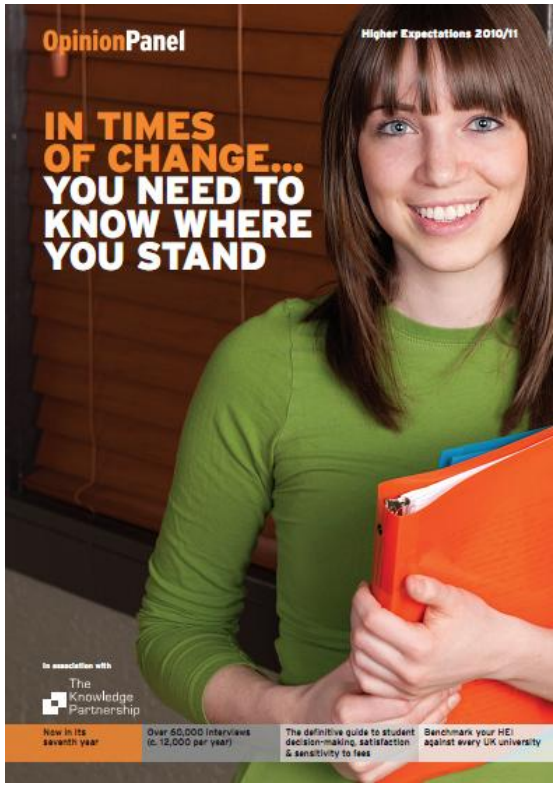
OpinionPanel



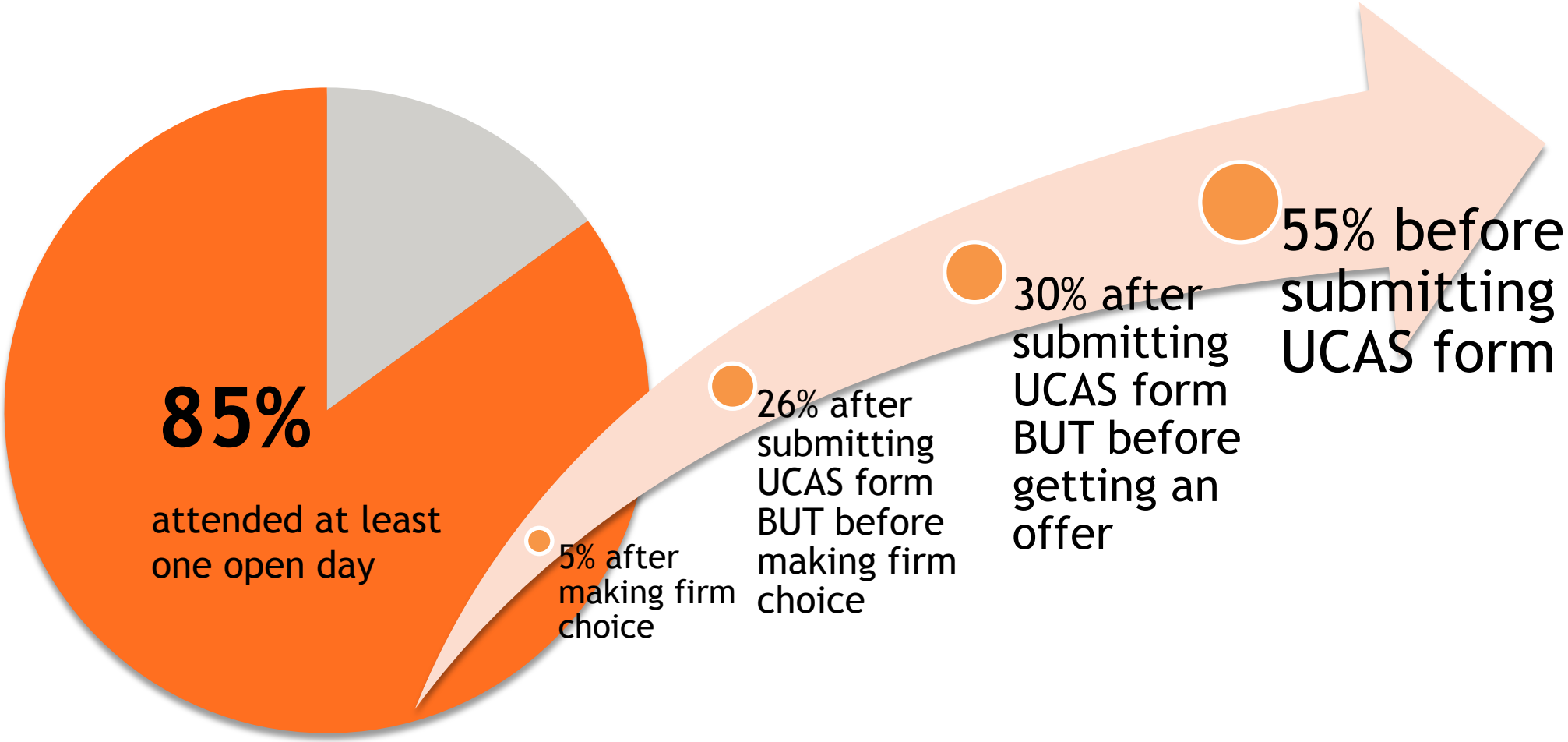
What applicants want:
Open day activities to enhance the student experience

