



Community College of Philadelphia



Community
College of
Philadelphia

Customer Service Scan Results

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Shopping The College

Purpose

A key factor in whether a student actually enrolls at a college is the amount of information the student receives when inquiring about the college. Community College of Philadelphia was contacted (or shopped) by CLARUS Corporation personnel by telephone and by Web requests. CLARUS Corporation personnel called the College during day, evening and weekend hours and asked for specific information to assess the College's response to prospective students. The key issues examined included:

- How are the calls handled in terms of personnel friendliness and courtesy, wait times, availability of information and overall assistance? How many times is the caller transferred, put on hold, etc.?
- How quick is the turnaround on the information requested and what level of response is given? Do the materials received match the College's policy stating which materials are to be sent to prospective students?
- How easy is it for the caller to get information in the evenings and on weekends?

The purpose of these requests was to examine a prospective student's "first impression" of the College and to examine how a prospective student is first handled when contacting the College for information. In addition, the College was shopped via the College's Web site. Requests were made on the Web site for additional information about the College and the responses were examined for speed and efficiency of reply and information provided.

Process

After visiting the "Important Phone Numbers" page of the College's Web site, a calling schedule was developed and then approved by the College. This schedule outlined the number to be called, the time of the day to call and the specific request for information. It is important to note that none of the calls were made in an attempt to "catch someone doing something wrong." The calls were made during reasonable business hours, at times when a potential student would expect an answer from the College. Table 1 summarizes the call schedule for the College.

Table 1. Call Schedule For Community College Of Philadelphia

| Number Contacted | Weekday, 10am College Time | Weekday, 2pm College Time | Weekday, 7pm College Time | Saturday, 10am College Time |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Information Center – Call Set 1 215.751.8010 | General information packet – moving to area | Program information about majoring in computers | Information for son or daughter about college | Information for adult and financial aid available |
| Information Center – Call Set 2 215.751.8010 | Information for adult and financial aid available | Information for son or daughter about college | Program information about majoring in computers | General information packet – moving to area |

| Number Contacted | Weekday, 10am College Time | Weekday, 2pm College Time | Weekday, 7pm College Time | Saturday, 10am College Time |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Admissions – Call Set 1 215.751.8230 | Program information about majoring in computers | Information for adult and financial aid available | General information packet – moving to area | Information for son or daughter about college |
| Admissions – Call Set 2 215.751.8230 | Information for son or daughter about college | General information packet – moving to area | Information for adult and financial aid available | Program information about majoring in computers |
| Financial Aid 215.751.8271 | Information for son or daughter about financial aid for college | Information for adult and financial aid available | Information for son or daughter about financial aid for college | Information for adult and financial aid available |
| Northeast Regional Center 215.972.6372 | Information for son or daughter about college | Information for adult and financial aid available | General information packet – moving to area | Program information about majoring in computers |
| Northwest Regional Center 215.751.8773 | Information for adult and financial aid available | Information for son or daughter about college | Program information about majoring in computers | General information packet – moving to area |
| West Regional Center 267.299.5850 | General information packet – moving to area | Program information about majoring in computers | Information for son or daughter about college | Information for adult and financial aid available |
| Web Site www.ccp.edu | General information packet – moving to area | Program information about majoring in computers | Information for son or daughter about college | Information for adult and financial aid available |

Personnel from CLARUS Corporation made the calls from the home office in Nebraska. Each of the calls was documented with the date, day and time of call, the number called, the number of rings and the conversation. Each contact was made with a different name and address to document responses. In addition, a request for information was made when the opportunity existed for each call or Web request. The calls and Web requests were made from October 4 to November 19, 2005. The response from the College was also documented. The detailed documentation for each call, the response and the outcome are presented in Appendix A. A summary of the outcomes for the requests for information is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Outcomes For Call Schedule For Community College Of Philadelphia

| Number Contacted | Weekday, 10am College Time | Weekday, 2pm College Time | Weekday, 7pm College Time | Saturday, 10am College Time |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| Information Center – Call Set 1 215.751.8010 | Rang twice, recording answered, no option to press, message kept repeating No opportunity to leave message at this number | Rang once, recording answered, held on the line, told it was transferring to an attendant, message repeated five times On the sixth time, pressed 7, phone rang 31 times, person answered, took information Packet postmarked next day | Rang once, recording answered, message told to dial 215.751.8879 Called other number, pressed 1 for Admissions Application, could not proceed without social security number; after entering number pressed 1, left message with name and address spelled out, pressed 1 for more information, 2 for course listing, 1 for Fall 2005, 1 for main campus course listing, left message of request, recording said would receive info in next five working days No response received to date | Rang once, recording answered, message told to dial 215.751.8879 Called other number, pressed 1 for Admissions Application, could not proceed without social security number; after entering number pressed 1, left message with name and address spelled out, pressed 1 for more information, 2 for course listing, 1 for Fall 2005, 1 for main campus course listing, left message of request, recording said would receive info in next five working days No response received to date |

