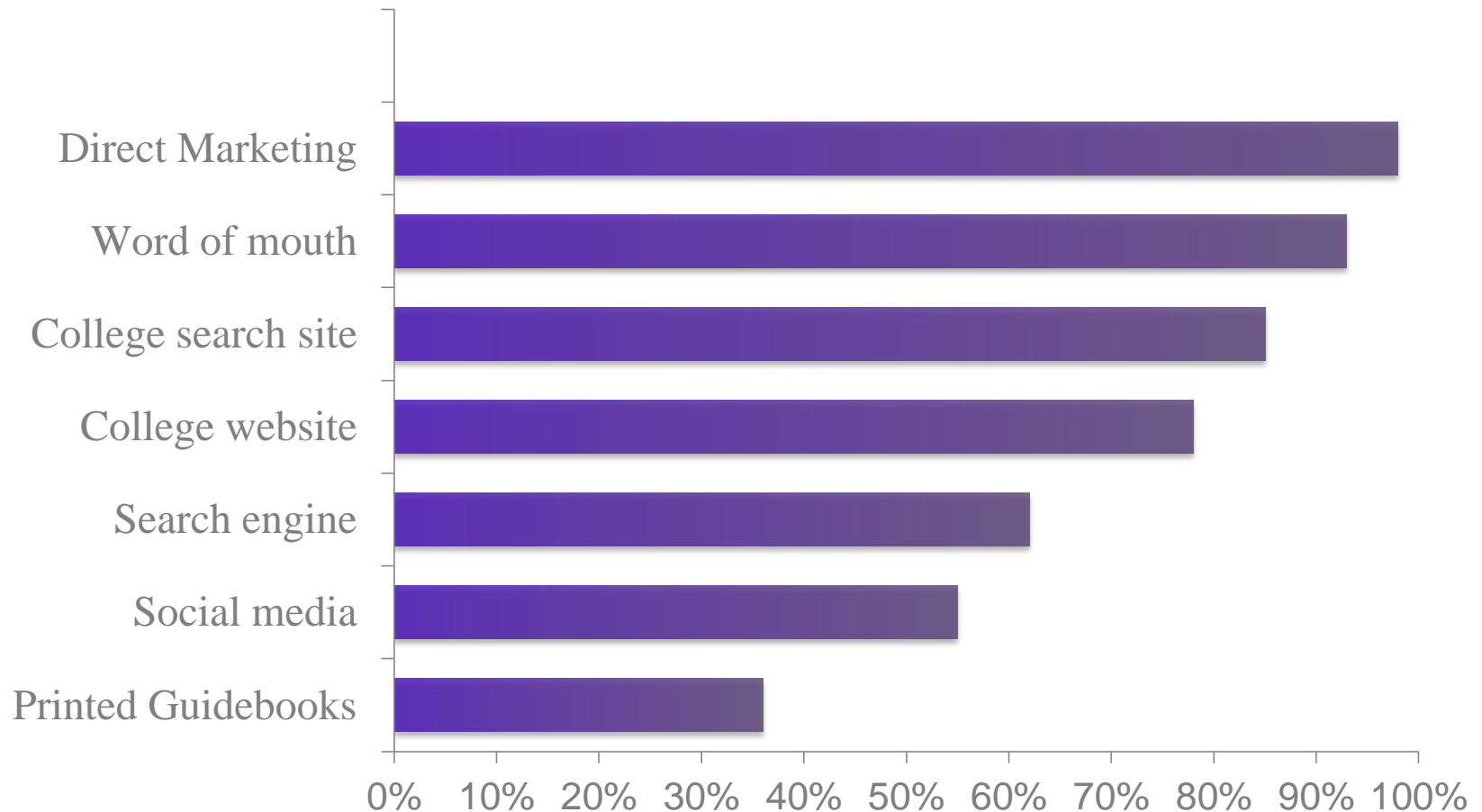
**Dr. James Vineburgh, Director of Research at TWG Plus
&
Gil Rogers, MBA, Senior Business Development Manager
- Marketing and Outreach at Chegg**



