pitney bowes

University of Liverpool automates tracking of inbound student mail for full accountability.

Client profile

University of Liverpool
- In the top 1 percent of universities worldwide for internationally recognised research
- More than 4,500 students housed in 7 halls of residence
- An international student population of 22 percent, receiving mail and parcels from around the globe

University of Liverpool

Moving beyond tracking parcels on paper

For more than a century, delivering a postal package into a student's hands was the responsibility of the porter, who would manage the post and keys for a hall of residence using pen and paper. When the University of Liverpool created new student reception centres to meet modern demands, they called on Pitney Bowes for help managing large volumes of inbound student mail. 'A paper system doesn't work. You need something more professional to make it efficient', says Niki Horobin, Hall Operations Manager.

Business challenge

Each hall of residence receives three or four large bags of correspondence from the Royal Mail daily as well as parcels from international couriers. The staff then sorts the post and notifies the students that they have packages for pickup.

'About three or four years ago, the system was very prehistoric — a whiteboard and a paper book. You'd write in the book who the parcel was for, and you'd write on the whiteboard when it came. The problem with that was human error, and it was a huge one', says Horobin. With no efficient system for distribution, students' parcels would sit on the shelves, taking up valuable space.

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— Niki Horobin, Hall Operations Manager

Technology used

• SendSuite™ Arrival®

'Looking back, I can't believe we used a paper book and a whiteboard to keep track. Now I think the first impression that the student gets is one of efficiency'.

— Niki Horobin, Hall Operations Manager

Solution

SendSuite Arrival had already been implemented to streamline mail delivery at a neighboring institution, The University of Manchester. The University of Liverpool decided to emulate Manchester's model first with a trial in two halls of residence, and then across the campus.

This decision posed a challenge for Horobin. 'I was dealing with staff who were very happy with the paper system because it was easy for them and they felt comfortable,' he says. 'Perhaps they had a little bit of trepidation about technology. But the implementation process was facilitated by Pitney Bowes. For the majority of our staff, the system is now second nature'.

SendSuite Arrival Inbound Package Tracking Software automates package handling for the University and ensures full accountability for parcels until they are picked up by students. Barcode readers, electronic signature capture, and tracking and reporting functions have brought post operations into the digital age to meet the expectations of today's students.

Benefits

'The real benefit of this system is the accountability all the way through final delivery. We have a record to reference if there's a query', says Horobin. 'If a courier company emails a student to say that a parcel has arrived before it has actually arrived, and the student comes looking for it, I have the information there in black and white. There's no question of human error. And 10 times out of 10, the parcel turns up in a few minutes or a few hours'. With the inefficient old paper system, it was easy to point the finger at University staff. SendSuite Arrival enables the staff to answer questions with authority.

Gains have been made in efficiency and employee productivity too. 'The paper system was very labor intensive. On a daily basis, it could take up to four or five hours to process the incoming mail. It became a long, drawn-out process', says Horobin. 'SendSuite helps our parcel management run so much more effectively. We're at a stage now where some parcels don't even make it to the shelf. The parcels are scanned in, and emails go out to the students automatically. If the students are walking around the halls, they come and get the parcels right away. The flow is so quick', says Horobin.

SendSuite Arrival helps postal packages complete their journey quickly. 'We take in so many parcels, the shelves are practically packed by 11 o'clock. Come four o'clock, they're half empty again. The turnover is incredible and really efficient. No issues, no lost parcels', says Horobin.

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For more information,
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