



Customer Success Story: DePaul University

Overview

DePaul University is nationally recognized for its commitment to service learning and hands-on experiences. It serves more than 23,000 students who reflect a broad range of ethnic, religious, geographic and economic backgrounds. It was founded by the Vincentians in 1898 and have grown to become the country's largest Catholic university.

Challenge

DePaul University endures the challenge facing higher educational institutions today: students are attending the school in greater numbers and with higher expectations, both for the quality of education and clean, safe, modern facilities in which to learn. With more than 20,000 students on three separate campuses, maintenance of the university's facilities is a large and complex undertaking.

At first glance it may not seem so since DePaul's facilities operation group has the resources in place: 300 staff and has an annual budget of \$30 million. The challenge comes with management of departmental logistics. Even before a single work order is completed, reams of paper have been used to hire staff, create schedules and pay employees. Only after all of that administrative work is completed can the group begin its real work, from changing light bulbs and cleaning lecture halls to building walls and constructing new offices. All told, the group receives over 400 work orders each week.

These orders are hand written by administrative staff in each department, and then delivered to the facility operations group's offices on each campus. Then managerial staff must process and approve them, and resend them back to the corresponding trades personnel to begin the work. It's a process that can take up to 10 days, and because it is paper-based, it is virtually impossible to quickly determine why the process is delayed. It may be because

Highlights

Education

Processes Enabled:

- Work Order Routing and Initiation

Customer Benefits & Results:

- Users can initiate and complete tasks using a Web interface
- Work orders can now be processed electronically the same day
- Documentation of work performed reducing the need for correspondence between other departments

the form is sitting on someone's desk, or because it was lost in transit.

Solution

Within the facilities operations Group, the large number of unconnected accountants, and seven different trade groups of engineers, electricians and carpenters mandated integration. The university had in place software such as Oracle databases and PeopleSoft, so any solution had to be compatible with these. Using Metastorm's Business Process Management (BPM) software, DePaul created a solution where users could initiate and complete tasks ranging from creating and filling out forms, getting approval, and routing associated questions, actions, documents and decisions to the correct people via a Web browser interface.

The process begins when all orders are entered into the Metastorm BPM® application, where they are electronically sorted into three different groups – general, janitorial and set-up – and routed to the manager of each group. Each group manager then opens the requests and assigns them to a team or trades group. The work order is then automatically forwarded to the foreman of the group assigned to the job. The application also enables users to send alerts that both highlight activity deadlines and allows managers to monitor the status of any particular job.

The solution required some training, but this was not disruptive because there were only a few registered users in each department. With a manageable number of users, the facilities operations group could monitor the staff with access to the system, and reduce the number of duplicate requests arising from the same work order being submitted through multiple contacts.

Results

With the efficiency of the BPM platform, work orders can now be processed electronically the same day, instead of staff writing each order and waiting on hand-deliveries from remote locations. Throughout the process, it is clearly documented exactly who has handled the work order at each step, making it extremely easy to find the appropriate contact person, and reducing the need for correspondence between other departments and the facilities operations group.

However, another result is that few people notice the improvement. But you know you've been successful when people forget to complain about peeling paint and leaking faucets.

1-877-321-META (6382)
+44 (0) 208-971-1500
www.metastorm.com

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