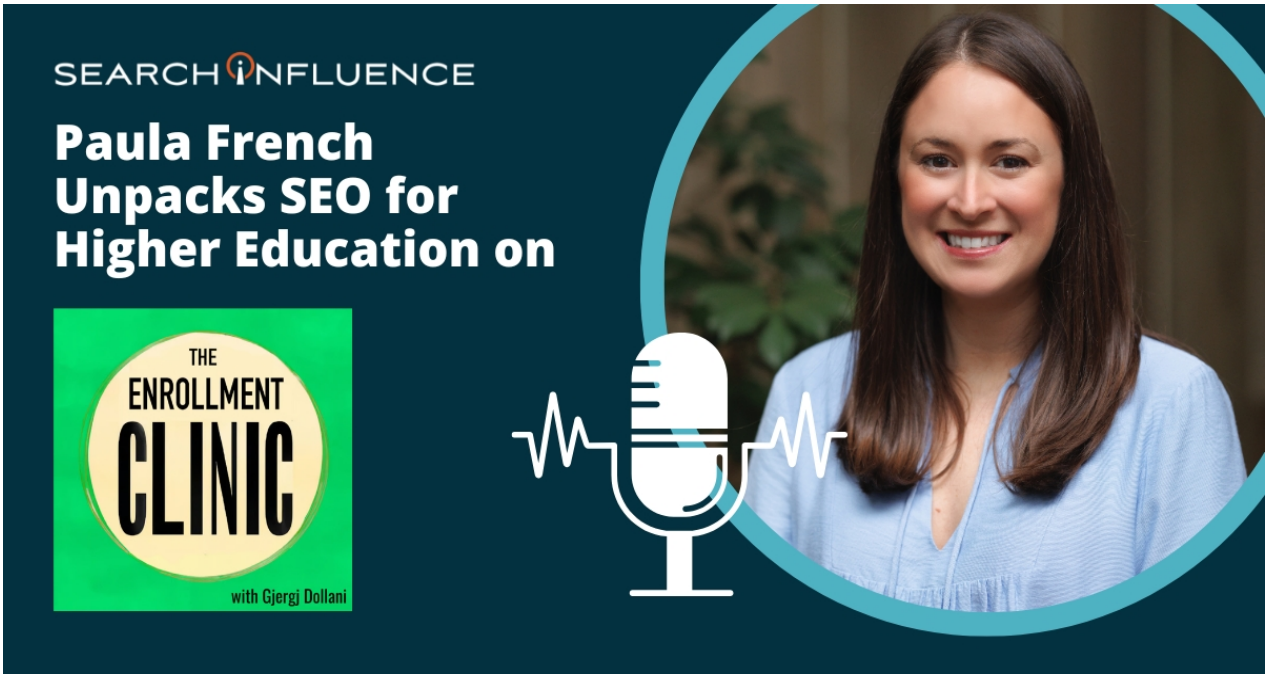

Search Influence?s Paula French Unpacks SEO for Higher Education on The Enrollment Clinic Podcast

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Search Influence?s Director of Sales and Marketing, Paula French, was recently featured on The Enrollment Clinic Podcast, where she discussed SEO for higher education and how universities can improve their digital presence to attract prospective students.

In her episode, ?Higher Ed SEO & Digital Strategy: What Universities Get Wrong (and How to Fix It),? French shared insights on common SEO mistakes in higher education and provided actionable strategies to strengthen enrollment efforts.

She also highlighted key findings from the 2023 Higher Ed SEO Research Study, conducted by Search Influence and UPCEA. This research revealed that many universities lack a clear SEO strategy despite recognizing its importance in student recruitment.

According to the study, 84% of higher education leaders see SEO as crucial, yet 51% of universities still

don?t have a defined strategy. Many online and professional education units rely heavily on paid digital advertising ? spending an average of $800,000 annually ? while overlooking the long-term value of organic search. French explained that without a structured SEO strategy, universities risk missing out on students actively searching for programs online.

French also noted that while many universities engage in content marketing and public relations, these efforts often operate in silos rather than as part of a broader SEO strategy. Without a cohesive approach, institutions struggle to rank for key search terms that would otherwise connect them with prospective students.

"Universities that neglect SEO are missing out on a vast pool of prospective students. Yet, over half of institutions still don?t have an SEO strategy in place," said French. "At Search Influence, we've seen firsthand how an integrated SEO strategy reaches and engages more students, fueling the enrollment pipeline. Universities must act now and invest in long-term organic growth to ensure they don?t fall behind in an increasingly competitive landscape."

Another key challenge French discussed was how universities should use AI for SEO benefits. As search engines integrate AI-driven features, universities must adapt their content strategies to remain competitive. French encouraged universities to focus on well-structured, informative content that aligns with AI-powered search algorithms while maintaining a human-centered approach.

In addition, the conversation explored the role of backlinks in higher education SEO. Backlinks serve as signals of authority and credibility, much like citations in academic research. However, many universities fail to build them strategically, limiting their ability to rank in competitive searches. French stressed the importance of proactive digital PR and link-building to strengthen a university?s online presence and improve search visibility.

Hosted by higher education marketing expert Gjergj Dollani, The Enrollment Clinic Podcast features conversations with industry leaders, admissions professionals, and marketing experts on student recruitment. French?s episode offers universities a roadmap for improving their SEO strategies, helping them reach prospective students more effectively.

To learn more about Search Influence?s approach to higher education SEO, visit https://www.searchinfluence.com/, call (504) 208-3900, or send inquiries to:

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About Search Influence

Search Influence is a woman-owned, ROI-focused digital marketing agency that helps drive prospects into and through the marketing funnel with analytics-backed search engine optimization and paid digital advertising. Founded in 2006, Search Influence?s core purpose is to optimize potential. The agency collaborates with well-regarded brands and institutions both nationally and locally in New Orleans. Clients include the Tulane School of Professional Advancement, Tufts University College, Associated Hearing Professionals, New Orleans & Company, and Audubon Nature Institute.

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Search Influence

Search Influence, a national SEO and digital advertising agency since 2006, delivers demonstrable ROI for clients. Specialties include SEO, Paid Advertising, and Analytics. In-house experts collaborate with clients for results. Also an informative blog.

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