Eleanor Simmons
19.10.2010

OpinionPanel

OPEN DAY ATTENDANCE…

…its role in applicants' decision making journey



Base: 10,070
Higher Expectations study 2009/10

OpinionPanel

IMPORTANCE OF OPEN DAYS…

…compared with other factors for university choice

Base: 10,070
Higher Expectations study 2009/10

OpinionPanel

OPEN DAY ACTIVITIES…

…participation rates and perceived usefulness

	Current Uni	Declined Uni
	Participation	Participation
Tour the university	82%	72%
Visit department	81%	70%
See a presentation	72%	62%
Chat informally with staff	70%	51%
Tour uni accommodation	60%	55%
Chat informally with students	65%	48%
Free time to explore	61%	48%
Sample the catering	29%	23%
Tour the town	27%	23%
Go to a mock lecture	21%	20%

Base: 10,070
Higher Expectations study 2009/10

OPEN DAY ACTIVITIES…

…participation rates and perceived usefulness

	Current Uni		Declined Uni	
	Participation	Usefulness	Participation	Usefulness
Tour the university	82%	46%	72%	38%
Visit department	81%	61%	70%	44%
See a presentation	72%	30%	62%	30%
Chat informally with staff	70%	44%	51%	34%
Tour uni accommodation	60%	42%	55%	36%
Chat informally with students	65%	41%	48%	32%
Free time to explore	61%	39%	48%	31%
Sample the catering	29%	20%	23%	20%
Tour the town	27%	29%	23%	35%
Go to a mock lecture	21%	41%	20%	34%

Base: 10,070 (base sizes for 'usefulness' questions vary
Higher Expectations study 2009/10

OPEN DAY ACTIVITIES…

…participation rates and perceived usefulness

	Current Uni		Declined Uni	
	Participation	Usefulness	Participation	Usefulness
Tour the university	82%	46%	72%	38%
Visit department	81%	61%	70%	44%
See a presentation	72%	30%	62%	30%
Chat informally with staff	70%	44%	51%	34%
Tour uni accommodation	60%	42%	55%	36%
Chat informally with students	65%	41%	48%	32%
Free time to explore	61%	39%	48%	31%
Sample the catering	29%	20%	23%	20%
Tour the town	27%	29%	23%	35%
Go to a mock lecture	21%	41%	20%	34%

Base: 10,070 (base sizes for 'usefulness' questions vary
Higher Expectations study 2009/10

OPEN DAY ACTIVITIES…

…participation rates and perceived usefulness

	Current Uni		Declined Uni		Would like to have done activity
	Participation	Usefulness	Participation	Usefulness	
Tour the university	82%	46%	72%	38%	37%
Visit department	81%	61%	70%	44%	40%
See a presentation	72%	30%	62%	30%	15%
Chat informally with staff	70%	44%	51%	34%	30%
Tour uni accommodation	60%	42%	55%	36%	37%
Chat informally with students	65%	41%	48%	32%	28%
Free time to explore	61%	39%	48%	31%	22%
Sample the catering	29%	20%	23%	20%	11%
Tour the town	27%	29%	23%	35%	19%
Go to a mock lecture	21%	41%	20%	34%	31%

