

Building Enrolments Through University-Brand Love

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How Did Evergreen State Turn Enrollments Around?



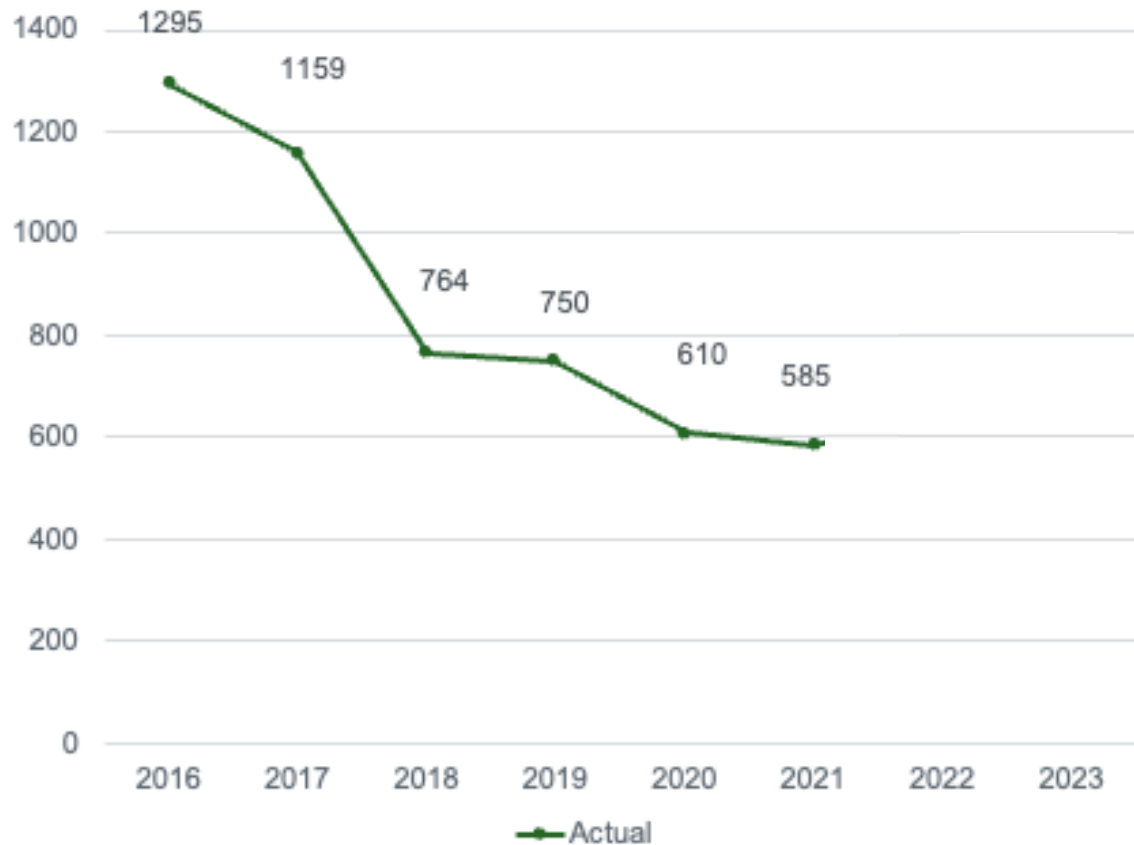
Evergreen State College is a small, public, liberal arts school near Seattle known for its progressive, ultra-flexible curriculum



How Did Evergreen State Turn Enrollments Around?



Final New Undergraduate Fall Headcount:
2016-2023



How Did Evergreen State Turn Enrollments Around?



New Program

“At first, I thought this was going to be an absolute disaster.”

