

Case Study: Brooklyn College

Data Quality Key to Smart
Enrollment Marketing



Situation

Brooklyn College's enrollment office was experiencing a high volume of returned mail from enrollment packs and offer letters costing the college money and hurting targeted marketing efforts. Staff members were wasting time correcting bad addresses already in the database in order to reach prospective students.

Solution

Brooklyn College installed QAS Pro and QAS Batch in Admissions, HR, Alumni Services, and Registrar to ensure that address data is corrected at the point-of-entry when students call into admissions and from information requests on the CUNY website.

Results

The college no longer loses a competitive advantage because of erroneous prospect address information; prospective packets and follow-up letters arrive on the first attempt to students and parents. This optimized approach saves departmental resources, but also provides accurate data to other departments on campus.

Enrollment Process Hindered by Bad Data

Founded in 1930, Brooklyn College is an innovative liberal arts institution with a history of academic excellence in both undergraduate and graduate studies. The college prides itself on offering affordable education which leads to a productive career and a life rich in opportunities.

As part of The City University of New York (CUNY), the college competes with all other CUNY colleges and the many other NYC private colleges for prospective students. With 2008 enrollment totaling more than 16,650, the college needs to market effectively to students in order to ensure a steady pool of highly qualified applicants.

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In order to attract the desired student population, Brooklyn College sends out enrollment packets to students who call the admissions office, request information from their website and who are included in lists from SAT and other data sources. A lot of that incoming information was plagued with bad address data, leading to a large amount of returned mail. This resulted in prospective students not receiving data in a timely manner and resources wasted sending marketing materials that never reached the intended recipient.

“Competing against CUNY peers and private peers when students are making quick decisions is tough,” said Mark Gold, CIO of Brooklyn College. “You don’t want your mailings to fail, especially when you’ve paid for that lead, or when a prospective student has made an inquiry that will seem to be ignored.”

Experian QAS Helps Reach Prospects

The enrollment office implemented QAS Pro, which provides fast and accurate real-time address validation against the latest postal address data files, for their HR system, their student Information system, their admissions prospect Tracking system, and their Alumni tracking system. Addresses are entered into these systems by office staff who process phone, email, and in-person updates.

In the admissions process all students are then tracked through Recruitment Plus from College Board. All prospective student addresses are verified with QAS Pro before being entered into the system to ensure accuracy.

QAS Batch, which can verify an existing database, automatically correcting spelling mistakes, formatting errors and bringing addresses into compliance with current postal standards, was also installed to clean purchased lists and the data coming in from the CUNY website.

“I choose Experian QAS because they were being used by another CUNY school,” added Gold. “I have been very impressed with Experian QAS’ procedures and methodology. Many vendors drop out of sight after their sale is completed, but Experian QAS made it their business to find out how things were going and what they can do to help long after they were paid.”

Bolstered Marketing Efforts While Saving Resources

Brooklyn College has been able to optimize marketing communications to prospective students while saving money on postage and enrollment packets. While the college has not actively tracked savings and saved staff resources, they certainly notice a difference.

“Having faulty mailing data is like having a computer virus,” said Gold. “Once you get a bad address in your file, you may never realize the damage being done until it’s too late, if you find out at all. You inadvertently end up paying for the undeliverables without always knowing it.”

These correct addresses also assist in new United States Postal Service (USPS®) regulations. Bulk mailers now need to be more careful than ever that address data is up to date in order to comply with new regulations and avoid fines.

“Email has not replaced mail,” added Gold. “Email is not 100% reliable because it may never be viewed or reach the target user. A mailed communication is important because when an enrollment packet goes to a home the student sees it and the parents see it. People also appreciate a letter signed from the president as a tangible sign of interest.”

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