

Reintroducing a historic Jesuit university of New York City.

A full institutional rebrand.
A team willing to take big swings.
A comprehensive activation approach.

Impressive results.

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52K Applications (Fordham record)

87% Positive Public Perception

38% Increase at Open House

8.8% Perception Increase in NYC

300+ Attendees at Training

49% App Increase from Ohio

#1 Article in *Chief Marketer*

How a rebrand led to a record-setting year.

In 2025, Fordham University embarked on an institutional rebrand with Ologie. The goal: clarify its institutional story, sharpen its enrollment strategy, and establish an authentic visual system that would stand out in a crowded and competitive market.

The university had been struggling to convey its Jesuit values in a modern context. It was also seeking a message that unified both of its New York City campuses. And it needed to organize its updated offer in a compelling way.

The initiative came at a moment of reinvention for the university. A new president was in place, as was a new vice president for marketing and communications: Justin Bell. It was the perfect time to rearticulate Fordham's relevance.

Ologie performed research and creative testing, and we then dove into collaboration with Bell and his team. The resulting brand embraced Fordham's authentic tradition and its ambition for progress. Under the banner "For What Matters," the platform spoke to both the personal path of each student, and the impact they can have on the world around them. Photography, illustrations, and graphic elements that celebrated Fordham's neighborhoods in New York City helped give the story a more confident shape.

But the university didn't stop at the rebrand. It needed help in rethinking its enrollment strategy, activating the new brand in materials throughout the funnel, and delivering its new message to more best-fit prospective students.

FROM THE HEART OF NYC FOR YOUR FUTURE



EST. 1841



FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

NYC



Identity System

A modernized mark for a historic university.

Fordham's new story needed a mark that worked harder across the entire university. We started the evolution by exploring updates to the school's signature "Block F."

After rounds of revision and wider socialization, we landed on a simple solution that drew on two of the university's most distinctive features: its hallowed gothic halls and its big-city culture. The new "Gothic F" would do double duty, acting as the institutional mark and the spirit mark. And the community fully embraced it with a record number of merchandise sales.

OLD LOGO

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

The traditional typeface and calligraphy of the previous wordmark was inspired by Fordham's seal. But without a stand-alone symbol that could scale down consistently, it faltered in smaller applications, especially in digital media.

