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Glossary

CPA – Cost Per Action/Acquisition;
LTV – Lifetime Value;
USP – Unique Selling Proposition;
NPS – Net Promoter Score.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Strategy Summary

This Strategy defines AlmaU's transition from a stable mid-market player to an institutional leader nurturing an intellectual and entrepreneurial elite. As higher education transforms into a key socialization institution, the university is shifting its focus from the learning process to delivering measurable results. The university positions itself as an ecosystem accumulating talent and innovation, allowing the educational process to be viewed not as a purchase of an academic degree, but as an investment in a highly effective career path.

According to the presented statistics, Kazakhstan's education market has significant capacity, estimated at **\$19.3 billion**. The Almaty region, home to 132 private schools with a high school enrollment of over 166,000, is of particular strategic importance.

Current undergraduate operating figures (ranging from 773 to 1,546 students depending on the model) demonstrate significant potential for scalability.

	Number of private schools	Number of pupils in 9-11 grades at private schools	Number of students in NIS (9-12 gr) School № 21	Number of pupils at RPhMS (9-11 gr)	Total number of comprehensive schools	Total number of pupils in comprehensive schools	Market size (in people)	Market size (money) tenge	Market size (money) \$
Almaty	132	166,500	500	450	216	331,400	498,850	123053 823750 0	2,341,965, 295
Kazakhstan	853	277,500	10,730	850	7,686	3,819,071	4,108,1 51	101337 814792 50	19,286,65 3,446
AlmaU Bachelor's degree (1st and 2nd year of study)	98	104	5	1	695	773			
AlmaU Bachelor's degree (4th year of study - hypothesis)	100	208	10	2	700	1546	1766	435628 0500	8,618,186

The above comparative analysis confirms the existence of untapped segments in specialized educational institutions, such as NIS and RPhMS, which dictates the need to strengthen integration into these target groups.

1.2. Mission and role of marketing in implementation of the general strategy of AlmaU University

The mission of marketing is to create a high perceived brand value to reduce audience sensitivity to the tuition fee.

To assess the success of the strategy implementation, the following target benchmarks have been established:

Indicator	Target value
Recruitment growth	Increase in the number of applicants by 20%
International development	Attracting at least 50 international students
Brand recognition	Increased awareness among target audience by 30%
LTV and loyalty	Retaining 85% of students to graduation

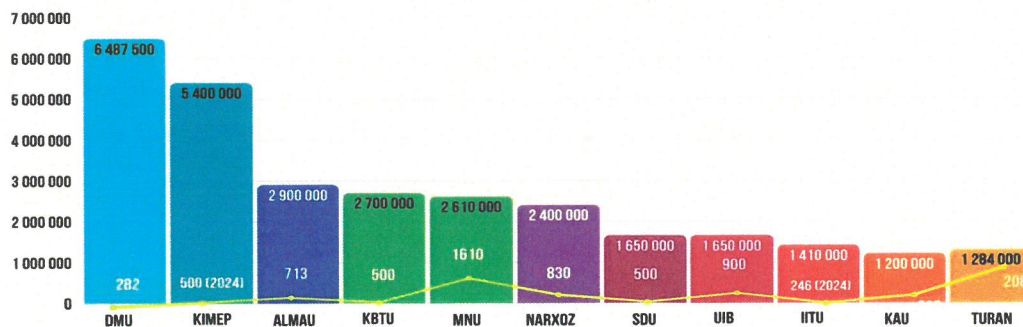
Based on an analysis of current market data and the university's strategic priorities, a unified logic for further development can be formulated.

Instead of competing in the mass market through price dumping, AlmaU is initiating a qualitative institutional transformation toward premium leadership. This means that all academic processes and external communications will now be aligned around the concept of "perceived value": we base tuition fees not on the teaching process, but on the long-term competitive advantages of graduates.

The primary growth point for realizing this ambition is the private secondary education sector, particularly specialized schools in Almaty, where the most targeted and solvent audience is concentrated. However, management's focus is now shifting from initially attracting applicants to managing their lifecycle within the university. Setting a strict retention target of 85% until graduation necessitates strengthening academic support and creating a unique entrepreneurial environment. Thus, the organization's sustainability will be ensured not only by aggressive marketing at the entrance but also by high-quality support that transforms students into loyal brand ambassadors.

2. ANALYSIS OF MARKET POSITION AND COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

2.1. Benchmarking: comparative analysis in terms of price positioning



A comparative analysis of the pricing positioning of universities showed **the absence of a direct correlation between the cost of education and demand.**

The most popular universities are those with a mid-price range and a strong reputation.