Introduc

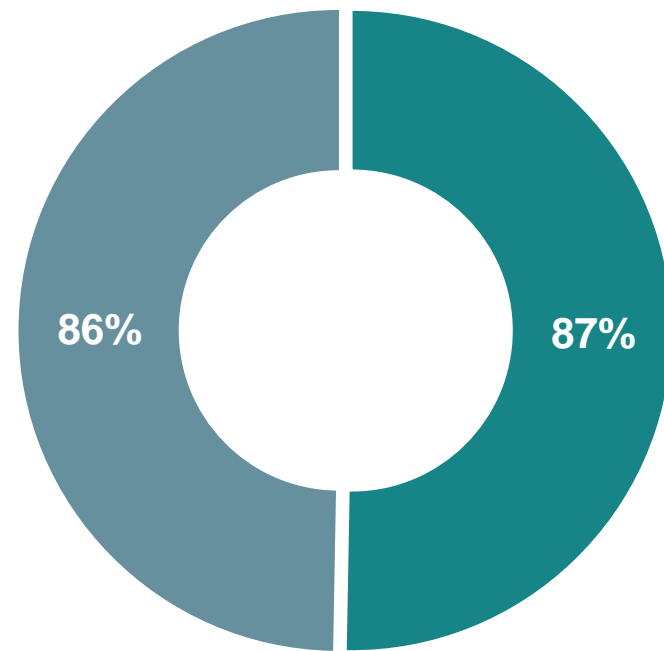
Out of 41 channels, **direct marketing is the #1.**

■ Aggregates 41 channels into 4



Letters rank 2nd in terms of the sources used by Students to learn about colleges and universities, postcards are used by 69%, and view books by 58%.

1%
DIFFERENCE
IN **EMAIL** vs.
MAIL



- Email from a college
- Letter mailed from college

98%

LEARN
FROM DIRECT
MARKETING



The Experiment



What makes one direct marketing piece **effective** & another a **flop**?

Demographics of 1,000 students

- $\frac{2}{3}$ were female
- 80% were under the age 18
- Additional 18% were between 18-24
- 70% had not decided on a school
- 31% of those who had decided on a college/university selected a National