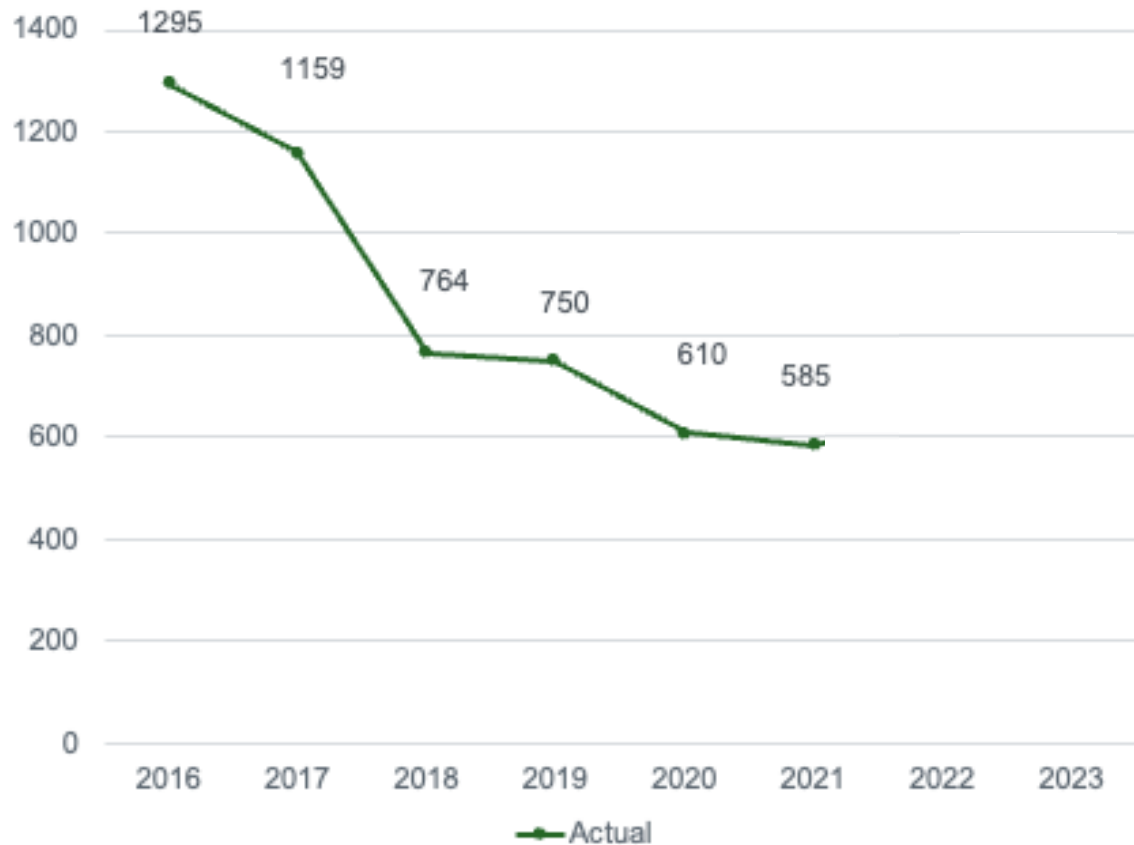
- John Reed, Director of Enrollment Management



How Did Evergreen State Turn Enrollments Around?



