Agiloft

Texas A&M International University

University Modernizes IT Software to Better Serve Users

Business Overview

Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) is an international university located at the Gateway to Mexico in Laredo, Texas and serves as the cultural and intellectual hub of a vibrant multilingual and multicultural community. Through instruction, faculty and student research, and public service, TAMIU improves the quality of lives for citizens of the border region, the State of Texas, and national and international communities.

One of 11 campuses in the Texas A&M University System, TAMIU provides over 7,500 students with a learning environment built on a solid academic foundation in the arts and sciences. To fulfill its mission, it offers a range of baccalaureate and masters programs as well as a Doctor of Philosophy degree in International Business. The programs offer a progressive agenda for global study and understanding across all disciplines.

Challenges

Albert Chavez, Jr. goes to work each morning with 1,300 TAMIU employees and 7,500 students depending on him and his staff to keep IT services running smoothly throughout the university. This includes making sure the university's 2,500 desktop and laptop computers, and 300 servers are functioning properly at all times. It's a challenge Albert has faced as the Director of Computing & Information Services the past 5 of his 20 years with TAMIU.

> "Agiloft had all the features our campus currently needs, and it was also budget-friendly."
>
> — Albert Chavez, Jr., TAMIU Director of Computing & Information Services

Albert works with a staff of 50 full-time IT professionals and 20 part-time employees – mostly students – across 3 IT departments: Instructional Technology and Classroom Support, Student Information Services, and Computing and Information Services. In addition to

Industry
- Education

Challenges
- Provide IT services for 1,300 employees and 7,500 students
- Maintain 2,500 computers and 300 servers
- Support student email, portal, and e-learning systems
- Add IT services as TAMIU's needs evolve

Agiloft Solution Benefits
- Budget-friendly solution
- Reduced ticket response times
- Automatic round-robin assignment of service tasks
- Automated service requests for recurring service needs
- Integration with Bomgar and Active Directory
- Web-based incident reporting and service-requests
- Full ITIL framework for ITSM

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managing the computing and audiovisual environment for TAMIU employees, the team provides IT services to students for student email (Office 365), the student portal for accessing information on classes, registration, and grades, and the distance education program using Blackboard Learn. The team also manages 30 computer kiosks around the campus for students and employees to access the Internet, email, and the student portal. On average, TAMIU's IT department handles nearly 1,400 service requests per month.

The help desk system that TAMIU was previously using, BMC's Track-It!, was "getting the job done," according to Albert, but had limitations. It was client-based rather than web-based, requiring software to be installed on every computer used to access the system. In addition, it did not include a service catalog, which made it difficult to keep track of the services his team provided. The main drawback of Track-It! was that TAMIU's version was not ITIL-compliant. Albert, who is ITIL Foundation-certified, understands the benefits of having his IT department follow ITIL best practices. Finally, the Texas A&M University System was encouraging standardization across all its universities, and Track-It! was not one of the recommended systems.

The Search

TAMIU limited its search to the two companies the Texas A&M University System chose to standardize on for IT service management across all its campuses: ServiceNow and Agiloft. Albert and members of his team attended presentations the two companies gave to IT representatives from the various campuses. Based on those presentations and a subsequent personalized demo from Agiloft, TAMIU chose Agiloft ITIL Service Desk Suite.

It was an easy decision. "Agiloft had all the features our campus currently needs, and it was also budget-friendly," Albert stated. It also helped

knowing that other campuses were using it successfully as well.

> "Bringing the system online was as easy as flipping a switch."
>
> — Albert Chavez, Jr.

There was more. Albert liked that Agiloft came ready to use out-of-the-box with an ITIL-compliant knowledge base and that they could easily make changes to the system to match their needs and workflow going forward. The fact that the system was web-based and accessible from mobile devices made it particularly useful for service staff in the field.

Another selling point was the Agiloft service catalog. According to Albert, "We didn't have a service catalog for Track-It!. Since the Agiloft solution is based on one, we sat down and reviewed all our service offerings and for the first time, put together an actual service catalog. It lets us and our users keep track of the services we provide." Currently, the TAMIU service catalog lists 167 service items across 14 categories.

A final factor in their decision was Agiloft's personalized approach. "When we called in, we could speak with somebody directly. They were easy to talk to and we were comfortable working with them." He added, "All our interactions with Agiloft during the sales process were with the VP of Sales and she had the answers to everything. We feel like we got a very personalized service throughout the sales and implementation process."

The Project

Implementing Agiloft ITIL Service Desk Suite for TAMIU was straightforward, according to Albert. The most difficult part was creating their service catalog, which they developed based on examples from other universities and from EDUCAUSE, a higher education IT association. "They took their time and were very deliberate," said Dick Miller, Agiloft Project Manager and Implementation Specialist, adding that the service catalog is a big part of ITIL and forms the

basis of Agiloft ITIL Service Desk Suite's service management functions.

TAMIU hosts Agiloft ITIL Service Desk Suite on its own servers, but for the implementation, Dick set up a development sandbox on an Agiloft-owned server. He worked closely with the four members of Albert's implementation team, who all had access to the sandbox, and guided them through the implementation. It was a collaborative effort, according to Albert.

In addition to configuring the parts of the suite that TAMIU planned to use initially (Incidents, Service Requests, and Problem Management), the team requested a few small customizations that were easy for Dick to add. These included a recurring service request option, round-robin task assignments from incident and service requests, and limiting surveys sent automatically to repeat users to one per month.

When the system was configured and tested to everyone's satisfaction, they transferred it to TAMIU's servers, made a few minor tweaks and began using it. "It was as easy as flipping a switch," said Albert.

Solution Benefits

Albert is very pleased with Agiloft. He likes that Agiloft ITIL Service Desk Suite provides the full ITIL framework, which gives him confidence his department is following IT service management best practices.

TAMIU has been using the system for a year and a half now and hasn't experienced any problems, and Albert's staff finds the system easy to use. Features like the automatic task assignment from incidents and service requests have helped them reduce their overall response time. The

dashboard and reporting capabilities make it easy for Albert to track his team's productivity while alerting him to potential bottlenecks that could impact their services. "We've started building our own custom reports," claimed Albert, giving TAMIU an even sharper picture of their IT operations.

In addition to ITIL Service Desk Suite's standard features, TAMIU is using Agiloft's Bomgar integration for remote access and control of user's computers to troubleshoot and resolve incidents. They are also using Agiloft's Active Directory integration for maintaining and authenticating user accounts.

Albert plans to take advantage of additional ITIL Service Desk Suite features that they are not currently using. In a few months, TAMIU will offer web-based incident reporting and service requests to their users. He also plans to begin using the Suite's Change Request functionality. Albert is confident that as TAMIU's IT service needs grow, Agiloft ITIL Service Desk Suite can meet them.

Let Us Show You

What Agiloft has done for TAMIU, it can do for you. Let us show you how. In a few hours, we can set up a custom proof of concept featuring your toughest business process. Give us a call to schedule a time.

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