Email

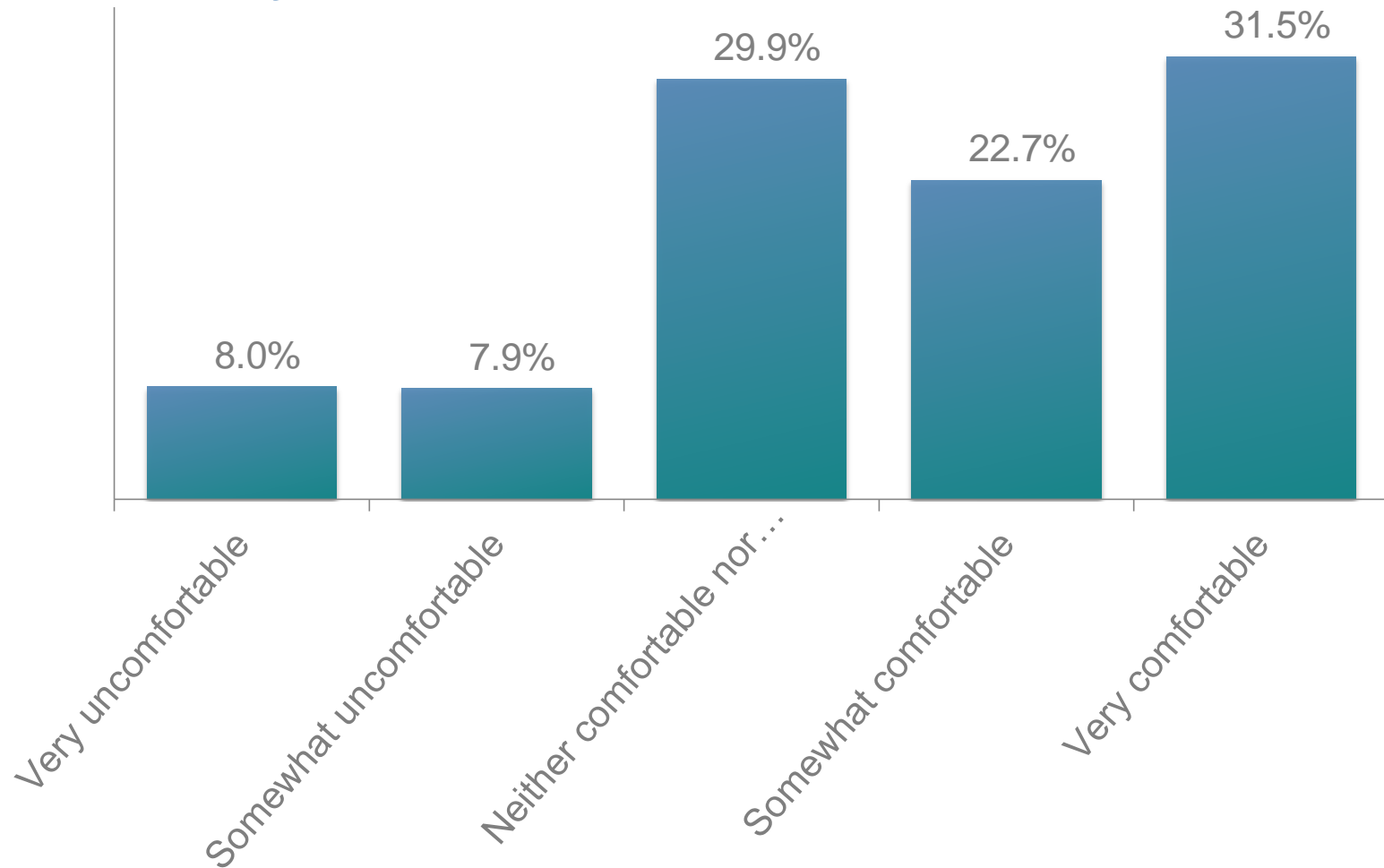
Recipe

- 2 tablespoons of prospective **students' personal email** addresses