Base: 10,070 (base sizes for 'would like to have done' questions vary
Higher Expectations study 2009/10

IMPACT OF OPEN DAYS…

…on applicants' interest in a university

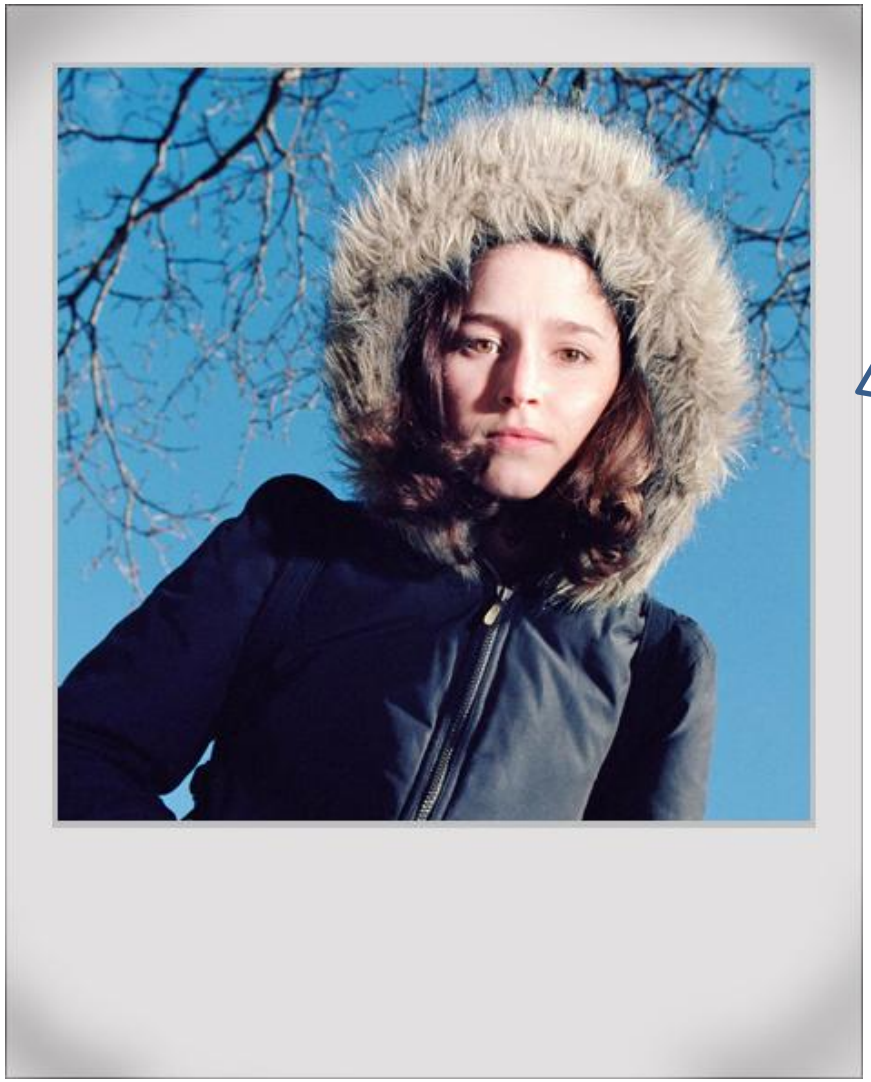
	Open days (net)	Open day at university now attending	Open day at university not attending
Made me want to go to the university more	50%	77%	28%
Made me want to go to the university the same	32%	21%	41%
Made me want to go to the university less	17%	1%	29%

