

M4 Systems Case Studies

Barry College

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M4 Systems Customer Solution Order Story



Barry College Selects Microsoft Dynamics CRM and M4 Systems to Widen Participation and Drive Growth

Overview

Country or Region: United Kingdom
Industry: Education

Customer Profile

Based in South Wales, Barry College is a Further Education College with 500 staff and around 9000 students. The College offers courses ranging from Entry Level through to Higher Education and Postgraduate qualifications in a broad range of vocational and academic subjects.

Business Situation

Providing bespoke courses and work placements for business and industry, the Business Services division has many relationships in place with employers and external organisations. A solution was required to bring this information together so that departments could benefit from shared and mutual contacts.

Solution

Microsoft Dynamics CRM and M4 Systems were selected to:

- Assist in widening participation and links with the local business community
- Improve the communication capability of the College - leading to increased recruitment of potential learners and income generation

“We needed a solution that would allow us to continuously improve upon the level of service we provide and manage every relationship we have externally.”

Owen Mathias, Employer Engagement Manager, Barry College

Based in the Vale of Glamorgan, South Wales, Barry College is a Further Education College offering Entry Level through to Higher Education and Postgraduate qualifications in a broad range of vocational and academic subjects.

Providing bespoke courses and work placements for business and industry, the Employer Engagement, Business Training and Work Based Learning teams are in regular contact with external organisations. The lack of a centralised solution to monitor and manage contacts and relationships meant that the College was not benefiting from shared and mutual contacts across departments.

Microsoft Dynamics CRM and **M4 Systems** were selected to assist the College in widening participation and links with the local business community.



Microsoft Dynamics CRM



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Situation

Based in the Vale of Glamorgan, South Wales, Barry College is a Further Education College with 500 staff and around 9,000 students. Approximately 2,000 of these students are full-time, whilst the remainder study on part-time day, part-time evening and flexi-study programmes.

The College also offers an increasing number of e-learning programmes, where individuals can learn via computers from any location across the world. The College offers courses ranging from Entry Level through to Higher Education (HE) and Postgraduate qualifications in a broad range of vocational and academic subjects. In addition to this the College has a successful Business Services Unit which undertakes consultation, training needs analysis and run bespoke courses for business and industry. Barry College also has a subsidiary company, the Vale of Glamorgan Training Association (VGTA) that is responsible for the Work Based Learning (WBL) contract for the College.

The Transformation of a Traditional College into a Dynamic Business Demands on Further Education (FE) Colleges have never been higher. The sector is constantly being challenged by government agenda, competitive pressures and limited resources. Since the refocus of FE colleges in England and the introduction of Train to Gain, the traditional college as many know it has changed and transformed into a dynamic business. As a result, many colleges have had to establish education centric systems that manage their relationships with employers, training bookings, leads and marketing activities.

The business driver for the search and selection of a new College system was initiated by the Business Services Unit. Providing bespoke courses and work placements for business and industry, Business Services has many relationships in place with employers and external organisations. Contact information and details of the type of relationships in place are stored in a number of databases in use across the College including EBS, MAYTAS, Access, Excel spreadsheets, Outlook contacts as well as on business cards.

Owen Mathias, Employer Engagement Manager at Barry College explains the issue *"The Employer Engagement, Business Training and Work Based Learning teams are in regular contact with external organisations. To date there has been a huge inconsistency in the management of this data, resulting in a high level of duplication, inaccurate and out of date information. Departments are not benefiting from shared and mutual contacts."*

"The fact that M4 came recommended by another College, were local and able to demonstrate proven success implementing Dynamics CRM, provided us with confidence in our decision to move forward with them."

