

Upgrading to a comprehensive commerce platform

Texas State takes a complete approach to campus commerce with TouchNet

Texas State University in San Marcos was moving to a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system and needed a comprehensive commerce platform that would complement, enhance and grow with the school as it implemented the latest technology.

"At Texas State, we needed to implement commerce functionality faster than expected to meet the admissions application go-live date," says Marcus Bryant, who represents the Student Business Services team along with Lisa Allen and Kim Stringham. "We also needed a flexible system that allowed us to automate tuition and fee payments, installments, refunds, and campuswide e-commerce while reducing back-office processes and maintaining compliance and security."

In 2010, Texas State chose the TouchNet U.Commerce technology platform.

The U.Commerce suite integrated with the school's new student ERP and other non-student financial systems to provide a cohesive payment and disbursement platform.

"Moving to the new system, we brought together almost 40 integration partners," says the Student Business Services team. "Now having an integrated commerce platform gave us the campuswide visibility we needed, improved business processes, ensured compliance and, most importantly, delivered a great student experience."

Automation and integration

Automating time-intensive processes such as installments and refunds and integrating previously disparate systems such as parking, housing and dining was key to meeting the implementation timeline and making sure the business office, departments and merchants across campus were ready to serve students.

One of the most popular products at Texas State is TouchNet Marketplace, which offers departments a broad range of customizable e-commerce payment tools that can be used for event registration, pop-up stores and any service or product on campus. For external vendors, the TouchNet Ready Partner Program ensures they are integrated into the campus commerce system and are compliant and secure from day one.

According to Stringham, "E-commerce is booming everywhere." The ability to automate postings to the general ledger, easily tie in partners and vendors across campus, and have all of that data in one place gives staff the information they need and the students the experience they expect.



Results and feedback

Bryant says that TouchNet takes a "partner" approach when working with clients and teams, which include staff members from multiple areas within Student Business Services as well as campus. TouchNet stays in contact regularly regarding new features and enhancements.

"From the beginning, the training was detailed, and the customer service was outstanding," says Bryant.

The streamlined user experience also receives positive reviews from students.

"Anything that reduces the number of clicks and makes information easy to find is a huge win," says Bryant. "It cuts down on students having to spend time on something that is not integral to their education experience."

Bottom-line benefits

The TouchNet U.Commerce platform provides staff a view into campus commerce activity via detailed views and reports and it automates processes and integrates disparate systems. Now, Student Business Services has time to do what it does best, which is support students.

"As with others in our industry, we are faced with having to do more with less—less budget, less staff. All of the automation that TouchNet provides is very helpful," says the Student Business Services team. "It is a consistent user experience across all modules. It's a secure, PCI-compliant product, which removes much of the end user system maintenance so that we can get back to the business of education."

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