NEW LOGO



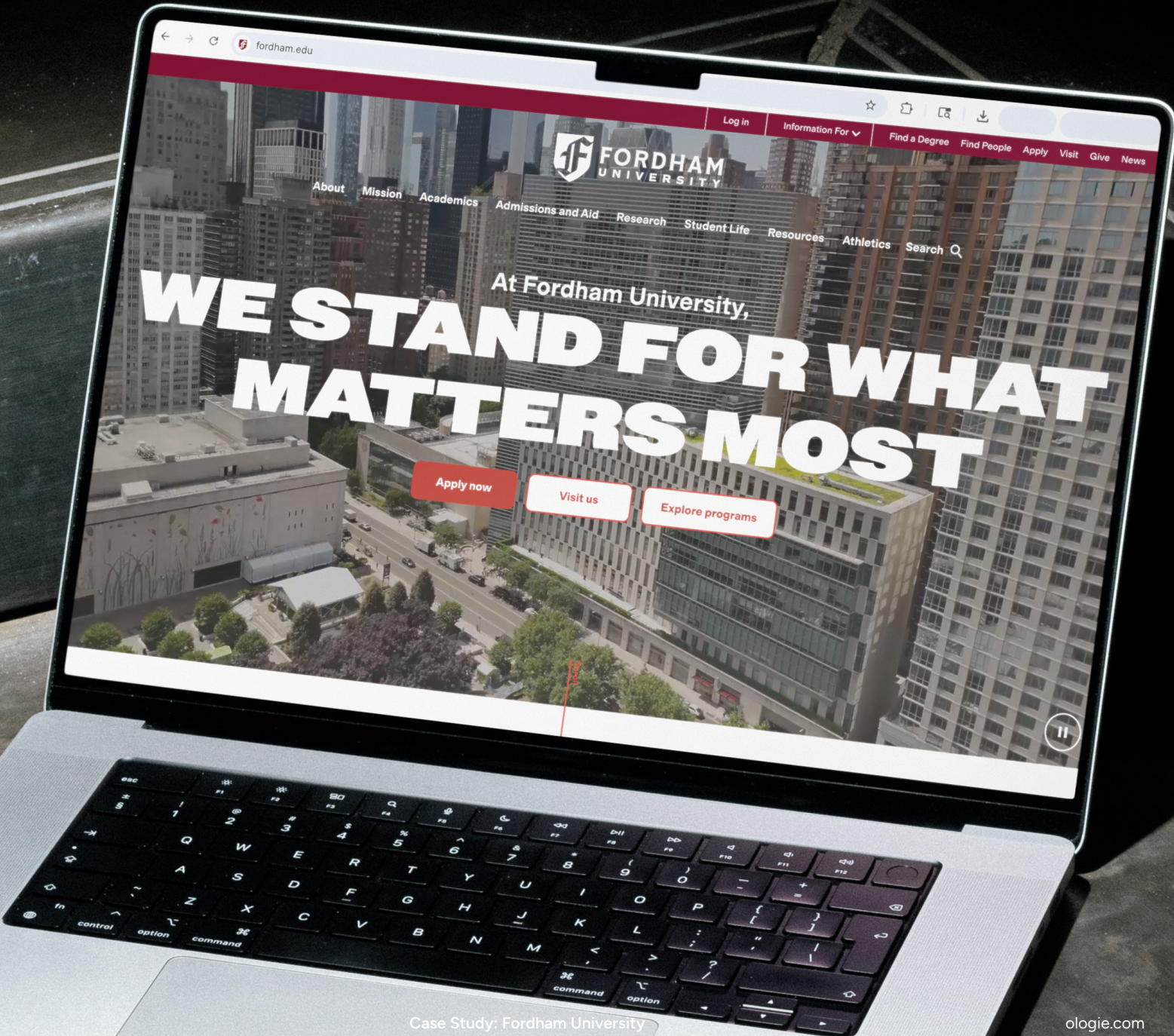
The new logo has two components: The symbol, with the initial and shield, is a nod to tradition, inspired by Fordham's gothic architecture. The wordmark is set in a custom-drawn typeface, whose flared terminals and thicker stems make it better suited for all applications.

The expanded Fordham photo library includes images from three separate shoots across both main campuses and around NYC.



For a harder-working funnel.

For usability. We applied the new brand to Fordham’s website, reorganizing the highest-impact pages with a strategic overhaul of the site’s existing components. Working with the university’s development team, we also made updates to color, typography, and layout, creating a more engaging and seamless experience for users, along with the flexibility Fordham would need for future updates.



Case Study: Fordham University



For functionality. We reimagined Fordham’s college fair materials, keeping portability in mind while still making a strong statement amid a sea of gymnasium tables. Partnering with the university’s industrial engineer, we designed a foldout, tiered box for topic-specific inserts that prospects could easily navigate and both personnel could easily assemble.





A reclamation of stomping grounds.

Strong assets.
Fordham's new photo style required an expansion to its photo library. With the first two photo shoots, we sought to capture the beauty and bustle of the Bronx and Manhattan campuses, with real moments of students learning and living there. The third photo shoot was dedicated to an out-of-home ad campaign for placements around NYC.



Sound strategy.
Through device ID campaigns featuring the new brand and fresh photography, we targeted prospective high school, transfer, and graduate students. New portraiture also fueled Fordham's reintroduction to NYC, populating digital boards across town in high-traffic locations at peak travel times over the holiday season.

From buy-in to brand launch.