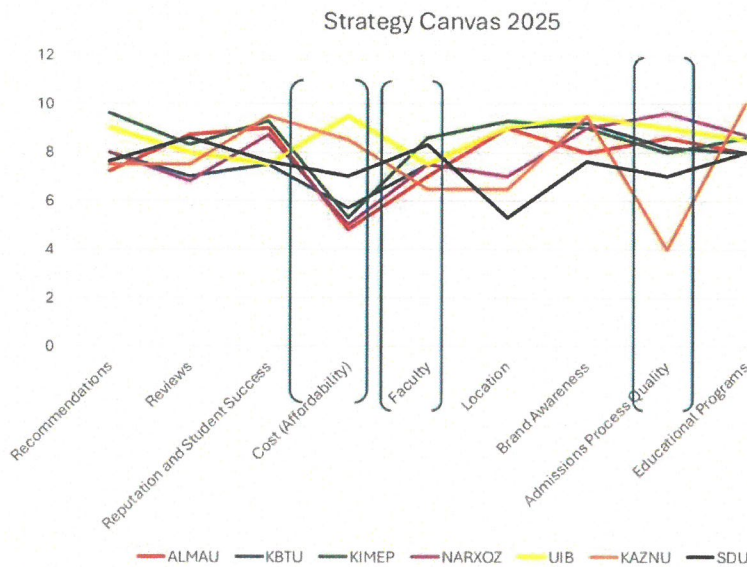
Currently, Almaty Management University occupies a **price segment above the market average**. This is especially noticeable when compared to universities whose target audience partially overlaps with AlmaU, such as Narxoz and UIB.

KIMEP and DMU are also represented in the premium price range, with tuition fees among the highest on the market. At the opposite end of the price spectrum is Turan University, which offers the most affordable tuition.

Based on a comparative analysis of key market players, AlmaU occupies a stable position as a mid-tier player, demonstrating consistent performance across most criteria. However, it lacks a clear dominant advantage in any of the key selection factors. This indicates **the need to strengthen brand differentiation and develop a unique value proposition**.

2.2. Audit of the current perception of AlmaU brand (Brand Equity)

The perception of the AlmaU brand in Kazakhstan's higher education market can be characterized as stable but lacking clear differentiation. The university is perceived as a reliable and high-quality player in the upper-middle segment, but in the minds of its target audience, there is no clearly established associative advantage that would clearly distinguish AlmaU from its competitors.



The analysis is based on the parameters that applicants use to select a university: reputation, cost, infrastructure, faculty, brand recognition, and program quality.

According to a strategic framework based on 12 qualitative studies conducted among applicants and students in Kazakhstan, the key factors in choosing a university are:

- affordability of training (cost),
- quality of the teaching staff,
- quality of work of the Admissions Committee.

The current brand positioning creates a situation in which students choose the university not based on a unique value proposition, but on a combination of factors, with AlmaU

demonstrating consistent, but not dominant, performance. This increases audience sensitivity to tuition costs and requires a clearer justification for the educational product's value.

2.3. Portrait of the target audience: from Generation Z to Generation Alpha

The strategy is based on a deep understanding of the pain points and expectations of three key segments: applicants, parents, and career guidance counselors.

The client analysis shows that the generation with which Kazakhstan's universities are currently working is very different from previous generations (2018–2021).

Applicants' fears and pains have become more profound. For example, the fear of failing to realize one's potential and living a boring life like everyone else clearly demonstrates how social media influences the thinking of current applicants. Today, students aren't simply choosing a profession or specialty; they're looking at the skills they'll graduate with. From a marketing perspective, it's no longer advisable to simply broadcast lists of educational programs; it's recommended to showcase the real skills and practical tools they'll gain.

As the analysis showed, one of the university's key indirect target clients are school career counselors. They significantly influence applicants' choices and, consequently, the admissions funnel.

It is recommended to establish systematic interaction with career guidance counselors: maintain regular contact and provide them with the most transparent, structured, and up-to-date information about admission procedures, requirements, and deadlines.

Additionally, it would be advisable to appoint a designated responsible employee (single point of contact) at the university who would oversee work with career guidance counselors at target schools, promptly respond to their requests, and maintain ongoing communication.

2.4. SWOT analysis of marketing potential

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Current programs for the labor market (interdisciplinary approach) 2. Clear positioning of the university 3. 3 years of study (opportunity to enter the labor market faster) 4. Convenient location of the university in the city (image of an urban university) 5. Well-developed academic mobility 6. Event Marketing (Marketing Management) 7. Networking within the university, a sense of belonging to a community of progressive youth 8. Absence of negative reviews in open sources 9. The strongest Graduate School of Business in Kazakhstan 10. GSB representative offices in the regions of Kazakhstan (which also 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poor work with graduates, low level of loyalty 2. Weak showcase of TS 3. The campus and dormitory infrastructure are not attractive 4. There is no onboarding for international applicants 5. Weak infrastructure for a number of educational programs (weak technical and material base of the university) 6. Poorly developed scientific activity (directly affects admission to doctoral programs) 7. Poorly organized work with government agencies (from a PR perspective) 8. Online education

