Royal Roads University

Unit4 Business World provides flexibility for the University to extend functionality and connect custom apps, allowing stakeholders to take charge of their information data needs.

Progressive education defines Royal Roads University. Superb online courses taught by quality faculty and intense, small group residencies on a beautiful campus combine to deliver quality education to working professionals, executives, and traditional college-age students pursuing post-secondary degrees. Courses are launched regularly throughout the calendar year, running days, nights, weekends and online. Some are accelerated or condensed, while others are offered in a more traditional semester format.

The Situation

The University's current plans call for aggressive growth in North American and international enrollment. The organization takes pride as a lean operation, so there is a strong commitment to keep resource investment to a minimum while achieving this growth objective. Mandatory external and internal reporting requirements necessitate careful, accurate tracking of enrollment, education delivery model success and student outcomes. Larger prospect and student populations increase the demand for close management and access to individual applicant and student records, as well as tuition and billing information.

The Need

Delivering data on demand

For more than 15 years, the University has used Unit4 Business World (Agresso) ERP as its strategic finance system. "It's done an excellent job," said Darryl Karleen, Project Manager, Royal Roads University. "So much so, that in 2006 when we wanted to replace our home grown enrollment and retention solution, we naturally chose Unit4." The University evaluated a number of potential solutions, but "ultimately determined that Unit4

offered the flexibility and agility we needed to handle our non-traditional cohort model with a tight integration with Business World ERP," Karleen said.

Admissions needs

The in-house IT team sought to leverage Business World's features across many departments throughout the University. The biggest area that could immediately benefit from the features was the admissions office. "A growing prospect pool created enormous pressure on the admissions staff to track and monitor the status of individual applications and all the elements that comprise an application, such as transcripts, letters of

Darryl Karleen, Project Manager at Royal Roads

recommendations, essays, test scores and the like," said Karleen. At the time, the five-member admissions office staff received approximately 2500 applications each year and extended offers to approximately 2000 students. "We knew the volume was only going to increase with our enrollment and marketing drives," said Karleen. "We needed to address that issue before it got out of hand."

The admissions office needed a module to enable applicants to submit applications online as well as allow them to monitor the status of their application process in real-time. "Up to that point," said Karleen, "this was not possible. There was a home-grown system for online application submissions, but it was cumbersome, not integrated with Business World, a source of frequent problems and not always current.
A lot of manual work - by both prospects and admissions staff - had to be done to assist this group."

The online system was not very user-friendly; more importantly, it required prospects to complete their application in one sitting or use cookie technology to return at a later date to complete their application. This was a source of many problems. Additionally, the system did not integrate with the finance system so collected application fees were not automatically entered into the finance system. Once their applications were submitted, applicants had to call in to keep track of the progress of their application as well as the offer. This sometimes required multiple phone calls to admissions to ensure their application and acceptance packages were up to date. Admissions staff had many manual processes to provide follow up and they had to take calls from applicants who needed to know their status.

The Solution

Unit4 student information system and the application wizard - working in harmony in Unit4 Business World
Although Royal Roads University reviewed systems from other vendors, it quickly decided upon Unit4 for the following reasons:

- **Strength and functionality of Business World:** Royal Roads already had a proven track record with Unit4 Business World. "We were overwhelmingly pleased with the ability to change and flexibility we experienced with our Business World ERP finance system, and we were confident that the student information system would deliver the same, if not more in this regard," said Karleen.

- **Single source:** Royal Roads appreciated the convenience of a single source for its technology solutions, rather than having to deal with any third-parties.

- **Superb integration:** Integration was key not only within Business World but also with other solutions Royal Roads University had installed in departments across the campus.

Royal Roads University continues to benefit from its decision as its IT team enhances Business World with its own custom touches. According to Karleen, "Unit4's APIs make it easy for our business analysis team to make changes in-house; we are particularly pleased that our application wizard harnesses the power of Business World so effectively."

Business Benefits

Leveraging the Elastic Foundation of Unit4 Business World to introduce comprehensive self-service

One of the innovations made possible by Business World's student information system was the beginning of data self-service, campus-wide. It started in admissions, with the application wizard. Prospects now have a more productive online experience, with an online application process that allows saving in-process applications, requesting additional information, tracking the elements of the application package and determining the status of an application. Now used as the official application method, maintaining thousands of prospects who seek a Royal Roads University education each year, the application wizard also enables prospects to submit required deposits and fees during the offer and admitted stages - revenue that is now recorded once and automatically tracked through the finance system.

"These features empower prospects to understand their application submission status at any point in time," said Karleen. "Admissions can extend offers online, and accepted students login to confirm their acceptance, place a deposit, and schedule their start dates. What used to take a day or more for each applicant can now be done in a matter of minutes. All of this makes for a better student enrollment experience which in turn will help Royal Roads meet its enrollment goals."

For the admission staff, the application wizard has been of tremendous value. "Our current staff can handle our growing applicant pool due to Business World and our application wizard," said Karleen. "Instead of spending an average of, say, ten hours a week fielding prospect phone calls just on application status checks, admissions advisors can now focus on improving application completion and making preliminary admissions decisions. In terms of dollars, this means that roughly 25 percent of each admissions advisor's salary can now be redirected into activities that have more value ultimately to both prospects and the University."

"Our push into self-service has had some great benefits so far, and our goal is to extend that to all touch points, including students and alumni. All this while we make sure we maintain good business sense and deliver an excellent user experience," said Karleen.

"At the highest level we have created a common interface so that active students and alumni can log in and access various student services, such as viewing their grades online, updating email addresses, applying for awards and bursaries, requesting courses at other institutions or asking for extensions in their current program. We are adding a feature that allows students and alumni to request transcripts, which will then be mailed the next day. We've eliminated the risk of manual errors."

UNIT4

Karleen summarized other key benefits as follows:

- Business World allows Royal Roads University to be extremely flexible in configuring, setting up, maintaining and making changes within the software. "It allows a variety of business rules so we are not constrained in any way. For example, we can easily deal with the different program modules we have at Royal Roads; we can enroll a cohort of students into all relevant courses at the same time or we can enroll students course by course," Karleen said.

- The system's open architecture allows Royal Roads to use a variety of tools. "For example, we can change data elements and take advantage of tools outside of the client," he said.

- The combined Business World ERP and student information system solution allows administrators and faculty to run about 100 different types of reports on demand; while others are customized for individuals and departments in real-time. "We run a lot of reports. Revenue recognition reports, for example, used to take seven to ten days. Three years ago, we automated the process. Now they take a day or less - and over 36 months that represents enormous time and cost savings. Another example is full time equivalent (FTE) reporting. We need to report regularly to the government, and because we use a non-traditional academic schedule, these reports used to take days and weeks. Now they, too, are on demand. The ease of reporting and efficiencies gained have been game changers, and now other departments are lining up to reap the benefits as well," said Karleen.

About Unit4

Unit4 is a leading provider of enterprise applications empowering people in service organizations. With annual revenue over $550M and more than 4,000 employees world-wide, Unit4 delivers ERP, industry-focused and best-in-class applications. Thousands of organizations from sectors including professional services, education, public services, not-for-profit, real estate, wholesale and financial services benefit from Unit4 solutions. Unit4 is in business for people.

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