Base: 10,070
Higher Expectations study 2009/10

OpinionPanel

IMPROVING OPEN DAYS…

…how applicants can be attracted to a university

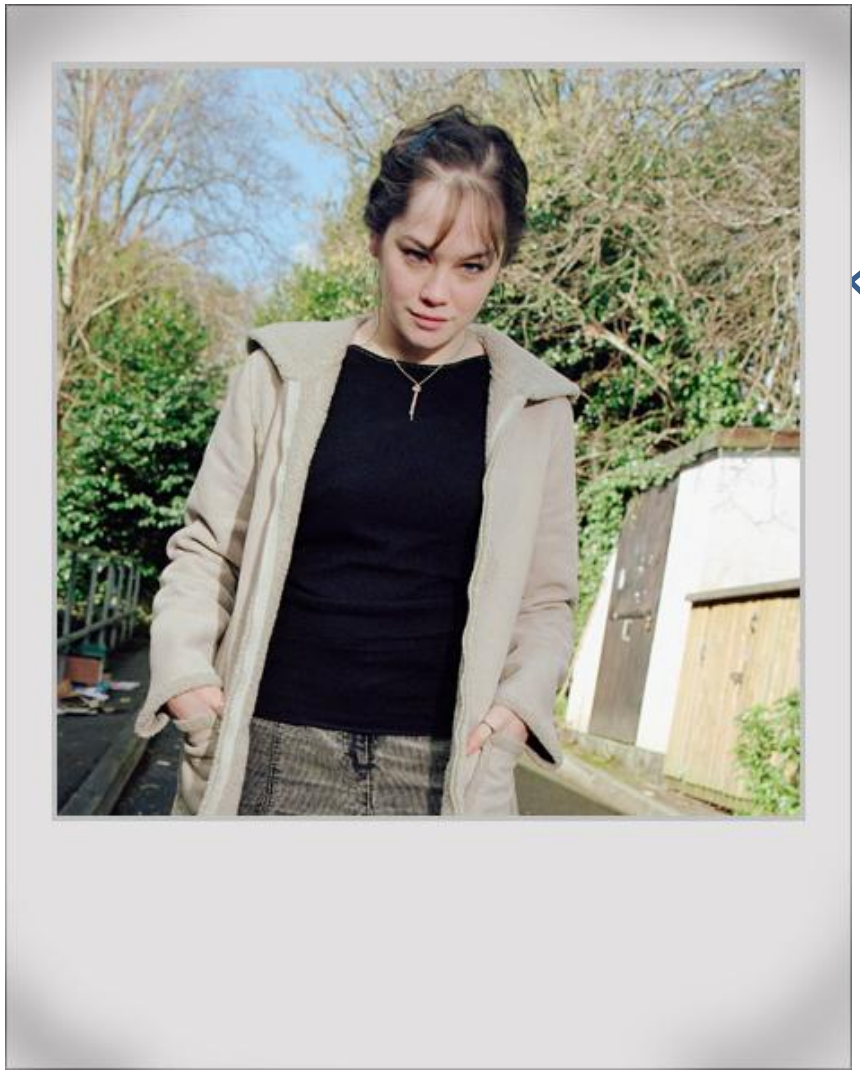


An example seminar might have given an interesting insight into the workings of study and student/staff relationships in the department.

OpinionPanel

IMPROVING OPEN DAYS…

…how applicants can be attracted to a university



Could have offered a more informal approach and given prospective students more of a chance to see the union and meet other students. Whilst the academic side of the university was very good, I think that the social side was a little overlooked.

IMPROVING OPEN DAYS…

…how applicants can be attracted to a university

Should have made the open day much less of a mess. There were too many people for so little space. There could perhaps be a limit on the number of people who could attend as this led to a lot of disorganisation and discomfort.

POSITIVE STUDENT EXPERIENCE…

…and the importance played by open days

	Attended open day at current university (mean score)	**Did not attend open day at current university (mean score)**
Student experience rating *1=awful* *5=excellent*	4.32	4.06 Significant difference
Whether experience of university matches expectations *1=doesn't meet* *2=meets* *3=exceeds*	2.35	2.17 Significant difference
Whether regrets choice of university *1=yes* *2=no*	1.92	1.87 Significant difference

Base: 10,070
Higher Expectations study 2009/10

SUMMARY…

- Open days are a powerful marketing platform for universities
- Open days can be modified and improved in a single cycle
- Open days enable universities to be more competitive

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