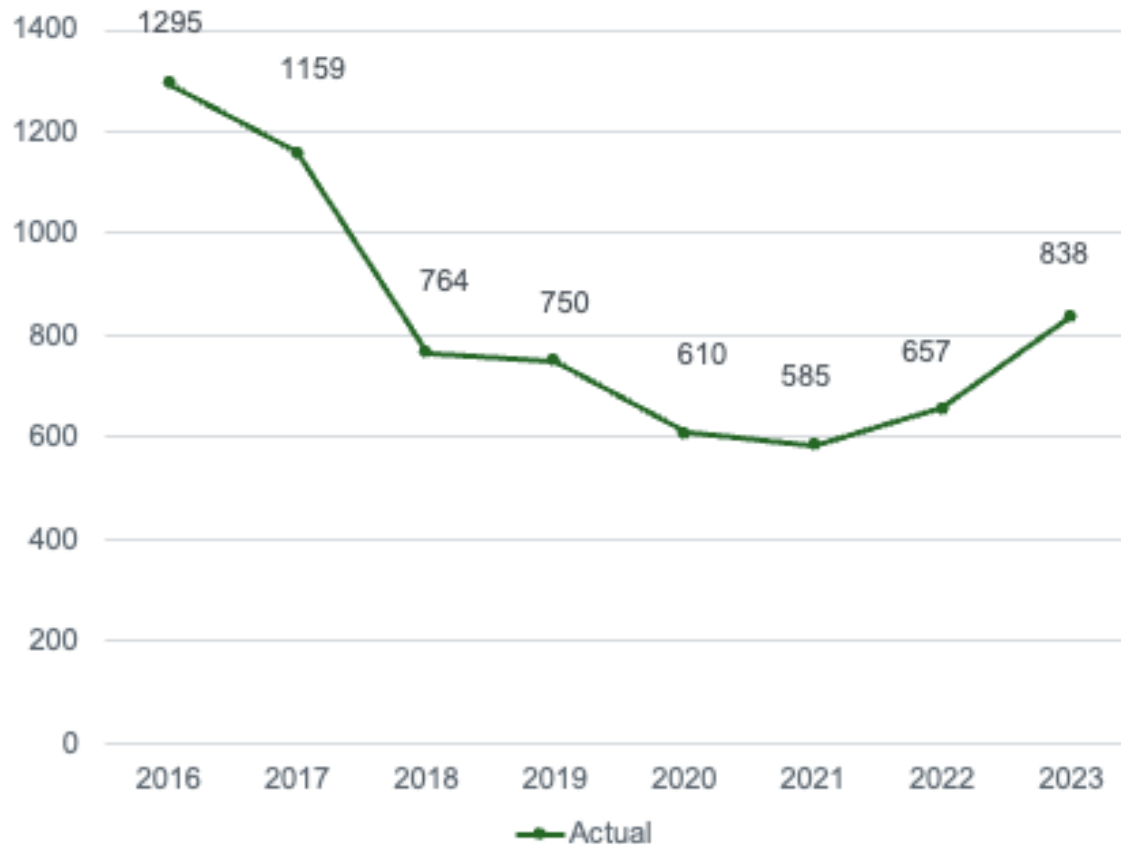
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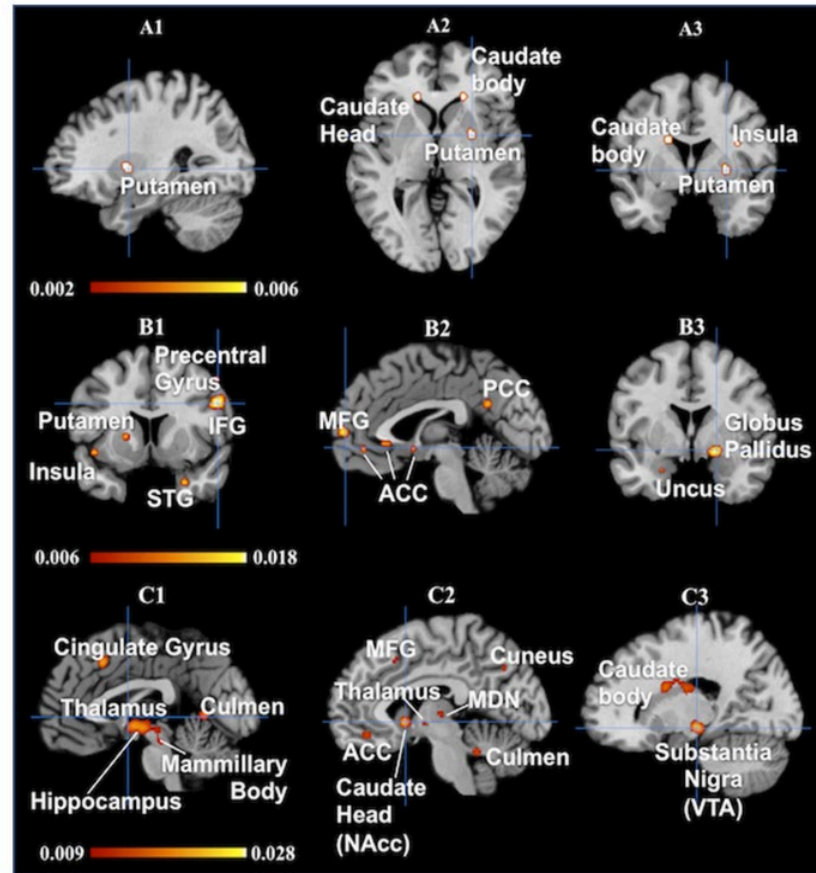


Final New Undergraduate Fall Headcount:
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Do We Really Love Things?



What Loving Things Feels Like

- You think it's great
- It makes you feel good
- It's "just the right thing"
- You feel emotionally connected to it
- **It becomes part of your identity**
- You care about what happens to it



WHAT DO PEOPLE LOVE?

The Things
We Love



The Things
We Love





What Do You Love?

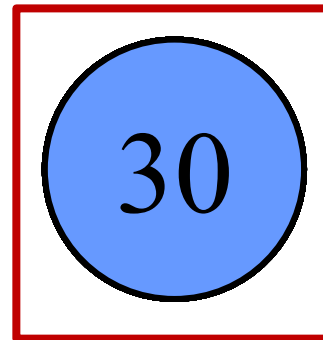
Can be anything except people you have a relationship with

- Things you would be heartbroken to lose
- Things you made yourself
- The best gifts you've received
- Things that help you remember your past
- Music, CDs, books, movies, TV shows, art, etc.
- Activities
- Food and drink
- Pets, plants, natural places, and other animals

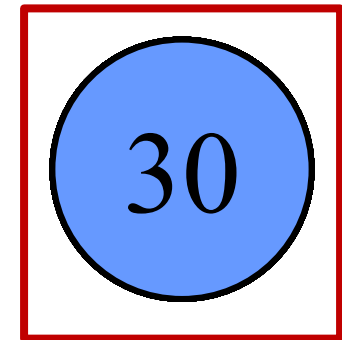
Tell Your Neighbor What You Love and Why?



- 30 Seconds per person
- One thing you love
- Why, in one sentence



Person 1



Person 2



20,000+

University-Brand Love Leads to ...

