A CASE STUDY

Leveraging Data and Automations to Help a Small Division Punch Above Its Weight
How Destiny One is facilitating growth at the University of Delaware Professional and Continuing Studies

The Division of Professional and Continuing Studies at the University of Delaware (UD PCS) is a small division in a small state, but with large aspirations and great awareness of their competitive environment.

With Philadelphia, New York City and Washington DC within a two-hour trip, UD PCS is in the middle of a higher education hot-zone with stiff competition for non-traditional registrations. UD PCS serves approximately 17,000 learners annually through its credit courses and degree offerings, professional development courses, certificate programs, specialized conferences, workshops and lifelong learning member cooperatives throughout the state. To grow on that base, they needed a new back-end system that would help them scale.

“The limitations of the existing technology prohibited us from growing and serving our learners in the best way possible,” said Steve Kendus, Manager of Marketing and Communications for UD PCS. “We were looking for a new, more modern cloud-based solution to facilitate the way we want to engage with and track our learners.”

The solution they turned to was Destiny One, the customer lifecycle management (CLM) software platform by Destiny Solutions. Crafted specifically for non-traditional education, Destiny One manages all aspects of the learner lifecycle, including marketing, enrollment, curriculum, finance and more. The Destiny One CLM integrates with main-campus systems, engages students with an Amazon-like experience, optimizes staff efficiency, and provides business intelligence that empowers data-driven decision making.

By leveraging Destiny One’s capabilities, UD PCS is set up to scale for the future. They have the capacity to strategically grow programming, to improve marketing effectiveness and to deliver the kind of student experience that will separate them from the crowd—all underpinned by data and automations.

Program Management

Relevant data around enrollment numbers and demand, combined with automations in program development and outreach, is transforming UD PCS’s approach to launching and managing offerings.

The Destiny One CLM helped UD PCS significantly with program management right away. From launching new programs to understanding the performance of existing ones, the real-time data available in their back-end improved management significantly.

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Destiny One Helps with Data Management

Any modern organization needs a strong culture of collecting, analyzing and leveraging data to succeed, and higher education institutions are no different. The era of simply building a new offering and expecting it to fill up are over. Today, institutional and divisional leaders need to be responsive to data to ensure they stand out above the crowd.

Destiny One brings data to the forefront of decision-making at every level. First, the CLM provides over 150 standard reports—in real time—that give administrators full visibility of their operations. Secondly, it gives non-traditional division leaders ownership over their own data so they can easily build custom and precise reports that respond to a specific divisional need. Higher education leaders no longer need to be data scientists to understand what the data is telling them—so long as their back-end is designed to help.

Further, Destiny One also offers a Dashboards module that goes beyond what’s already available in the core CLM. Destiny One Dashboards has 42 out-of-the-box data visualizations, powered by Tableau, that help leaders to understand performance across every level of their institution or division. The information the dashboards are built from is already cleaned and scrubbed, taking most of the preparatory work that goes into data analysis off the table. What’s left are pure, data-driven insights ranging from enrollment trends to instructor histories to financial tracking that help leaders make the best possible decisions to grow their institutions.

At the University of Delaware, availability of accessible and understandable data has helped them transform UD PCS in just a few short months.

Revenue, to everything a student has received through Destiny. That visibility is great to have at our disposal,” said Shaun Sutherell, Assistant Director of Business Development and Program Management for UD PCS.

This kind of insight gives the UD PCS team visibility into how they can adapt and shift their programming to see and address the needs of their target demographics. What’s more, by leveraging the automations and ease of the Destiny One back end, they can quickly adjust to the insights they’re gaining.

For example, Destiny One automates the approval workflow process, notifying the right people at the right time when their input is required. This means UD PCS can respond to market demand and get new offerings to market quickly—a critically important piece that supports their competitiveness.

It’s also easier to serve wider student demographics with program offerings, since the system allows for multiple pricing models, provisions and delivery methods for the same courses. This way, it’s possible for UD PCS to offer a course to a wide range of prospective students with diverse needs without having to build it from scratch for each audience.

