



The College Store Expands Their Offerings With the MBS System

About Pennsylvania College of Technology

- FTE: 5,127
- Desired to find a new system that offered advanced functionality and a user-friendly eCommerce solution
- Boosted online sales 6% during off-season

MBS Systems

- Gives stores the ability to develop a robust, transparent and easy-to-use eCommerce site with inSite
- Reward customer activity in your store, online and at buyback with an integrated Loyalty module
- A dedicated client representative is on hand and readily available to help stores utilize their system effectively

Technology is crucial to today's college bookstore. From tracking inventory to creating a successful eCommerce site, a store's POS system is one of the most essential aspects in the operation. But, as the industry continually evolves, it can be challenging for retailers to ensure their technology stays current.

That's one of the many reasons why **Matt Branca, director of The College Store at Pennsylvania College of Technology**, knew it was time to search for a new system. He needed a solution that would minimize the labor involved with maintaining an in-store server while offering him the advanced functionality necessary to run a successful store.

"We were looking for a system that offered a hosted solution to eliminate both the labor and costs involved in maintenance," he explained. "Plus, we were hoping to find an eCommerce solution that was more user-friendly than our last web application."

After exploring his options, Branca knew the MBS system was the right fit for his store.

"It had everything we were looking for," he said. "inSite is much more user-friendly, which makes it easier to update our online merchandise, the POS system is more advanced, and even the cash register functions with a more intuitive flow."

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After making their decision, the store was eager to begin working with the new system. Because they plan for the fall semester in the early spring, they had a tight turnaround deadline. They began transitioning to MBS hosted solution in February, and continued with both on-site and online training in March.

"One of the benefits of using cloud computing was that we could get started right away, and it saved a lot of time," he described. "We installed in early April and within three weeks we were using everything. We needed to be rush-ready by the end of June and we met that goal; it was great!"

As expected with any new system, Branca and his team needed time to learn the new processes.

"We'd used the same system for a long time, so there was an adjustment period," he explained. "MBS was very easy to work with and the support team was excellent in meeting our needs. Many of the processes on the MBS system are better but different, so we've all had to change our thought process to get a handle on them. I'm still learning, but I couldn't ask for better support."



know how each of us thinks and what we've been working on," he said.

Branca has continued to discover the benefits of the system as he gains more experience with it.

"The integration between different applications is wonderful," he said. "For example, the MBS system integrates better with both our general merchandise and text applications than our previous system did. Price adjustment through Verba's Complete feature is now easier than it's ever been using the MBS-Verba integration. Plus, the system fully integrates with our campus systems such as our registrar and student accounts, which was very important to us."

Although the system offers more advanced functionality, the store's staff has found it to be user-friendly.

"The SFA system is comprehensive, but also easier for a user to manage," he added. "It's important for us to have something as simple as possible so that we can easily train temporary cashiers to be able to work with it during rush periods."

The College Store isn't the only one who will benefit from the new technology, either. Many new programs have been implemented to help enhance customer service.

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– Matt Branca

Because the store is assigned one support representative, they have been able to quickly and efficiently resolve any issues that they've run into while converting.

"The dedicated account representative is a huge benefit that other competitors just don't offer. Knowing we have one person to talk to each time is so valuable because they



"We recently created a Wildcat Rewards program through the MBS Loyalty module which is going to be a great way for us to thank our customers," he explained. "The store can also accept debit cards and even provide cash back for students, adding to the convenience of shopping on campus."

Overall, Branca believes that the system is helping the store to meet their goal of having all that students need at the best price. In fact, they've also been able to offer additional cost-saving options when it comes to textbooks.

"I've shied away from rental for the last few years, but I was very impressed with the MBS Rental application and, with it, we're now planning to offer a much more significant program," Branca described. "It's very easy to set up and work with the application and the reports are fabulous. I especially like that it's integrated with buyback to make returns easier for students."

"They continue to develop new technology that makes our store even better and they're always open to suggestions. We had several customization needs, for example, that they have addressed right away."

— Matt Branca

Similarly, The College Store has expanded their online presence through their inSite eCommerce page. With the platform, the store can more easily update their merchandise, ensuring there is continually fresh content for students to shop.

"inSite support did all of the customization for us which was a huge benefit. They perfectly mirrored the aspects of our old site that we wanted to keep and helped us enhance the navigation," he explained. "Our online sales have already increased 6% over last year in the month of July and our heavy ordering season hasn't even started yet."



Beyond the technology, Branca believes that his partnership with MBS will ultimately help his store stay competitive.

"It's been a very positive experience for us so far. I'm very pleased with MBS and the support we've received," he continued. "They continue to develop new technology that makes our store even better and they're always open to suggestions. We had several customization needs, for example that they have addressed right away."

To others who are considering making a change in their system, Branca offers this advice:

"Keep in mind the end result. If you're looking at a new system than it means that you're not happy with your current one in some way, so you have to be willing to embrace the differences in how they operate," he said. "Talk to other stores and visit them, if you can, to watch it in use. The improvements on our end result greatly outweigh the few challenges that we faced along the way in learning a new system."