

Whitworth University

A case study for learning better maintenance practices

SPOKANE, WA – Whitworth University is a non-profit Christian University located just north of the city of Spokane. As a non-profit educational facility there is constant pressure to keep costs down. In addition to the regular maintenance staff, the University enlists the assistance of students to get the job done. The continual influx of casual labor put additional pressure on Whitworth to find a maintenance management solution that was easy to use but could handle the complexities of a multi-use campus while still being affordable.

Company Background

Whitworth University is a relatively large campus consisting of 33 academic buildings, athletic facilities, administration buildings, 10 dormitories and 26 satellite houses used for additional residences. Prior to using Megamation's Directline Facilities Management solution, Whitworth relied on a software application combined with a manual paper-based solution that really wasn't suited for maintenance-oriented facilities management and required time-consuming administration that led to excessive backlogs and inefficiencies across the board. Faced with many options to choose from, Whitworth chose Directline from Megamation Systems.

The Challenge

Keith Thompson, Administrative Supervisor Facilities Services, put it this way, "Every university campus has the same problems with maintenance. Whether you have old buildings or new, big budgets or small, the need to get the work done with limited resources is always going to be a challenge". Whitworth was faced with a sprawling campus and more work than the Facilities Services Department could possibly get done. It all boiled down to information management. They needed to improve how information was getting to the maintenance department, how the information was being used to efficiently plan and schedule work, how to get information to the people doing the work and finally how to capture the work-related information

back into the system for future analysis. "We weren't doing a very good job at any of this and, as a result, backlogs ensued".

The Solution

"We already had an application that was used across campus for everything from Finance to Plant Management and Inventory Control", said Thompson. "So the prerequisite for any facilities management system was that it had to integrate to this system". Megamation already had a University in Canada using both applications. The University of New Brunswick worked with Megamation to build the integration between Directline and Datatel. Although at the time it was a relatively new integration, Keith was assured by both UNB and Megamation that the integration was working and providing benefits.

Although Directline was implemented to better manage maintenance operations, its Inventory functionality was soon introduced to Whitworth. It turned out to be the catalyst for the biggest cost savings by reducing inventory levels over a relatively short time. "Work Orders automatically change inventory calculations based on parts needed and parts actually used", said Thompson.

"We know we made the right decision with DirectLine"

“The system then manually or automatically sends Purchase Requisitions, based on predefined criteria, to our Purchasing system. Additional reports and analysis tools have helped us to really understand the dynamics of our inventory and the result has been an incredible cost savings over the last few years”. Other reporting tools have allowed Whitworth to analyze maintenance processes and their associated costs to achieve substantial cost savings. “We knew we were more efficient across the board using Directline, but the ad hoc reporting tools included with the system allowed us to really evaluate improvements in parts and labor; paving the way for continuous improvements”, expressed Thompson.

Time is a precious commodity and is valued more by Thompson and his team above all else. “When we look at the time savings afforded to us by using Directline, we know we made the right decision. Our administration office saves time on entering work requests because regular staff is encouraged to enter work requests directly into the system. Creating work orders has never been easier or faster. We can create a work order in less than 30 seconds. Assigning the work, parts and tools is effortless. After training students on the system, which can be done in just minutes, even they are able to use Directline to reduce the amount of time they need to record actual work, time and materials against a work order”. Thompson went on to say that they have managed to reduce man hours by 30-40 hours a week by using Directline because there is simply less time wasted waiting for work, parts, tools or access to the system because it is accessible from any computer that has access to the internet.

Preventive Maintenance procedures were another area where Whitworth needed improvements. Prior to Directline, the campus was on a reactive maintenance course. Things primarily got fixed when they were

broken. Now PM’s are beginning to be a part of the daily maintenance schedule. “We knew that PM’s were an important part of improving our maintenance standards but the systems we had in place were not really able to handle the scope of our needs”, recounted Thompson. “We are now implementing Directline for PM’s, which will improve the overall health of the campus and reducing the amount of reactionary work our maintenance team does”.

“Other applications we looked at were cheaper on the surface but when we compared the value of the services offered through Directline none of them came close to the ROI we expected and eventually achieved through Directline”, said Thompson. Keith was referring to the Directline Service Bundle, which includes implementation services, data migration, customization, continual training, live customer support and hosting of the application solution. “There is no question that their services are superior. Applications may be similar but it’s the services of Directline that provided us with tangible benefits”.

In addition to the time saving benefits, Directline has given the maintenance department the tools to really understand the relative health of the maintenance operations and the community as a whole. “Generally speaking, we are more responsive to our customers; the staff and students at the university, and they are much happier because of it... and that’s what really matters”, reported Thompson.

DirectLine is a world-class online CMMS/EAM service offered globally through an all-inclusive monthly subscription. With hundreds of customers throughout North America and Europe of various sizes and industries, DirectLine continues to benefit a broad range of maintenance and facilities management professionals.

Some of the Key Benefits for Whitworth University

- ▶ Large time and cost savings across the board
- ▶ Lock and Key Module automates tracking and reporting of lock management
- ▶ Charge back functionality to accommodate billing to departmental accounts
- ▶ Better inventory management
- ▶ Unlimited Training and support

Please contact us with any questions
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