<p>provides consultations on bachelor's programs)</p> <p>11. The University's history (founded in 1988) is a good external credibility factor.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing a full-fledged business incubator within the university (taking into account the university's positioning and practical focus) 2. Resumption of an active and diverse student life 3. Strengthening and expanding international partnerships for dual degree programs 4. Strengthening dual education 5. Increasing the number of international applicants at all levels of education 6. Developing continuous learning (school-university-industry) through strengthening the career center and increasing alumni loyalty, as well as partnerships with industry representatives 7. Increasing marketing communications for IT and STEM programs (CMDA, Fintech and AI, Product Management) 8. Strengthening internal development and external positioning as an inclusive institution 9. Promotion of "Tolyk Adam" program 10. Strengthening the university's image 11. Development of the university's internal infrastructure (opening of new laboratories, access to libraries) 12. Development of science 13. Increasing collaboration and partnerships with major industrial players (through advanced training courses) 	<p style="text-align: center;">RISKS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High price (above the market average among direct competitors) 2. Launching new EPs without demand analysis (low enrolment, losses) 3. Poor UX website and weak service (loss of requests) 4. The dominant language of instruction is Russian (limiting international partnerships and recruitment of foreign applicants) 5. Growth of foreign universities in Kazakhstan and substitutes (short-term courses, online platforms) 6. Low university recognition 7. Inefficient budget allocation and bureaucracy (slow hypothesis testing, lack of resources) 8. Ineffective activities of other university departments (lack of focus, lack of measurable results) 9. Hollow promises, false offers (disappointed students, loss of reputation) 10. Opening a new campus outside the city (falling demand, difficult to attract teaching staff) 11. Weak communication with students (students' dissatisfaction, low loyalty, and bad reviews)

Analyzing the current balance of power, it is worth noting that AlmaU is at a point of strategic transition, where its academic reputation must be supported by real service and infrastructural excellence.

AlmaU's critical advantage remains its three-year bachelor's degree model, which allows the university to carve out a unique niche for ambitious applicants seeking the fastest possible entry into the job market. However, to realize this potential, internal gaps must be addressed, such as modernizing the campus and digital services (website), which currently do not fully align with its image as an innovative leader.

The strategic focus should be on developing high-tech areas (Fintech, AI) and creating a full-fledged business incubator, which will transform the learning process into applied career preparation. Finally, the university needs to move from one-time sales to building lifelong relationships with clients within the School-University-Industry chain.

Activating the alumni community and building systematic collaboration with career counselors will create an ecosystem where the AlmaU brand becomes a guarantee of success in life, reducing audience sensitivity to price through a clear and high return on investment in education.

3. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS

3.1. Market niche and strategic role of AlmaU

Market niche and strategic role of the brand

AlmaU occupies a unique niche in Kazakhstan's education market as an **entrepreneurial, career-oriented university**. The university's primary focus is on ambitious high school students and conscious parents, as well as applicants seeking an accelerated professional start. At the same time, AlmaU deliberately *avoids competing with academic universities that aspire to the scientific elite, mass universities focused on the low-cost segment, or foreign universities where the primary value is the status of a diploma*. The primary competition is for students seeking a practice-oriented education, a strong environment, and rapid career advancement.

Marketing ideology

AlmaU's marketing policy is built not simply as a promotion of educational services, but as a way to create a holistic life scenario for success for students.

"The university doesn't sell a diploma, but the results that applicants receive after three years of study."

The key ideological principles of communication include the value of time over cost, the creation of a strong community of people capable of developing one another, and the understanding of education as a career tool. The university is positioned as a launching pad for professional success, where education becomes the foundation for students' future achievements.

Marketing strategy development methodology

AlmaU's strategy is based on a hybrid "data-driven + brand-driven" model. When developing solutions, the university relies on a comprehensive analysis of the target audience, competitive environment, and brand architecture. The strategy is built on the principle of: meaning first, then channels; value first, then traffic; brand first, then leads. This approach

ensures the integrity of communications and helps foster a lasting emotional attachment to AlmaU among students and parents, as well as enhance the perceived value of education.

Competitive differentiation

AlmaU stands out from its competitors thanks to five key advantages: an entrepreneurial environment, practical orientation from the first year, accelerated educational trajectories (a bachelor's degree in three years), strong networking, and integration with companies for career launches. Unlike its competitors, the university strives to be not simply the "best" university based on academic performance, but the "most useful" for students in real-life career and practical contexts.

3.2. Target positioning and USP

AlmaU positions itself as a hub for talent and innovators, where prestigious education combines with practical experience and networking, opening up broad career prospects and helping students effectively utilize their most important resource – time.

The university creates an environment for ambitious, proactive students who seek more than just a diploma, but rather the effective use of their time, access to a strong network, and expanded career prospects both in Kazakhstan and abroad.

Thus, AlmaU is a university for those who want to quickly launch their careers, be surrounded by strong people, and receive an education related to real-world practice.

3.3. Educational model (Skill Wheel 360)

To ensure its stated market leadership, AlmaU is implementing the comprehensive "**Skill Wheel 360**" educational model. This concept transforms the learning process into a system for creating measurable value for students, based on four fundamental pillars:

Practice-oriented

Training is based on working with real-world cases, projects, and business challenges from the first year of study, allowing students to gain practical experience while still studying.

Leadership ecosystem

The university serves as a platform for ongoing student interaction with entrepreneurs, media personalities, recognized experts, and industry leaders, fostering a strong professional networking environment.

Optimization of time resources

AlmaU offers the opportunity to complete a bachelor's degree program in 3 years instead of 4, allowing students to enter the labor market and begin building a career more quickly.

Global scale

Students gain access to international exchange programs, double degrees, and global educational experiences that expand their professional and cultural horizons.

4. KEY MARKETING DIRECTIONS

4.1. Digital Marketing and Traffic Management

AlmaU's digital communications are based on the principle of functional diversification: each digital platform plays a specific role in the audience acquisition and retention funnel. We avoid duplicating content across platforms in favor of creating a unique user experience on each platform.

