



University in Missouri Uses Early Indicator Technology to Improve Retention

Vocantas IVR Helps Avila University Reach Out to Students

Ottawa, Ontario – October 20, 2011 – Vocantas announced today that Avila University in Missouri has deployed Scaller™, its proven successful interactive voice response (IVR) solution for student retention.

Dean of Students at Avila University, Darby Gough, said “Avila is thrilled to have completed our first round of student retention outreach using the Vocantas IVR solution. Our students were very receptive to the outreach, and the results provided us with early indicator intelligence as to which students were most at risk within our fall semester intake group.”

Avila provided Vocantas with student contact information for each of their first year students. Using their hosted IVR, Scaller, Vocantas made automated calls to each new student at various times of day to reach students at times most convenient for them to interact with the survey. The IVR made daily calls until a preset maximum number of students identified an area of need from any of the seven possible areas; time management, financial assistance, career counseling, academic advisement, note taking, personal counseling or tutorial help.

Once this preset maximum was reached, the IVR discontinued calls until the next evening or predetermined calling window. This 24 hour lapse gave Avila’s student success specialists time to follow up by phone with each student that asked for help in one or more areas without adding too much burden to their existing workload. The success specialists spoke to students directly to provide the one-on-one help the students needed to remain in the program and on track for success. “What we found when we followed up with students after the IVR calls, was that multiple issues identified in each survey call could often be resolved with just one personal phone call to the student,” Paige Illum, Coordinator of Retention and the First Year Experience, Avila University.

Calls continued until the following results were achieved at the end of just 6 days of automated calling:

- more than 55% of first term students engaged with the University in an interactive dialogue about their need for additional help, and
- 37% of the students that answered the IVR call identified one or more areas of immediate need.

At Avila, student success offices organized adjacent student departments (such as the financial aid office, career counseling center, etc.) before retention calls were made to prepare



departments to handle individual student follow up from the data collected by the IVR. This made individual follow up easier, as the student success offices were able to quickly triage each student by their identified area of need and pass on the student contact information to the adjacent departments for direct follow up within 24 hours of the student identifying that they needed help.

Gary Hannah, President and CEO of Vocantas said, “The results of Avila’s outreach are in line with the successful results we have seen in other deployments of our IVR in higher education. When given the opportunity, typically students will self identify that they need help; in fact 35-40% of students ask for help when given the chance. The good news is we typically see retention rates improve after the students receive a single outreach call from the IVR. With the diligent follow up that Avila has put in place to speak to each student individually when they have identified an area of need, we expect a significant improvement in Avila’s year over year retention results.”

About Vocantas Inc.

Vocantas develops hosted and premise-based interactive voice response solutions (IVRS) using advanced computer telephony and speech recognition technology to provide businesses and service providers with more efficient outreach capabilities. Vocantas solutions help organizations in the higher education, utilities, healthcare and customer service environments improve outreach and engagement while reducing operating costs. Visit www.vocantas.com for a free interactive demo of Vocantas solutions that intelligently respond to your customers.

About Avila University

Avila University’s history dates back all the way to the mid 1800's when the Sisters of St. Joseph arrived in the United States from France. Their mission has been to work for the dear neighbor and therefore Avila has continued their tradition in our mission and values. With over 60 undergraduate majors and concentrations and five graduate programs, Avila has grown as a university with academic excellence, transformational learning and inspirational leadership.

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