Industry and Campus Webinar: What Is the Digital Campus? The Future of Student Engagement
Tuesday, December 15, 2020

This transition is more urgent than ever. The digital campus experience begins from the recruitment process, to onboarding, there are numerous interactions that take place between students, faculty and administration. This streamlines the student experience. Colleges and Universities need to incorporate to increase student body numbers. This is a key part of transformation especially during Covid. Communications in collaboration platform is critical to an effective digital campus. Having channels of real time communication, a robust system, and collaboration are key to digital enablement. Having a strong Cybersecurity framework with encryption, device 0 security is critical. To learn more, check out the full Aragon research.

>> Let's get right to it. We're talking about covering, blanketing the entire campus with this capability. So can you tell us a little bit about your findings from the research and lead the discussion? Thank you, Jim.

>> At era done, we kind of dive deep into some of the technologies that we talk about as new aspects as to what a digital campus is. I think one of the things that we're seeing. This is a real focus on engagement, whether it is employee engagement or customer engagement. And in the University setting, some people are potential customers, student, and some alumni are also constituents. If we go to the next slide, one of the big things that's come out that's a race in the enterprise space is seamless experiences. I think that's one of the things that we did. And this graphic kind of gets at that which is -- are there breakages along the way? I'm sure our colleagues from Cornell will talk about this. That's one of the things in a lot of areas of business and now in a remote work area, it is highlighted more aggressively that there's issues with breakage in communication so having more of a streamline approach to the, you know, the collegiate experience is kind of a bigger and bigger deal because it is competitive. One of the things that happens -- I will tell you a story that probably people can relate to. We have Millennials here. And yours truly decided five years ago that I was not going to pick the technologies and so sometimes the millennials would complain we have too many technologies. My comment is, who made those selections. So if we go to the flex slide, there's two other key points. The first one, the experience begins before they step foot on campus but the second one that gets at this issue of ideology, so many companies have come on board. What we found over the last five years is the
emergence of a collaboration/communications platform. So the idea of the graphic is that we see enterprises today racing to consolidate two of the three main mediums which is either voice and video or video and meetings or messaging together. But, you know, large enterprises are kind of already there. Every time you have to switch applications that's an interruption in your day. That's why our view is, it's not just about stand-alone meetings, stand-alone messaging. Some Naveed is here with Ring Central. It's a fast-paced world. There's a lot of things going on. So when things happen, you didn't notify people that something happened, and, you know, that becomes more critical. That's become a major, major trend, but now with remote teaching and everyone using meeting tools, you know, having the meetings be able to reach your Professor for maybe a 101 session, we think that's become more and more important. And remember that also -- on Saturdays, when people want to go to a game and they have to watch it remotely. But the alumni experience comes into play, the fact ill till P.M. Can I connect with my faculty? All in all, we think that the bottom line is that we think that you need collaboration infrastructure that is headed towards more integration so you can keep those connectivity appoints along that journey of the student, of the administration and of the alumni. And that's really what the piece kind of dives into more completely.

>> I love that. Colleges and technologies, they are like village, people bring their own -- I think that the unified communication platform and really, I feel like that Ring Central strives forwards, it's a platform and provides innovation. How does this enable better overall communication with students and faculty because that's a different breed? It's not a corporate structure, I want to use what I like. How do I get to use it and be resourceful here?

>> Yeah. There are more ways to integrate some of this together. A lot of the better from I firms have A.P.I.s. The reality, a lot of enterprises can't get rid of stuff that they already have, you are seeing more integration through app stores. Ring Central has an app store. There is a company in Austin, Texas that allows different platforms -- it can make the different things like Ring, Teams, Google, sometimes that's a nice bridge to bring everything together because sometimes you can't make all of the changes that you want during the school year you are running a business. There's -- the A.P.I. game is the number one game. That's why app stores are really representation of A.P.I.s. I got a connector can I turn that on and light that application up with the existing infrastructure.