Social media ecosystem:

Instagram: a platform for building trust through the logic of "price = quality."

TikTok: A Loyalty Driver. Goal: 10,000 followers. Primary tool: UGC (User Generated Content) created by students.

Facebook: expert storytelling, showcasing AlmaU's contribution to science and society.

LinkedIn: Strengthening your reputation in the professional and international community.

Telegram: three independent channels (applicants, graduate students, foreigners) for quick navigation through the admissions process.

Lead generation

- **Instagram:** 70% of categories are aimed at prospective students and parents; they use UGC formats, educational program carousels, memes, and trends.

- **TikTok:** 100% of categories are designed to engage prospective students through trends, dances, and engaging creatives.

- **Telegram:** standalone channels for applicants, graduate students, and international students. The content is independent, useful, and targeted.

Working with hot leads for retention

Telegram:

- autonomous channel for applicants;
- стратегия автономии: Telegram ≠ репост других соцсетей;
- goal: broadcasting targeted and practical content;
- work format: joint brainstorming sessions with recruiting management, formation of posts;
- Features: independent content plan, answers to questions, admissions navigation.

Implementing this model allows AlmaU to transform its digital presence from an information tool into a **highly effective attention management system**. Separating roles between platforms ensures a seamless user transition from initial interest (TikTok, Instagram) to deep trust (LinkedIn, Facebook), and finally to final conversion through personalized service channels (Telegram). This approach minimizes lead loss at the top of the funnel and improves the quality of communication by taking into account the psychographic characteristics of each target audience group.

4.2. PR and expert positioning

AlmaU's PR strategy is focused on cultivating a sustainable image of the university as an expert, innovative, and socially significant institution that influences the development of education, business, and society. The strategy combines media presence, expert positioning, institutional engagement, and multi-format content.

AlmaU builds a systematic approach to media engagement based on a win-win principle: the university provides high-quality expert analysis and news, while the media receive a platform for strengthening its brand reputation.

Key formats of interaction:

- Expert comments from teachers and management on current issues.
- Analytical columns, blogs and author's opinions.
- Forecasts and reviews of markets and professions of the future.
- Comments on changes in legislation and government initiatives.
- Case studies of companies and industries.
- Publication of university research results.

- Highlighting the achievements of faculty, students and graduates.

Thus, AlmaU is shaping the image of the university as a source of competent expertise, and not just an educational platform.

Developing the public image of teachers and researchers:

Regular presence of PPS in the media as experts.

Promotion of scientific and applied research.

Supporting teachers' personal expert brands.

Participation in professional discussions, forums and industry events.

Принцип: сильные эксперты → сильное образование → сильные выпускники.

All key AlmaU projects, events, and strategic initiatives receive PR support at every stage, from announcement to finalization.

Priority PR areas:

- educational innovations and new learning formats;
- international partnerships and academic exchanges;
- unique educational programs;
- AlmaU's position in global and local rankings;
- global achievements of the university;
- significant results of the year and strategic results.

Commercial placement in key media outlets is provided for the most significant newsworthy events—stories that cement the university's status.

GR direction: formation of sustainable relations with government agencies and strengthening of the institutional status of AlmaU, taking into account interfunctional interaction with all joint ventures of the university.

Main tasks:

- regular interaction with relevant ministries and departments;
- participation in the discussion of educational reforms and initiatives;
- positioning the university as an expert platform for the state;
- development of partnerships, including joint publications and analytical materials.

This strengthens the perception of AlmaU as a significant player at the level of educational policy, and not just as a private university.

AlmaU's own media formats:

- YouTube channel and short formats (Shorts);
- podcasts with experts, alumni and partners;
- regular news digests;
- author's columns and blogs of teachers and administrators;
- special media projects, such as "JURTTYN BALASY", aimed at social and value-based agendas.

A multi-format approach allows us to simultaneously engage with different audiences: applicants, parents, the professional community, and government agencies.

Effect of implementation:

- strengthening AlmaU's reputation as an expert and innovative university;
- increasing the trust of parents and the professional community;
- strengthening positions in the information field and ratings;
- reducing sensitivity to high tuition costs through perception of brand value.

The comprehensive implementation of the PR program is aimed at brand equity, which directly impacts the university's financial stability. By shaping the image of an innovative and expert center, we achieve two critical goals:

The first is increasing trust – strengthening the loyalty of the professional community and parents as key decision-makers.

Second, price elasticity - a high perception of brand value helps reduce audience sensitivity to the cost of training, transforming “price” into an “investment in status.”

4.3. Recruitment Strategy (Admissions Marketing)

AlmaU's recruiting strategy is aimed at generating lasting interest in the university long before application submission. It combines traditional career guidance tools with new immersive formats, allowing applicants to experience the university through real-world experiences, people, and the career environment.

The main goal of standard offline activities is to ensure the university's systematic presence in the educational community and maintain regular contact with potential applicants. This work focuses primarily on schools in Almaty as a priority market, but also actively covers key regions of Kazakhstan, including Astana, Shymkent, and regional centers. Through presentations, meetings, and partnerships with educational centers, the university creates a pipeline of motivated candidates, capturing their interest at specialized exhibitions and Open Days.

