

# Case study: University of British Columbia

Faster, More Accurate Address  
Entry Equals Better Alumni  
Relations at UBC



## Situation

The UBC Annual Giving Phone Program was having trouble with inconsistent and inaccurate addresses taken over the phone by student fundraisers. Incorrect addresses led to wasted mailings and returned mail, and hampered the ability of students to find missing alumni using their tracer program.

## Solution

UBC adopted QAS Pro, which validates addresses against official Canada Post and U.S. Postal Service® data in real time to use with their RuffaloCODY CAMPUSCALL™ phone automation software.

## Results

- Reduced call times
- Stronger relationships with alumni
- Increased sense of pride in program
- No spelling mistakes and consistent address formats
- Added value to tracing program

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**John Foster,  
Development Officer  
with Annual Giving**

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## The Problem

UBC consistently ranks as one of the top 35 universities in the world. The Annual Giving’s Phone Programs help the university stay in touch with their constituents and dials more than 400,000 times to be able to talk to over 40,000 donors and prospective donors. With various UBC departments publishing and mailing magazines, newsletters, event invitations, thank-you notes and tax receipts, Phone Programs is heavily relied upon to obtain address updates with each call made. According to John Foster, Development Officer with

Annual Giving, UBC sends more than a million pieces of mail to alumni each year.

“Having accurate addresses is critical to our mailings,” Foster said. “Every department that sends out a piece to an alum benefits from the quality of addresses the Phone Programs are producing with the help of QAS. We were having trouble with our callers’ accuracy when entering addresses. Even a simple typo in a postal code would likely cause mail to be returned as undeliverable.”

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UBC ANNUAL GIVING  
PHONE PROGRAMS

"Canada Post doesn't always return mail to us unless we pay for the service," Foster reported. "On occasion we did pay for returns and we found the address inconsistencies were way too high. We have to be accountable to our donors, and spending money to send mail to bad addresses means that communications don't reach our audience and money is being wasted."

Another issue Foster pointed out is that student callers were often having to repeat complex or difficult-to-spell addresses over and over and sometimes just taking a guess to avoid putting off the donor. This was causing inefficiencies in call times as well as continued bad address entry practices.

"The longer our callers spend on details like filling in addresses, the less time they have on each call to develop relationships with our alumni," Foster added.

Annual Giving also maintains a tracer program by which student staffers research missing alumni information

using phone books and phone calls. The labor costs associated with the tracer work was another reason UBC needed to implement an address validation strategy; getting better address data at the point-of-entry would help diminish the need for reworking it later and would allow the tracers to focus on finding lost alumni.

#### Enter Experian QAS

In 2005, UBC adopted QAS Pro from Experian QAS. The software validates addresses against official Canada Post and U.S Postal Service® data in real time. Address data on 16 additional countries is also available.

QAS Pro provides drill-down lists of valid and properly formatted addresses. A student caller can simply click a button to have a complete, valid address inserted into the data fields after typing in just a few keystrokes. This cuts down on spelling mistakes and typos as well as awkward, repeated requests to clarify addresses.

"Implementing QAS was a breeze, and training student workers to use the program took about five minutes. The transition to the new version of CAMPUSCALL was easy, too."

#### Results: Faster Calls, Better Mailing

"QAS helps us make the address check a lot quicker," said Foster. "It also makes for a better call overall — rather than having to ask alumni to repeat complicated street spellings, for example, our representatives can simply enter a few letters to find a match and then drill down with a couple of clicks to complete the address and insert it into the CAMPUSCALL system."

With QAS Pro in place, Foster immediately noticed that calls were going much quicker and at it was easier for this team to get alumni addresses corrected. "Once you get used to seeing a correct address, our reps can now recognize when a bad address is coming in. The inconsistencies just disappeared; they were no longer an issue," Foster explained.

Another derived benefit was the sense of increased professionalism and pride that the call center reps had by having the software at their disposal.

Also, with address consistency in place, the department's tracers are also able to dedicate more time toward a longer-term project: tracking down tens of thousands of alumni with whom the University has lost touch.

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