

Love Your Work: Marketing Operationalization of the Online Registered Behavior Technician Training Program at UTSA

Introduction

Extended Education & the Autism Research Center

Extended Education develops and delivers continuing and professional education programs that match the university's unique resources with the lifelong learning needs of professional learners. Continuing education divisions housed at institutions of higher learning are unique in that they have direct access to faculty, or subject matter experts, that are thought-leaders in the fields most in demand by professional learners. It is the purpose of continuing education divisions to discern the needs of professional learners and then engage in-house subject matter experts to deliver community-facing programs.

For instance, the University of Texas San Antonio (UTSA) is home to the Autism Research Center (ARC). The ARC is a university-based applied behavior analysis (ABA) clinic that serves the needs of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other intellectual disabilities in South Texas. Applied behavior analysis is a systematic approach to environmental modification for the purposes of influencing socially important behavior to a meaningful degree.

Since 2015, Extended Education has worked closely with ARC to develop and deliver the Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) Training Program. RBTs are paraprofessionals who are primarily responsible for the direct implementation of ABA skill-acquisition and behavior-reduction plans developed to assist those with autism spectrum disorder. The training program consists of ten hours of in-class instruction and 32 hours of asynchronous, online modules. The program is limited to a local audience because of the in-class instruction requirement.

RBT Training – Grant Program

According to the Center for Disease Control, 1 in 68 children have ASD, which is a 30 percent increase over the previous estimate of 1 in 88. Presently there are more than 55,000 students receiving special education programming in Texas under autism eligibility. However, this number is less than half than the estimated 130,000 Texans with ASD below 22 years of age (Texas Council on Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders, 2014).

To address the needs of students with autism throughout the state, UTSA received funding from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Autism Grant Program to allow us to scale up the existing RBT training program. However, in order to meet the requirements of the statewide grant, we dissolved the in-class requirement and replaced it with a virtual meeting space.

A New Opportunity – Online RBT Training

Upon successfully training 960 teachers over the two-year grant, an established online program emerged. Extended Education began the transition of the grant program to an open enrollment, community-facing, professional education program.

Online RBT Market Analysis

Answering Questions

How do we determine interest in an online program?

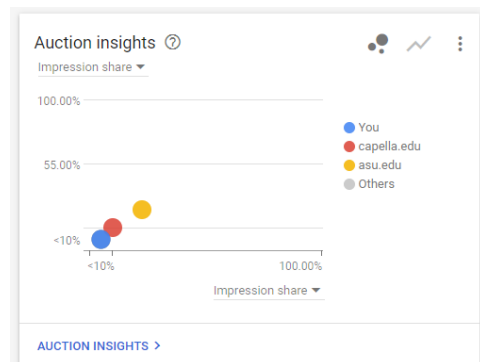
The grant came with a built-in audience: teachers. Leveraging previous success with in-class RBT trainings, we created new engagement forms to determine interest in an online modality.

How do we engage a national audience?

ASD diagnosis is not only on the rise in Texas, but nationwide. We used data mapping from the CDC to determine states with the highest diagnosis rate as well as Google Ads geographic data/CTR per state/city and directed funding sources to those locations.

What programs exist in the space? Who are our competitors?

With a national audience, comes greater competition for participants. The keywords most associated with RBT training or ABA Therapy are also associated with larger undergraduate and graduate programs. For example, Arizona State University offers an Online Applied Behavior Analysis Graduate Certificate. Competing at the top-level was not possible because of budget restraints; we concentrated on mid-level value keywords with lower bids.



Leveraging Strengths

- UTSA is home to the Autism Research Center, a nationally recognized therapy clinic
- Industry-credentialed researchers run the ARC
- We utilize a top-level domain (.edu). This holds significant trust value in audiences
- RBT program was back-linked by 'Top Online RBT Programs'
- RBT Training is not a saturated market. Third-party vendors offer most trainings.
- Affordable course price: \$349.00 per participant, no fees or materials required

Execution of National Marketing Campaign

Asset Allocation

We engaged ARC instructors to provide research papers, interviews, student data, contemporary research trends and models, and practical application scenarios of ABA therapy. The synthesized

assets tell a story of need, progress, compassion, and love: <http://www.utsa.edu/ee/online-registered-behavior-technician-training.html>

Understanding Audiences

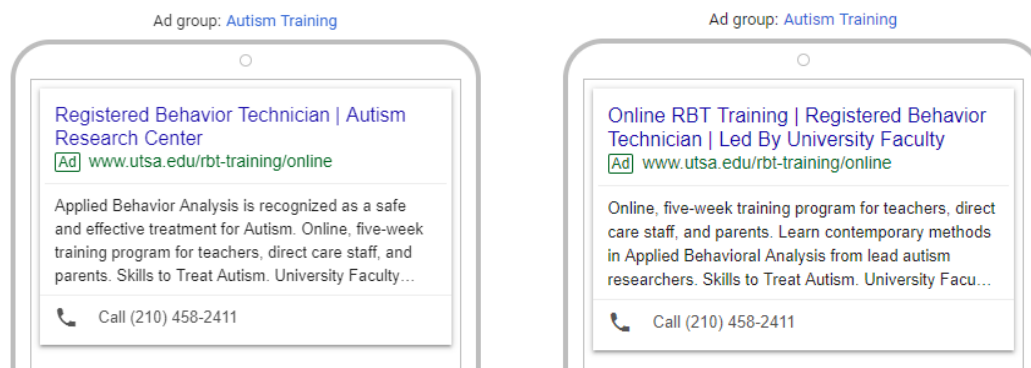
RBT Training is useful to a variety of audiences that have different motivations for seeking training. The two main audience motivations are:

- 1.) Educators and paraprofessional engage in training to enhance their skill-set, receive a promotion or a raise.
- 2.) Family and friends of those with ASD seek training to better understand the disorder and develop skills to enhance their interactions.

