



## A Champion of CRM

When Chris Coons came on board as Director of Admissions for Mercyhurst College, a small, private, liberal arts college in Erie, Pennsylvania, he was an experienced user of CRM and was well versed in the benefits of having a system to maximize recruiting efforts. Chris quickly identified the need for a CRM system to help increase Mercyhurst's traditional undergraduate student population, which had been suffering slight declines over the past four years. "I had worked with CRM before, so I understood the power it had to automate and improve recruiting efforts" explains Chris.

Chris, a champion of CRM, still had to sell colleagues on the idea of CRM for recruiting. He drew up a business case comparing the return on investment of additional staff resources to the return on investment of an implemented CRM solution. He presented the case to his boss, Mike Lyden, Vice President of Enrollment, and was given approval to move forward with the evaluation and purchase of a CRM solution, as it presented the best ROI.

After ample research and evaluation, Azorus was chosen as the 'right fit' CRM provider for Mercyhurst.

***"The level of customer service provided went above and beyond any bells and whistles. In addition to superior customer service, I wanted the ability to improve data input and both develop & execute an automated communication plan."***

***Chris Coons, Director of Admissions  
Mercyhurst College, Pennsylvania***

## Moving from many to one

Prior to implementing CRM, Mercyhurst lacked a centralized database to house prospective student data. Rather, the school was using several different databases, which was proving to be increasingly inefficient and ineffective. “One of the biggest driving forces to consider a CRM system was to move from several different databases of inquiries to one consolidated system.”

Without a central database which could also communicate with prospects, the task of connecting via direct mail, email and phone calls was daunting. On top of that, “there was virtually no ability to understand important information like conversion rates or the effectiveness of a marketing campaign” tells Chris.

By moving from many data sources to one data source, Mercyhurst was able to set up targeted email campaigns, measure their effectiveness and set up a structured reporting system – all of which have been invaluable to their recruiting strategies.

## Make it Automatic

At Mercyhurst – like in many universities – resources needed to be utilized to the fullest. The ability to automate the data collection and communication processes with prospective students was one of the most appealing features Mercyhurst saw in the Azorus CRM system.

Mercyhurst began with implementing the Azorus Digital Recruit solution as the first step of their CRM project, automating the data collection. This provided them with accurate and relevant data. At the same time their prospective students received their first communication shortly after the initial meeting – making Mercyhurst the school without delay in its first contact. The Digital Recruit solution also triggered a targeted and automated communication plan through the CRM platform, which allowed Mercyhurst to utilize all communication channels, including email, their prospective student portal, and Facebook.



Within their CRM system, Mercyhurst created separate communication plans for high priority (likely to enroll) or low priority inquiries, the parameters of which were based on historical data. Now, each time new prospects enter the system, they are automatically categorized and automatically sent communications tailored to them.

This is just one example of the many ways Mercyhurst targets and segments prospect data. The most important facet of this strategy being that the segmentation and delivery of communications is automatic, efficient and effective.

## The Results

After completing one full recruiting cycle with Azorus, Mercyhurst could not be more satisfied with the results they have seen since implementing their CRM platform. "This year we exceeded our recruiting goal in both number of freshman and transfer students. I know Azorus played a key role in this" says Chris.

Not only was Mercyhurst's number of enrolled students up 7% in 2009, they also saved money in the way they recruited these students. Thanks to a process put in place by Azorus to track and prioritize which students received viewbooks, Mercyhurst was able to reallocate 50% of their prior printing and postage expense, resulting in a huge savings to the school.