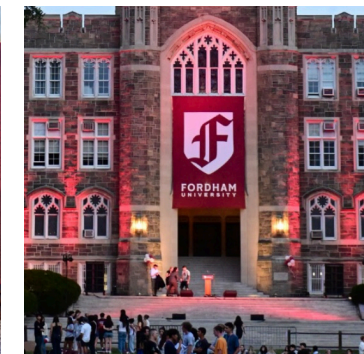
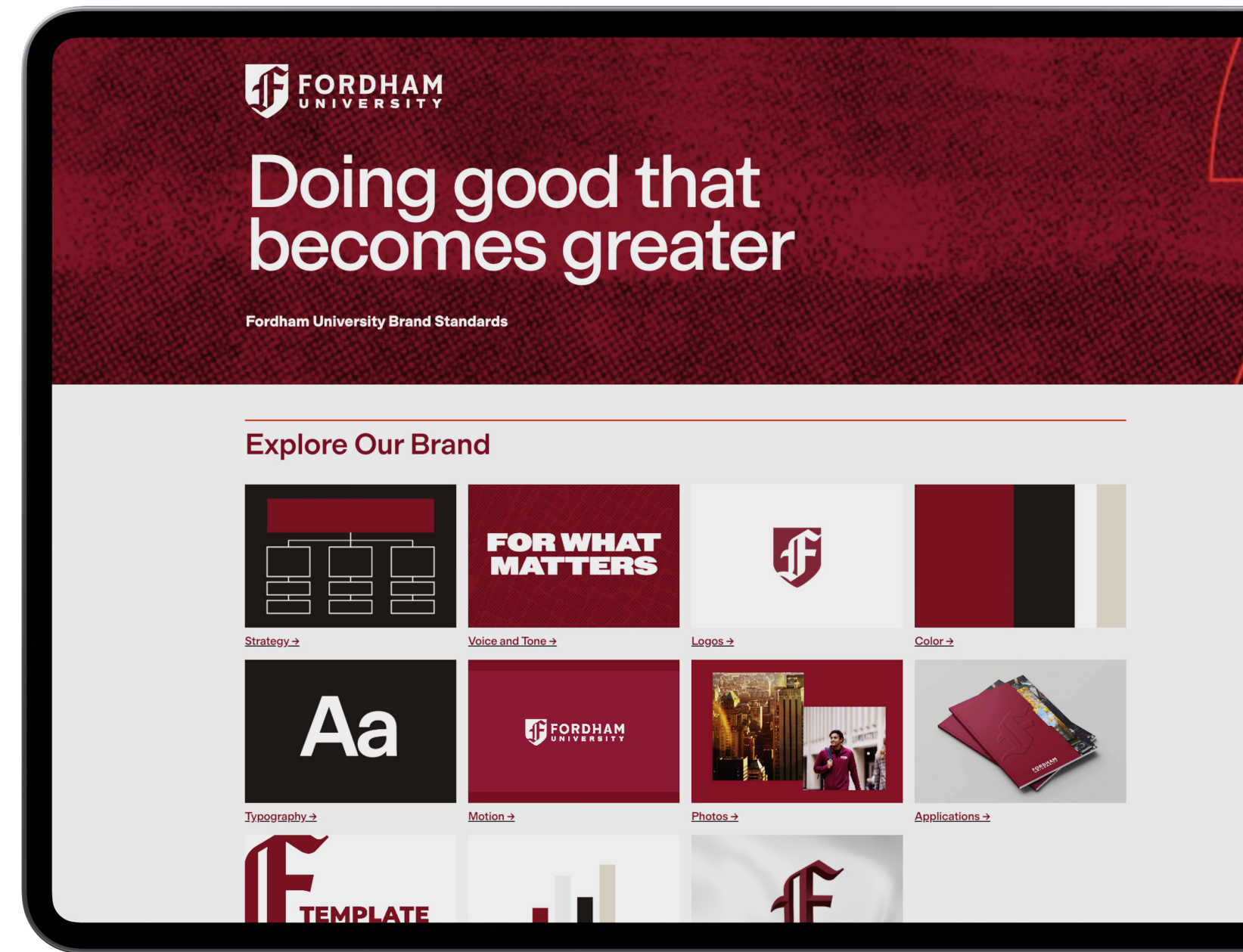
To set the stage for a successful external rollout, Ologie worked with Fordham to kickstart a strong, unified, university-wide effort. The internal launch was so effective because it was equal parts unveiling, celebrating, and training. The event matched the magnitude of the moment: High-energy videos showed off the potential of the new visual system. Panels of featured guests spoke to the why behind the work, the research that informed it, and the vision guiding it forward. And communicators learned how to start using the new brand right away.



Brand adoption. Through a set of training sessions, Fordham's marketers, writers, and designers gained the confidence to execute the evolved brand.

