DESTINY One

Bringing the Amazon Experience to Higher Education

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO
CONTINUING AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

University *of* San Diego

DS DESTINY SOLUTIONS

How Destiny One is helping the University of San Diego Professional and Continuing Education deliver an exceptional customer experience while staying nimble and agile

About University of San Diego
Professional and Continuing Education

The University of San Diego is committed to advancing academic excellence, expanding liberal and professional knowledge, creating a diverse and inclusive community, and preparing leaders dedicated to ethical conduct and compassionate service. The Division of Professional and Continuing Education shares this mission through academic outreach to adult and professional students.

Today's postsecondary environment is incredibly competitive and this is doubly true in the non-credit sector. The growing recognition for the value of lifelong learning and alternative credentials ranging from badges to certificates has increased the number of entrants into the marketplace, forcing non-traditional divisions of colleges and universities to find new ways to stand out and compete.

Students in the non-credit space are customers with high expectations— they are adults and experienced consumers who gather all necessary information about a learning opportunity before they register. This means, for a non-credit division to be successful in today's environment, they must be nimble and responsive to customer demands, while also being student-centric and delivering an Amazon-like experience.

In 2013, the University of San Diego Professional and Continuing Education (USD PCE) implemented Destiny One, the studen lifecycle management software platform by Destiny Solutions, to provide students with a rich online experience while automating routine administrative tasks that allowed staff to increase their productivity and focus on high-value, differentiating tasks.

"In today's competitive education landscape, every school is looking to do more with less," said Jason Lemon, dean of USD PCE, after USD first chose Destiny One. "Destiny One provides the front-end capabilities needed to give students a rich online experience as well as the back-end functionality

needed for us to manage our growth—all while increasing our staff's productivity so that we can expand our offerings without expanding our staffing needs."

Four years after the initial implementation, four of USD PCE's senior Destiny One users—Brandon Gregory (Director of Marketing), David Kaplan (Director of Enrollment, Business and Student Services), Charles McGinnis (Director of Professional and Public Programs) and Uyen Nguyen (Information Technology Manager)—got together to discuss how Destiny One is helping USD PCE meet the high expectations of today's students.

① Being Nimble and Responsive

Flexible. Nimble. Agile. These adjectives are commonly used to describe some of the world's leading businesses, and represent the goals of today's non-credit higher education providers. After all, the non-credit space is unique in needing to respond quickly to the needs of the labor market to serve its students. Non-credit divisions are on the forefront of providing students and working professionals with the skills they need to succeed in the fast-changing world of work.

Unfortunately for non-credit postsecondary divisions, the market is immensely competitive. Facing competition from other colleges and universities, bootcamps and MOOCs, it's critical to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to programming.

"Without staying competitive and offering innovative and current curriculum, course formats and more, we would lose market share and no longer be able to support continuing education programs," said the team from USD PCE.

> " Since Destiny One was designed with continuing education in mind, we do not have to be concerned with trying to make the square peg of continuing education fit into the round hole of traditional postsecondary academia. "

Destiny One helps non-credit divisions like USD PCE get new courses to market much faster by using collaborative workflows that automate some of the repetitive aspects of curriculum creation and alert the right people at the right time when their input and approval is needed.

What's more, Destiny One also increases efficiency during the course creation process by allowing staff to input all relevant information (including rich media, fee information, prerequisite requirements, search engine optimization keywords and much more) at once, on one screen. It connects with your website, your course calendar, your learning management systems (LMS), and your corporate portals to display the right information to the right audience. You only have to input the curriculum information once, but you can use it everywhere.

This also facilitates unbundling of non-credit offerings, allowing divisional leaders to make more use of existing content by tailoring it to different audiences. With Destiny One, institutions can easily make non-credit offerings available to different audiences through different modalities at different prices.

"If you listen to what the market is telling you, respond to that by offering the programs that are being requested, and have the right tools—including the right support system like we have with Destiny One and our personnel—then you can move ahead of the competition and solidify yourself as a respected leader in the continuing education arena," they said. "Destiny One allows us to build the product and get it to market quickly."

② Delivering an Amazon-Like Experience

Students enrolling in non-credit programs are, for the most part, adults and working professionals looking to advance or change their careers. These are experienced shoppers whose expectations have been set by class-leading organizations like Amazon, and it's critical for non-traditional divisions to be able to meet their high expectations.

> " We want to grow enrollments and we want to grow programs and now we're going to be able to do that without actually adding more cost to the bottom line. "

"Amazon has set the standard for eCommerce engines. Non-traditional, adult learners expect an Amazon-like experience since they are searching for, and purchasing, courses online," the USD PCE team said. "Features such as recommended products based on user search intent, purchase history, and cart reminders make an Amazon-like experience very powerful for an organization. The ability to find what you want, choose it and get it (register, pay, etc.) with a few clicks (after you are in the system, of course), is the expected customer experience in today's marketplace, no matter what you are selling."

With that in mind, Destiny Solutions designed its student lifecycle management software platform, Destiny One, specifically to help non-traditional divisions of higher education institutions deliver that experience to their students.

Destiny One allows institutions to launch and monitor targeted marketing campaigns and publish easily searchable course information to bring students to the website, which provides a consistent and unified look and feel from the homepage right through checkout.

> " If we make the system onerous or cumbersome, they will simply choose to go elsewhere, as they have options in their continuing education. "

Destiny One also helps staff manage each of their division's unique customers, whether they are online students, corporate employees, K-12 campers, conference attendees, international learners or any other type of student. It automates processes like waitlist management, abandoned cart follow-ups, prerequisite validation, course provisioning and more, ensuring timely and responsive service to highly discerning students, with minimal staff resources required.

"The easier we make their experience to get into our classes, the better opportunity we have to obtain and retain those students," they said. "On the other hand, if we make the system onerous or cumbersome, they will simply choose to go elsewhere, as they have options in their continuing education."

③ Tailored to Continuing Education

Continuing education divisions share the same desire to help students change their lives as their main campus counterparts, but the similarities tend to end there. These divisions are often responsible for covering their own operating costs, typically do not run on defined semesters and offer a wider range of credentials and certifications.

Despite their fundamental operational differences, many continuing education divisions manage their business using systems designed for traditional degree programs, improvising to make their divisions work. This means staff wind up spending huge amounts of effort on time-consuming manual tasks to make their adapted system work in their unique environment.

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"Since Destiny One was designed with continuing education in mind, we do not have to be concerned with trying to make the square peg of continuing education fit into the round hole of traditional postsecondary academia," Gregory, Kaplan, McGinnis and Nguyen said.

Specifically, the administrators at USD PCE said they saw specific benefits in Destiny One's reporting capabilities and in Destiny Solutions' commitment to continuing to build their SaaS student lifecycle management platform to meet emerging and specific needs of non-credit leaders.

"Having experience with continuing education programs that tried to use systems that were not designed for continuing education, we appreciate the capabilities Destiny One already has to offer," they said. "The reporting is much more in line with what continuing education professional needs to assist in their decision-making process. Additionally, Destiny One seems to always be on the lookout for "add-ons" that make sense and aid in the growth of continuing education for our institution."

By adopting a system specifically tailored for the continuing education environment, the team at USD PCE noticed a huge difference in how they were able to allocate their time and resources.

"All of this allows us to spend less time worrying about those administrative functions of continuing education and spend more time focusing on program development, personnel development and making connections in the community that are vital to the health of any continuing education program," the team said, in closing. "Continuing education is more like a business than traditional college and Destiny One helps us run our business more efficiently and effectively."

About Destiny One

Destiny One is student 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
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