>> I think this is something that we take pride in, our app store. And then, you
know, also letting you know, being vertical sense. The key differentiation in software has a surface, before you had a box and now you have software and with A.P.I.s, you can really expand and a doships and resources so it becomes part of your one investment becomes part of your entire investment buying more tools and software, that can get more complicated.

>> And the last thing I will point out, the thing that's changed this year, everyone in the Webinar knows it, a lot of the collegiate experience with your instructors is usual Fay face-to-face and it's kind of that more intimate teaching experience. Now we've had to go remote and learn how to use your video cameras. I've been kind of doing this for ten years and meetings were much more common in the corporate side. We have to keep moving, the time does not slow down. I think that the worldwide reaction to this is that we prove that technology can help us get our work done and keep our University going and going well. So I think it's a really attributable fact that we're believers. You saw that we produce video with every single research that they do. Now everyone is seeing the benefit -- video technology is now challenging voice as the lead way of getting work done. It's been a big change. It was forced upon us. Now with the vaccine coming online next year. I think we'll be able to get back to a regular campus experience which I know a lot of people are looking forward. Again, with regards -- video has been one of the big takeaways. It's -- our big thing is if you are going to do two things, you should look at meetings and messaging. Most of the market if you look AT most of the players, they do have those including Ring as an integrated platform.

>> I want to touch on the customer experience real quick before we move on. When we talk about bus more experience we talk about student experience and alumni experience. What we're talking is a fully integrated experience. You circle it in your slide here about automation and A.I. First touch resolution and being able to provide those quick answers on the channel that the students come from on, right, regardless if they come in through What'sApp or Chat, where are you seeing this and how effective is this first touch resolution with A.I. integration into the college experience?

>> Well, I think the -- you know, it's competitive. So when you look things they have to do, going fully digital is to look at the journey. One of the things is the breakage is often in the communications channel, meaning we don't support that channel. We don't have the What'sapp integration. That's where it drops off. Can the college I want to go to, interact with the channel student is picking? Many people use different channels than we do. They might want to do it on TikTok or
Snap. Many Universities are on top of that game. But I do think that the customer journey analyzes the student journey, analyzing the alumni journey and looking at the journey before you look at the technology is really a vital thing. One of the things that happens -- I've been in businesses is people say -- wait a minute. That's not my responsibility. I don't have to worry about that. Wait a minute. It's all integrated. It's all part of that experience and that's really what you want to try to minimize. Okay. I want to get Sarah's reaction. How has the Cornell team adapted the physical campus experience to a digital one?

>> Sure. I think it's interesting when we talk about higher education and digital transformation. I think the perception is that we've been slowed to digital transformation, but I don't think in reality that's true. I think we've done a good job of managing that very traditional student experience while they are on campus. But creating that digital presence as well. I think there's a good balance. I think that Covid and the Pandemic has accelerated a lot of this for us. We were able to switch to online learning fairly quickly. Cornell had a first-loud initiative, but a lot of our infrastructure was already in the cloud. So moving to remote classes was not a huge stretch for us. I think it was eye-opening for our faculty and our student to realize we can do this remotely. I don't think most of them would say they enjoyed it or that it's better in one way. I think it will be interesting to go -- after we go back to normal on-campus life, what parts of that escalated or accelerated digital transformation will remain. I think there are some parts of that and they will include the classroom experience. I think a lot of the traditional things will come back as well.

>> The traditional side will come back 100% or do you see more of a blending learning approach and still social distancing for a while?

