



University Increases Revenue Ten-Fold with Melissa's Data Quality Solutions



With state aid falling and financial pressures continuing to rise, higher education facilities must find ways to optimize external revenue sources to support their educational and research efforts. The University of Washington has placed a great emphasis on fundraising as a means to generate revenue. Fifteen years ago, the university concluded a campaign that raised \$284 million. However, the most recent campaign resulted in a striking ten-fold jump in revenue – a total of \$2.7 billion.

A key element of the campaign's success was implementing an extensive, pro-active data quality program for its primary donor database, which houses roughly 900,000 contacts, including their contact information and details about their relationship with the university; such as a student, staff member or even an attendee at sporting events.

TOUCHING BASE WITH COMMUNITY SCORES CONTRIBUTIONS

"Our job is to understand the many ways that people are connected to the university," said Shawn Drew, former director of information management for the university's Office of Development. "This data is invaluable in our capital campaigns – enabling us to really connect the dots, find new relationships and capitalize on the many ways our supporters want to contribute."

Dealing with inaccurate and outdated data held fundraising efforts back from optimal performance. The university contends with many factors that hinder its data quality: multi-sourced contact information, data entry errors and variations that lead to duplicate records; and maintaining accurate student records when students are so often transient due to graduation, relocating for job offers, getting married, changing names, etc.

If the university cannot maintain communication with students and alumni, it suffers a double loss. First, in the waste of postage, production and time spent on trying to send mail that is ultimately undeliverable. Second, the lost fundraising opportunity associated with the inability to communicate with the right person at the right time.

MAKING THE PASS TO MELISSA DQ SOLUTIONS

"We had so much data to contend with and knew it was important to bring in an expert in DQ [data quality]," said Mike Visaya, associate director IM, strategic technology initiatives in the advancement department at the university. "We were an early adopter and use nearly all the components in Melissa's Data Quality Suite. We appreciate their developer support and integration with our own tools and workflow. We see Melissa as a trusted vendor that provides good value and superior quality."

Melissa provided address, phone and email verification, as well as name parsing solutions (collectively known as the Data Quality Suite) to more accurately retain data in a more centralized database for the University. Melissa was also utilized by the University for advanced record matching and deduplication solutions, as well as Melissa's geocoding service, to help in analyzing location-specific relationships that lie within their data.

SCORING THOUGHTFUL DATA TO WIN ANALYTICS

"Even though the concept of 'big data' has made a huge impact in the business intelligence landscape, the university was more concerned with nurturing what they termed the 'why data' – analyzing patterns in alumni/donor behavior to better model current and prospective donors.

The ability to make analytical connections about individuals' relationship with the university and dig deeper into their data was a huge benefit to the university. "It's become apparent that people have multifaceted relationships with our university and understanding these relationships has helped us facilitate more efficient fundraising," he said.

Improved data quality paved the way to better analytics. "The better quality of data – the better our data makes sense," Visaya said.

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– MIKE VISAYA, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR IM,
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON



About University of Washington:

The University of Washington (UW) is a multi-campus university in Seattle, Tacoma, and Bothell, as well as a world-class academic medical center. The university has 16 colleges and schools and offers 1,800 undergraduate courses each quarter. UW confers more than 12,000 bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and professional degrees annually.

About Melissa:

Since 1985, Melissa has specialized in global intelligence solutions to help organizations unlock accurate data for a more compelling customer view. Our breadth of data and flexible API technology integrates with numerous third-party platforms, so it works for you and makes sense for your business. More than 10,000 clients worldwide in key industries like insurance, finance, healthcare, retail, education and government, rely on Melissa for full spectrum data quality and identity verification software, including data profiling, cleansing, matching and enhancement services, to gain critical insight and drive meaningful customer relationships.

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