| Number Contacted | Weekday, 10am College Time | Weekday, 2pm College Time | Weekday, 7pm College Time | Saturday, 10am College Time |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Information Center – Call Set 2 215.751.8010 | Rang once, recording answered, none of the options applied, stayed on the line, message kept repeating No opportunity to leave message | Rang once, recording answered, none of the options applied, stayed on the line, message repeated once and then disconnected No opportunity to leave message | Rang once, recording answered, message told to call back during regular office hours, message repeated once and then silence No opportunity to leave message | Rang once, recording answered, held on the line, message repeated, pressed 7, rang 10 times, another recording answered and told call will be handled in order it was received, waited 10 minutes with no music or recordings, finally person answered, took information No response received to date |
| Admissions – Call Set 1 215.751.8230 | Rang 4 times, recording answered and said it was forwarded to a voice mail system, but the person does not subscribe to this service No opportunity to leave message | Rang 4 times, recording answered and said it was forwarded to a voice mail system, but the person does not subscribe to this service No opportunity to leave message | Rang 4 times, recording answered and said it was forwarded to a voice mail system, but the person does not subscribe to this service No opportunity to leave message | Rang 4 times, recording answered and said it was forwarded to a voice mail system, but the person does not subscribe to this service No opportunity to leave message |
| Admissions – Call Set 2 215.751.8230 | Rang 4 times, recording answered and said it was forwarded to a voice mail system, but the person does not subscribe to this service No opportunity to leave message | Rang 4 times, recording answered and said it was forwarded to a voice mail system, but the person does not subscribe to this service No opportunity to leave message | Rang 5 times, recording answered and said it was forwarded to a voice mail system, but the person does not subscribe to this service No opportunity to leave message | Rang 4 times, recording answered and said it was forwarded to a voice mail system, but the person does not subscribe to this service No opportunity to leave message |
| Financial Aid 215.751.8271 | Rang once, recording answered, told to go to Web site for financial aid status No opportunity to leave message | Rang once, recording answered, stayed on the line, recording repeated and then disconnected No opportunity to leave message | Rang once, person answered, told the office was closed and person hung up No opportunity to leave message | Rang once, fast busy signal Called back, recording answered, stayed on the line, recording repeated and then disconnected No opportunity to leave message |

| Number Contacted | Weekday, 10am College Time | Weekday, 2pm College Time | Weekday, 7pm College Time | Saturday, 10am College Time |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Northeast Regional Center 215.972.6372 | Rang 4 times, recording answered, pressed 1, another recording answered, pressed 7, rang once, person answered, took information and promised no later than Monday of following week No response received to date | Rang 4 times, recording answered, stayed on the line, person answered, requested information, person said one moment please and transferred into a person's voice mail, left message No response received to date | Rang 4 times, recording answered, pressed 1, another recording answered, told to dial 215.751.8879 to request a publication from the voice response system No opportunity to leave message at this number | Rang 4 times, recording answered, stayed on the line, recording transferred, rang 20 times, no answer, hung up Called back, rang three times, recording answered, pressed 1, another recording answered, told to call 215.751.8879 for automated system No opportunity to leave message at this number |

| Number Contacted | Weekday, 10am College Time | Weekday, 2pm College Time | Weekday, 7pm College Time | Saturday, 10am College Time |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Northwest Regional Center 215.751.8773 | Rang once, recording answered, held on the line, recording transferred, rang 12 times, person answered, told to press 7 after being transferred to the information line; transferred and then pressed 7, rang 8 times, person answered, took information No response received to date | Rang once, recording answered, immediately transferred at end of message, rang 3 times, person answered and transferred to a recording without asking; pressed 3, rang 4 times, another recording answered, pressed 1 for admissions application, could not proceed without social security number; after entering number pressed 1, left message with name and address spelled out, pressed 1 for more information, 3 for course listing, 1 for Fall 2005, 1 for main campus course listing, left message of request, recording said would receive info in next five working days; pressed 1 for more information, 4 for Financial Aid, remained on the line for a minute, recording repeated that should receive in the next five working days No response received to date | Rang once, recording answered, immediately transferred at end of message, another recording answered; transferred at end of message, person answered, told to call back in the morning Called back, recording answered, pressed 1, rang 4 times, person answered, took information, was going to send an application Spring course listing postmarked five days later, no application received | Recording answered immediately, transferred at end of message, another recording answered, only able to dial an extension, a last name or Security No opportunity to leave message |

