



PeopleFind

In Higher Education

Student/Faculty Finder

Challenges:

- Many dropped calls
- Inefficient customer service
- Manual directory updates

Benefits:

- Automated directory
- Speech-enabled
- Less labor in managing directories
- Far fewer dropped calls

Results:

- 7-month ROI
- Service representatives freed to provide improved service
- An SEAA investment with future-proof extensions & flexibility

A well renowned liberal arts college in New England provides academic opportunities to approximately 3000 undergraduate and graduate students in over 50 different areas of study. Complementing the student body are hundreds of professional faculty and staff that make up more than 40 different academic departments and college sponsored organizations.

In 2003, the college looked at solutions to speech enable their ever changing directory of students, faculty, staff, departments and school sponsored organizations. Not only did the college want to improve the way that calls were handled and routed, but they wanted to alleviate simple operator tasks such as call transfers, allowing personnel to handle calls of greater importance, while providing a 24x7x365 automated directory assistance option. PeopleFind, a speech-based "Student and Faculty Finder", was ultimately chosen to enhance the college's ability to route callers to their desired destination.

The college installed PeopleFind in 2004. The system supports over 6,000 unique directory names and handles upwards of 8,000+ calls per month. External callers dialing the main campus number are greeted by the system and if the caller knows the name of the person, department, or school organization they wish to reach, they simply speak that name and the call is automatically transferred. Also benefiting the college is a separate internal application of PeopleFind that allows students and faculty to dial an extension number to access PeopleFind. Members of the student body, faculty and administration can find one another without knowledge of extension or phone numbers, and without tying up vital customer service time and resources. The end result is an exceptional caller experience where callers spend little to no time on hold and are immediately directed to their desired endpoint.

Complementing the efficiencies created by speech-enabling the campus directory is the streamlined process of keeping that directory up to date. IT staff are no longer burdened with maintaining the ever-changing student database. Students and Staff are assigned an email address and a voice messaging inbox which automatically updates their PeopleFind system. Users are then able to log into a web interface to add a secondary contact location, in most cases, a mobile number. Maintaining contact preferences through PeopleFind offers users the privacy of not divulging their personal numbers, while remaining well connected to the increasingly mobile campus community.

Like any enterprise, a college or university must strive to be as efficient as possible and reliable, quick connections among staff, students, and faculty are just as important to the effectiveness of the institution.