Brand champions. On campus, the team transformed key buildings, light-pole banners, and bookstore merchandise to build pride in the university's new look.

Brand longevity. With a digital set of brand standards housed fully online, communicators had easy access to all the tools they needed, ensuring the brand's long-term success.



1,557 pizza slices served.
Hundreds of heads turned.



DO NOT
ENTER

The **FORDHAM** **PIZZA SHOP**

From Fordham,
FAD
When you're here,
YOU'RE RAMILY

NYC JESUIT
UNIVERSITY

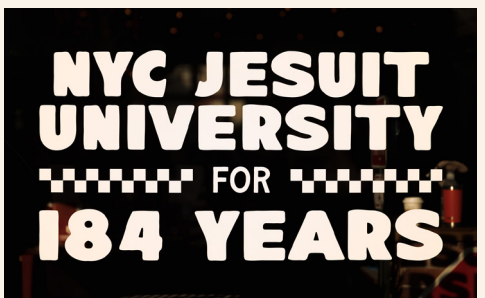
OH
PIZZA

THE ESCAPE ROOM
USA
CAN YOU GET OUT?

459

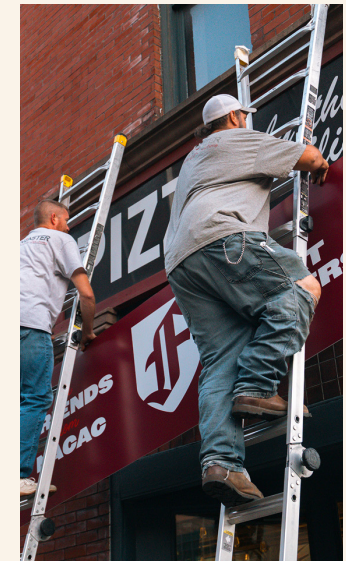


Scan Me to
Learn More



Transforming a local restaurant into an NYC hot spot.

At the 2025 NACAC conference in Columbus, Ohio, Fordham wanted to communicate the vibe of its campuses. And attendees needed a good lunch option. So we helped the university take over a nearby pizza shop for the afternoon. The event showcased the value of earned media opportunities, brand flexibility, unapologetic authenticity, and well-timed levity. And thanks to a truckload of customized materials and countless mascot high-fives, 950 admissions professionals experienced a slice of NYC life from 500 miles away.



“Ologie’s collaboration turned a monumental, institution-wide shift into a series of strategic wins, ensuring that our recruitment collateral was as bold and polished as the broader brand platform.”



JUSTIN BELL

Vice President for Marketing and Communications, Fordham University

Q: You were hired as Fordham’s vice president for marketing and communications with a clear vision for how Fordham could redefine itself in the NYC marketplace and beyond. How did the “For What Matters” platform bring that more modern vision to life, while staying authentic to who Fordham has always been?

When I joined Fordham, I spent months in discussions with various audiences to understand Fordham’s story. It was clear Fordham offered a distinctive experience; however, there was no consistent way of audiences being able to describe our “secret sauce.”

With our rebrand, we didn’t want to invent a new Fordham; we wanted to reveal the most compelling version of the one that already existed. Through a thorough research and discovery process with Ologie’s support, involving over 8,600 stakeholder intercepts to inform our work, we found that our edge was the unique intersection of a rigorous Jesuit education and the relentless energy of New York. “For What Matters” perfectly brings our distinction to life. It’s a platform that feels modern and urgent, while remaining authentic to who we are — rooted in our timeless mission of developing people who have the wisdom to take charge and the caring hearts to act.

Q: Beyond the actual rebrand, activating it took shape across a multitude of projects over an extended period of time. How did the collaboration between your team and Ologie make this work more manageable? And how important was that iterative process to the overall success of this work?

A rebrand of this scale is a massive lift, which took more than 18 months, and having Ologie as our agency partner was vital. Our three-phased approach to the project (research, then creative development, then testing and refinement) set us up for a successful partnership. We maintained a rigorous touchbase cadence that allowed us to be iterative rather than reactive. We also brought Ologie into internal conversations, such as hosting specialized workshops with our enrollment and admissions teams to ensure that the brand lived in every touchpoint of the student journey. That collaboration turned a monumental, institution-wide shift into a series of strategic wins, ensuring that our recruitment collateral was as bold and polished as the broader brand platform.