>> I think -- I don't know the answer to that. I think there are a lot of people who have campus light back. But we had very few in-person classes and I think the whole campus community misses that face-to-face. Students miss being with each other and their faculty and the other engagements that happen. So I think a large part of the face-to-face experience will return. But I think we will see some of the aspects remain. I think we'll see classes being recorded more often so that students can attend later. Although the experience for students has not been great. They don't prefer it. They prefer the in-person experience. I think we'll see some of it stick around. Itch don't know what it will be like. I'm curious to see. I don't really know where we're going. I was going to say one of the interesting stories about our digital transformation due to the Pandemic was we were working on a project to
transition from a legacy phone system to something new. We tried to many, many times on our campus and have not been successful at it. The idea of switching to a new platform was very disruptive. So in 2019, we started an R.F.P. to look at the products out there. Because we're a Cloud-first institution, we were looking at Cloudy-based, the jump from a P.D.X. that we run our campus to a Cloud-based solution is a big leap that -- one, for the Technologists who support it but also for the folks using it. We won't through the whole year of 2019 looking at different products. We did land on Ring Central as our solutions and we signed contracts about the time we -- We are my that some of our campus would embrace the soft client application. But we knew there would be some fairly large percentage of people who would still want the hands-on. Fast forward to the Pandemic, and everyone is working from home. As we started to roll out the soft client, we ran into two really big challenges -- one was, we couldn't rom it out fast enough. We still can't. People are really eager to have this because they are working from home and having their phone forward is not the best solution. And there's a lot of gaps with the call centers and that sort of thing. We really can't keep up with the demand to move to the soft client and the Ring Central platform. The other challenge we were faced with, as we introduced Ring Central to replace our phone system. We got the phone system replacement and meetings and chat and those were features over latched with other features on campus. We had increased confusion when we're trying to communicate with our campus. My C.I.O. asked me to start a unified communications steering Committee and the idea was to have a broad range of stakeholders across the campus. So community relations, and H.R., our admissions folks and our advising folks so we could understand the space. You can go to the next slide. Of. The first meeting that we had we started talking about what are the channels and features in unified communications that we're talking about. We really wanted to define those. We had a telephone call. We had text messaging and chat messaging. These were all different kinds of communication channels.

>> This is specific to Cornell on the telecom side, we're switching from viacom to Ring Central. That's our only option. Once people start using it. They love it and they are not gonna try or move to any other platform. That just means that we add to the technologies that we have. Next slide. The next thing we did, we mapped out constituents, which used which tools? And this, again, sort of showed why we have challenges that we do. Staff uses Office365 and Teams. But students don't. We have Ring Central Zoom is used by everybody and we have Slack. But there are challenges to these. There's inconsistent adoption. We're not good at complete adoption across campus. We have a lot of (Indiscernible) it's really important to
understand for E-mail, regardless of what platform I'm on, I can E-mail anyone and same with telephone and text. Regardless of what platform I'm on, as long as you have a telephone number. I can call you or text you. But when we get into the videoconferences and the video calls and the messaging, those are, you know, vendor specific proprietary protocols which require the sender and receiver to have the tool. So this first meeting and these three slides, we're just trying to introduce the challenges that we saw. The other thing, we had a conversation about solve problems. And solving your problem might be integrated several of our tools or building blocks together rather than trying to buy something new. It may be that our advising sales force implementation needs the ability to send text messages out and how do we combine some of the building blocks we have to allow that. We also had a conversation, I think, Jim hit on this as well. Which is better than Cornell? Is it better for us to have distribution on our reliance between vendors and products. And for us, I think the answer is -- it's a balance of both. Too much of one vendor causes problems for us. But too many vendors cause problems for us. This is part of the conversation that this steering Committee is having. How do we make sure that we can get campus to buy into the solutions that we help them with, so they are more powerful solutions? We need campus adoptions. That was sort of the we thought we were going to go to one way but Covid changed that. I think putting those challenges out there. It follows up from what Jim was saying about digital transformation pretty really. We're transforming but we're transforming in too many directions right now.

