University of Technology Sydney

How UTS improved student experience and created a future-ready university

Industry:

Education

Solutions:

Experience Cloud   Sales Cloud   Service Cloud   Education Cloud   Marketing Cloud

THE CHALLENGE: EVOLVING STUDENT EXPECTATIONS, A LEGACY TECHNOLOGY STACK, AND SILOED DATA.

As people become familiar with best-in-class digital experiences, they start to expect them from every organisation they interact with – higher education institutions included. A hyper-personalised, mobile-first, intuitive experience is expected by past, present and future students, as well as external partners.

However, with vast amounts of information to deal with, and a rigid, often department-based, legacy tech stack a daunting opponent, it can be challenging to deliver.

And, as the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) found, not providing that experience can create significant issues.

A need for optimisation

Attracting and enrolling new students is essential for universities, but due to the sub-optimal experience when applying for places, UTS was finding that prospective students were accepting offers elsewhere. It was losing students at the point of application due to the cumbersome online process they were asked to negotiate.

In addition, the university faced challenges streamlining its day-to-day operations.

The university was using multiple systems to manage different aspects of its operations, and those platforms weren't all integrated. Student and partner data existed in silos, with no central source of truth.

The university knew it needed a better technology solution – one that both aligned teams and data internally, and provided a great experience for stakeholders. It was imperative that any transition didn't impact the student or staff experience, and that the new solution integrated with existing systems.

> 66 The decision was made that they needed to explore ways of unifying all of the university's student, partner and alumni engagement activity. The question the university had was, 'how do we do it?' 99

THE SIMPLUS SOLUTIONS

A university-wide source of truth

Proof of concept built and validated within two months

While the ultimate solution was university-wide, the project began towards the end of 2017 with a proof of concept project to demonstrate the overall business case.

The minimum viable product (MVP) proof of concept project focused on implementing a CRM solution to manage external relationships with vendors, partners and suppliers.

In less than two months, the proof of concept was validated.

"The program began with the identification of a small-time boxed MVP use case with a defined ROI," explains the Account Executive at Simplus.

"From this, an eight-week CRM solution was built for the university's External Relations team. This solution leveraged Salesforce Sales Cloud capabilities out of box and was used to validate how quickly the platform could deliver and be operationally and easily usable."

Following the successful implementation, and a competitive tender process, Salesforce was chosen as the technology of choice for a university-wide solution, with Simplus chosen as the implementation partner.

Creating the future state for the University of Technology Sydney

Creating the future state began with an advisory engagement to scope and help define a university-wide CRM, during which a three-pronged approach was identified, comprising an online application process, a case management solution for managing and triaging student requests, and a student recruitment solution.

From there, a program roadmap and delivery plan were created across those three core areas – the roadmap included how different capabilities could be leveraged across initiatives and what a transition state would look like.

In addition, another project – an ecommerce platform for short courses called UTS Open – was also introduced, which ran concurrently, and for which Simplus designed the back end Salesforce architecture.

"All of these areas are managed by different people with different responsibilities within the business," explains the Simplus Account Executive.

"However, because of our foundational approach, whereby you're building general capabilities that largely apply to most cases, it's simple to evolve and build on what's there, while still ensuring each element is as bespoke as it needs to be.

"By taking this approach, we avoid any significant technical duplication, and ensure the solutions can continually evolve based on the university's needs."

Using a SCRUM agile implementation approach, solutions were delivered incrementally, with minimal disruption to students or staff.

Subsequently, UTS has engaged Simplus to design a new student management system within Salesforce, to replace its legacy technology.

THE OUTCOME

Simplus implemented a university-wide solution that improved student experience, sped up processes, and prepared the university for the future.
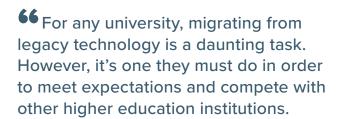
Proof of concept MVP program designed and delivered for External Relations team in just eight weeks, demonstrating the business case for wide-scale change.

Application process for range of student cohorts designed and created using Experience Cloud, Sales Cloud, Education Cloud, Form Assembly and Conga. This solution offers a vastly superior online experience, and resolves user experience issues prospective students were previously facing.

A consolidated, university-wide enquiry management system now means all e-requests, special consideration requests and other online enquiries are all managed by a solution combining Service Cloud and Salesforce Experience Cloud. A staggered implementation, while the legacy system ran in tandem, ensured real-time learnings informed the final solution.

The new student recruitment solution, which uses Salesforce Education Cloud and Marketing Cloud, has created a high-quality digital experience for new students. Established, legacy marketing journeys were migrated to Salesforce CRM and Marketing Cloud.

The short course e-commerce project was successfully launched, with Simplus designing the Salesforce component and managing an initiative to enable free taster and paid short courses to be offered.

66 For any university, migrating from legacy technology is a daunting task. However, it's one they must do in order to meet expectations and compete with other higher education institutions.

By creating a meaningful MVP the business case for wider change could be established, while a foundational approach means the system can evolve as the university needs to without ever requiring seismic change again. 99

SIMPLUS ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Learn more about how Simplus partners with higher education institutions to maximise the value of Salesforce.

CONTACT US

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