Objective: AlmaU's systematic presence in the educational environment and regular contact with potential applicants.

Career guidance work in schools:

Main focus: schools in Almaty (priority market).

Additionally: regions - Astana, Shymkent, Taldykorgan, Uralsk, Aktau, Aktobe, Atyrau, Taraz.

Formats: presentations, meetings with high school students, consultations on choosing specialties and career tracks.

Working with educational centers: partnerships with pre-university centers and language schools to reach motivated applicants.

Educational exhibitions:

Free – within Kazakhstan.

Paid – in Kazakhstan and abroad (as appropriate).

Open Days: presentations, meetings with faculty, campus tours, admissions committee consultations.

A separate direction of AlmaU's recruitment strategy is focused on attracting international applicants and strengthening the university's global presence. This work is carried out across CIS countries, Central Asia, and other priority international markets where there is strong interest in studying in Kazakhstan and in English-taught academic programs. The primary goal of this direction is to increase AlmaU's international brand awareness and attract motivated international students through a combination of offline and digital recruitment tools.

International Recruitment:

Geography: CIS countries, Central Asia, and other priority international markets.

Key formats of engagement:

- participation in international education fairs and forums;
- outreach tours, career guidance sessions, and presentations in schools and educational centers across CIS countries;
- partnerships with recruitment agencies and international educational organizations;
- digital promotion and targeted advertising for international audiences in countries where permitted by legislation and supported by advertising platforms;

– online consultations for international applicants, including guidance on admissions, visa support, and adaptation processes.

The strategy also предусматривает integration with the Study in Kazakhstan program through participation in joint marketing campaigns, the use of the platform for lead generation, and expanded presence at international exhibitions and digital channels operated by the program. These tools are aimed at increasing AlmaU's international visibility and ensuring a stable inflow of international applicants.

Through international recruitment, AlmaU expands the geography of its student community, strengthens its multicultural environment, and builds a sustainable flow of international students.

In parallel with the traditional approach, career-focused recruiting is being implemented, aimed at clearly demonstrating the connection between academic training and future professional success. As part of this approach, applicants are introduced to the real business environment through Career Tours at partner companies, Career Talks with industry leaders, and practical challenges such as case competitions and hackathons. This approach is complemented by the creation of informal touchpoints: from city picnics and open lectures to creative promotional events. This multi-format approach not only lowers the barrier to brand perception but also builds a deep emotional connection with prospective students, transforming AlmaU from an educational institution into a clear and reliable partner in career planning.

Objective: to show applicants the connection between education and a future career.

Career Tours: On-site excursions to partner companies, demonstrations of work processes and career paths.

Career Talks: guest lectures and meetings with businesses, entrepreneurs, and experts.

Career Challenges: case competitions and hackathons with employers.

Partner companies are selected based on their relevance to applicants' interests and AlmaU's strategic directions.

Creating informal points of contact with a brand reduces the barrier to perception and creates an emotional connection:

- AlmaU Career Tour
- AlmaU Picnic
- Fruit promotions
- University Invitations
- Street Promo
- AlmaU Open Talk
- Outdoor events

The effect of an integrated approach:

- increasing the reach of the target audience in key regions;
- building early brand loyalty;
- reducing applicants' anxiety through clear career prospects;
- strengthening the perception of the university as practice-oriented and modern;
- increasing the conversion rate from interest to participation in Open Days and document submission.

Thus, recruiting ceases to be about “information” and becomes “**designing the future**” for applicants, which is critical for attracting the most talented and motivated young people.

Promotion of AlmaU Master's and doctoral programs is built on the principles of expertise, networking, and an open academic ecosystem. The primary goal is to shift the focus

of communications from formal admissions to career and intellectual development, enhancing AlmaU's value as a platform for professional growth.

AlmaU Graduate Fair is a unique inter-university platform for future master's students, bringing together leading universities from Almaty and Astana.

The format aims to foster a new culture of open interaction between universities, where applicants have the opportunity to compare programs, development trajectories, and academic approaches in a single space.

AlmaU Graduate & Doctoral Evening is an intimate open day for master's and doctoral students, held in the form of a business evening. In an informal cocktail atmosphere, participants have the opportunity to directly interact with AlmaU faculty, program directors, and alumni.

Online information sessions are a regular communication tool for potential master's and doctoral students. The format is aimed at removing entry barriers and reducing uncertainty among applicants.

MegaMasters is held during the active admissions campaign and is a key lead-generating event for the master's program. The format combines program presentations, meetings with academic directors, career path analysis, and practical case studies.

MegaMasters' primary goal is not only to attract new applications but also to build trust and loyalty among applicants through transparent communication, demonstrating the value of the programs, and direct contact with the university.

Together, these formats form a holistic ecosystem for promoting AlmaU postgraduate education, where the university acts not simply as a provider of educational services, but as a partner in professional and academic development.

5. MARKETING ECOSYSTEM AND COMMUNICATIONS

5.1. Image methods and event marketing

AlmaU's image strategy is built on the principle of a cascading increase in brand presence in the information space. Throughout the year, the university consistently increases the intensity of its communications—from provocatively attracting attention to building trust and a sustainable reputation.

