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MARKETING DAILY

ACCOUNT ACTION

Colleges Ontario hires Smith Roberts to boost enrolment

Advocacy group **Colleges Ontario** is launching a new campaign this fall to bolster flagging enrolment rates.

The group, which represents 24 applied arts and technical colleges, tapped Toronto-based **Smith Roberts Creative Communications** to develop a strategy to win back the market share it's been losing since 2003. That was the year of the so-called "double cohort" when the province discontinued its fifth year of high school, putting twice as many high school grads into the post-secondary system. Since then, university enrolment has been going up while college enrolment has been going down.

"There is this universal belief that college is inferior, that it's full of kids who can't get into university," says Smith Roberts' principal **Malcolm Roberts**. "It's completely untrue."

Roberts' firm has had success with such challenges before. Last year it produced the much-discussed WonderCafe.ca print ads for the United Church of Canada to combat declining attendance. (One ad showed a bobble-head Jesus doll and asked if it was funny, or a ticket to hell.) Roberts says the Colleges Ontario account, which is worth \$2 million, is "exactly the kind of challenge we wanted."

The RFP went out in early July and the first creative is due in October and is expected to appear in outdoor, transit and digital channels.

The campaign will target high school students, parents and "indirect" applicants, a group that includes mature students, post-secondary drop-outs and university graduates.

—Jeromy Lloyd



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