| Number Contacted | Weekday, 10am College Time | Weekday, 2pm College Time | Weekday, 7pm College Time | Saturday, 10am College Time |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| West Regional Center 267.299.5850 | Rang once, person answered, requested information, person immediately transferred to the info line without giving a chance to talk No opportunity to leave message at this number | Rang twice, person answered, transferred to the Information Center, recording answered, pressed 3, another recording answered, stayed on the line, recording repeated; pressed 1 for application or publication, asked for social security number, did not enter, recording repeated two more times, said there was an error and disconnected No opportunity to leave message at this number | Rang 3 times, person answered, person referred to Information Center at 215.751.8010 No opportunity to leave message at this number | Rang once, person answered, person referred to 215.751.8010 No opportunity to leave message at this number |
| Web Site www.ccp.edu | Typed in www.ccp.edu , clicked on Contact Us, filled out form and submitted Received a confirmation e-mail almost immediately saying that any questions would be answered as soon as possible; no other correspondence was sent | Searched for Community College of Philadelphia, first line of results was ccp.edu; went to home page, selected Programs and Courses, Computer Information Systems, AAS, brought up a pdf, went back to Academic Departments, clicked on Computer Information Systems Department, e-mailed request to cis@ccp.edu E-mail response received 6 days later, with invitation to an open house and a flyer about it attached | Typed in www.ccp.edu , clicked on Admissions Process, High School Graduation or Graduating High School Senior, sent e-mail to: admissions@ccp.edu No response received to date | Typed in www.ccp.edu , clicked on Prospective Students tab, Important Forms, none applied, clicked back; clicked on Contact Us, filled in form, selected e-mail as the best way to contact, clicked Next, previewed request and hit Submit No response received to date |

Issues To Address

Thirty-two phone calls were made to the main numbers of the Community College of Philadelphia over a two month time frame during the registration period for the Spring 2006 semester (October to December 2005). Of those 32 phone calls, only nine calls resulted in an opportunity to leave a message – the majority via an automated request system and a couple with an actual person. Of those nine requests for information, only two of the calls resulted in information being sent to the person.

In the last five years, the Community College of Philadelphia has attempted to use the automated phone system to become more responsive to the students requesting information. This has resulted in allowing a student the ability to make contact and leave an information request, but the request is not being answered. Currently, when a student calls the main number or any of the Regional Centers' numbers and requests information, they are either told to call 215.751.8879 or are forwarded to the automated request line. It appears that if a person answers the phone, then the caller can be forwarded to the information line (215.751.8879) and if it is after-hours or the automated system picks up the call, then the caller cannot self transfer to the information line (215.751.8879) but must call back and dial the number directly. The information line's automated system is a rather lengthy series of questions which takes the caller through the information requested and asks the caller to record all the information about their name, address, area of interest, etc. The message also informs the person requesting information that they can expect to receive their information after five working days. Two months later, nothing had been sent to the people requesting information. After being promised information in a timely manner and after spending the time to leave the information on the automated system, never receiving the information sets the stage for a person to be dissatisfied from the start of their experience.

In addition, if a person is using the Web site to make an information request, the College has an automated response system informing the person making the request that the request was received and they should expect a response. Again, nothing was ever received from the request for information from the main contacts and nothing was received from Admissions. Only the CIS department responded to the request for information about CIS programming, six days after the message and only a couple of days prior to their open house.

