



# OOH Case Study

## The Citadel

### Problem

How can The Citadel expand its graduate school and online enrollments?

### Solution

By using OOH in locations central to the target audience.

### Background

Established in 1842, The Citadel is a public military college located in Charleston, South Carolina. The college is dedicated to the education and development of principled leaders. There are approximately 2,300 members of the South Carolina Corps of Cadets, which combines academics, fitness, character development and military discipline. All cadets are required to participate in ROTC, and about one-third of each class earn commissions to become officers in every branch of U.S. military service. For more than 50 years, The Citadel has offered graduate degree programs in the evening. Today, the college offers more than 70 master's degrees, graduate certificates and degree completion programs in the evening or online. The Citadel has been named the No. 1 Public College in the South by U.S. News & World Report for eight consecutive years. In 2019 the report also named The Citadel the No. 1 College for Veterans in the South. As the size of the Corps of Cadets is limited to the number of barracks rooms on campus, The Citadel's biggest opportunity for growth is through its graduate college, specifically, its online programs.



### Objective

The Citadel's objective was to build awareness of the college and its online degree offerings in the Washington DC region, and increase spring enrollment for its online graduate degree programs. Two of the key audiences targeted by advertising and outreach for the online programs are active duty military and government employees. These are the people likely to pursue a graduate degree and would take special interest in some of the military and intelligence focused programs. This also is an audience that is likely to resonate with the brand as a military college. The Washington DC area was specifically targeted because of the strong presence of military and government agencies, the strength of the alumni network within the region, and because a regional recruiter works full-time recruiting students in the city.

### Strategy

In November of 2018 The Citadel placed an advertisement for its online degree programs in the format of a transit station "takeover" at the Pentagon Metro stop in Washington DC. All media in this Metro station was simultaneously branded for The Citadel, telling the viewer a progressive story of The Citadel brand and online offerings as they made their way from the train car to the station exit. These advertisements took on the visual identity of a metro map, with the language "What's your next stop? The online programs can take you there." Each stop along the map was one of the master's degree programs offered online, examples including intelligence, international politics, leadership, and military history—programs that are especially relevant to the government employees and active duty military that frequent this station. The ads included more than 60 forms of media within one small space, ranging from backlit walls, faregates, escalator banners, floor graphics, dioramas and more. As a "station domination," the viewer can't help but take notice of the OOH ads. Since many of the viewers are passing through this station to get to work, they see the ads on a daily basis. The large advertising space gave The Citadel the opportunity to

thoroughly communicate what the college has to offer, while simultaneously promoting its rankings by U.S. News & World Report as the #1 Public College in the South and #1 College for Veterans in the South (for colleges offering up to a master's degree). The Pentagon Station in the Washington DC Metro boasts a niche audience and is precisely who the college targets for the online programs. This is one of the most highly trafficked stations in Washington DC and a major hub for active duty military and government employees. The ads featured a custom landing page URL which not only offered a tracking mechanism, but took users to a special website that matched the messaging and aesthetic of the ads. In addition to the station takeover, this campaign also included "car cards" with the same messaging in 250+ train cars throughout the DC Metro system. Additional advertising efforts were launched in the DC region during the same timeframe to enhance the effects of the metro station domination.



## Plan Details

Markets: Washington DC

Flight Dates: November 5, 2018 - December 2, 2018

OOH Formats Used: Metrorail Pentagon Station Domination, Rail Car Cards

Target Audience: Active duty military and government employees.

Audience TRPs: 23.1

Audience Reach: 5.1%

Audience Freq: 4.5x

Additional Metrics: +541,203 Circulation/4 weeks at Pentagon (Station Domination not audited)



## Results

The goal of this campaign was to increase awareness of and enrollment in the college's online programs, while simultaneously promoting the brand strength of the college as a whole. The ads featured a custom URL accessible only for those who saw the ad and used the direct URL when visiting the college website. The custom URL received 100 page views during the Pentagon station takeover. It was known that not everybody will use a custom URL, so traffic was monitored to the college's primary webpage for online programs. During the station takeover, the average daily traffic to that webpage increased by 45.3%. The college's recruiting offices received frequent feedback from prospects sharing that they saw and enjoyed the campaign. The Citadel's social media manager also noticed social chatter from alumni and other external parties taking photos and posting about the campaign. Enrollment for online programs during spring term increased by 55% in 2019 (vs. 2018).

## Testimonials

The Citadel's recruiting office received a lot of word of mouth feedback from prospective students stating that they saw the DC Metro Station ads. The college also received feedback from alumni and peers who saw and enjoyed the station takeover.

## Additional Information

Tweets and comments were also received from various marketers who saw and complimented the Metro campaign. The campaign also won a national bronze award from CASE (Counsel for Advancement and Support of Education) in the Advertising category ([Link](#)).