

How a Trucking School Uses Sales Accelerator to Meet Twice the Prospects



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CASE STUDY



National Truck Training: Jumpstarting Careers

“Students come first” is the byword at National Training Inc (NTI), which trains truck drivers and heavy equipment operators. With a 350-acre campus and a private 1¼-mile highway, this formidable operation provides courses in trucking and heavy equipment. Its graduates receive job placement services.

The passion is palpable as Andrew McLoughlin, VP of Admissions, recounts recent student conversations. “In our initial 1:1 interview, the first 10 minutes are totally about the student applicant. People go into this for different reasons.” One candidate would increase his pay by 15-20%, because he’ll have his Commercial Driver’s License (CDL). Another will greatly expand his job choices by learning on NTI’s wide range of equipment—for example, other schools often teach only automatic transmission.

“We accept about 1 in 10 people who contact us. We accept only people we can help.” Conversely, NTI knows that prospective students have choices. The two most crucial moments in admissions are an initial virtual tour and interview, followed by an onsite visit.

“Once they get close and interact with these big trucks, they want to be part of our family.”

—Andrew McLoughlin, VP of Admissions

NTI’s Growth Opportunity

NTI has grown tremendously in its 45 years, since CEO Larry Lark first towed his 20-foot boat from Colorado to Florida, sight unseen, to get out of the cold. To achieve this, the NTI team has combined personal sensitivity with the sophistication and creativity to apply technology in the right places.

Speed to the lead was the next frontier. “Our next two strategies were to automate lead follow-up, and to go virtual. Automation lets our reps devote more quality time to talk to each student,” explains Andrew. “We wanted to eliminate the human bottleneck in getting that first meeting. Also, we went to virtual tours because we want to talk to them right away.”

“We need them to ‘see’ the campus before they talk to another school.”

—Andrew McLoughlin

With such an expansive facility, millions invested in trucks and equipment, and salaried staff, NTI has economics like that of a restaurant or dental office: cash burns whether or not seats are filled. Staying profitable depends steeply on selling effectively.



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Solution: Automated AI-driven follow-up

NTI configured their customer-relationship management (CRM) system, Podio, to trigger the Lumin.ai Sales Accelerator (SA) to follow up on most leads.

A prospective student starts by submitting a request via a number of mechanisms, such as the popular referral site for exclusive use by NTI's graduates.

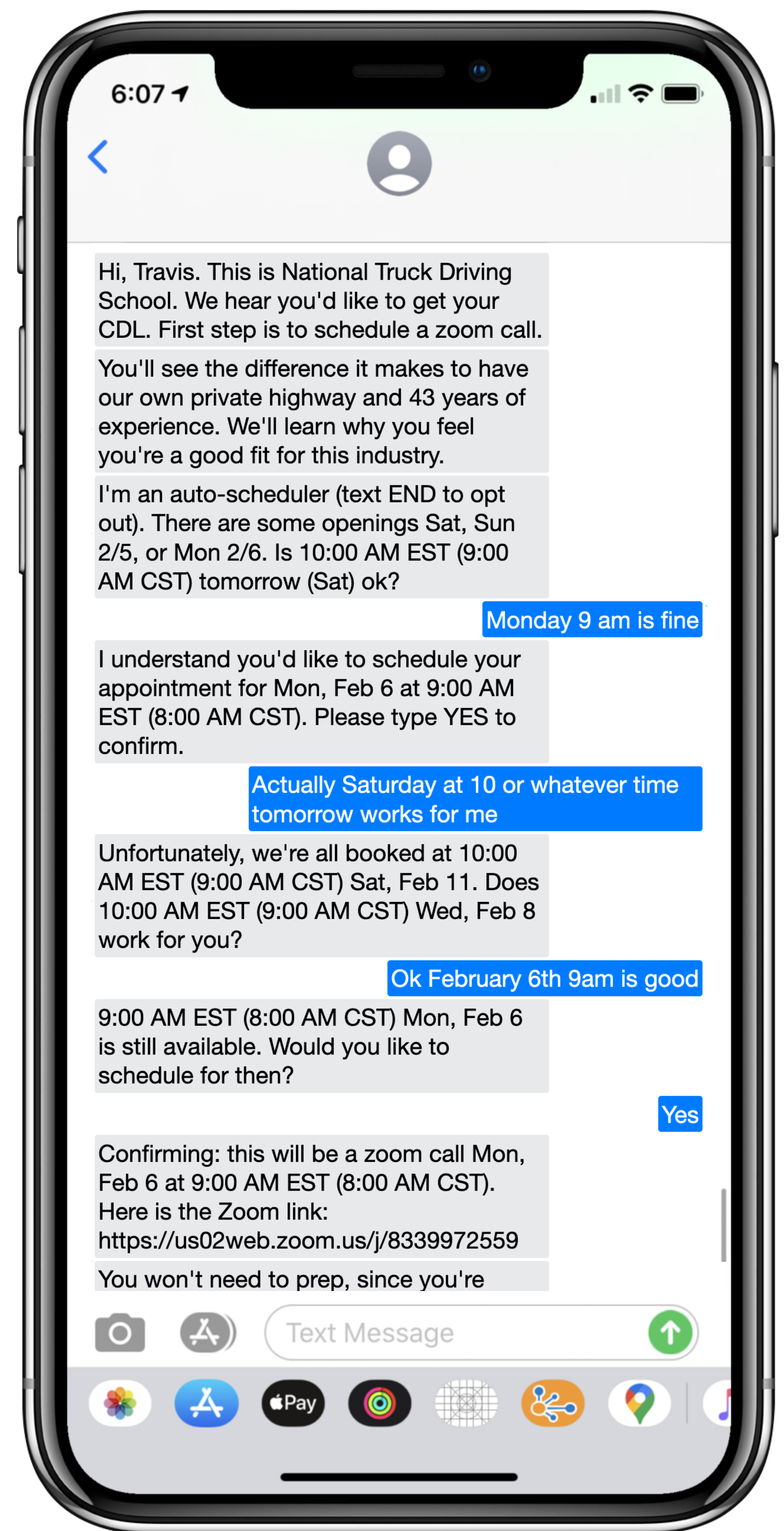
He or she then receives a follow-up text immediately.