This approach is aimed at systematically managing the attention of the target audience and converting short-term interest into long-term brand preference.

IN basis lies model **Attention** → **Engagement** → **Conversion** → **Trust**,

where each stage of communication performs a clear function in shaping demand and making decisions about admission.

The annual promotion cycle is structured by quarters:

Q1 - Provocation (Attention)

Launching vibrant and provocative communications aimed at attracting attention and building brand awareness. Example: "The rest teach. AlmaU develops leaders."

Q2 - Engagement

Creating an emotional connection with the audience through large-scale events and content. A key tool is the AlmaU Future Fest, a forum on the professions of the future featuring thought leaders, entrepreneurs, and business representatives.

Q3 - Conversion

The peak of the admissions campaign and maximum focus on converting interest into applications. Communications are strengthened by career arguments and social proof. Example: "Your future boss studies at AlmaU," collaborations with companies (Halyk, Kaspi), and internship programs.

Q4 – Building Trust

Focus on building loyalty and reputation through success stories, alumni case studies, and parental PR. Example: "AlmaU Stories" and graduate employment communications.

Image campaigns and event marketing are integrated with digital and recruiting activities, strengthening every stage of the funnel and ensuring the brand's continuous presence in the lives of the target audience.

The role of event marketing is not only to generate contacts but also to shape the brand experience. Events serve as a tool:

- reducing barriers and anxiety among applicants
- demonstrations of a real learning environment
- building trust through direct contact with the university
- Key formats include:
 - large-scale image events (Future Fest)
 - career guidance events
 - career activities with employers
 - open days and chamber formats

This comprehensive approach ensures AlmaU's continuous presence in the media and consistently converts initial audience attention into lasting trust and an informed decision to enroll. Ultimately, the image strategy creates the image of a bold, innovative, and career-focused university. This is strategically important for business, as significantly enhancing the perceived value of the educational product helps reduce potential clients' sensitivity to tuition costs, shifting their focus from price to long-term life prospects.

5.2. Content strategy and attention management

AlmaU's content strategy is viewed not as a collection of individual communication channels, but as a unified ecosystem of interaction with the target audience at all stages of their journey—from initial contact to admissions and the formation of long-term brand loyalty.

The key objective is to build a systematic and manageable communication system in which each platform plays a clearly defined role and strengthens the overall acquisition and retention funnel.

The strategic goal of the content is to create a sustainable perception of AlmaU as a modern, practice-oriented, and international university that provides a high price-quality ratio and realistic career prospects.

The content policy is aimed at solving the following tasks:

- increase in the number of targeted requests from applicants
- reducing audience anxiety at the admissions stage
- building trust through demonstrating real student experience
- building a loyal community around the brand
- strengthening the university's expert and international image

Communication is based on three key principles:

Humanity over formality. Communication is built through living stories, real cases, and student experiences. The university speaks not "about itself," but "through its people."

Practical value instead of theory. The content answers specific audience questions: how to proceed, what to choose, what opportunities open up after training. Each piece of content reduces uncertainty or increases confidence in the choice.

Contextuality instead of universality. The same news item is adapted to the behavior of the audience of a specific platform and is not replicated in the same form.

The content strategy is based on the principle of functionally distributing roles between platforms, which eliminates duplication and increases communication efficiency.

Instagram, TikTok, and informal digital formats generate emotional engagement, trust, and initial interest in the brand. Content includes showcases of student life, university values, trending formats, and user-generated content (UGC) created by students themselves.

Telegram serves as a support service for applicants during the decision-making process. Content is built around practical benefits: instructions, checklists, and walkthroughs of complex application stages. Communication is structured around the principle of a "trusted guide" helping students navigate the application process.

Facebook, LinkedIn, and news platforms are used to shape the expert agenda and strengthen the university's reputation. The emphasis is shifting from formal reporting to interpreting events, demonstrating the significance of achievements, and explaining their value to the audience.

LinkedIn also serves as a means of validating the status and quality of education, focusing on international achievements, accreditations, and career opportunities for graduates.

TikTok is used as a tool for building organic trust through vibrant, native content. The primary focus is on student participation, adapting to trends, and avoiding direct advertising. Forming a dedicated team of content creators allows for rapid response to trends and strengthening the brand's presence in the digital environment.

Additionally, communication is divided into formal and informal levels (including individual accounts and mascots), which allows for simultaneous expansion of reach and reduction of the brand perception barrier.

Таким образом, пользователь проходит последовательный путь взаимодействия с контентом: увидел → заинтересовался → разобрался → принял решение.

AlmaU's content serves not only as an information tool but also as a key mechanism for managing applicants' attention, trust, and choice.

6. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

6.1 Forecast budget for strategy implementation

The University's total marketing budget is 133.6 million tenge per year, which attracts 907 students. The average student acquisition cost (CAC) is 147,000 tenge.

Expenses	per year in tenge
Branding	₸20,830,000
Payroll (including civil-law contracts)	₸65,472,000
Advertising + CRM/SMS/E-mail	15,926,000 rubles
Offline activities	₸21,900,000
Business trips	9,475,047 ₸
Total for the year	₸133,603,047

The average revenue per student is 2.53 million tenge per year, resulting in a lifetime value (LTV) of 7.6–10 million tenge. Thus, the LTV/CAC ratio exceeds 50x, demonstrating the high efficiency of marketing investments.

