

Case Study: Minnesota State University, Mankato Foundation



“Mailing accuracy not only affects our operational costs, but it also influences our donor’s perception of our Foundation.”

—Lucette Wildt,
Director of Annual Giving, Minnesota
State University, Mankato Foundation

Situation

The Minnesota State University Mankato Foundation leverages two databases, Raiser’s Edge and DialVision to support its growing contact database and advancement programs. With 30 individuals across 3 departments accessing the same 140,000 contacts, contact data mismanagement, and more specifically address errors, posed a serious threat to the Foundation’s fundraising and networking success.

Solution

The Minnesota State Mankato Foundation turned to QAS Pro and QAS Names to verify addresses in real-time against USPS® data. This front-end tool works in conjunction with both Raiser’s Edge and DialVision to support the Foundation’s address collection methods.

Results

With QAS Pro and QAS Names, the Foundation has streamlined address updating processes across departments. More importantly, significantly fewer address errors are entered into their databases. With more accurate alumni and friends information, the Foundation ensures that communications are timely and therefore, more effective.

About Minnesota State University, Mankato

Minnesota State Mankato is a comprehensive, doctoral university and is part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. The University challenges students with 150 undergraduate and 80 graduate programs and attracts over 14,950 national and international students.

About Minnesota State University, Mankato Foundation

The Foundation shares its mission with Minnesota State Mankato to serve their students, to enhance their faculty members’ professional development, and to build better learning facilities. Through donor support, the Foundation helps students go beyond what they thought possible.

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Addressing bad addresses

The Minnesota State Mankato Foundation communicates with alumni and friends of the university via their Annual Fund Call Center, annual giving department, and gift receiving unit. Each division accesses and edits the same contact data, which flows freely between two contact databases, Raiser's Edge and DialVision.

30 individuals across 3 departments leverage the same 140,000 contacts to mail pledge cards, gift receipts, thank you cards, event invitations, and other nurturing communications. Mailings go out daily to their contacts and often include time sensitive information.

Every address error inputted translated into a monetary loss to the Foundation. Costs were calculated based on missed donation opportunities, poorly managed donor interactions, database dilution, staff re-work timelines, and mailing expenses.

"The Foundation can never afford to have bad addresses on a donor file," said Lucette Wildt, Director of Annual Giving at Minnesota State University, Mankato Foundation. "Our challenge was to ensure database integrity given

our current technology, budget, and staff resources." With their donors in mind, contact management and maintenance became essential to the Foundation's overall success.

Ensuring address quality

The Foundation purchased QAS Pro to ensure addresses are verified in real-time, against USPS data. Staff use QAS Pro's typedown interface to locate and verify donor addresses before information populates within Raiser's Edge and DialVision.

Additionally, the Foundation purchased QAS' Names dataset to help ensure that donor names match against addresses and are spelled correctly.

Stakeholders from all departments were trained on the new data input process. Soon after execution, administrators could already see the benefits. "We could instantly see that addresses were correct. The software was extremely user-friendly and up-to-date," says Wildt.

Tracking address management

With QAS Pro and Names used by many Foundation areas, the Foundation has streamlined

address updating processes across departments. More importantly, significantly fewer address errors are keyed into Raiser's Edge and DialVision.

With more accurate alumni and friends information, the Foundation ensures that their communications are timely and therefore, more effective.

"Mailing accuracy not only affects our operational costs, but it also influences our donor's perception of our Foundation," says Wildt. "You want donors to be more than satisfied with their experience which in turn strengthens the relationship for future gifts and endowments."

QAS products enable the Foundation to update more of their database than they would otherwise be equipped to do. These validations in the past year have enabled the Foundation to engage the 4% of their mailing list that would otherwise have been undeliverable or slow to deliver.

This increase in communication represents a savings in staff re-work and mailing costs, but also an increase in donor satisfaction and gift opportunities.

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