Target your best prospects and retain "customers"

How Baruch College successfully gains and retains students using predictive analytics

Overview

Organizational Challenge

In a climate of declining enrollments for many colleges, Baruch was looking for a way to attract and retain students most likely to thrive and succeed at its institution.

Solution

Using IBM SPSS predictive analytics, the school created well-defined market clusters and effectively implemented strategies to recruit students who were most likely to register. Specifically, using IBM SPSS Modeler, the school created models to better identify at-risk students, effectively award merit scholarships, determine course placements and predict retention.

Many colleges are facing declining enrollments, as students struggle to find financial aid. And once in college, many students drop out.

Manhattan's Baruch College was looking for a way to better attract … not just any students … but the students mostly likely to thrive and succeed. While this is a daunting task for any school, Baruch has been repeatedly named the most ethnically diverse student body in the U.S. – with more than 15,000 students who speak 110 languages and come from 160 countries. Attracting and retaining students having such diverse backgrounds and needs makes the process even more challenging.

How did the college, ranked among the top 15 percent of U.S. colleges, maximize resources and make transparent, data-driven decisions to support institutional and student success?

Getting the data talking across all channels

The first issue facing Jimmy Jung, Baruch's assistant vice president for enrollment management, was that the school's institutional data on students (admissions, enrollment, degrees, financial support, revenue, etc.) was housed in separate data "silos" (admissions office, registrar, account receivable, etc.), making it difficult to integrate data across units. Jung was able to use IBM® SPSS® software to generate standardized reports across campus, helping the school make more consistent, well informed decisions. Now administrators could predict future outcomes based on data rather than on tradition and intuition. "For the first time, we had a common dataset, data that officers could draw from and use and that there would be no confusion about," said Jung.

Organizational benefits

- Increased applications to its business school by 7.1 percent, when other schools were seeing significant decreases

- Achieved a 21 percent annual increase in transfer students

- Decreased dropouts significantly by using predictive analytics to improve the placement of freshmen in introductory classes

Solutions for higher education

IBM SPSS predictive analytics solutions touch every point of the student lifecycle so institutions can generate more value for their students and receive a higher return on their information. From recruitment and retention to student success and institutional advancement, IBM SPSS predictive analytics provide the ability to direct and automate effective decisions. The result is a more efficient, successful and accountable academic environment.

"These days, no meeting to make policy changes takes place without analysis based on predictive analytics."

— Jimmy Jung, Assistant Vice President Enrollment Management

Using market clusters and models to gain – and retain students

Jung then devised a plan to increase market visibility and target specific segments of prospective students. Using predictive analytics, his department created well-defined market clusters and effectively implemented strategies to recruit students who were most likely to make the leap from "interested" to "committed."

Using IBM® SPSS® Modeler – the premier data mining workbench – the college also created models to better identify at-risk students, determine course placements and predict retention. They also increased matriculation rates with models that show the types of candidates that will be helped most with scholarship funds.

Quantifiable results demonstrate the power of predictive analytics

The school realized a 7.1 percent increase in applications to its business school when other schools were seeing significant decreases. There was also a significant decrease in dropouts by using predictive analytics to better place freshmen in the right introductory classes. "By identifying market clusters, we able to realize a 21 percent increase in transfer students," said Jung.

More broadly, predictive analytics has transformed the way school administrators approach decision making. "These days, no meeting to make policy changes takes place without analysis based on predictive analytics," said Jung.

Whether your audience is students or customers, the same rule applies – you can attract and retain the most profitable customers using predictive analytics.

About SPSS, an IBM Company

SPSS, an IBM Company, is a leading global provider of predictive analytics software and solutions. The company's complete portfolio of products - data collection, statistics, modeling and deployment - captures people's attitudes and opinions, predicts outcomes of future customer interactions, and then acts on these insights by embedding analytics into business processes. IBM SPSS solutions address interconnected business objectives across an entire organization by focusing on the convergence of analytics, IT architecture and business process. Commercial, government and academic customers worldwide rely on IBM SPSS technology as a competitive advantage in attracting, retaining and growing customers, while reducing fraud and mitigating risk. SPSS was acquired by IBM in October 2009. For further information, or to reach a representative, visit www.spss.com.

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