- Combine ingredients and send

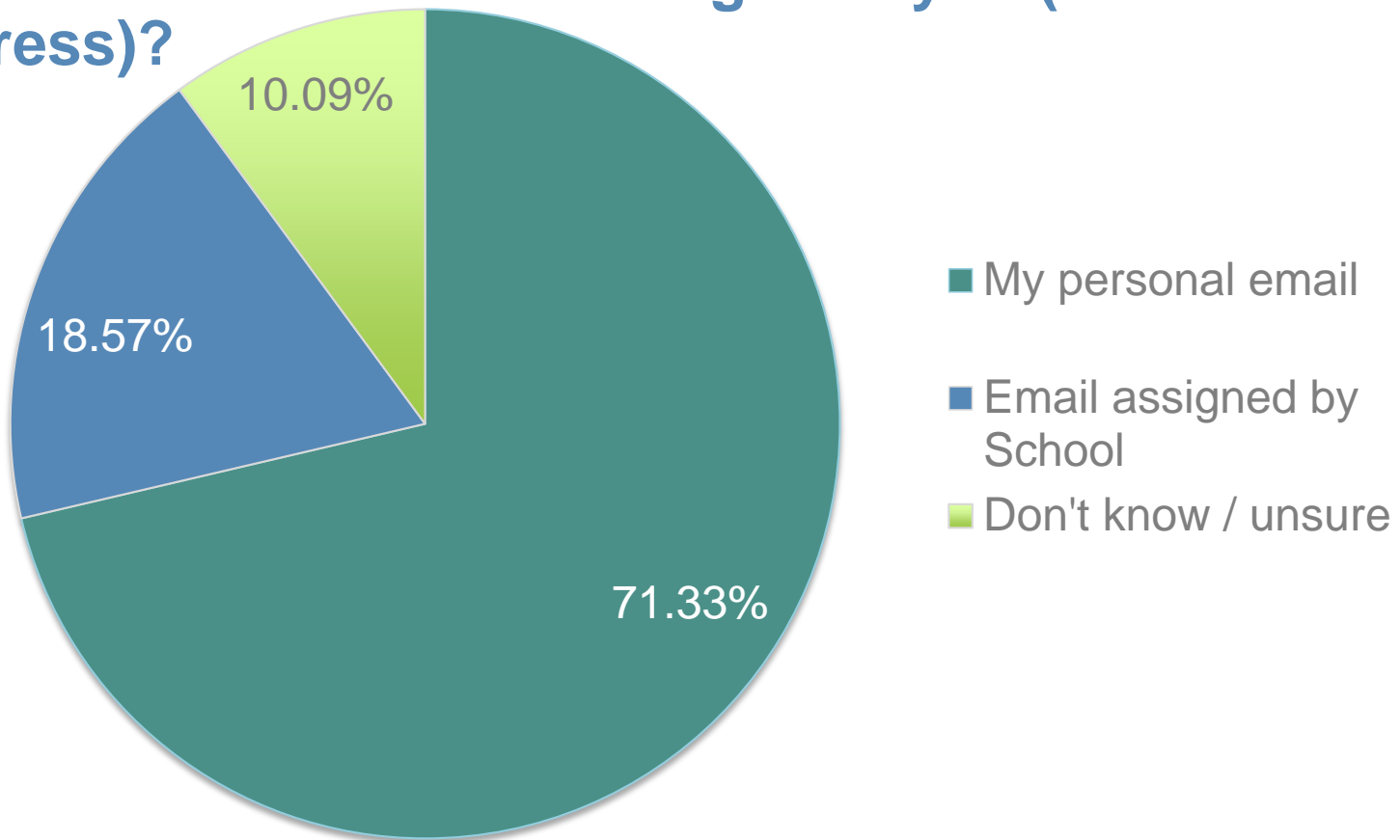
Respondents were shown the following example of an email:



How do you feel about the fact that the email was personally addressed to you?



When emailing with colleges/universities, would you prefer to use your personal email address or an email address that the school assigns to you (a .edu address)?





**7 in 10 prefer to
use their own
personal email**

A wooden rolling pin is leaning against a small chalkboard. The chalkboard has a light-colored wooden frame and a black surface. The words "Calls-to-Action" are written in orange cursive on the chalkboard. The scene is set on a wooden surface with a red and white checkered cloth in the background.

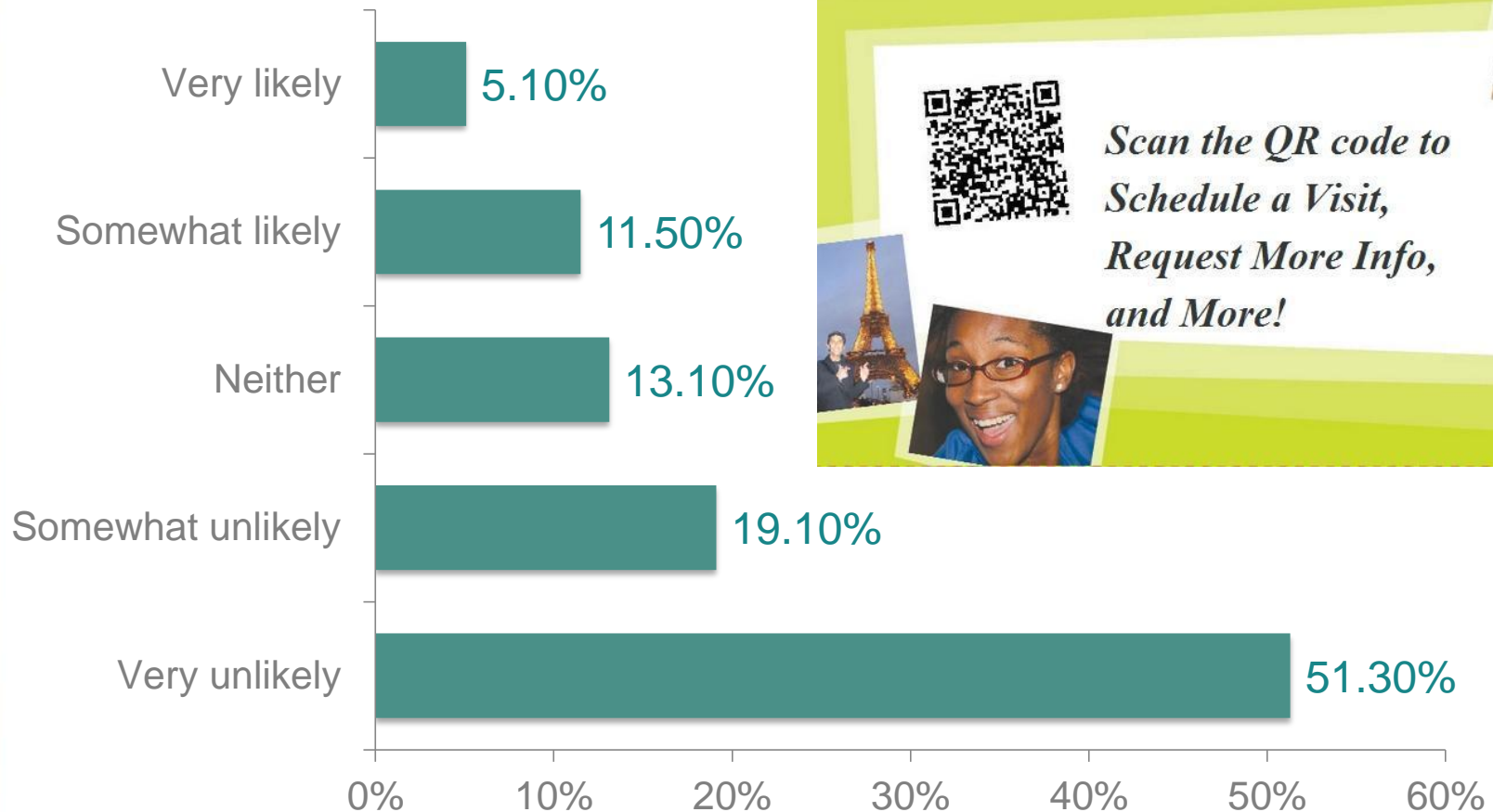
Calls-to-Action

Recipes for Calls-to-Action

Pour in links to websites and social channels
liberally

- Add 3 ounces of landing page
(some people prefer 2 oz. of **personalized URLs**)
- Add a few pinches of links to free guides
- **Don't add QR codes!** They will sour the mix
- **Avoid lengthy forms** or sprinkling in any information
that you already have!
- Broil for 45 minutes and let it cool

