



# **Market developments and recruitment strategies in The Netherlands: to catch and to keep**

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# Agenda

- Recruitment in the past
- Why change recruitment strategies?
- Higher Education in The Netherlands
- From “ist” to “soll”
- Communicating with prospect students
- Good practice
- Bad practice
- Future



# Recruitment in the past (1)

- **Until the 60's**  
knowledge = power; recruitment of the happy few with educated, wealthy parents
- **70's**  
knowledge = prosperity for everyone; Higher Education for all!  
(national orientation, common goals)
- **80's and 90's**  
big = beautiful; focus on mass recruitment
- **2000**  
reputation = funds; the hunt for talent  
(international orientation, institutional goals)



## Recruitment in the past (2)

- 1996\*  
19% of working population has a bachelor and/or master degree
- 2005\*  
25% of working population has a bachelor and/or master degree
- Future  
40% of working population has a bachelor and/or master degree

\* CBS Statline, 2008



## Why change recruitment strategies?

- Globalization of economy and knowledge, mobility
- Increasing competition
- Large scale budget cuts by the government
- Financing output in stead of input
- Low results (dropouts)
- Students become consumers



**Higher Education is serious business!!**



# Higher Education in The Netherlands

- 14 research universities (200.000 stud., BA+MA)
- 40 universities of applied science (375.000 stud., mostly BA)
- Small profile differences
- High quality
- Regional < > nationwide recruitment
- Using the same recruitment instruments
- Accent on recruitment of prospect students as an independent action/task (not cradle to grave)
- Moving focus: from quantity to quality; from national to international
- Little cooperation in communications



# From "ist" to "soll" (1)

**demand < > supply**

**"We know what is best for you"**

**We are offering without knowing what "they" want**



## From “ist” to “soll” (2)

“The international reputation of Dutch research universities must be improved to get access to:

- The best students
- The best researchers
- The best research facilities
- The relevant scientific networks
- Research funds
- Private investors”

(Policy of the Association of Universities in The Netherlands)



# Communicating with prospect students (1)

Who are “they”?  
(Bachelor)

- Young, sociable and engaged
- Serious about their future, but there is more
- Consumers, “what’s in it for me”
- The world is within their (technical) reach
- Be authentic and they will accept anyone
- They know who your competitors are and easily switch
- They will tell about you on the internet ...



## Communicating with prospect students (2)

Who are “they”?  
(master)

- Mature, engaged and well informed
- Serious about their future, they want to contribute
- Going for the best they can get
- The world is within their reach (social networks, study)
- They know who your competitors are and easily switch
- They will tell about you on the internet ...



# Communicating with prospect students (3)

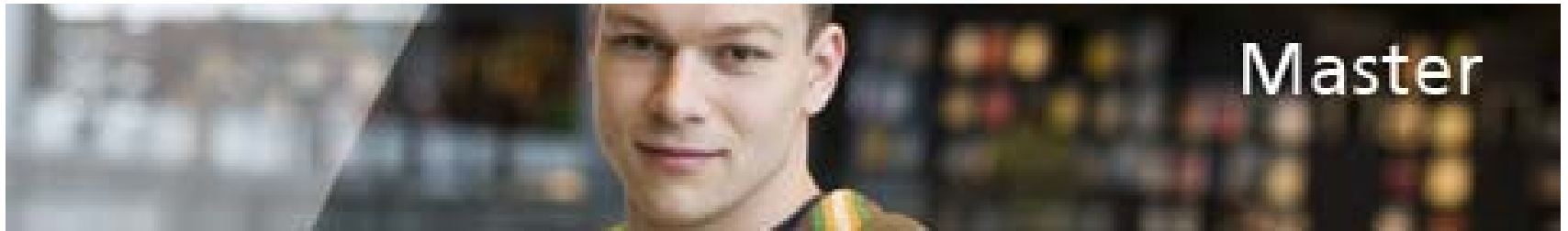
Which instruments do we use?

- Website (> interactive communications)
- Brochures (> publishing-on-demand)
- Fairs
- School visits
- Open visiting days
- Special events for parents and school information officers
- Call center (> live chat and chatbot)
- Electronic newsletters
- Advertisement
- Research & Evaluation
  
