

8 Reasons the University of Notre Dame went Paperless in Admissions

Admission to the University of Notre Dame (ND) is highly competitive. For every four applications Admissions counselors review, only one of them will have a place in the freshman class. Going through 15,000 applications per year requires time, attention and an efficient business process.

However, paper documents were getting in the way. Because of the high volume of paper to process, completing and routing applications through the review process took too long, and customer service was suffering. In addition, office storage space was tight and only getting tighter as more and more paper documents accumulated. Mike Seeley, Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions, and his team knew they couldn't keep working this way.



Here's what Mike had to say about how ND solved its paper woes in Admissions:

1. Customer Service:
"If a counselor, parent or applicant called asking if we received documentation, it could be days or even weeks before we had an answer. With document management, counselors and support staff can pull up documentation within minutes, so we have immediate answers when someone calls."

2. Online Access:
"Answering calls right away is great, but eliminating the need to make those calls is even better. We can securely put documents online so customers can check for themselves to see if we have received a document or not."

3. Speeding Review Processes:
"Sending paper application files through reviews was slow, and they could get stuck on someone's desk or left at home. Now, once reviewed, they automatically move on to the next person without delay."

4. Space Constraints:
"Our paper took up an incredible amount of space and we were running out of room. We simply just didn't have anywhere else to put it. By electronically importing, rather than printing, documents from outside vendors – for example, the Common Application and related forms – and by scanning in any paper we receive, we don't waste all that valuable space."

5. Overtime Costs:
"To handle our peak processing times, Admissions staff had to work hours and hours of overtime. It was expensive for Notre Dame and it was really hard on staff. Now we complete files and route documents faster, more efficiently and with fewer mistakes, saving us those overtime costs."

6. Going Green:
"Going paperless supports Notre Dame's sustainability initiatives. We reduce our copying and printing, saving paper and toner."

7. Beating the Competition:
"By electronically completing and reviewing applications, we prioritize which files we read first, allowing us to focus on areas of need, such as high talent and diversity. That way, we can work on yielding the best candidates before our competition, making it more likely they'll enroll with us."

8. Return on Investment:
"We couldn't justify a solution without seeing a definite return on investment. There were savings on hard costs like paper, file folders, cabinets and storage space. We saved by reducing staff overtime hours and, although we didn't layoff any employees, we also saved by not replacing support staff when there was turnover. We also find a return on investment in ways that we can't put a dollar amount on – improved customer service, better image on campus and happier staff."

That's just one university's experience, but it represents the story of admissions departments all over the country. They struggle with paper, slowing their review process and making it difficult to serve customers well.

By scanning in paper documents and importing electronic content, the entire staff has the complete student record at their fingertips without searching through file folders. By going a step further and automatically routing applications to the right people for review, they eliminate process slowdowns.

With electronic document management and workflow automation, admissions departments handle the ever-increasing volume of applicants and beat out the competition for best-fit students.

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