>> I love the fact that you are looking at a balance between the applications. Everyone gets into the C.I.O., you want to wean out as men applications as possible. I always hooked at that as a village and people are going to bring their own stuff and want to work in their space. The fact that you are looking at integrations and looking at the co-existence and the balance, I think it's critical. I feel like this Committee is a great way to hear everybody's voices and get their buy-in. I think adoption occurs from the bottom up. It's never going to happen with I.T. saying, this is the best because this cost the least or this is the best because it has the most features. It's going to be how do I use it in an academic environment and how do I communicate with my students. I love the approach. Is there anything that you've learned with regard to the integrations so far in rolling out this adoption of software as a service across the board. I think this -- their sort of whole journey has proven this again, and again. The tool that's the most convenient, the thing that works the easiest is the one that people are going to use and that changes over time. And so, you know, two years ago, we were all using Skype and last year, we started using Slack. Things sort of move for us. It's a very -- I guess organic
transition between technologies, and I think there's value in that. It keeps us from becoming stagnant, but it is also challenging to keep up. With.

>> That's great. As you are building this Committee, are you including students as part of your student engagement process or who is the member of the Committee?

>> We have student areas and admissions and versing, but we haven't included students and I see Becky smiling, like maybe that's a good idea. [Laughter]

>> One of the things that Jim brought up is simply the fact that students are engaging with the campus even before their students as prospects. Students are making a lot of their decisions based on the technology that's available on the campus now because students are native technology users today. How have you incorporated that into your student engagement journey? So I think what you are hitting on and what Jim hit on, this is a real big problem area, I guess and the surface area of need is very large. It's not just the communication channels, but it's the back-end tools that support that experience. It's not just department or students as users. It's also the employees that you are trying to empower to provide students to those services. There's so many dimensions of this and I think that's where it is hard to get your head around. I thought I would spend some time talking about at Cornell, how we've gotten our head around this. We are a very large organization so we tend to tackle things in initiatives and we can really only entertain one big initiative at a time. I mean, that's not totally true but we tend to prioritize them. We had a student can experience initiative that launched three years ago that got us partway down the path. We started to run into the channel questions. Students are using, texting, not just E-mail and we didn't have a full suite of tools for that channel engagement. And so that's what this unified communications Committee is tackling. The choice of how do we meet them. One of the challenges with this technology space, is these apps like Slack or whatever, they are not very platformy. They are just one-off things. So how you knit that together behind the scenes can be very challenging. Some of the more traditional players, they are not digital and you end up with this huge gap. That's really what the problem space that we're trying to resolve. Next slide. The way we tackled it. We have overlapping tools and channels. What do we do about it? And we then worked with the people in various areas of communications across campus to define the surface area of need. It doesn't mean that we're going to tackle all of these things, but we really wanted to put the ocean down into smaller lakes to look at more independently. So we looked at four areas. One of them, customer service. I'm on the frontlines and I need to provide service and do it in a consistent way. And if there's too many tools, we a
confusing our customers. Second there's this pure collaboration. I need to work with my peers, people outside of the University. How do I collaborate with them? Third area is multichannel communications and mark marketing, this is the part where you are bringing students along in a journey from admission to advising to graduation coursework, all of those things and you need tools to manage those journeys with students. And then finally, emergency management. In the moment, I'm responsible for a group of students and I need to make sure that they have the -- we're communicating with them at the right time to the right people with the right resources. So those are broadly the four areas that we're tackling. So we met with the group and we've prioritized and we're -- you know we're tackling this -- we decided, people are going to use what they are going to use. Here it is more of an education. Here's all of the tools that we have. Pros and cons of each. We're here to provide support if you need it. Communications and marketing, we're in the process of figuring out should we adopt a communications and marketing platform and what would that look like and how do we distribute the users across the organization and then the emergency management. We have emergency management tools, we're going to put this on hold from projects one and three to inform that area. That's the how of it. I think that's where people get stick. It's great to talk about digital transformation but how do you go through the organization and implement Chicago change. Next slide. We know behind the scenes what our goal is. We understand the current state, which is this departmental approach. And this is a legacy of -- I think a couple of things, you know, how we got here, where we are is I.T. historically didn't get involved in these