

Case Study: University of Connecticut Foundation



Keep in touch with
alumni and friends of
the university.

“Address verification
makes the biggest
difference.”

— Deb Cunningham, Assistant VP,
Advancement UConn Foundation

Situation

The University of Connecticut (UConn) Foundation understands the correlation between address information and potential donations. Each undelivered mail piece represents another neglected contact from their fundraising database. With a significant amount of returned mail per year, UConn Foundation sought a solution that would improve the accuracy of their address information and enable them to avoid duplicate efforts.

Solution

The UConn Foundation uses QAS data verification software in conjunction with their Millennium central database. As thousands of new contacts are added to their system on an annual basis, including new parents and students, donors, and volunteers, the address information is verified in real-time. The Foundation also uses back-end verification tools regularly to maintain list quality, search for duplicate entries, and CASS certify.

Results

With an all-encompassing database maintenance strategy, the Foundation now has a 90% mail accuracy rate which translates into more donation opportunities. In addition to improving revenue generating activities, QAS products provide an annual savings of more than \$40,000 in mailing costs. Additional cost reductions associated with print and staff efficiencies have further solidified the return on investment UConn Foundation is seeing from its data quality strategy.

About the UConn Foundation

The University of Connecticut Foundation, an organization with more than \$366 million in assets, is a tax-exempt corporation that operates exclusively to promote

the educational, scientific, cultural, and recreational objectives of the University of Connecticut. The Foundation's mission is to solicit, receive and administer gifts and financial resources from private

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sources to support the students, faculty, research and programs at all of UConn's 14 schools and colleges.

Data Entry Debacle

The UConn Foundation records contact information from a variety of sources, making maintenance a tedious and time-consuming task. In addition to manual contact entries, bulk lists, like the national fraternity and sorority group and the grateful University hospital patients list, are imported monthly.

Their constantly growing database currently maintains about 400,000-500,000 records, of which approximately 100,000 require modification each year. Changes could be the result of merging duplicates, updating change of addresses, or simply correcting information from a bulk import.

The Foundation's Winning Formula

The Foundation's database is regularly combed for address inaccuracies and updates to ensure that each fundraising solicitation reaches the maximum number of contacts. Whether the information comes from the call center, the alumni online directory, the registrar's office, or a purchased list, the contacts are rigorously tested to ensure overall list quality.

Call Center employees use QAS Pro to confirm each person's address in real-time. Using QAS Pro's typedown

engine, the staff inputs, verifies, and auto-populates the Foundation's central database with a reduced address entry of 10-15 keystrokes.

While Call Center employees use QAS front-end tools, the gift processing and alumni programs divisions rely on QAS Batch. This back-end product helps account for the ever-changing nature of address information.

All database imports from external lists, the alumni online directory, and registrar's database are run through QAS Batch. It identifies close matching records as duplicates, updates address errors, flags DPV and LACS contacts, and provides CASS certification for each mailing.

Launching a Large Scale Campaign

The UConn Foundation is in the early stages of a \$600 million campaign. Deb Cunningham, Assistant VP of Advancement at the UConn Foundation says, "Address information is critical for building successful fundraising campaigns." Larger gift giving initiatives require more staff resources to better target and call essential contacts. QAS provides a simple strategy to ensure that all Foundation divisions have the information they need to meet their campaign goals.

The Bottom Line

With an all-encompassing database maintenance strategy, the Foundation

now has a 90% mail accuracy rate, which translates into more donation opportunities.

Additionally, with more mail getting delivered, the UConn Foundation no longer pays upwards of \$0.40 per returned piece. Combined, the Foundation saves over \$40,000 annually.

Now consider the printing and postage wasted on the Postal System and the time saved researching and updating bad data.

And lastly, the Foundation uses QAS Batch to CASS certify all of their bulk mailers, producing an additional cost savings of \$100 per campaign.

"Address verification makes the biggest difference," says Cunningham. "More accurate address data has resulted in a large increase in NCOA (National Change of Addresses) matches, which allow us to reach alumni even after they move."

The software was quick to implement, required little staff training, and is non-intrusive to the rest of their database processes. Cunningham noted, "We've been using Experian QAS products since 2002 and are very happy with the quality in data that we have achieved."

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