

TargetX and Skagit Valley College

TargetX CRM Meets Widespread Buy-in and Increases Application Conversion at Skagit Valley College

Challenge: Students, staff, and SVC’s bottom line were suffering due to a lack of organization, coordination, strategy, and personalization

The student success rates at SVC were “abysmal,” says Jessie Payne, SVC CRM specialist. SVC students were exiting programs prematurely or not progressing to graduation on time, which is not particularly unusual at community colleges. In fact, of students who matriculate at a community college in the fall, 25 percent won’t be there in the spring; while, only 39 percent of community college attendees receive a degree within six years.

Not only was this detrimental to SVC students, it was also harmful to the college’s financials — when students exit, tuition dollars go with them. Additionally, Washington State colleges get momentum points that equal additional funding for reaching certain academic milestones. Payne says, “We weren’t hitting many.”

To better support students, the college underwent in-depth strategic planning and applied for a federal Title III Grant. Awarded the grant, Payne and team were tasked with finding a CRM to significantly assist SVC in enhancing student communication and retention efforts.

Skagit Valley College was also lagging in enrollment support. Students were entering the application pool from multiple points — including the online application, athletics, workforce ramps, and other doors — and these points were not coordinated or aligned. The same lack of coordination was true at the student services-level, which Payne describes as “siloeed.”

She explains, “Students would get information from one place, then get sent to another and another. It was kind of a nightmare for them.”



Skagit Valley College at a Glance

Established in 1926

Two-year community college

Serving Skagit, Island, and San Juan counties in Northwest Washington

Approximately 10,000 total students

TargetX Solutions

Recruitment Suite

Retention Suite

Goals

Skagit Valley College needed a solution that:

- Centralized student information data into one easy-to-use system
- Organized and tracked student communication touch points for simple access and follow-up
- Allowed for automated and customized email, phone, and texting campaigns
- Offered early alerts to identify and help support at-risk students
- Provided a supplement to the Washington State application

Payne adds, “We really didn’t have anything in place to communicate with students during the intake process. If someone sent an inquiry, staff added the information into an Excel database, did a mail merge, and sent generic emails. Our communications were not customized at all. We had no follow-up. We had no way of knowing if students received or even read the email.” Things needed to change and fast.

Payne and SVC leadership, armed with Title III funding, were determined to find the best technology solution to execute on a more organized, streamlined student outreach and support strategy that would lead to systemic change.

Solutions: Adoption of TargetX Recruitment and Retention Suites to meet SVC’s goals

Payne and her team looked at a number of different CRM solutions, but landed on the TargetX Recruitment and Retention Suites after “getting on the phone with real people at real schools who used TargetX to solve real-world challenges,” says Payne.

The Recruitment Suite is composed of three pieces — the Recruitment CRM, Application, and Review tool — all integrated into one powerful suite and built on the Salesforce platform to easily and successfully recruit students anywhere, at any time. The CRM eliminates the need to move data around and organizes prospect information in a simple, centralized dashboard. Email, telemarketing, and texting campaigns are easily customizable, automated, and tracked for maximum impact.

Payne comments that the “entire staff loves that tracking student notes, interactions, and activity history is so easy.” She adds, “We also adopted the

TargetX Online Application, which allows us to get the additional information we need to serve students well, but isn’t required on the Washington State app.”

SVC is currently working to launch the Retention Suite, which will empower the team to engage students through an integrated advising center; identify and support at-risk students through an early-alert system; monitor student progress through a robust tracker; be proactive in student success efforts by creating action plans or to-do lists; and receive feedback from students in real-time.

Results: TargetX CRM increases conversion rates from application and gains widespread buy-in across campus

Though early into implementation, Payne says that, campus-wide, “buy-in is amazing” and SVC is already seeing results. In fact, SVC has seen a positive impact on the number of students registering after applying because of the increase in personalization and timely communications with students.

Everyone — from the student success team to the faculty members — is energized by the new CRM, says Payne.

“Our student admissions team is so excited about the telemarketing campaign that they might die,” laughs Payne. “The CRM as a whole is an amazing benefit for our entire staff and the proof is in how much they are using it! I am TargetX’s biggest fan and I look forward to the gains ahead in recruitment and retention.”

