Work Smarter, Not Harder: A More Efficient Way to Drive, Manage, and Measure Student Involvement

The University of Arizona is home to some of the top collegiate leadership programs in the country. For the past 20 years, they’ve been managing these programs manually, resulting in numerous inaccuracies and an overworked staff. In 2008, the university partnered with OrgSync to completely revolutionize their processes.

Problem

ATTENDANCE TRACKING
The Leadership Programs office hosts a multitude of events throughout the school year but lacked a formal registration process. As a result, staff had to make accommodations for each event based on attendance in previous years and hope for a similar turnout. At each event, staff members manually tracked attendance using sign-in sheets that were then entered into an Excel timesheet. This method took up valuable time and left plenty of room for error.

ACCURATE FEEDBACK DATA
If using a paper-based system to track attendance was difficult, using one to track student feedback and reflections was nearly impossible. The staff provided each student with a reflection workbook that they were to fill out after each event or activity they participated in. When it came time to collect the nearly 400 workbooks at the end of the year, it was bedlam for the administration. Few students kept up with the workbook throughout the year, and as a result, many were rushing to fill out their reflections in May for an activity from September. As with attendance, staff members had to manually input the reflection data into spreadsheets - an arduous, month-long process.

OVERWHELMED STAFF
With staff drowning in stacks of paperwork, they had no time to analyze the performance of existing programs, nevermind develop new programs and opportunities for reaching more students. Additionally, all administrative tasks related to events, such as creating events, sending reminder emails, and organizing programs, had to be managed by the staff because students couldn’t access the system.

How did OrgSync help?

EVENT RSVPS
OrgSync enabled UA’s Leadership Programs office to manage participation and collect RSVPs for all of their events. When students receive the event invite, they can respond with their status, giving event organizers an exact number of expected attendees. This allows the organizers to plan room space and order supplies in advance. After the event, students can be required to fill out a response form that not only verifies attendance, but once completed, assigns students credit hours for that particular event. All the information is automatically tracked in each student’s Co-Curricular Transcript.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
OrgSync also allows event organizers to require that students provide learning outcomes and a reflection for each event they attend. This data can be included in each student’s Co-Curricular Transcript, but it also serves as a feedback tool for improving programs going forward. Additionally, all the information is received in real-time, drastically reducing the amount of paperwork and time required by administration.

PROCESS AUTOMATION
With OrgSync, UA’s Leadership Programs staff was able to take their office virtual with online forms, automated attendance tracking, mass messaging, and real-time reports. Processes such as position interviews have been reduced from half an hour per application to 10 minutes, freeing the staff up to get creative
and focus on improving programs. Another time saver is student access. By transitioning these processes online, student leaders within each organization can be set up as administrators and take over many of the tasks, such as event planning, that were once available to staff only.

**Results**

**EMPOWERED STUDENTS**

Now, with access to everything that OrgSync has to offer, students are empowered to take control of their co-curricular experience. With the Co-Curricular Transcript, they can see a history of their activities and learning outcomes, which is helpful for identifying their strengths as well as areas of need. With this knowledge, students are able seek out opportunities to help them become more well-rounded individuals and better applicants when it comes time to enter the workforce.

**WORKING SMARTER, NOT HARDER**

“OrgSync helped us work smarter instead of harder. It made us think differently, made our programs better, and helped our students get more involved,” said Tina Wesanen-Neil, Director of the Arizona Blue Chip Program. The use of OrgSync has resulted in more efficient processes, which gives the staff more time to actually utilize their backgrounds in Student Affairs and leadership to improve their programs and further engage their students.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATION (NCLA)**

With more time to allocate toward student development, the UA Leadership Programs staff was able to create a new program - the National Collegiate Leadership Association (NCLA). The Association was developed specifically for students who want to engage in leadership activities. For years, the University of Arizona hosted the National Collegiate Leadership Conference (NCLC), a 3-day student-led conference that serves as the cornerstone for leadership training for college students across the nation. However, they wanted a way for students to continue the experience long after the conference ended. With OrgSync’s technology, students can now hold webinars, online chats, share best practices, and even collaborate with student members from across the nation.

**Problem** | **Before OrgSync** | **After OrgSync**
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**WEBSITE** | Posted calendars on web (externally controlled) once a semester | Calendar and website are now automatically updated in real-time
**COMMUNICATION** | Lack of communication and unable to track and monitor accountability | Polls, discussions, and messages improve communication; to-do lists enhance planning and accountability
**EVENTS** | No registration process to know who was coming to each event | Online RSVPs make it easy to track attendance and plan room space
**ASSESSMENT** | All registrations, evaluations, and reflections were done on paper | Students can submit online forms for registration and post-event assessments