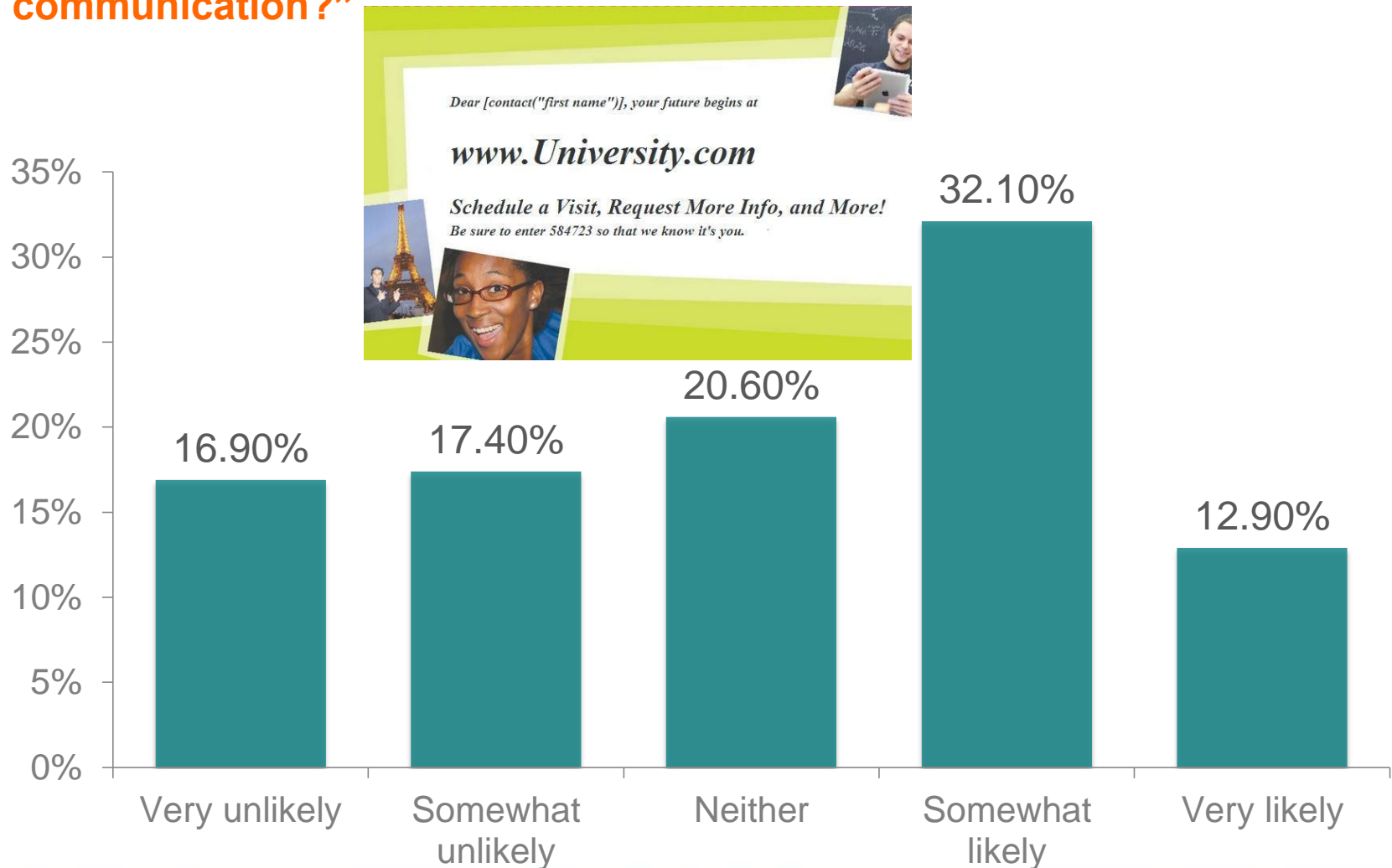
How likely or unlikely would you be to scan the QR code if you received this communication?"



**More than half were
very unlikely to
respond to a QR Code**



How likely or unlikely would you be to go online and navigate to the landing page URL and enter the pin if you received this communication?"



To test additional calls-to-action, study participants were shown the following options and asked which action they would most likely take:



95%
of graduates are
employed or in a graduate
program within 1 year.

