



A university-wide source of truth for a major Australian university

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

Industry: Solutions:

Education

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.

With vast amounts of information to deal with, and a daunting legacy tech stack, this university was finding it a challenging target to hit.

A need for optimisation

The University identified that optimisations could be made in several areas.

First, the student-facing application process had room for improvement. Attracting and enrolling new students is essential for universities, so this university wanted to make the end-to-end experience as smooth as possible for prospective applicants.

Second, they wanted to streamline their day-to-day operations as they were using multiple platforms to manage different aspects of their operations, with student and partner data stored in different systems. The Institution knew that with a central source of truth – one that both aligned teams and data internally – it could provide a better experience for everyone, including university staff.

It was imperative to deliver a unified experience and eliminate data silos, a system transition was essential for an integrated solution across all stakeholders.

“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?’”

THE SIMPLUS SOLUTION

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,” said 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 envisioning the opportunity to scale with native platform capabilities, a competitive tender process resulted in Salesforce as the platform for a university-wide solution, with Simplus chosen as the implementation partner.



Creating the future state for the University

Creating the future state began with a strategic mindset to identify the high priority value drivers that focused on revenue uplift, improved user experience and removed operational inefficiencies. This led to a three-pronged approach, focusing on the student journey from prospecting to student support comprising a student recruitment solution, an online application process and a case management solution for managing and triaging student requests.

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 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 Account Executive.

“However, because of our foundational approach built on top of the Education Data Architecture (EDA), the functionalities were built to scale across the business capabilities. The approach was iterative with a MVP mindset, also considering the end goal of an University wide CRM ensuring each element was as bespoke as it needed to be.”

“By taking this approach, we avoided any significant technical duplication, and ensured the solutions could 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.

THE OUTCOME

An improved stakeholder experience

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. In addition it provided a streamlined and an automated solution for the internal staff to manage the application evaluation process and communication.



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

“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.”

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE, SIMPLUS

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

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