“It’s extremely easy to build programs in the system, which is freeing up time for us,” said Sutherell. “I’ve been able to delegate much of the responsibility with program up-keep, whereas in our old system it was more labor-intensive and involved more players. There are more checks and balances in place now.”

Additionally, leaders can set unique business rules and allow the system to enforce them—from prerequisite validation to course provisioning to incoming inquiries—to ensure students are receiving the level of service they expect without placing additional burden or expectation on staff.

By leveraging the many automations built into the Destiny One CLM, UD PCS’s staff can focus their time on high-impact work and student service rather than on back-end bureaucracy.

“One of the best benefits from Destiny One is freeing up my team’s time,” said Sutherell.

An example of the impact these automations are having—both on staff time and on enrollments—is in announcing offerings and in waitlist notification. When the registration
period for a course or program is about to begin, non-traditional divisions can take advantage of a Destiny One function that automatically sends emails notifying potentially-interested students about the offering and pushes them to register. Prior to bringing on Destiny One, the UD PCS team put a great amount of time and effort into trying to manually accomplish this task.

“Sending out new offering emails was a labor-intensive, manual process performed multiple times for each program opening or offering, especially with all the different dates that the registrations open,” said Kendus. “We would have to access self-standing databases of contact information, we would build individual emails using an email blast tool and then schedule them to be sent individually.”

Destiny One has automated this otherwise arduous process (and many others!). It’s managed entirely in the back end, allowing US PCS staff to focus on other priorities.

“Now that the automation is in place, as soon as Shaun clicks go, emails are automatically generated and sent. The time savings are significant,” Kendus added.

And, what’s more, the emails have already generated positive outcomes for the division.

“The waitlist function is helping us see interest beyond our capacity,” said Sutherell. “It prompted us to open up another paralegal certificate program because of the waitlist. In the past, we would’ve just closed registration not knowing that we could’ve hosted another program.”

By leveraging the data-driven insights that come from Destiny One and by taking advantage of the flexibility and automation the CLM provides, staff at UD PCS are able to scale and improve programming without burdening their daily schedules.
Marketing Effectiveness

Improved reporting and automated processes around website development ensures that UD PCS marketers are focusing their time, efforts and resources on the areas that have the most impact.

Another area where UD PCS has observed significant improvements—both in effectiveness and in staff efficiency—is in its marketing activities. Marketing, more than many fields, is extremely dependent on quickly analyzing and leveraging data.

“The first thing I do every morning is check Destiny One’s reports to get a sense of how well our programs are performing,” said Kendus. “As soon as I arrive in the office I check two reports. The first is the credit card payment report so I can see how much money came in within the past 24 hours. The second is the enrollment transaction report, organized by section, so I can see how many people enrolled in individual programs over the past 24 hours. I use that information to adjust our promotional efforts in real time.”

The insights UD PCS’s marketing team gains from Destiny One go beyond identifying which programs or courses need a promotional push, however. The CLM provides a rich repository of information that can unlock a wide array of secrets around who is enrolling in what programs and for what reason—intelligence that can help define marketing campaign messaging. The system provides a deep dive into learner preferences, storing information about each student like their employer, communication preferences, goals, interests and more. As such, marketing campaigns can be highly targeted to ensure the messaging is as impactful as possible.

Additionally, Destiny One helps institutions ensure that once prospective students arrive on the website, they take the necessary steps to register. The web content manager built into Destiny One ensures that when information is updated in one place it is automatically updated across UD PCS’s system, ensuring all information students might find is as accurate as possible. What’s more, that information is SEO-optimized and searchable, keeping UD PCS’s courses top of mind for students.

Further still, UD PCS staff can use their time more productively as the pages for each new offering are automated, easy to build, and customized with defined school colors, logos and other branding elements.

