



CONCEPT

Market finding: Conducting research through marketing to identify our target population.

INSIGHT

Focused, research-based digital marketing was critical to identifying and reaching our target population.

MICRO-CREDENTIAL INSIGHTS

MARKETING

THE ALAMO COLLEGES STORY

OPPORTUNITY FIND AND SERVE OUR TARGET POPULATION

San Antonio has the country's highest rate of urban poverty. Alamo Colleges' moonshot is to end poverty through education. Our target population was unemployed, under-employed, and displaced workers. US Census data revealed a **potential market of over 1 million people in the San Antonio region** – those with no degree or some college, no degree. However, we realized we could not just build micro-credentials; we had to make the information publicly available and bring it directly to the populations in our region we were aiming to serve.

PIVOT RETHINK MARKETING | DIGITAL MARKET TESTS

Alamo Colleges knew traditional marketing techniques would not suffice and took a new approach:

1. We partnered with a marketing firm to help connect us with a new market of learners.
2. We started by developing and understanding the consumer journey to orient our thinking and hone our approach.
3. We reviewed research on our competitors.
4. We developed a set of digital ads with messages that would be simple and compelling.
5. We used images fully representative of the population we were trying to reach.
6. We focused on short digital marketing sprints to determine which message resonated with potential learners. "Free" resonated more than "upskill," "fast-track," and "rolling starts."

This approach was hugely successful. It connected us to our target population in a much shorter period of time than we anticipated and expanded the profile of learners we typically served.



BUILD NEW SKILLS FAST

UPSKILL AND EARN A
PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE



ITERATION MARKET TEST | LEARN | EVOLVE | REPEAT

We started with rapid market testing to refer prospective learners to our new micro-credential platform, [Upskill](#). From Spring 2021 through 2022, we continued to develop, expand, and iterate on both Upskill and our marketing approach based on what we were learning from the market tests and our learners' experience.

Ongoing digital market testing at each phase was essential to better understand the needs and priorities of our learners through messaging. This process allowed us to identify the top three features that made the program attractive to prospective learners:

- **Flexibility:** The format and schedule of offerings were crucial to learners' ability to engage. We started with online and on-demand.
- **Affordability:** We knew our learners were most concerned about cost, so we launched the pilot version of the program with free courses, made possible by a one-time grant. Following the initial pilot, we set courses at an affordable price and provided micro-scholarships to learners as needed.
- **Reputation:** Learners trusted these offerings, as they were from Alamo Colleges, a known and valued educational provider in south Texas.

HOW TO MARKET TO WORKING ADULT LEARNERS

1. Embrace digital marketing with support from digital marketing experts.
2. Use market-finding to identify prospective learners.
3. Research the consumer journey from exploration to interest, contact, and enrollment.
4. Conduct market tests to find messages that resonate with your learners.
5. Take an iterative approach to test, improve, and scale outreach efforts.



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