



Key student administration process 90% faster with Bizagi



Customer:

Birkbeck University of London

Industry:

Higher Education

Location:

London, UK

Birkbeck, University of London, achieved

Operational Excellence

with Bizagi BPMS

HE provider accelerates student administration and ensures more students apply for loans in a timely manner

Birkbeck, University of London, embarked on a BPM program to streamline key administrative and financial functions as well as empower employees to initiate their own process improvements.



Process Modeler has gone viral; and this is only possible because Bizagi is so easy to use."

James Smith, Head of Systems & Process Improvement, Birkbeck University of London

Objectives

- ✓ Implement an Operational Excellence Programme through BPM
- ✓ Define high-volume processes to be automated and implement them quickly
- ✓ Increase speed and quality of data
- ✓ Reduce complexity, duplication and errors
- ✓ Build cross-functional processes across many university units
- ✓ Empower business users to implement their own small-scale process improvements

Achievements

- ✓ Three key processes deployed in less than a year
- ✓ Key 'student status amendment process' 90% faster
- ✓ Massive improvement in timeliness of student applications for Tuition Fee Loans
- ✓ "Fastfix" initiative for small scale improvements implemented

Overview

Birkbeck, London's only specialist provider of evening higher education, attracts students who are looking to re-skill and change career. Like any HE institution, recent changes in government funding increase the pressure to demonstrate efficiency and value for money. Birkbeck's University Operational Excellence program is a landmark project designed to meet these challenges through BPM. With Bizagi, it has the tools to support continuous improvement in a turbulent HE environment.

Challenges

The first step towards Operational Excellence was to define and prioritize the processes that would deliver optimal services, and help business users work in tandem with the Process team to deliver them.

A thorough tender took place during which Birkbeck reviewed six other BPM vendors. "We chose Bizagi because it looked easy to use for our non-technical users," comments James Smith, Head of Systems & Process Improvement at Birkbeck. At kick-off, Birkbeck used a process improvement facilitator to run a series of workshops. This introduced staff to a more structured approach to managing and carrying out processes of which three were chosen as the foundation of the Bizagi project.

The BPM Solution

The first process to be automated was Student Status Amendment (SSA), a process which touches on many functions and departments. "The knock-on effect of a student's decision to change, defer or withdraw from a course is huge. From the administrative side, there's exam marks to transfer, modules to be checked and student records to update. We wanted to remove the bottlenecks and reduce the length of the overall cycle."

The next process was chosen to provide better management information associated with Student Loans. Birkbeck students are accepted on the basis that they will apply for a student loan within 28 days. "Prior to Bizagi, we had little visibility of whether students were delivering on their promises so we'd see a lot of debt resulting from students failing to apply to the Student Loan Company. There were also lots of manual updates required to actually get the loans paid to us."

Results

Using the Bizagi BPM Suite, the Birkbeck team was able to easily model and define workflows and turn them into running applications. The comprehensive e-learning capabilities also

made the system easy to learn. Now, students wanting to change course can do so via 'My Birkbeck Profile', an easy to use, online portal based on Oracle Apex. This creates a case and via web services, Bizagi interacts with existing systems to ensure every element of the process is checked and actioned. To date, 20,000 students have access to the system closing an average of 3,000 cases per year; automation has reduced the time taken to close a case from 93 days to 10.

The loans processes are also slick; as soon as students enrol, Bizagi creates a case which 'watches' whether an application has been made to the Student Loan Company. Once the submission is made, the case is closed. Before the implementation of the Bizagi PEPSLC process for chasing loan applications, 'to be confirmed' debt (tuition fees owed by students who had enrolled on the promise of applying for a student loan) represented 18% of total debt. Just one year on, this number is down to 1.9% - providing the University with far greater clarity over its income position. This figure is even more impressive when set against a 35% year-on-year increase in debt due to more students taking out student loans under the new fee regime.

The aim of increasing knowledge and use of BPM internally has also been achieved. Birkbeck's Fastfix initiative puts all the steps in place for staff to deliver their own small scale process improvement. "The whole logic behind selecting Bizagi was to empower people to model their own processes. Process Modeler has gone viral; and this is only possible because Bizagi is so easy to use."

Best Practice

- ✓ Involve all business owners in the technology selection
- ✓ Enlist support from external facilitator to define the first processes
- ✓ Map processes and share tasks with the business team
- ✓ Promote and share your aims for Operational Excellence
- ✓ Support and mentor colleagues' modeling efforts
- ✓ Recognize that BPM does not reside in IT but should be a shared business tool