CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

The Switch to a Mobile Workforce Improves Communication and Efficiency at Georgia College

CLIENT
Georgia College & State University
— Mark Duclos, Assistant VP of Facilities and Operations

GEOGRAPHY
Milledgeville, Georgia

VITALS
7,000 students; 94 buildings; 645 acres

CHALLENGES
Their prior system was clunky and outdated, and it didn’t allow for necessary data collection or proper communication.

RESULTS
Now with a mobile workforce, they’re generating data-based reports and benefitting from technicians and students actively using the system with ease.
At 128 years old, Georgia College & State University is an institution with staying power. When you consider that the average campus building age is around 75 years, it’s easy to see why their Facilities and Operations department would need an airtight maintenance management system. Now with 7,000 students enrolled, notable alumni like author Flannery O’Conner and CEO Tony Nicely, and a spot on the National Register of Historic Places, Assistant Vice President of Facilities and Operations Mark Duclos realizes the importance of keeping the campus well-maintained both for students and visitors.

Though Mark and his team now operate successfully using Dude Solutions, they weren’t always so efficient. Before making the switch to The Dude, they were using Maximo — an old, clunky system that was complicated and cumbersome and too expensive to maintain. It was due to that fact that the team got bogged down, relying on paper work orders and trying to keep the department organized despite no inventory management control system. During those days, techs were going back and forth to the office to pick up a printed work order whenever a new one came in, and work orders came in through calls or emails that someone had to transfer into the system.

A Robust but Simple Solution

The old system proved ineffective in one even more major way, though: It wasn’t reporting data back. That meant Mark couldn’t pinpoint how much money was being spent to maintain each building, why some buildings were costing more, what materials were being used where and how much labor was needed for certain projects. It was clear that the larger issue pointed back to communication. The system wasn’t communicating with Mark, nor were technicians or students able to communicate with the system. The need for a software change was evident.

Mark began a search for a robust work order management solution that would be effective yet easy for techs to use. While shopping around, he came across other systems that seemed too complicated for his team to train on and actually use every day. Larry Christenson, Executive Director of University Housing, wanted a change too and told Mark about Dude Solutions. When they checked out Dude Solutions Work and Asset Management, the solution fit the “robust but simple” goal they were after — and it had the best mobile capabilities they had seen.

The Move to Mobile

One huge benefit Dude Solutions offered was enabling their techs to easily become a mobile workforce. They’ve been mobile from day one with The Dude, with each tech now using an iPad in the field to track work orders. Upon implementing mobile operations, Mark and the team...
saw results immediately. The techs adapted to the change quicker than he expected, and they’ve since been able to upload their own notes into their work orders, which is essential for Mark when tracking patterns and looking for red flags.

“When we get these work orders that keep coming up for the same equipment, now we can go back and look at the notes that the technician put on it and say, ‘Now we see the pattern here. He keeps having to replace this one circuit board. Maybe there’s something causing that circuit board to keep going out. Let’s try to figure out the root cause of this,’” he says.

**A Solution for Students, Too**

The new system not only improves communication between Mark and the techs, it also allows for better communication between the department and students. One of Mark’s goals in getting new software was having an effective client portal feature so students and staff could report work requests. He didn’t just want them to be able to submit issues, though. He also wanted them to be able to get real-time feedback on the status of their work order. He wanted transparency, and that’s what Dude Solutions was able to provide.

“We know students, as well as their parents, expect immediate response to requests. Days, or even hours, to respond are not acceptable. Satisfaction with prompt service leads not only to retention of students in the residence halls, but retention at Georgia College,” says Larry Christenson.

Mark knew the percentage of students willing to call in or come by the office to put in a work order would be low, resulting in much-needed work not getting fulfilled, so an easy client portal was key. Now, students can click right into the portal and submit their request, as well as see where the technician is in the process of completing it. This capability has provided an increased visibility that benefits all and is an essential aspect of reporting.

**Seeing the ROI Day to Day**

Today, Mark is able to use all of this data the system collects to justify important decisions regarding costs and manpower. He and his team can quickly enter work order notes or make changes without having to reprint or have the tech come back to the office. With both techs and students able to report notes on work orders, more gets documented and more accurate reports are able to be generated.

Mark considers some of the system’s highlights to be:

- The average time for work order completion has dropped from days or weeks to 24 hours
- Approximately 18,775 work orders were able to be completed in one year
> He now can generate a report that breaks down specific cost per building
> Reports also show him what savings are achieved due to making changes like switching to energy-efficient LED bulbs
> He was able to see immediate results in collecting time spent on each job

He and his team even earned an Outstanding Process Improvement Award for their increased effectiveness and efficiency in 2015, validating the significant change Dude Solutions Work and Asset Management has had on the entire department.

“Dude Solutions Work and Asset Management has revolutionized how we accommodate the customer here at Georgia College. It allows the response time to fall well within the desired four to 24 hours completion of 90 percent of all work orders. The communication gap has been bridged by the implementation of the maintenance system, allowing customer-to-technician communication to happen almost instantly,” says Zone Supervisor Chadwick Wilson.

**Recommending Dude Solutions**

With the benefits he’s seen thus far, Mark says he would tell those considering The Dude to give it a strong look. “I’d tell them about the successes I’ve had,” he says. “It has not only been simple – it’s as robust as I could have wished for... I didn’t have to sacrifice.” He also says his department’s interaction with Dude Solutions’ Client Support team has enhanced their experience. “We don’t shy away from calling. The support at Dude Solutions has been absolutely amazing,” he adds.

With reporting increased and operations streamlined across the department, the grounds and buildings of GCSU’s campus are in good hands, and with focus now turning more toward preventive maintenance, here’s hoping GCSU is still thriving in another 128 years.