engagement stools. That's were left to the departments and the departments were then out choosing what I call Ed tech. They were buying the holistic advising tool, the holistic app for alumnis' engagement. So what we ended up with are these stand a-alone, the data, the operations. Times hundreds and hundreds of tools. And there's overlapping functionality in them and getting yourself out of that state is what the challenge is. What you want to do is move away from these holistic stacks to an app approach. You have a platform. Where it is a common platform, your permission, security, data and all of the integrations live in the platform and then you have these plug-in-play state-of-the-art tools on top of the platform. Instead of having an alumni engagement stack. You've got a texting tool. You've got a customer service call center, you've got a community tool where you can have groups of alumni get-together and talk to each other. They are all pulling from the same platform. This day-to-is two-way. It's feeding the app so you are working with common data, but also the data from the apps about the engagement is going back into the platform so other units can use that data for their business needs. So this is the target state is this enterprise approach. There are just all kinds of advantages if we can get there
and it is hard because people are married to their tools, they are very reluctant to turn over something so core to an I.T. business. But the advantages if we can get there, that's cost advantages. We are you are not supporting a bunch of different integrations and full-time people. You are sharing the costs and a lot of -- every investment you make in the platform, benefits everyone. Rather than being these one-off investments. I think this is also a more state-of-the-art approach to digital engagement. These legacy tools are gonna be limited because a tool that focuses only on texting or marketing or certain channel marketing. Those will be the best in class, analytics tools, et cetera. That's where we would like to get and the framework we use to get there, if you go to the next slide, you know, Jim talked about these journeys that students have and I think that breaks down -- there's the big journey, admissions, learning, graduation, alum. That's a big journey. But there's also all of these Microjourneys. They have to pay a bill. They need to -- they go an exchange program and suddenly they shift from being an on-campus student to an off-campus student. That's hard to have a tool set that can address all of these Microjourneys and it's why that app approach is so valuable. It allows you to have building blocks that you can construct these experiences for students, depending upon the context where they are at a given moment in time. So I picture it like -- I'm a student I need to find things and I need to do things and I -- a little bit of how we're doing our political blocks, we think about the front ends, our website, community, channel and how students go out and they figure out what the University has to offer. What are the events we have. What resources could I access if I'm looking for a job in investment banking and so all of that. You need to make those channels and all of that -- all of your resources accessible through the channels. But then there's the back end and how you support it. These are the heavy technology tools that have to back up all of these Microjourneys. So you need a case management tool. If they have a question, they can ask it. It doesn't have to be a question specific to admission and onboarding. The system is intelligent and you have texting tools and call centers and forms tools. All of these things are what empower the University and the employees providing services to students to construct the right back end support functions for those front-end channels. That's a little bit about how we build the structure. So I think it's a puzzle. I think it's hard to get your head around it. This is actually where you should start the journey, not at that Committee stage but I think the reality of higher Ed can be that you just have to get people on board to understand this vision before you can go out and be student centric, as we all know we should be. And then start with what are the needs, what channels do they live in, and how do you back into the --
I love the database and using that multiple times and creating boundaries around the data used. As we go towards privacy in the future, right, and disposing of data and using data once and things like that, understanding, you know, privacy when it comes to the future of privacy for students and for faculty and for alumni. We're dealing with multiple constituents. I think that that standardized single source of truth with the boundaries around it will help you in the journey. But I think it allow us to pick and pull integration, so you are not stuck with the single tool that's not working for you. Did you think of that as part of your adoption plan or is that part of the buy-in to be able to pick and choose what applications work best in that journey or are you thinking about structuring the data so it can be modulized?

Absolutely. That's the vision. It's more that I.T. has a set of building blocks to go to a use case and identify how do we provide this service to you to help you set up the right mix of products for your call center needs. We have a big veterinary school. They have different needs than our alumni services for fundraising. Having these best in -- a common set of data where you don't have to start from scratch every time I think is where we are headed.

The other cool thing, we used to do these -- you will now have an inventory based on the users and what data has been --

Right.

The feedback that you will be able to get. So that insight will, I think, be better than the schedule that you do on a semi-annual basis. More like a check box and actual monitoring, right?

That's very astute, yes.

That's outage. I don't want to keep these -- by the way, thank you.

