



## **Case Study**

### **Carleton University:**

#### **Web Based Administration, Management and Issuance of Parking Permits**

Many institutions encounter the time consuming and laborious effort required in the administration, management and issuance of parking resources. The need to streamline the process, make it easy to use and easy to manage has resulted in many universities and colleges re-examining their business and administrative parking processes.

#### **University Profile**

Founded in 1942 as Carleton College, Carleton became a university in 1957. The university is located in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada and is situated on 62 hectares just south of the city center, bordered by the Rideau River, the historic Rideau Canal, and pleasant residential neighborhoods. The university has grown to offer studies in more than 50 disciplines and catering to a total full-time student body of 15,730 and 4,723 part time students for a total of 20,453 students. The student body is support by over 3,000 academic, management and support staff and running on an operating budget (including ancillaries) of \$207 million.



#### **Department of University Safety**

Carleton University's parking inventory has remained relatively stable (increase of 250 additional permits each year over the last two years) although the need for additional parking stalls has increased.

The Department of University Safety (DUS) is responsible for thirteen parking lots as well as two parking garages, which accounts for 3,400 parking stalls. The department issues 5,000 permits per year representing \$1.2M in revenue. They also collect \$60,000 for in-house parking violations. In addition, the DUS is responsible for the administration of locker rentals, which represents \$35,000 of revenue.

#### **Department of University Safety's Parking Challenge**

The department issues up to 5,000 parking permits per year (experiencing 5-7% year over year growth). The parking administration division of the department had a staff of 9 full-time employees and hired an additional 3 temporary part-time employees to handle the traffic of the permit purchasers plus the volume of paper work and administrative tasks required for each permit purchased. The staff was also responsible for locker rentals as well as violation tracking.

The level of frustration that resulted from the up to two-hour line-ups resulted in a less than favourable purchasing experience. The strain on the staff was also evident as it added up day after day.

It was the goal of the DUS to complete the registration forms; file away the large amount of supporting paper work and process/account/reconcile payments for the business volume at the end of each workday. This resulted in large amounts of over time costs, manual errors and the added strain resulting from long workdays.

There must be a better way, they thought.

#### **Department of University Safety's Goals**

The DUS Campus Safety and Parking Services were looking for ways to improve operating efficiencies in terms of delivering a better service and reducing the cost of delivering the service all the while maintaining a high-level customer centric service approach.

They felt that a more flexible customer service offering which offered their customers a more accessible and self-service model would help alleviate the two hour line ups and provide a better permit purchasing experience. They were also looking for a solution that would allow the customer the ability to manage their own permit account (additions, updates, modifications) anytime from anywhere. It was felt that this model would reduce the stress and chaos associated with the issuance of the permits over the counter.



They also felt that a more automated solution and process would help to reduce the amount of paper work and in turn the number of errors associated with the large volumes of manual intervention. It was also felt that an automated payment service was required which would help reduce the risk and reduce the liabilities of having large amounts of cash on hand.

They felt that such a solution should be web based. In addition it was necessary that the solution be very easy to use for the customer and very intuitive from the administration and management perspective.

### **Department of University Safety's Results**

After exploring a variety of options, which didn't meet the DUS requirements and expectations, Carleton University contacted Tomahawk Technologies to seek advice and assistance in developing a web based parking permit issuance and management solution.

Tomahawk has worked very closely with Carleton's Department of University Safety to address the issues and concerns that they had. The result was ParkAdmin, an easy to use robust web based solution designed from the bottom up for academic parking needs.

Carleton University has been using the ParkAdmin solution since 2001 with the web-based payment processing capabilities coming online July 2003.

Since July 2003, Carleton University has sold over 1,500 permits and has collected over \$400,000.00 in Visa/MasterCard on-line financial transactions without the intervention of any parking staff. The reduced cash on hand in the office has reduced the liabilities and risk associated with having large amounts of cash in the parking services office.

In previous years the parking staff were swamped with over-the-counter face-to-face line-ups for the issuance of parking permits and were engaged in accepting all payments for permits and locker rentals. As a result of ParkAdmin, the DUS has been able to reduce the number of full time staff from six to four as well as reducing the requirements of three part time assistants to only one. The staff is delighted and it has significantly reduced their workloads. This allows for the redirecting of the staff's time and talent in other areas of the Parking Services division. This more efficient use of staff has resulted in a more focused, more productive and a more enthusiastic staff. ParkAdmin has also helped reduce the overtime costs from \$25,000 to less than \$5,000.

The ParkAdmin system is totally web-based and user friendly and all data-entry are pushed down to the user level. This has drastically reduced the traffic in the Parking Services office. Also a benefit of the service being web-based is it has reduced the amount of administration and filing work previous required not mentioning the reduction in paper files and the risk of lost files. The web-based solution also makes it easy to query the system for real time sales and inventory tracking. It also makes it easy to maintain account history and audit trails for each user. Including violation tracking. The web-based solution also allows for the quick and direct email communication with the permit holders.

On the Administration side, the menu screens are very intuitive and the staff finds it easy to navigate through the system as they administer the user records. It has been customized to Carleton University's parking operation and it is flexible enough to allow for changes mid-stream.

### **Department of University Safety Conclusion**

The introduction of Tomahawk Technologies' ParkAdmin solution at Carleton University has resulted in a more satisfied customer, lower costs, and the ability to refocus employees to strategic activities. The return on investment in terms of additional revenues and reduces costs has been quicker than the DUS department initially anticipated. The DUS department is very pleased with the ParkAdmin solution and continues to work closely with Tomahawk to add additional features and functionality.