Once a time for a virtual meeting is agreed upon, the prospect receives a text confirmation, a calendar invitation, video instructions for joining the zoom, and a warm video welcome from the assigned NTI contact. Closer to the appointed time, the prospect receives a text reminder.

The NTI enrollment-team representative sees an appointment automatically appear on her or his calendar and in the prospect's Podio record as soon as the prospect agrees to a time. If the candidate doesn't show up for the Zoom call, the representative uses Podio to trigger Sales Accelerator to engage the prospect or get a reschedule.

Text content varies based on:

- ▶ Desired course
- ▶ Identified persona
- ▶ Marketing pathway



“ Sales Accelerator integrates into our reps' mailboxes. They weren't living out of their calendars before, but now they are. They no longer need to 'see' this part of the sales process. Appointments just pop up on their calendars.”

—Andrew McLoughlin



NTI provides its students with a high-tech learning environment, including full-motion truck simulators like the one pictured here.

The entire process is automatic, but Sales Accelerator is fully sensitive to any change in status that arises from the representative's interactions with the candidate.

For example, it is entirely acceptable for a representative to catch a candidate to conduct an impromptu virtual tour, obviating the need for SA to schedule one. SA detects this via Podio and stops trying to engage.

Likewise, a candidate might email or phone the representative to request a reschedule. The representative simply moves the calendar appointment, and SA adapts its behavior accordingly.

Thus, Sales Accelerator participates in a natural, omni-channel interaction with the prospect, acting in real-time collaboration with the enrollment team.



The Results

Andrew walked through a 360° view of the positive impacts on NTI's students, staff, and intake statistics.

Candidate Perspective

Enhancing the candidate experience through technology has always been a prime focus for NTI, whether it's automatically pre-filling a legal contract or providing state-of-the-art simulators for both trucking and heavy equipment.

Sales Accelerator has brought convenience to the prospective student's very first touchpoint with NTI. Starting with the initial text contact, he or she can answer immediately 24/7, or later when the time is right. Providing the prospect with control over her or his own time is one more way NTI can show the fundamental respect that pervades its culture.