The Things
We Love

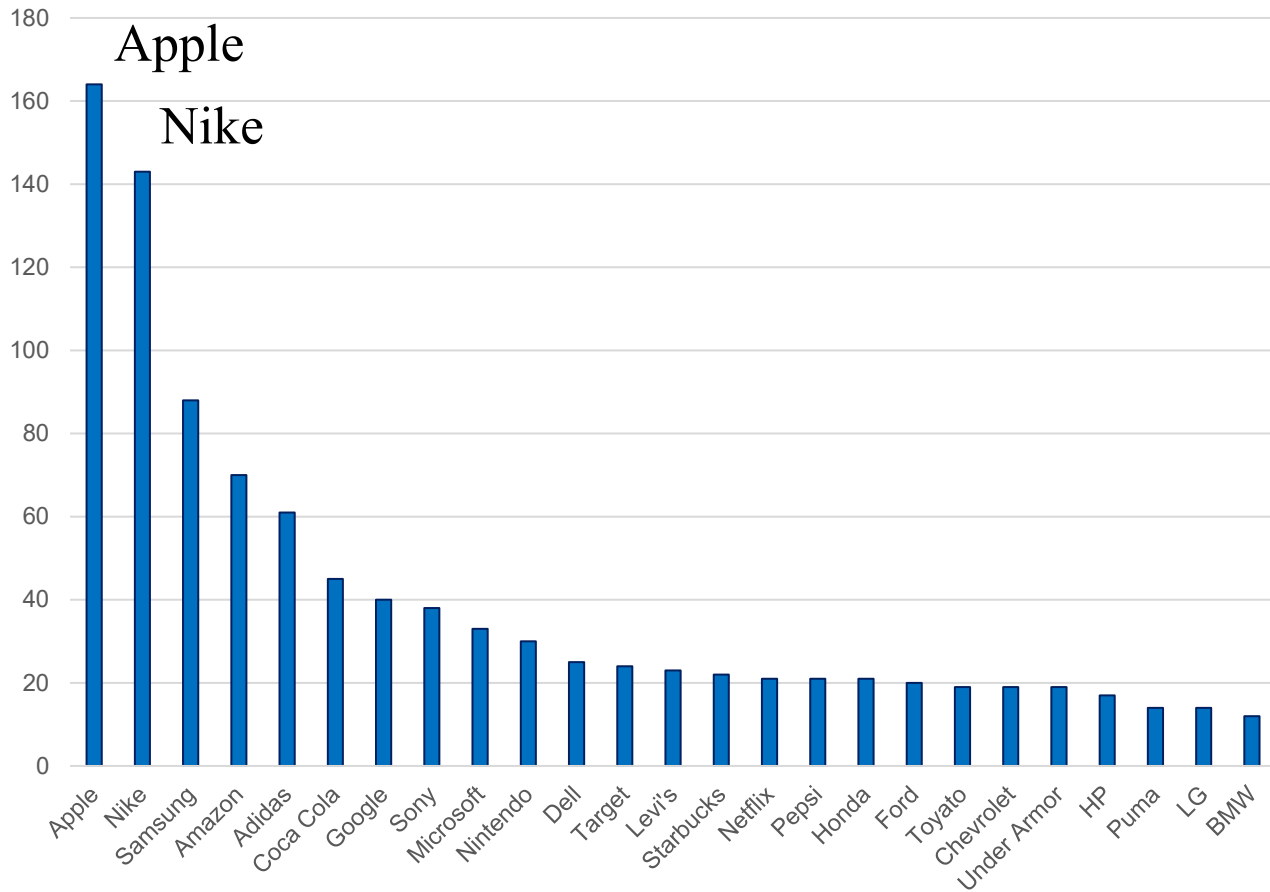




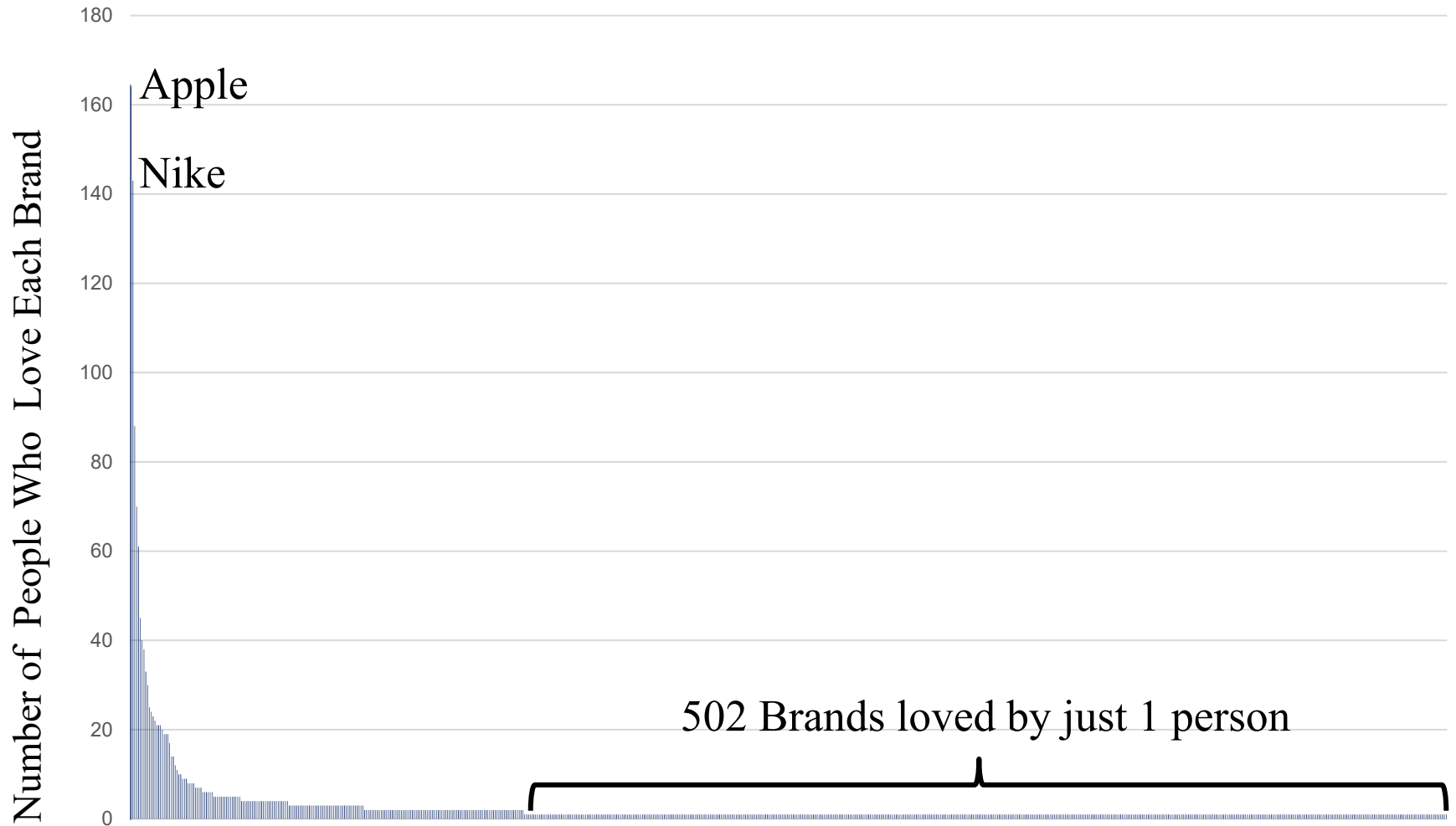
25 Most Loved Brands



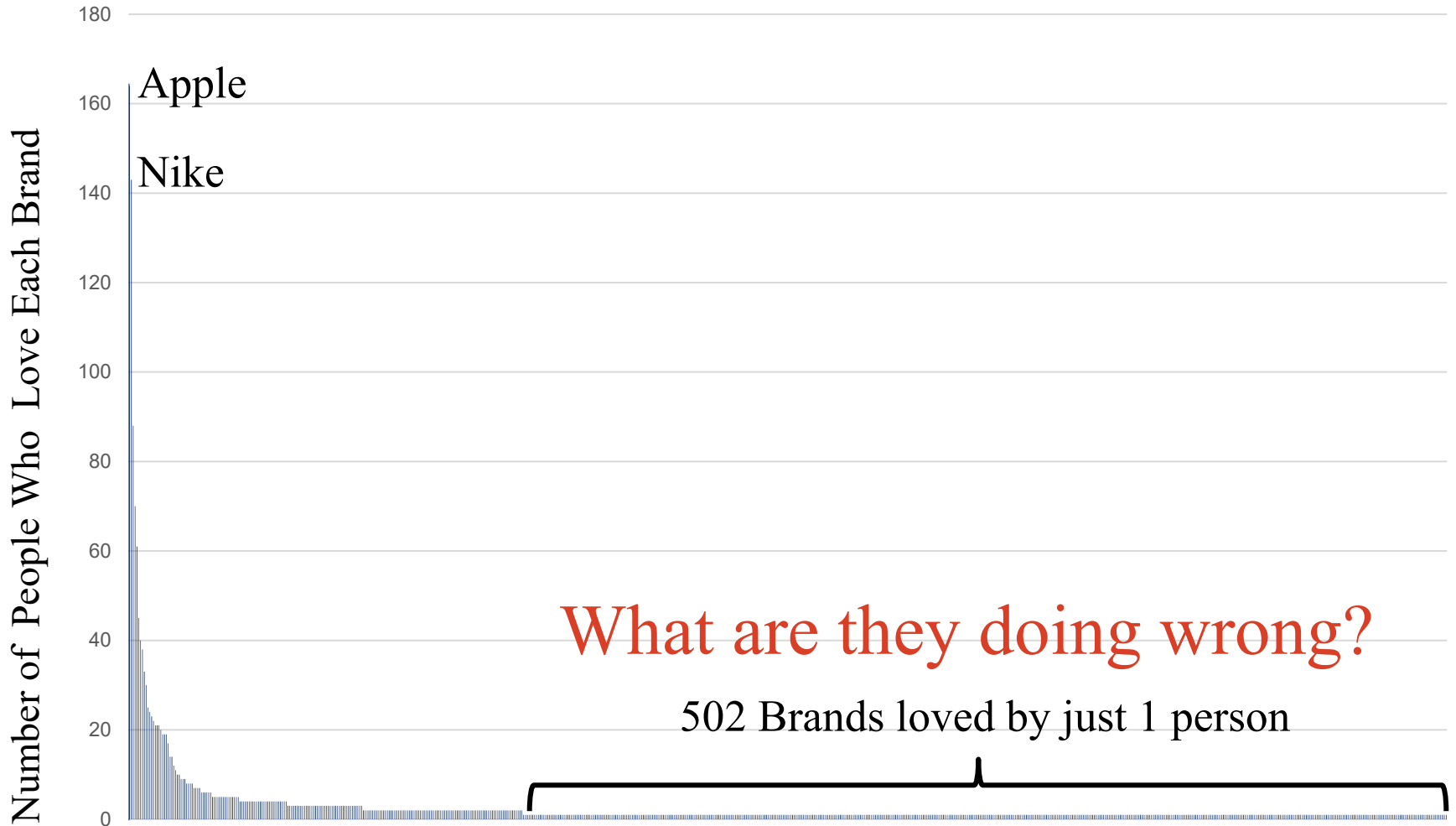