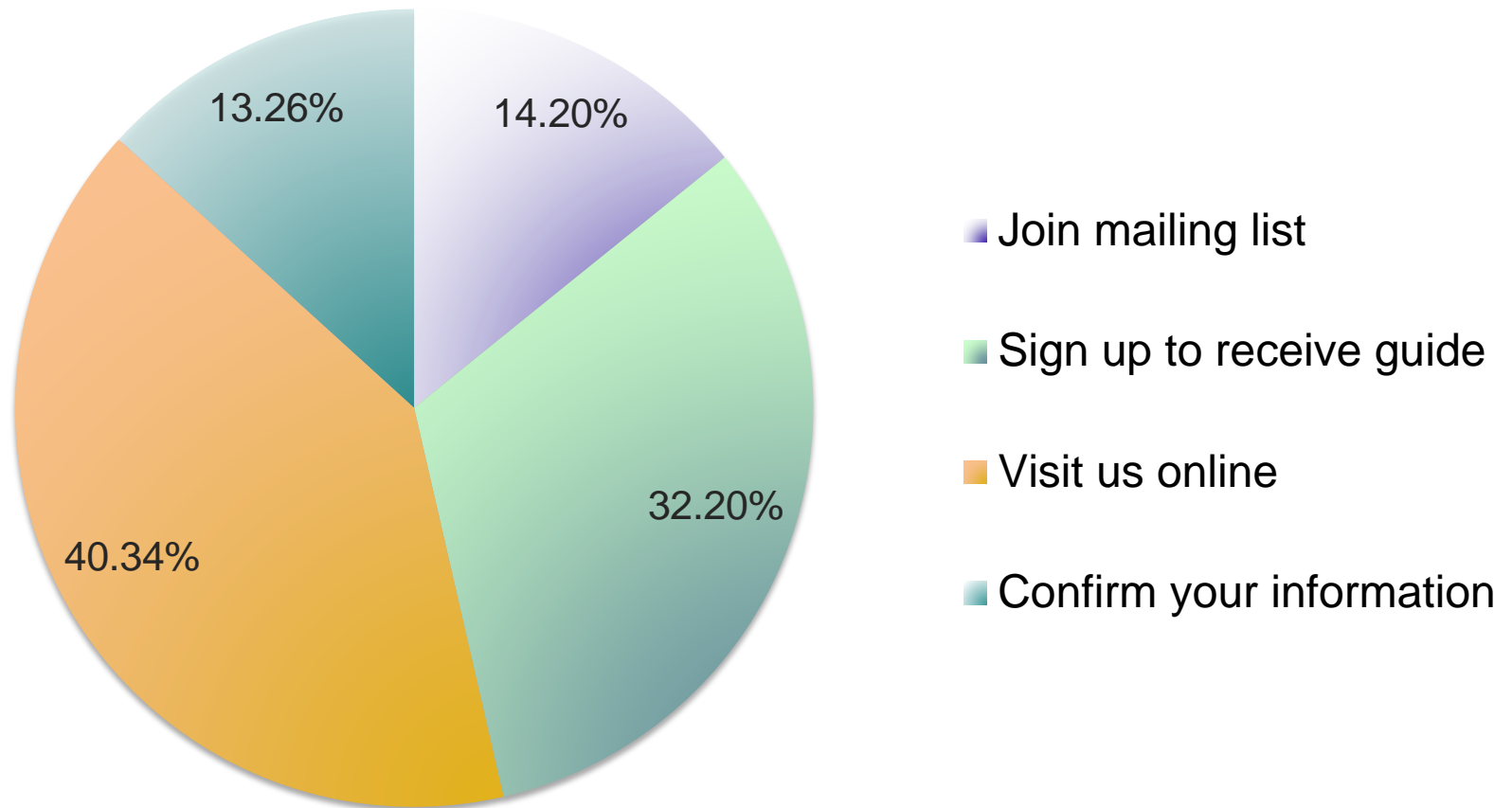
A number of reasons to apply:

- Strong Academic Tradition
- Inspiring Historic Location
- Distinctive Liberal Arts Programs
- Engaging Student Experience
- Successful Outcomes

**Confirm your
information to schedule
a visit and request more
information.**

VISIT US ONLINE AT
university.com

Of the four postcards, “Visit us Online,” was the most preferred.



When asked in an open-ended format: “Why did you select the one that you chose? Why did you not select the ones which you did not choose?”



“I don't want to be on a mailing list; basic information is good enough for me unless there is some special offer or scholarship to communicate...I would rather just go online to look up fast facts. If I'm really interested, I'm going to apply, so it's not like I need a bunch of fliers to convince me to apply.”

When asked in an open-ended format:
Why did you select the one that you chose?
Why did you not select the others?

“The word ‘visit’ sounded more welcoming without being pushy. The one with the word ‘free guide’ was insulting, no one should have to pay for a guide. The college should make you feel like you are important and they’re lucky to have you and not the other way around. The word ‘confirm’ was too pushy.”



When asked in an open-ended format: “*Why did you select the one that you chose? Why did you not select the ones which you did not choose?*”



“I chose the second one [free guide] because it seems like I would receive a more personalized treatment by being sent a guide directly, rather than having to do my own search online.”