Google Ads

Extended Education allocated \$1,500 for the marketing launch. Google Ads began showing on the search network February 1, 2019 with the course start date of March 13, 2019. Start-up daily budget maxed at \$10.00 per day, in an effort to register auction insights and keyword CPCs before committing additional funds. Eventually, daily budget increased to \$40.00.

Ad groups subdivided by education/learning keywords and career training keywords. This segmentation allows us to determine what landing page is most appropriate for the visitor.



Landing Pages

- 1.) Education focused searches (L1) received content that included research papers, interviews and the relevancy and impact of ABA therapy. To convert this audience to RBT participants, we deployed Monroe's Motivational Sequence. In practicum:
 - a. Attention: ASD is on the rise
 - b. Need: There is a shortage of qualified individuals with the correct skill-set
 - c. Satisfaction: ABA therapy is useful tool and you can learn it
 - d. Visualization: videos from inside the ARC, participant responses
 - e. Action: RBT Training will allow you to engage ASD

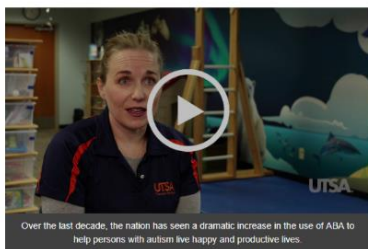
- 2.) RBT training focused searches (L2) received content that included the affordability of the program, the expertise of the instructor and the simplicity and availability of instruction. Emphasis on career exploration was also included: Love Your Work

Email Campaigns and Form Integration

Embedded MailChimp forms captured data relating to location, interests, industry and employment. Signup form conversions were tracked using page loads with individualized confirmation pages. Email segmentation was determined by landing page signup form (L1 or L2); email campaigns used the education/career messaging dichotomy. For example,

Online RBT Training is conducted by faculty from the UTSA Autism Research Center...

UTSA's Autism Research Center is a university-based applied behavior analysis (ABA) clinic that is dedicated to serving the needs of children with autism and other intellectual disabilities



As the number of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder continues to increase, so does the need for specially trained and credentialed professionals and caregivers in the area of applied behavior analysis.

[Learn More About Online RBT Training](#)

- 1.) L1 (education) visitors that used the associated sign-up form received email campaigns with video testimonials from parents focused on the impact of ABA therapy
- 2.) L2 (career) visitors that used the associated sign-up form received email campaigns with participant testimonials focused on the execution of UTSA's RBT training

Exit Survey

Qualtrics exit surveys will give us an additional data capture tool. Participants provide their industry of employment, reasons for seeking RBT training, a participants affiliation to individuals with ASD, how the participant found UTSA RBT Training, and the usefulness of the training to their overall career goals. The course has not concluded, therefore no data is available for dissemination.

Outcomes

During the marketing period from February 1 – March 12, 2019, 70 visitors requested to receive additional information about the course. The first fee-remitting participant processed on February 25. Course enrollment maxed at 15 participants, but expanded to 17, due to demand. Locations of participants are below.

Lemoore, CA
 Los Angeles, CA
 Tampa, FL
 Lexington, KY
 Seymour, MO

Austin, TX (2)
 Cedar Hill, TX
 Del Rio, TX (2)
 Helotes, TX
 Kemah, TX

Magnolia, TX
 Red Oak, TX
 Robinson, TX
 San Antonio, TX (2)

Extended Education also received communication from a philanthropist in Florida who wished to donate to the ARC in the memory of her grandson with ASD. She located the ARC through the L1 landing page.

Extended Education scheduled three additional courses for summer 2019 and the first section is reaching capacity. We have used no additional marketing dollars towards the courses. Conversion attempts to visitors who requested information, but did not enroll, are being made through email and phone.

Analysis

The digital campaign spent \$1,300 of the original \$1,500 marketing allocation. Minus instructor fees and marketing costs, Extended Education collected a 32% net profit. The CTR for the campaign was in line with industry standards of 2.0-3.0%.

Ad	Impressions	Clicks ▼	CTR ▼
● Enabled	55,674	1,381	2.48%

Although we marketed the course to a national audience, a majority of the participants are Texas residents. Without further exploration, we cannot discern the exact reasons, but we speculate that name recognition and lack of a variety of course dates may have influenced bounces. For future marketing initiatives, concentration will be placed on Texas, to reach enrollment totals, and then nationally segmented to improve ROI.