Number of People Who Love Each Brand



All 716 Brands Mentioned By Any of the 720 Respondents



All 716 Brands Mentioned By Any of the 720 Respondents



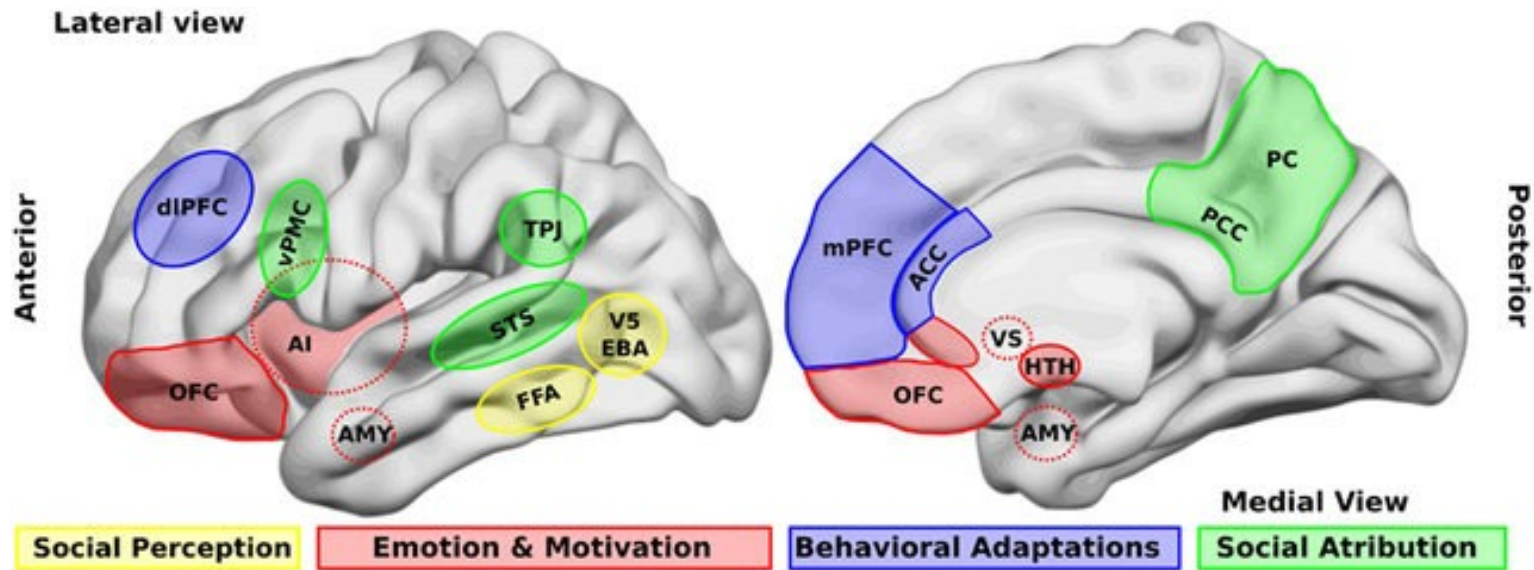
All 716 Brands Mentioned By Any of the 720 Respondents





WHY DO SO MANY BRANDS FAIL TO CREATE BRAND LOVE?