Q: Getting internal buy-in across an institution can be just as challenging as navigating the external launch of a rebrand. How did you manage both? And what has the reception from stakeholders and the general public been so far?

Buy-in from stakeholders is critical for any successful brand launch. We prioritized transparency throughout the project, such as establishing brand councils with representation from across our audiences, and working with key partners to bring them along the journey while gathering feedback and buy-in. The President’s Cabinet and the Board of Trustees also served as trusted sounding boards and were supportive throughout the project. For launch, we hosted a road show to establish awareness, while hosting brand camps with key partners to support rollout and adoption.

Any brand evolution of this scale requires a lot of change. And while change is never easy for audiences, as we’ve introduced the brand into the market, we’ve received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with 87% collective positive sentiment across our audiences.

[Read more](#) →

Client Perspective

Q: Most of the activation work for the rebrand happened throughout your enrollment funnel, but the in-person activation at NACAC focused more on reintroducing Fordham to high school counselors and college admissions officers. Why did the pizza shop make sense for the moment, and how did the response to it reinforce your approach to university marketing in the future?

The Fordham pizza shop activation at NACAC was a calculated, bold swing. But we knew we needed to do something “outside the pizza box” in order to stand out in a crowded market. The in-person activation was a way to “show, not just tell” the very people who influence student decisions about Fordham and our New York City roots. It worked. Beyond going viral and being the talk of the conference, we created a thorough strategy to remain in touch with guests of the activation, establishing bonds and relationships that are paying dividends.

Just this recruitment cycle, Fordham has seen a remarkable 49% increase in undergraduate applications from the state of Ohio, directly correlating with the activation’s location. Even more telling is the localized impact: Applications from high schools whose counselors engaged with the activation are up 47%. The pop-up was a huge success, thanks to Ologie’s great collaboration and creativity. The work earned us the most-read article in *Chief Marketer* for 2025, proving that higher ed marketing can be disruptive and fun while still driving serious enrollment results.

Q: You’ve been living with this rebrand and its activation across your materials for nearly a year now, and you’ve made a big splash in the market. What are the most exciting results? How do you see the rebrand evolving and being implemented next?

Every fall, we execute an out-of-home campaign across the New York metropolitan area, and we collect market research to gauge impact and ROI of both the campaign and the broader brand evolution. After our most recent OOH campaign, which featured the new brand, we saw an astounding 8.8% increase in the perception of prestige among New Yorkers, along with a 3.8% increase in the likeliness for New Yorkers to recommend Fordham to friends and family.

The impact the brand evolution has had on undergraduate recruitment has been stellar as well. Getting prospective students to visit Fordham’s campuses is critical to our recruitment success. Thanks to the rebrand and new engagement tactics, we’ve seen a 38% increase in open house attendance for this year alone. Additionally, we’re on track for a record-setting year with the number of undergraduate applications Fordham has ever received — with nearly a 25% increase in applications over last year.

Deliverables

Research and Strategy

- Brand Strategy
- Enrollment Planning Workshop
- Research and Creative Testing

Branding and Campaign

- Brand Expression
- Logo and Identity Evolution
- Photo Shoots
- Brand Training
- Brand Standards Site
- Brand Launch
- Icons

Advertising and Multimedia

- Ad Templates
- Device ID Undergraduate Campaign
- Device ID Undecided Campaign
- Device ID Business Campaign
- Device ID Yield Videos
- Website Reskin

Enrollment Activation

- Prospective Student Emails
- Prospective Parent Emails
- Viewbook
- Travel Piece
- College Fair Materials Suite
- Yield Personality Quiz

Awareness Campaign

- Out-of-Home Ads in NYC
- Out-of-Home Ads in Outside Markets
- Pizza Shop Experiential Activation





Ologie is the agency for brands on a mission.

We amplify powerful stories with work that moves people. By crafting distinctive brands and effective campaigns that deliver results, we help our partners build reputations, engage donors, and become brands of choice to their core audiences.

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