However, analysis of academic movement shows significant levels of dropout, especially in the early stages of education. During the last academic year, 201 students were expelled, of which:

- 51% - in the 1st year of study
- 33% - in the 2nd year

This indicates a high flow-out rate in the first two years of study. Taking into account actual retention, the average duration of study is ~2.3–2.5 years, which results in an adjusted LTV of approximately 6.1 million tenge per student.

The essential volume of the losses occurs not at the recruitment stage, but at the retention stage. It's estimated that the university loses up to 40% of its potential revenue per student, which, when measured against the annual enrollment, amounts to hundreds of millions of tenge.

The return on market investment (ROMI) is 16.2, which means that every 1 tenge invested in marketing brings in more than 16 tenge in revenue.

Olympiad	1,400,700 ₸
Open Days	₸2,610,830
Targeted advertising	₸8,080,900
Total for the year	₸12,092,430
Received from Target and events	302

An analysis of the channels reveals significant unevenness in effectiveness: channels (Olympiads, open days, and targeted advertising), which account for only 9% of the budget, provide 33% of all revenue with an average CAC of approximately 40 thousand tenge.

Channel	Total number of leads	The last touch	Received a grant	Admitted to the PE
OD December 8	20	9	1	8
Admissions Committee Questions	10	10	3	7
Form in Bitrix	11	10	2	8
Business trip	6	6	2	4
Telegram	18	17	2	15
Almau4u landing page	84	46	3	43
AlmaUNomad OD	52	52	5	47
GameDay OD	4	4	1	3
Megachance Olympiad	208	139	29	110
Mystery OD	13	9	2	7
Total	426	302	50	252

Funnel analysis shows that out of 426 captured leads, 302 converted into sales, representing a conversion rate of 70.9%. This is a high figure and indicates strong performance during the follow-up phase.

Channel analysis shows significant variability in conversions:

- Highly effective channels (Telegram, Megachance, offline activities) demonstrate a conversion rate of 67–94%
- individual channels (for example, individual event activities) show lower conversion rates at 45–55%

Maintaining the current marketing structure will limit growth to linear dynamics. By optimizing budget allocation and implementing end-to-end analytics, it is possible to:

- CAC reduction by 30–50%
- increase in student numbers by 30-100% within the current budget.

The forecast model places a primary emphasis on performance and engagement tools that ensure high conversion rates and lower acquisition costs. Specifically, targeted advertising is viewed as a key lead generation tool, and offline events as a source of the highest-quality, high-converting traffic. The strategy also includes developing a CRM infrastructure and automated communications to improve lead processing and reduce losses during student retention.

Direction	Activity	Role in strategy	Stage (A/E/C/T)	Units of measurement	Volume	Cost per unit	Total KZT
Digital	Targeted advertising Meta, TikTok	Collection of applications	Conversion	month	12	1,625,000	19,500,000
Digital	Image photo shoots	Formation of a visual image	Awareness	filming	4	700,000	2,800,000

Offline	Image partnerships	Brand enhancement	Trust	partnership	5	1,000,000	5,000,000
Offline	Marketing research	Analytics and strategy adjustment	Trust	research	2	450,000	900,000
Digital	Landing pages for educational programs	Lead conversion	Conversion	landing page	3	500,000	1,500,000
Offline	Billboards	Formation of a brand environment	Engagement	Billboards	3	2 333 333	7,000,000
Recruitment / Offline	Open Days	Conversion of applicants	Conversion	event	5	3,841,667	11,525,000
Recruitment / Offline	Olympiads and educational events	Audience engagement	Engagement	event	3	1,666,667	5,000,000
Recruitment / Offline	Trips to schools and regions	Initial contact	Awareness	trip	12	3,750,000	45,000,000
Branding / Design	Decorating walls at the university	Formation of a brand environment	Trust	building project	5	1,400,000	7,000,000
Branding / Design	Registration of the Admissions Committee	Strengthening the conversion point	Conversion	project	1	5,000,000	5,000,000
Branding	Art objects/installations	Formation of a city brand presence	Awareness	object	1	5,500,000	5,500,000
Branding	Image collaboration	Increasing recognition	Awareness	Textile campaign	2	3,500,000	7,000,000
Branding / Design	Photo zones and brand zones	Audience engagement	Engagement	zone	3	333 333	1,000,000
Branding / Design	Roll-ups / banners / structures / signs and navigation	Event support	Awareness	set	12	458 333	5,500,000
Image products	Image brochures (RU/KZ/EN)	Information support	Awareness / Trust	set	3	3,500,000	10,500,000
Image products	Notebooks/diaries/corporate folders	Brand support	Trust	lot	12	466 667	5,600,000
Image products	Merch (hoodies, T-shirts, shoppers)	Increasing loyalty	Engagement	collection	3	6,000,000	18,000,000
Image products	Promotional products (pens, flags, etc.)	Event support	Awareness	lot	4	1,200,000	4,800,000
CRM / Retention	CRM implementation	Lead processing	Conversion	setting	12	250,000	3,000,000
CRM / Retention	Email / WhatsApp communications	Retention and Trust	Trust	month	12	250,000	3,000,000
CRM / Retention	Funnel automation and analytics	Improving efficiency	Conversion	system	1	2,000,000	2,000,000