The Brain Thinks About People and Things Differently



**HOW IS IT POSSIBLE THAT
SOME COMPANIES DO
CREATE BRAND LOVE?**

A Clue As To How Brand Love is Possible



What	Creates	Love for . . . ?
	→	A dating service?
	→	A medical practice?
	→	A flat screen TV?
	→	A cellphone?

A Clue As To How Brand Love is Possible



What	Creates	Love for . . . ?
Relationship with the matchmaker	→	A dating service?
	→	A medical practice?
	→	A flat screen TV?
	→	A cellphone?

A Clue As To How Brand Love is Possible



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What	Creates	Love for . . . ?
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A Clue As To How Brand Love is Possible

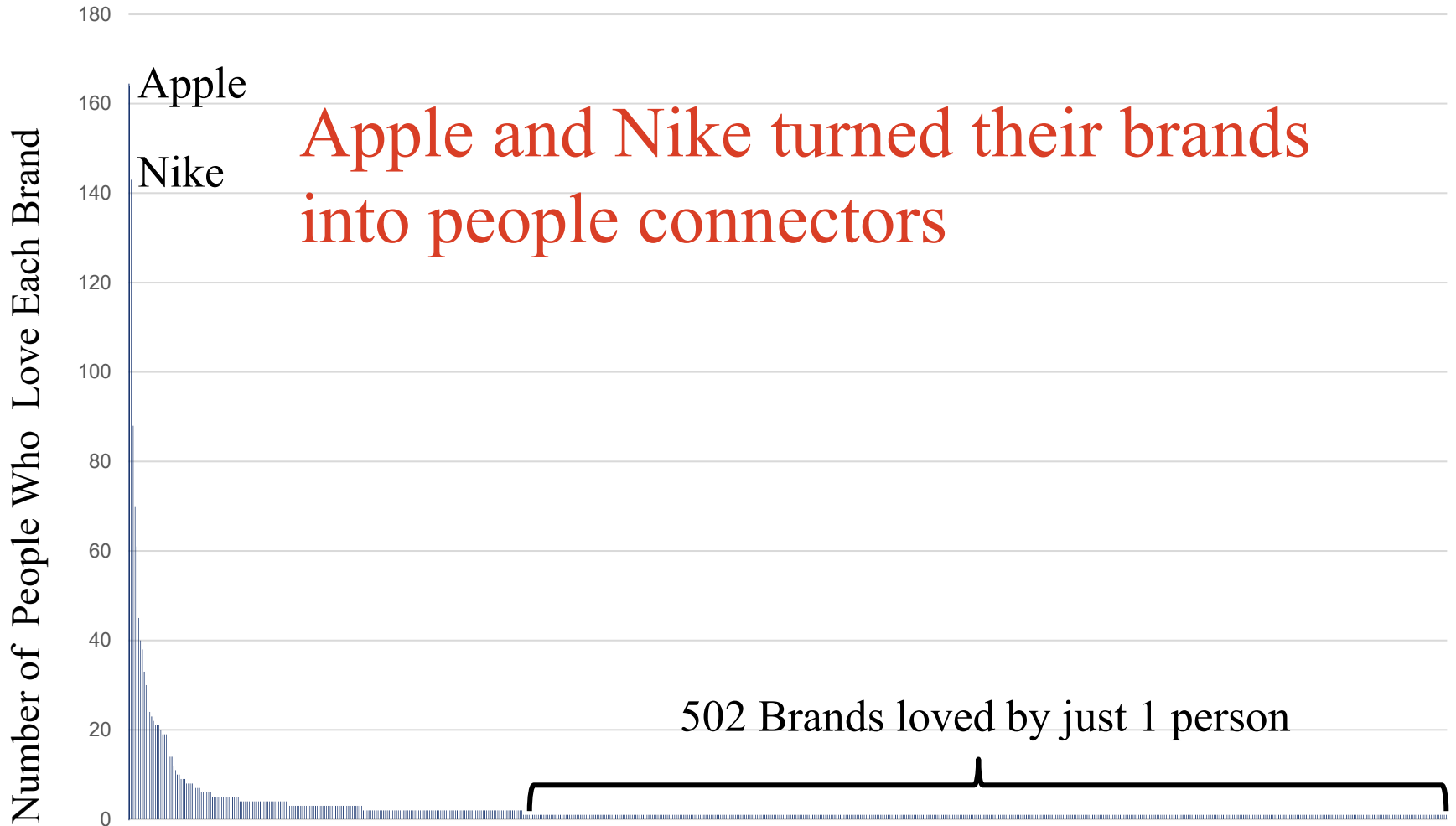


What	Creates	Love for . . . ?
Relationship with the matchmaker	—————→	A dating service?
Relationship with the doctor	—————→	A medical practice?
Relationship with friends	—————→	A flat screen TV?
Relationships friends	—————→	A cellphone?

People Connectors



All 716 Brands Mentioned By Any of the 720 Respondents



Apple



Steve Jobs



I'm a PC

I'm a Mac



The Crazy Ones

Nike

The Things
We Love



Nike

The Things
We Love



“A shoe is just a shoe . . .”



Nike

The Things
We Love



“A shoe is just a shoe **until**
somebody steps into it.”



Universities Have Always Been People Connectors



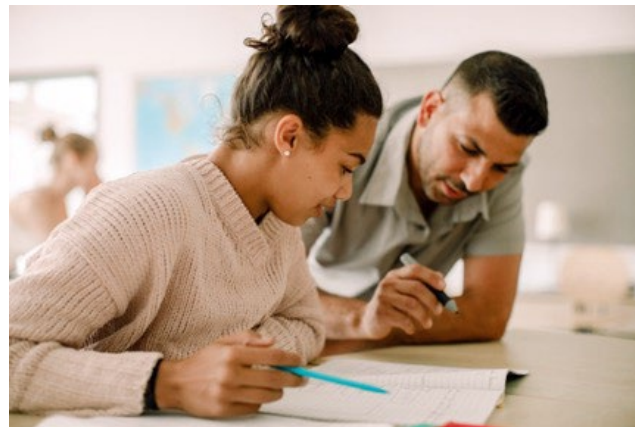
A university is just a bunch of buildings until students make a human connection



Universities Have Always Been People Connectors



But for enrollment management, this happens too late



How Evergreen State College Turned Enrollments Around

The Things
We Love



Make that
human
connection
happen *sooner*



How Evergreen State College Turned Enrollments Around



Faculty had
Zoom calls with
prospective
students



How Evergreen State College Turned Enrollments Around



“What really moved significantly for us was yield”

- Evergreen President
John Carmichael



Make a Human Connection *Sooner*



Get faculty and students involved in recruiting

Make a Human Connection *Sooner*



Reach out through Zoom early in the process

How to Connect

- 1-on-1, 20-60 minutes
- Repeated interactions with the same person
- This shows the student they are important to you