Owen Mathias,
Employer Engagement Manager,
Barry College

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A New CRM Solution

In order to co-ordinate this data and ensure that the College relates to external organisations as an individual incorporated body, Barry College made a decision to invest in a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system that will:

- Store contact information across the college centrally for all to access
- Track and monitor all communication with these organisations and individuals within including emails and phone calls
- Allow the marketing team to analyse the relationships in place and information held and provide a toolset for mail shots and targeted campaigns
- Provide senior managers with the insight to monitor the progress towards widening participation and links with the local business community
- Allow staff at all levels to manage their daily workloads more pro-actively and easily alert team members to pending tasks

Solution

Having made a decision to invest in an active cross department CRM solution, the College began evaluating systems available on the market. Led by the Employer Engagement team, various options were considered including open source, software and suppliers that the College already uses and new suppliers.

Having devised a short list of potential solutions and suppliers, the College carried out a cost benefit analysis to determine which system will bring the greatest gain, both short term and long term to an FE college in South East Wales.

Why Microsoft Dynamics CRM?

Barry College met with a number of suppliers who claimed to have „out of the box“ solutions for Colleges. However, like most corporate businesses, very few Colleges have the same requirements or processes in place.

Owen explains “It became clear that no one solution was going to meet our exact requirements. The out of the box college solutions did not match our needs closely enough – like traditional solutions they were very business development oriented, tailored for sales people. We needed a solution that would manage more than a sales pipeline – one that would co-ordinate work placements and risk assessment information, allow us to continuously improve upon the level of service we provide and manage every relationship we have externally.”

Microsoft Dynamics CRM was selected as it was able to meet the College’s immediate and longer term needs.

Take the „C“ out of CRM and you are left with Microsoft Dynamics Relationship Management. Also referred to as Microsoft Dynamics „xRM“, the College quickly saw that whilst functionally rich out of the box, Microsoft Dynamics CRM offered more than sales and marketing functionality. It’s a platform for developing line of business applications that manage and track information and processes around real-world objects. The object could be a customer, or in the case of Barry College, an employer, business or student.

The easy to customise framework underlying Microsoft Dynamics CRM and workflow configuration will provide Barry College with the ability to rapidly develop unique line of business processes.

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The .NET framework and ability to expose Dynamics CRM components to web-services will allow Barry College to easily integrate the solution with existing College systems.

A Microsoft solution, the College liked the fact that Dynamics CRM is fully integrated with the Microsoft Office suite including Word and Outlook –increasing accessibility and the likelihood of adoption.

Longer term, the College is comfortable knowing that Dynamics CRM is already fully integrated with Microsoft Office SharePoint Server which will be used as part of its e-strategy – providing students and employers with the ability to apply to the College on line via its website.

Why M4 Systems?

Barry College leveraged its relationship with and the experience of other local Colleges when searching for the right company to partner with on the project. **M4 Systems** came highly recommended by another college within the close network in South Wales, who had met with M4 previously to review and discuss their own internal systems. Owen explains the College's reasons for selecting M4 as preferred partner *"M4 were a breath of fresh air! They weren't selling an out of the box solution – they took the time to understand our drivers for change and key requirements from a new solution. The fact that they came recommended by another College, were local and able to demonstrate proven success in implementing Dynamics CRM, provided us with confidence in our decision to move forward with them."*

Next Steps

Following a recent scoping exercise with M4 Systems, Microsoft Dynamics CRM will be rolled out across the Employer Engagement, Business Training and Work Based Learning teams at Barry College in the first half of 2010.

The College is confident that Microsoft Dynamics CRM can deliver immediate tangible benefits including:

- Improved functional capability of customer-facing staff, providing potential customers with a professional and consistent service
- Improve the market communication capability of the College and the recruitment of potential learners, resulting in increased income generation
- Provide functional line managers and senior management with a comprehensive marketing database which can be used to measure performance against agreed College targets, objectives and government initiatives

M4 Systems

M4 Systems is a Gold Microsoft partner focussing on Microsoft Dynamics finance and accounting (ERP), Dynamics CRM and custom development solutions.

An internationally recognised ISV, M4 has a dedicated in-house development team offering customers the flexibility and capability to deliver rapid, cost-effective, integrated and sector-specific solutions.

For More Information

For more information about M4 Systems solutions and services visit: www.m4systems.com