Recipes for Key Messages

- 1st, add 6 tablespoons of information about **academics, program availability, and a personalized education**
- Bring to a boil and then mix in 5 tablespoons of **financial aid and scholarship information**
- Let the mixture cool and then add 4 tablespoons of **outcomes information that speaks to employment prospects upon graduation and/or graduate school placements**
- Whisk in 3 teaspoons of information about **campus life: clubs, organizations, the performing arts, etc.**
- Layer on 2 teaspoons of information about **campus location and local culture**
- Sprinkle on a thin layer **athletics** information and refrigerate

What information is the most important
in the message copy?

1. Academics

Small class sizes and a faculty that knows students by name mean that you'll get a ton of personalized support and attention from our professors. With more than 80 majors and minors to choose from, you're encouraged to create your own path.

2. Financial

With so many financial aid options available, you'll be surprised at how affordable education can be. And, when you consider all of the available grants, scholarships, work-study programs, and federal or state assistance, your actual cost is a small investment.

3. Outcomes

Our graduates are placed, both in employment opportunities and graduate programs, at a rate that far exceeds the national average. 93 percent of our grads are employed or attending graduate school. For this reason, Forbes Magazine recently rated us as one of "America's Top Colleges."

4. Campus Life

Feel right at home on our intimate campus with more than 50 student clubs and organizations related to academics, athletics, performing arts, service learning, political and social issues, student publications, and many more.

5. Location & Culture

When you're not thinking about your studies, where do you want to spend time? How about in an amazing college town that is full of arts and culture, from music venues to gourmet restaurants. Mountains and beaches are within 25 miles of campus. Our hometown is just plain awesome.

6. Athletics

Love sports? Then, you'll love our university athletics. You'll have a front row seat at exciting games. Check out our brand new athletics facility - the hub of our athletics programs. Feel the pride - whether you compete in a varsity sport or play intramurals.

Remember

It is important to point out that all six attributes tested scored a significant number of points.



Recipes for Key Visual Messages

- Spread 4 quarts of images of **people collaborating and/or socializing on campus** in pan and bake at 400 for an hour
- For icing, sprinkle on a few images of that depict **academic scenes and other campus activities** (athletics, etc.)



Almost half of the respondents selected images depicting Campus Life when asked, “Please look at the sets of images below and then select the set that is the most compelling to you. In other words, if you were to receive a communication from a college/university that could only include one of the sets of images, which one would it be?”



Winner!



“It shows me how comfortable I would be while attending the campus. College can be intimidating, so I guess you could say that it is almost easing that fear a bit.”

“I chose that picture because it would show me how life would be on campus and I would like to get a small view of what I would be surrounded by everyday. The other pictures show students just doing work or just having fun.”

“An important part of selecting a college is getting a feel for the campus. I know I will be studying, going to sports events, etc., but seeing images of the college is more important to me up front (before I have made a decision).”

Conclusion



Direct marketing is still the primary way by which prospective students learn about colleges and universities.

Direct mail communications from colleges and universities should provide **clear and direct links to institutional web sites in calls-to-action.**

This finding also suggests the **importance of inviting and well-constructed landing pages.**

While email is clearly going to be a necessary introduction to a school, **prospective students don't want to be added to mailing lists or fill out cumbersome forms.**

They want direct marketing communications to enable them to go to institutional web sites and social channels so that they can continue their exploration on their own terms and schedules.

As prospective students ultimately seek a personalized college experience, it starts with introductory direct mail communications.

These communications should **address prospective students by name** and be sent to **their personal email addresses**.

Visually

Direct marketing copy **should lead with information that focuses on academic offerings and strength** as well as the **personalized experience** that a prospective student will receive.

Imagery should depict students who are socially and academically engaged with peers and faculty, yet who do so in a way that clearly shows that this engagement is **occurring on campus**. Prospective students want to see their potential future surroundings.

Direct marketing communications should **utilize text and images differently and in combination to highlight various drivers of the college choice process**.



ABOUT US:

TWG Plus is a full-service higher education marketing company located in Austin, Texas, and Charlotte, North Carolina. With a portfolio of services from student search and publications to branding, research, and social media consultation, TWG Plus combines data, strategy, and creativity so that colleges and universities achieve optimal results in their marketing efforts.

Chegg allows students to learn about, get recruited by, and interact with more than 850 colleges and universities from all over the world. And it happens on a platform that students embrace - the web.

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