Oh, okay. I have one more and then I can -- I think we can take questions. I had a few tips. These are for everybody. But Technologists, especially, that's a group of people, you know, that we're trying to come up with some common themes, as we go out into the user base and try to help solve problems. You know, start with student needs, let them interact in the stools that they use and make sure you are forcing them to channel fix. You can have different channels. If you are talking to them about a bill and they text you and you answer them on E-mail, they will be
confused. What we're doing is empowering frontline staff and I think that multi-
layer interaction with customers is important. You need to give the (Indiscernible) the experience the tools they need to provide service and that's really structurally how higher-ed works. And you have to end -- in this process think about those silo legacy needs. And build the operational and data foundation once and then use plug-and-play, best-in class capabilities. If you do that right, my hope is we're all building for the future, not the past. We're not building E-mail automation all of the time because that's not where people are going to be in five years. Really thinking that through.

>> Fantastic. Thank you so much, Becky. That's very insightful information and I love the fact when you look at Universities like yours, you think you already have it all figured out. It's a journey. It's a step-by-step process to make things better. I love how you are bringing everybody in to have a voice and to collaborate not just forcing the change upon them but involving them in the change. I think that's wonderful. Next slide, please, Sara. So you know, you get out of the presentation what you put into it, right? I love all of the chats that are coming in. There's more questions and ideas around how Cornell can even benefit from this or if you would like to share some of your thoughts and impressions on what's going on in the commune communication base and really from the student engagement and faculty engagement, it would be good if you please participate, put your thoughts in the Chat below. Would love to hear what you all are doing and what you see in the future of higher education. Give it a few minutes for some chat questions to come in. Take a look at.

>> If we have business processes that need to come into it, that's the one that I was picturing there. We are looking at broader API strategies and things like that as well. Data lakes. So there's different ways it could happen.

>> I would add more to that, which is because the -- just the -- there's so many different systems, but the single source of truth is an aspirational goal, we have a lot of sources of truth right now. Coming to a place where we have the sales force around the people soft around the many, many, many other platforms that we have that has one single source of truth, I think is one of those things and what Becky mentioned which I think is powerful, we haven't necessarily been able to do is pulling all of the information, the interaction from students back into the system. And I think some of that is being done in sales force but more broadly across other student-facing applications. I don't think we've been terribly successful there.
>> All right. Thank you very much. I'm going to take this slide. What we were talking about is a fully connected experience, that's really what Ring Central is all about. Providing you a fully integrated solution that works on both sides, on unified communications as the service and also contact center as a service. So when you think about student interactions on the platform, come until from chat, what's that? Students traveling? And sharing this platform. You want to be able to reach them on the network that they are coming in on and respond to them accordingly. There's a couple of tools that we have in place from an omni channel perspective, we have the contact Cert as a service platform. And then digital engagement as well as digital voice. So those are two Pratt forms we can talk about how they integrate into your social network plans and integrate into how they communicate with the students. We started off as a fax company and really have a strong P.B.X. solution is where we started with Cornell on and the conversation was purely about P.B.X. in the beginning, which is now growing into other aspects of Cornell's overall communication strategy. So S.M.S., fax, encrypted fax, encrypted communication, encrypted Team messaging and a video ring solution using Ring Central. We also have Zoom on Ring Central. So both applications are available depending upon your needs. Voice, video and phone. With a fully integrated context experience. So we can have this to the automation and then escalate that up to the registrar or admissions office depending on what the student needs are. And you can translate that to your advising officer, your Dean's office and your Chair's. Please check out Ring Central, and ringcentral.com. And you can go to ringcentral.com/education for more information.

>> Next slide. We're just about at time. Thank you so much. Folks, we do have a few takeaways and resources here. We will post the resources on the event page. I want to thank you for joining us. Please click on the comments link finally, please join us for the next industry and campus Webinar on January 19th at 1:00 P.M. eastern to hear about restore, evolve, transform the campus experience. Thank you to all of our presenters and thank you all for joining us today.

Event Concluded