
Case Studies | Educational Marketing

Client

Hickory Metropolitan Higher Education Center (HMHEC)
Hickory, NC

Objective

To establish a brand identity for and increase enrollment at the HMHEC, which offers working adults in 12 western North Carolina counties.

Challenges

The target market was unaware that the HMHEC offers:

- Degrees from the sponsoring university rather than the HMHEC
- 2-year completion programs through community colleges, graduate degrees and non-degree continuing education credits
- Evening, weekend and online programs designed to work around the schedules of working adults

Solution

Gotham devised a marketing strategy that repositioned the HMHEC by:

- Redesigning its name, logo and print collateral
- Creating a new newsletter format and corporate brochure
- Launching a three-part integrated campaign throughout its four-county core market, including:
 - Public relations
 - Billboards
 - Demographic-specific radio, TV and newspaper ads. This six-month, integrated multimedia marketing campaign targeted the HMHEC's two principal target demographics:
 - ~ Working adults age 30-40
 - ~ 20-30 year olds

Results

In February 2005, Gotham launched a PR blitz, followed by two months of heavy billboard placement. In May 2005, Gotham mass-saturated the target market area with radio and cable TV ads, followed by another public relations campaign, giving the target market a real education about the HMHEC. The result was substantially increased brand awareness, which led to a tripling of enrollment from 2004-2008.