- Place student's welfare first to build trust
- Get personal, use mutual self-disclosure



Don't Sell



Don't Lecture



Connect



Think of it as a free sample of future relationships

Faculty Involvement

Collaborative

Long-term

Compensated

- Teaching release
- Research release

Student Involvement

Long-term

Compensated

- Course credit, its own course
- Sales internship
- Mentoring program
- Cash

Staff Involvement

Can staff play the role of socially connecting with prospective students?

Justifying the Budget

Start with a trial program

- Target most promising “swing” students (like “swing voters”)

Measure and dollarize program results

- Create a pool of swing students
- Randomly assign some swing students to be contacted and leave the rest as a control group

This program is just an example, it's not the main point



- You job goes beyond providing information
- Your job can be helping students emotionally connect before they arrive on campus
- Prospective students will start falling in love with your university when they see how great it is, *and they feel a spark of connection with a person from your school*

Amazon.com: A “best book” of 2022

Non-obvious Book Awards: A “best nonfiction book” of 2022



"Aaron Ahuvia writes beautifully about this wonderful state of being in all of its manifestations."

—Philip Kotler, the father of modern marketing and author of *Marketing Management*

"A must-read for anyone who wants to understand what it means to be human in the modern world."

—Francesca Gino, author of *Rebel Talent*

"An exciting and engaging read."

—Jonah Berger, author of *Contagious*

"A meaningful read."

—Jennifer Aaker, Stanford University, and coauthor of *Humor, Seriously*

"Extremely well written, entertaining, and well grounded in research."

—Matthieu Ricard, author of *Happiness*

"Dr. Ahuvia brilliantly illuminates the science and psychology that underlies our affection for certain treasured possessions."

—Nir Eyal, author of *Hooked*

"A tour de force."

—Ethan Kross, author of *Chatter*

"A fascinating exploration of what it means to love something—and what our non-human relationships say about us."

—Catherine Price, author of *How to Break Up with Your Phone*