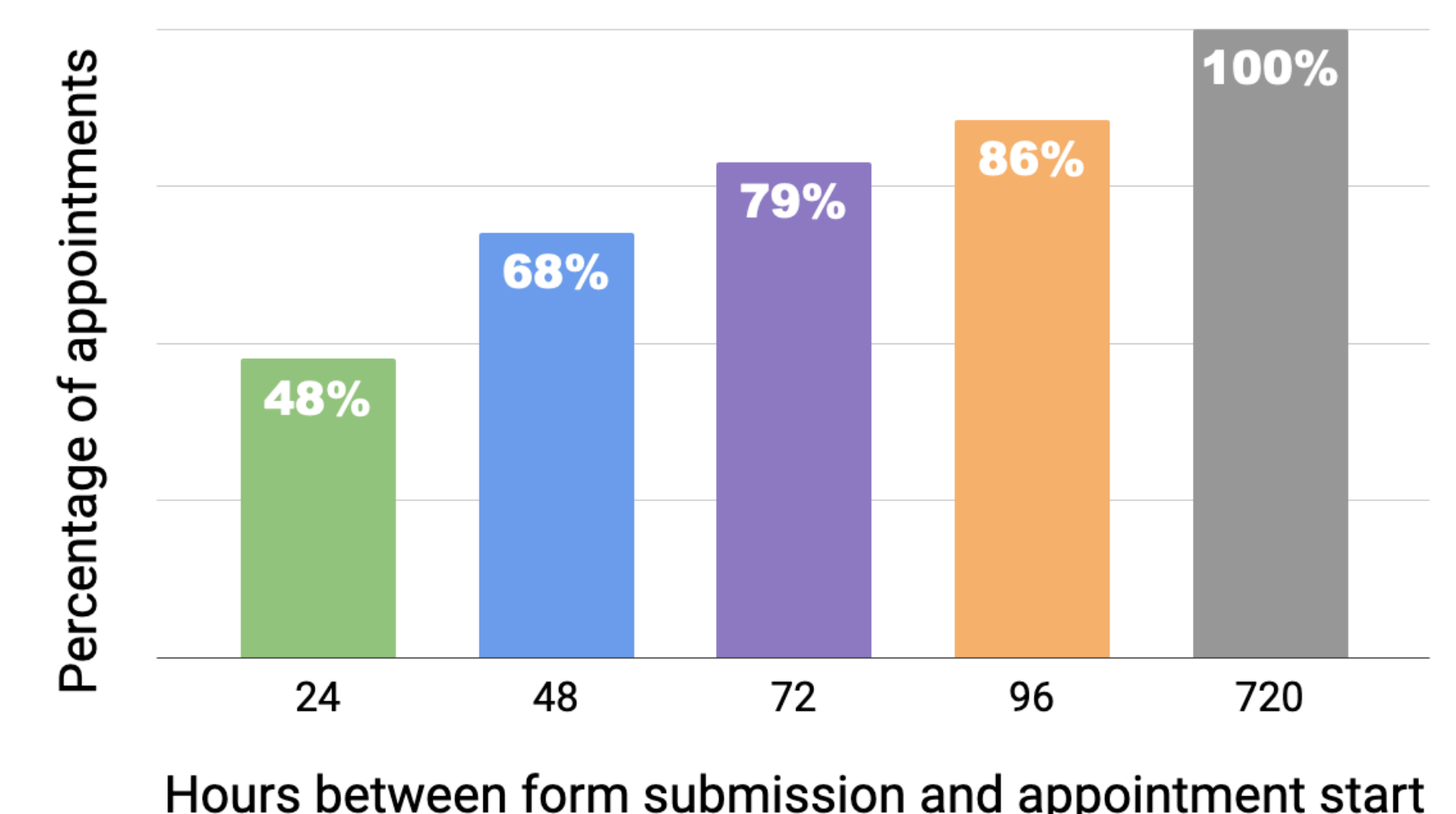
Staff Perspective

The enrollment staff is pleased because they have more time to do what they do best: spend time with each prospect with NTI's characteristic warmth and open ears, plotting a course toward the student's increased financial opportunity.

Lumin.ai technology, in most cases, puts NTI first in line to establish its benchmark, which subsequently competitors have to deal with. As the data show (see sidebar), half of the appointments made by Sales Accelerator for NTI are within 24 hours of form submission, and two thirds are within 48 hours.

“ A lot of our leads arrive in the middle of the night. These candidates often have met with us before other schools have even gotten in touch.

—Andrew McLoughlin



Key Metrics

In conjunction with their deep commitment to automation, the NTI team relentlessly measures everything from dials to interviews, enrollments, graduation, placements, and referrals.

“The reason we considered Sales Accelerator in the first place was that many of our leads were never making it to a first conversation. Last we checked, the appointment rate has risen 1.3X.”

“The other plus that I didn't expect was the show rate,” Andrew points out. “That used to hover right around 50%. When I last checked, that was over 75%.” The increased rates of appointment and attendance compound to essentially a doubling in the number of completed first conversations.

Seeing the entire operation takes prospective students the rest of the way.

“ Before, by the time we called, the student was at work already. Now that Lumin.ai is woven into our sales process, our reps are meeting with a lot more people and closing more sales.



Andrew McLoughlin
VP Admissions & Operations
National Training, Inc.