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“Destiny One makes the process of building course and seminar website pages easier and more streamlined,” said Kendus. “Instead of having to build individual pages within our web content management system, we now only have to build one or two general introductory pages in our website and then refer or link them directly to the individual course pages built by Destiny One. That content management tool within Destiny One streamlines the creation process for folks on the marketing and program management teams.”
The tools available in Destiny One allow for UD PCS’s team to be more responsive and proactive in driving registrations, and the automations within the system ensure that students are seeing the division’s most professional face when they arrive at the website.

### Student Experience

The wealth of student data made available in Destiny One, alongside the self-service functionalities opened up by the Student Portal, allows UD PCS to deliver a student experience that differentiates them.

Ensuring the expectations of students are met is arguably the most important factor Destiny One brings to the table at UD PCS. While all the improvements around program management and marketing effectiveness are valuable, they mean nothing unless they’re serving the needs and interests of learners.

UD PCS is in a tough position, where they are competing with larger divisions who have more resources at their disposal. However, students often vote with their feet and a great experience that meets their high expectations will keep them coming back for more. The Destiny One CLM helps smaller divisions, like UD PCS, meet those expectations and deliver a high-quality student experience without straining their human or financial resources. In the end, this supports their capacity to compete in a challenging market.

That transformation starts with creating the capacity for students to manage most of their own experience without having to call or visit the divisional office. In Destiny One, this self-service is delivered through the innovative Student Portal.

Providing students access to their data and organizational history automates a number of bureaucratic tasks that would otherwise require staff intervention. For example, students can simply log into their Student Portal to download a copy of their transcript rather than having to involve UD PCS staff.

“Destiny One gives students more control over...
their experience with UD PCS,” said Sutherell. “They can add courses to their shopping cart, make payments online, pay down their invoices, automate payment plans, print transcripts, see final grades and register all through their Portal. Destiny One allows students to seamlessly go through the process and essentially never have to pick up the phone, which is ideal.”

Students can also track their certificate progress, start and save applications without losing their data, enroll in new courses and request transfers and drops all from their Student Portal.

The information within Destiny One also allows non-traditional divisions to deliver the kind of highly-personalized and engaging experience that helps students feel respected. Alongside the personal data in the CLM, Destiny One also tracks each student’s complete enrollment and payment history. This means when a student does wind up encountering an issue that requires staff support, they can simply get the high level of advice and insight they need from the staff member without having to recount their story from scratch.

By creating significant access to self-service tools and by equipping staff with a rich repository of data, UD PCS is leveraging Destiny One to deliver the kind of student experience today’s learners expect without leaning too heavily on the superhuman efforts of staff.

Looking to the Future by Leveraging Data and Automations to Scale and Compete

By taking advantage of the functionalities and features of the Destiny One Customer Lifecycle Management software platform, UD PCS is scaling, growing and finding new ways to partner with their colleagues across campus.

Despite the large number of institutions within close distance—not to mention the constantly-growing competition of online offerings—UD PCS is transforming its approach to program management, improving the effectiveness of its marketing efforts and focusing on delivering the student-centric learner experience that today’s customers expect.

Ultimately, by leveraging the automations, workflows, and data made available by Destiny One, UD PCS is establishing a concrete foothold to stand out in an intensely competitive marketplace.

“I can, in real time, see exactly where any program is—from the student numbers, to the revenue, to everything a student has received through Destiny. That visibility is great to have at our disposal.”
About Destiny One

Destiny One is customer lifecycle management software for higher education administrators serving non-traditional students. It integrates with main-campus systems, engages students with an Amazon-like experience, optimizes staff efficiency, and provides business intelligence, empowering data-driven decisions. Destiny One lets schools unite, understand and control all aspects of their business at once.

Destiny One manages the entire learner lifecycle:

**Curriculum**
Plans and manages courses, certificates and programs

**Marketing**
Targets marketing campaigns and defines consistent branding

**Finance**
Governs accounting transactions and manages financial information

**Enrollment**
Increases registrations by engaging learners and automating the enrollment process

**Reporting**
Leverages dashboards and reports to make business-intelligent decisions

**System Administration**
Configures workflows, staff roles and permissions, and business rules and fees

Want to learn more?

Contact us at info@destinysolutions.com

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