- Introduction days
- Ambassadors programme





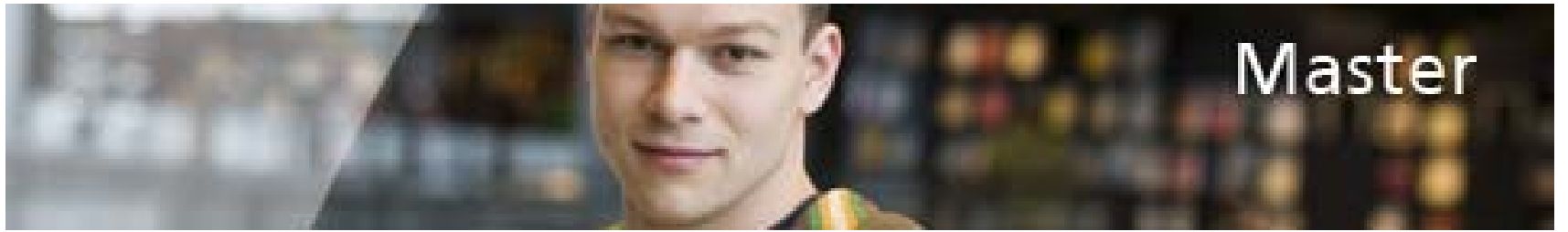
**GOOD PRACTICE: “choice coaching”**



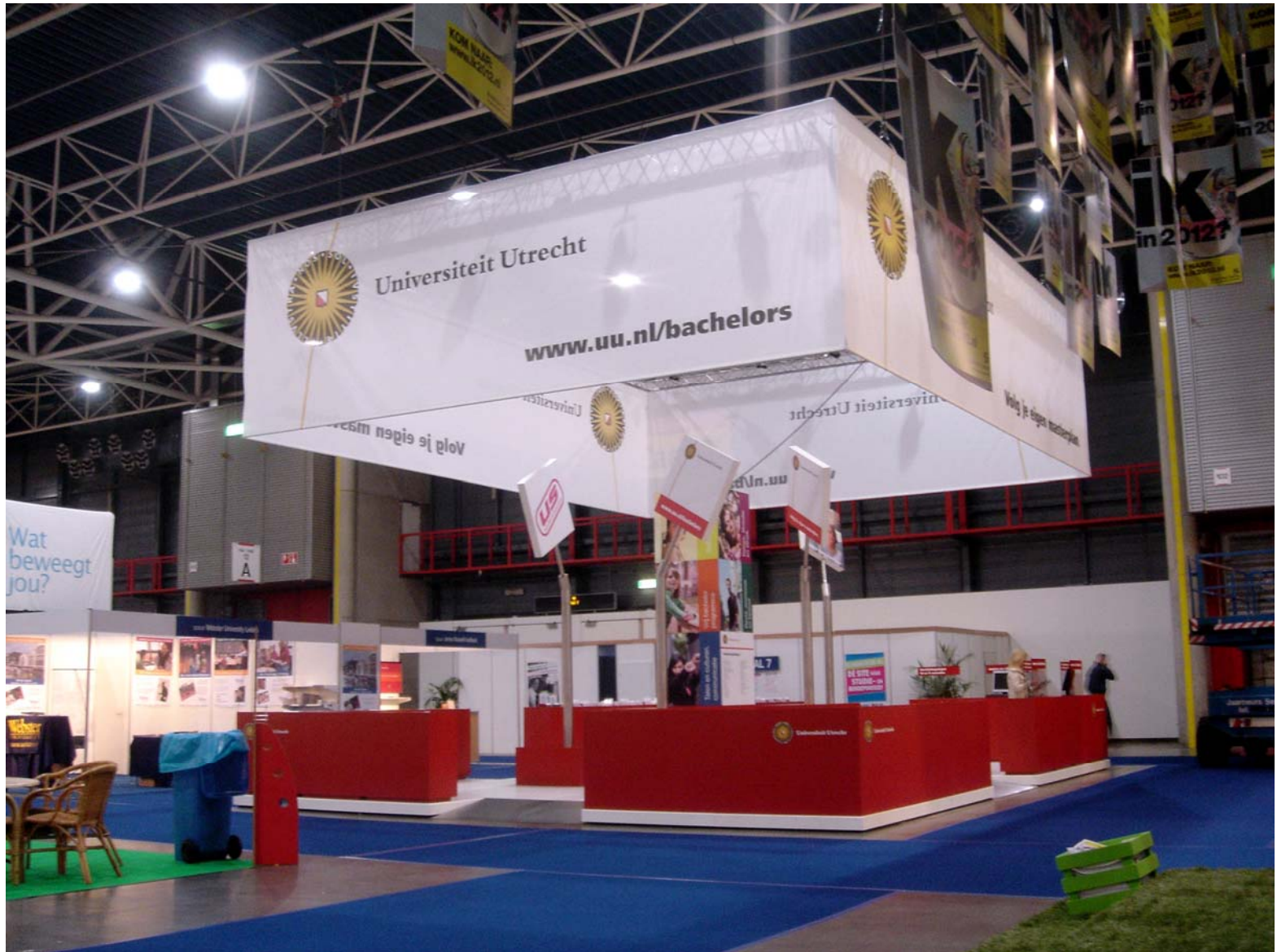
- Personal approach
- Giving a hand to make their own choice
- Information and consultancy office
- Meetings: live and digital



**BAD PRACTICE: catalogues**



## **DISCUSSION: fairs**



Study Fair Utrecht, Netherlands



Study Fair Beijing, China



Study Fair Berlin, Germany

## Future (1)

Will all of this be enough?

- ✓ Yes, it's all about personal and personalized communications
- ✓ No, we have to stretch out our relationship with our students



## Future (2)

We should:

- Wake scientific interest at young age
- Help prospect students to choose
- Help students to start
- Offer students a challenging, well equipped and sociable study environment
- Coach students to finish study and find their way "outside"
- Follow alumni through their careers
- Involve alumni in university policy and operations
- Offer alumni a community for life





# To catch and to keep

always knowing

- who they are
- where they are
- what is interesting them

It's not about you, it's about *them* to reach *your* goals ...

