Group Booking App Enables Faster Throughput, Better Service, and 20% Growth – at StudentUniverse
StudentUniverse Doubles Productivity and Prepares for More Growth with Group Wizard

Group bookings can take too much time without CRM and travel technology platform automation.

StudentUniverse integrated Group Wizard with Sabre Red Workspace and Salesforce.com to streamline pricing, eliminate extra key strokes, and save hours of data entry per group booking.

StudentUniverse has doubled productivity and added more service capacity, as its group booking business continues to grow 20 percent year-over-year.

Ambition

Each year hundreds of thousands of students use StudentUniverse to book travel around the world. The Group Wizard Red App for Sabre Red Workspace helps simplify group booking at StudentUniverse, making it easier to manage groups, select seats and issue tickets. Productivity has doubled and StudentUniverse is better prepared to handle its 20 percent growth, with greater accuracy, faster service and a better overall customer experience.

Brad Drake has found his dream job. In fact, he found it 20 years ago as a foreign exchange student living in Strasbourg, France, while a senior in college.

Drake was amazed at how his foreign travel changed his education and his outlook on the world. He thought that helping other students like him experience the same feeling might just be the career for him. He was right. And it’s a career that he’s cherished ever since.

As Vice President of Travel Services at StudentUniverse, Drake designs group travel programs that make travel affordable and accessible for students everywhere. “Traveling internationally is a life-changing experience,” says Drake. “At StudentUniverse, we are on a mission to make global travel possible for all students.”

StudentUniverse offers students and groups special rates on flights, hotels, and tours, through special discount contracts with travel partners and more than 90 airlines worldwide. It was acquired by Flight Centre Travel Group in 2015.

When Drake took over management of the group travel business at StudentUniverse, he knew that more software automation was needed to handle growth plans.

“"We were doing a lot of manual entries and keying travelers in individually, that’s when Sabre approached us about its new Group Wizard app. We installed it, tried it, and haven’t looked back since. It’s made a huge difference in our group booking productivity and accuracy.”

BRAD DRAKE
Vice President, Travel Services
StudentUniverse
StudentUniverse differentiates itself by providing dedicated account managers that work with a group from start to finish, and know the ins and outs of what the group needs.

“We were impressed with how Group Wizard made things simpler and faster, and we were even more impressed with Sabre’s willingness to listen to our needs and make it better,” says Drake.

StudentUniverse uses Salesforce.com for CRM and contact management. An interface for those systems was designed and enhanced traveler profile functions were created to better fit the group environment.

Drake says the Sabre development team was responsive and helpful at every turn.

“Implementing new technology can be intimidating, but Sabre made it comfortable and easy,” says Drake. “They asked a lot of questions, were very open to our ideas, and then came back with the improvements we discussed. It was nice to see our feedback turned into real upgrades.”

“Sabre’s flexibility and commitment are unique,” says Drake. “We suggested screen layout changes, manifest changes, and adding known traveler numbers with names,” says Drake. “They made all those happen. They have done everything they said they were going to do in terms of enhancements. That’s hard to find in our industry.”

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BRAD DRAKE
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BRAD DRAKE

Outcomes: Fewer Key Strokes, Faster Bookings, Ready for New Growth

Group travel bookings at StudentUniverse have increased by 20 percent year-over-year each year during Drake’s tenure. And fast growth is expected to continue.

“The student and youth market is one of travel’s fastest-growing sectors and we’re working hard to stand out in the fragmented group travel market,” says Drake. “We compete on speed, service, and of course, price. Sabre is helping us win in all those areas.”

StudentUniverse is also making gains in two other key performance indicators: quality and productivity.

“Using Group Wizard, we have fewer key strokes, and greater accuracy, so we get more done with the same number of team members,” says Drake. “We’ve doubled our productivity, which keeps costs low and maximizes volume.”

The Sabre travel technology platform is scalable and built for high volume.

“Group Wizard from Sabre has streamlined our entire group booking process,” says Drake. “We’ve automated the easy stuff so we can focus more on service, problem-solving – and selling.”