

Henley & Partners Education - Evolving the Proposition to Help Wealthy Families



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Why has Henley & Partners decided to go into the education space? This seems a little distant from the core business of citizenship and residence by investment.

It is a really logical step for Henley & Partners because their clients have been asking them for advice on education for some time, and they simply didn't have the in-house expertise. So the decision was taken to set up Henley & Partners Education at the beginning of 2023. It's just a wonderful way for us to help clients who want to move with their kids abroad, who are looking for schools and universities in an education system they don't understand and obviously they don't want to make a mistake. It's a very simple way for us to have a conversation with a client and it works very well with the citizenship and residence by investment space.

Because we are all ex-teachers and head teachers - I was a teacher for 25 years - we have a really global understanding of education. The client will come to us, for instance to do the Canada Start-up Visa, and they want their children to go to university there. But they don't have any understanding of what the international university space is there, and we can give them the advice they need to be able to find the right university for their child.

How does Henley & Partners Education differentiate itself from similar firms in this space?

We get asked this all the time because of course there are other agents and education service providers. We are fairly unique in the fact that we can offer a global solution. A lot of the specialists will focus on one particular geographical destination, whereas we have experts who focus on their specialist markets. We can work with families who want to send their kids to schools in Singapore, as much as we can help parents who have children who want to go to the US, New Zealand, Australia, the UAE, the UK, et cetera. And what's really interesting is that the majority of the destinations where parents want to do their citizenship and residence by investment are also home to some of the best universities and schools in the world. So it works really well together.

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The second thing is that we are all educators and as a result we understand the school system. John Milne, Group Head of Education Services, is an ex-head teacher. I've been in education for over 25 years. I'm a UK qualified teacher. And we work with admissions directors and experts. The team really understands children and education, and we are very, very child focused as a result. We are also completely impartial. We don't take commission from universities and schools, which is really important because most agents do. They have an interest in putting the child in the school or university that will give them a commission. Whereas we only will place children in schools or universities that match them really well so they can thrive and be successful and happy.

And then the other point is that we use our proprietary assessment methodology, the Henley Academic Profiling Assessment (HAPA). For children between the age of six and 16, we ask them to do this assessment that allows us to have a really good idea of their academic potential, which means that our decisions are data-driven and that we can look at their academic skills and academic potential and then find the best school for them, and potentially advise them going forward on the type of university that will suit them.

How can parents plan ahead to make sure their children get into the right university?

When families ask us how we can help their child get into the university of their choice, there are lots of questions and lots of answers and solutions. But it's important to understand that the global landscape has shifted, it's

become more competitive. Planning in advance is now more important than ever. Before the pandemic, Harvard had about 44,000 applicants. They accepted 7.8%. In 2022, they had over 65,000 and they accepted roughly 3.9%. So it's become hugely competitive and it's a similar story with schools. Preparing in advance, planning in advance is really important. We tend to work with families with children as young as 14 and 15 because we can offer pre-college counseling solutions, which allows them to help develop into the type of candidates that the universities they want to apply to are looking for.

We start with HAPA, because the way we manage the process is data driven. We work with the families over a period of several years. It's also important to understand that the application process for schools in the UK, Canada and Australia is a different application process to the US, which is more specific. Canada, the UK and Australia tend to be more grades driven.

In the US it's very different, and it is quite a complicated process. We encourage parents and children to have at least a couple of years to get into the right space for application. It's all about reducing the number of competitors. It's interesting to know that there are some universities in the US that take what we call arts portfolios.

For instance, if we look at a university like Stanford, you could be applying to study at Stanford, and you want to study chemistry. But if you are a great musician or artist or dancer, you can video yourself doing what you're great at. And with your application, you can submit this too. And if the relevant faculty thinks it's good enough and it

goes back to the admissions office, they say, "Okay, this person is brilliant at this. We're going to put them in the arts portfolio area." And this effectively brings them down from a pool of about 60,000 to let's say 20,000. There are so many parts to understand. And at Henley & Partners Education, you are working with people who really understand their particular destinations. Our core team has experts in education placement who have helped hundreds of students get into these types of universities.

The other thing I say to parents and to students is don't fixate on the big names, because they are very competitive. Parents and children tend to know the Ivy League, the Oxbridge, etc. But there are hundreds of wonderful universities. And it is essential to work with a team of people who know those options and can propose which options are really important. Finally, universities now are looking for diversity. Which means that they're not necessarily recruiting from the top schools anymore. Before, if you went to certain schools, it was almost a direct route into the top universities. This is not the case anymore. I have heard of parents in the UK, for example, taking their children out of boarding schools and putting them into state schools because there's a better percentage chance of them getting into Oxbridge.

There is just so much to understand and that's why we always suggest to parents and students to plan in advance. And seek assistance from impartial education specialists. ■