PR	Zhurtyn Balasy (Part 3)	Reputational positioning of the university	Trust	project	1	5,600,000	5,600,000
PR	Paid placements in the media	Strengthening recognition and reputation	Awareness / Trust	campaign	1	24,000,000	24,000,000
PR	Integrations with bloggers	Building audience trust	Awareness / Engagement	campaign	1	20,000,000	20,000,000
PR	Image videos for events	Emotional branding	Awareness	video clip	5	1,000,000	5,000,000
PR	Outsourced services (photography, video reporting, editing, voice-over)	Content production support	Engagement	plastic bag	1	10,000,000	10,000,000
PR	Merch for journalists and bloggers	PR communications support	Trust	lot	1	2,000,000	2,000,000
PR	Business trips, training, strategic sessions	Team development and PR networking	Trust	plastic bag	1	2,000,000	2,000,000
PR	Interactive stands for the 1st floor (2 pcs.)	Image and digital navigation	Engagement	object	2	1,500,000	3,000,000
PR	Service subscriptions (ChatGPT, TurboScribe, Figma)	Support for digital production	Engagement	year	1	360,000	360,000
PR	Podcast studio	Formation of the AlmaU media platform	Awareness / Trust	studio	1	10,000,000	10,000,000
PR	Image event	Building community and loyalty	Trust	event	1	5,000,000	5,000,000
PR	Merch for AlmaU ambassadors	Strengthening the brand community	Engagement	lot	1	2,000,000	2,000,000
Reserve	Unforeseen expenses	Flexibility in strategy implementation	All stages	reserve	1	3,000,000	3,000,000
Total						268,085,000	

Thus, the projected budget allocation reflects a shift from a predominantly linear marketing model to a performance-driven approach with enhanced analytics, scaling of the most converting channels, and the integration of retention tools. Implementation of this model will reduce the average CAC, improve the effectiveness of marketing investments, and ensure student enrollment growth without a proportional increase in the overall budget.

6.2. Risk matrix

AlmaU's marketing strategy implementation is subject to a range of external and internal factors that can impact the achievement of target indicators. To ensure the sustainability of the strategy, a system of preventative measures is in place to mitigate key threats.

Key risks:

High tuition costs and audience price sensitivity

Maintaining high tuition costs can lead to reduced conversion rates and student attrition due to insufficient value justification.

Increasing competition in the education market. Increased activity from competitors, including both local universities and international educational programs, is intensifying the competition for applicants.

Insufficient brand differentiation. Without clear positioning, AlmaU may be perceived as just another university among many, which reduces marketing effectiveness.

Dependence on specific acquisition channels. Excessive concentration on a limited number of channels (e.g., social media) increases the risk of algorithm changes or platform performance declines.

To minimize these threats, the strategy calls for a transition from price competition to value competition. This is achieved through promoting a "time-saving" model, developing its own independent media ecosystem, and close integration with the real economy. Systematic work on the center's image and improving the user experience at all stages of the funnel will transform potential risks into manageable parameters and ensure the university's sustainability in an aggressive market environment.

Conclusion

AlmaU's marketing strategy isn't a series of isolated actions, but rather the work of a unified ecosystem aimed at transforming the university's market perception. The strategy's success is based on five fundamental drivers, which, taken together, ensure the transition from quantitative recruitment to qualitative leadership.

The first is media visibility, including provocative campaigns, viral formats, and newsworthy events. We are moving away from passive information dissemination to an active media presence. The use of viral formats and the creation of resonant newsworthy events allow us to break through the information noise and cement AlmaU's status as the most dynamic and progressive university in the country.

The second social proof: showcasing successful graduates' case studies, employment rates, and partnerships with businesses. The university's reputation is confirmed by the measurable results of our graduates. Demonstrating successful career paths, high employment rates, and direct partnerships with business leaders serve as an undeniable proof of quality, reducing barriers of mistrust among applicants and parents.

The third community effect ensures student engagement through UGC content, closed events, and brand ambassadors. We create an environment where every student becomes a brand ambassador through user-generated content. and a system of closed events creates a unique "community effect" that transforms the learning process into a privilege of belonging to an intellectual and entrepreneurial club.

The fourth is career marketing, which includes excursions, case competitions, and internships. Integrating students into the real sector through case competitions, internships, and career tours from their first year allows us to sell not just a diploma, but a ready-made professional identity and a graduate's high market value.

The fifth is reputational capital, which is realized through expert commentary, research, and AlmaU's participation in educational reforms. The university's intellectual leadership is reinforced through participation in government reforms and in-depth expert analysis. Building strong reputational capital allows AlmaU to act as a player in educational policy, which ultimately secures our position in the premium market segment.

The combined impact of these factors enables AlmaU to achieve the core goal of its strategy, which is to transform "high tuition costs" into "high future value." We are building a university that doesn't simply impart knowledge, but projects success, creating measurable excellence for its students in a global context and scale. This marketing strategy will form the

foundation on which AlmaU secures its status as a leading entrepreneurial university, shaping the education of tomorrow.