Several issues need to be addressed by the Community College of Philadelphia for assuring that information requests are responded to in a timely manner. Thus, it is recommended:

- From the main 8010 phone number, branch the students immediately into "Current Student Information," "Prospective Student Information" or "To Access A Department." For example, the text may read: "Welcome to the Community College of Philadelphia. If you currently enrolled at the College, please press 1. If you are interested in enrolling at the College, please press 2. If you know the name of the department or person you are trying to contact, please press 3."
 - 1 Branch - The "Current Student Information" would then branch into functions like Registration, Admissions, Financial Aid, etc. Under each, the person could then either pick a specific request area or press 0 to contact a student representative. Under each request area, an automated message could provide additional information about most frequently asked questions.
 - 2 Branch - The "Prospective Student Information" would then use the current branching revamped to request information or opt to press 0 to talk to a person about enrollment. Please note that the current info line needs to be revamped to first ask the student's name and contact information and then a list of materials that they can respond yes or no to for the information requested. The current tree is cumbersome for prospective students to follow. The automated request should be a database which would look exactly like the online request for information form to be developed. The person should also be told they can use the online request for information form as well at the start of the message.
 - 3 Branch - The "Access a Department Option" would allow a person to dial a department name or opt to a directory of employees to contact a specific person. The option might state "If you know your party's extension, please dial it now. For a list of departments at the College, please press 1, or for a list of personnel at the college, please press 2." For option 1, the option would continue

“Using the number pad on your phone, please press the first five letters of the department you are attempting to call.” It would then list the departments that fit the letters. Each department would need to be contacted to assure that the number to which the caller is being transferred to is in fact the main contact number for that department, that it will be answered during working hours and that the department does not have only the voice mail system answering the calls. In addition, the “hunt” features should be checked for each department to make sure that if a main department phone is busy, it hunts in the correct order to assure that a caller reaches the correct person in a timely manner. The same type of option would then be used for the person’s name.

- Develop an online “Request For Information Form” to be completed when a student needs information or to request materials from the College. This information would then feed into a database and would be routed to the correct department or office for filling the request. The database system would allow for the ability to track the current information and would also allow for quality controls to assure that the responses are filled.
 - For routine materials which are requested at the College by potential or new students, make pdf’s available within the Request For Information Form” so that a person can download the information immediately or have an immediate direction to the information via a Web link so that the person may not have to use the “Request For Information Form.”
- Evaluate the current response systems used at the College to assure that all information requests are handled in a timely manner. For many of the automated requests for information, nothing was ever received. For the majority of the e-mail requests, nothing was received from the College. The following questions have to be answered:
 - Who is responsible for translating the requests for information from the phone system to actual packets of materials being mailed? Are the right people being used to respond? Is there a lack of staff issue in the response?
 - Is this a manual, labor intensive system or an automated system? How can the system be improved or automated to assure that a request for information is responded to within 24 hours? What quality controls exist to assure that the responses are made?
 - Who is responsible for responding to the e-mail request for information that are made via the College’s Web site? Are the right people being used to respond?
 - Is this a manual or automated system? Do the requests for information allow for a quick response through a database system or are there manual processes hampering the speed of the response?
- Currently, the staff at the Information Center answers every call and question known to man. Some of the questions are simple, such as where to go to take a placement test, and then others are as complex as understanding why credits from a previous college did not transfer as the person expected them to. The complexity of calls creates the potential for very long hold times for all calls routed into the Information Center. Thus, it is recommended that a form of triage be developed at the Information Center.
 - Develop two groups of employees for the Information Center – student admission specialists and general information specialists. Use the general information specialists to screen the level of complexity, handle calls quickly for those that can be answered and then transfer to a student admission specialist for the involved questions in which respondents have to pull up student records and that may take up to 20 minutes to solve the issue.
- Given that to speak to a student admission specialist may involve a longer than normal wait time, the College needs to develop information or at least music that can be played during the long hold times that will provide news and information about the College. The current long silences or ringing phones do not entice a person to stay on the line and it also makes the time spent waiting seem much longer.
- The Regional Centers all appear to have very different phone trees when the main numbers are contacted. It is recommended that the phone trees for the Regional Centers be standardized so that a person can easily contact someone at the Regional Center or move into the standardized main menu for the College without having to call another number.

Communication with staff is a very important issue when any changes are made to the phone systems. In several of the calls, staff seemed unsure of where a caller needed to be transferred. After the phone tree system is established with the branches and detailed in terms of where the calls will go, prior to making the system live, send the branch information to all front line staff for input and synthesis. It is extremely important for the staff to know what to expect from the system prior to the changes being made. This group will also likely have valuable input into any potential problems prior to making the system live.

As the Community College of Philadelphia moves forward with the changes in the phone system, to assure that responses are timely for students, the College may consider outsourcing the initial request for information responses for a new marketing campaign for Fall 2006. To assure that the responses from any new marketing campaigns are handled quickly and efficiently, it may be best to designate a new number MyCCPInfo for information requests until the system can be efficiently designed internally to handle requests for information from potential students.

Appendix A. Documentation Of Calls