



University of Phoenix®

University of Phoenix + InsideTrack

CASE STUDY

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

insidettrack®

Improving Student Support and Educational Experience at Scale



University of Phoenix®



insidetrack®



The Institution

Since its founding in 1976, University of Phoenix has been committed to providing access to quality higher education for underrepresented, nontraditional students, including working adults, minorities, veterans and service members, and students with families. The University has been relentlessly dedicated to helping students pursue education while providing the support and resources they need to reach their academic and career goals. Its focus on further developing the field of career-focused education, coupled with the increasing popularity of online coursework, continues to make University of Phoenix a key partner for both students and employers.



The Challenge

The University required a greater level of support at scale to better meet the unique needs of its working adult learner population. With a team of more than 500 counselors remotely serving working adult students, leadership wanted to continue to build an enhanced coaching approach to increase engagement. To accommodate an expanding portfolio of master's and doctoral programs, as well as undergraduate degrees and certificates, the University also needed an adaptive methodology that could be consistently adopted by counselors and enhance student success across a range of degree programs.






The Solution

The solution was a developmental coaching model that holistically supports student success, launched in partnership with InsideTrack. Through interactions taking place on the phone, over email or via online chat, counselors learn more about students' educational progress and help them overcome barriers to persistence. In addition to creating more meaningful interactions that enhance student success, coaching also generates new insights into the student experience, driving ongoing improvement across the University. At the same time, a new system of training, quality assurance and ongoing professional development further develops counselor abilities and drives better performance.



The Results

-  **91%** of counselors reported feeling personally motivated to implement this change
-  **91%** of counselors reported that they have the knowledge and skills to be successful
-  **93%** of counselors reported that they have the ability to perform their new duties



“The Right Path to Education Success”: Guiding students to better outcomes

University of Phoenix partnered with InsideTrack to take the next step in advancing innovative approaches to student support by implementing developmental coaching as a means to effectively improve student outcomes. The University leveraged InsideTrack’s expertise in supporting working adult students to build a high-quality and sustainable coaching program at scale. Through the partnership with InsideTrack, University of Phoenix trained leadership and counselors in coaching methodology while establishing new processes to ensure the program’s ongoing efficacy.

InsideTrack’s coaching methodology works with students to develop the noncognitive abilities that position them for success in higher education and beyond. With an emphasis on addressing obstacles outside the classroom, InsideTrack’s methodology effectively supports adult students who may be struggling to juggle multiple commitments while re-adjusting to academic culture. For many, challenges like balancing work and family obligations and managing finances can often lead to academic setbacks.

Integrating coaching into student support transforms every student interaction into an opportunity to support student success. With options for phone, email and online chat, students can access support in whatever way is most convenient and effective for them. Even if a student reaches out with a transactional need — a question about registration, or a request to drop a course — counselors can turn the interaction into a broader conversation that drives persistence. Multichannel options for communication mean that counselors can engage students efficiently and provide a rapid resolution to emerging concerns.

By adopting a student support approach that’s as accessible as it is powerful, University of Phoenix provides enhanced support tailored to the needs of its working adult student population. With coaching, students develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs that enable them to thrive, and the University learns key insights about the student experience that lead to better outcomes for all. Results are underway to look at the impact on completion and retention. The scalable coaching approach offers a model to other institutions seeking to meaningfully improve outcomes for a large, diverse student population.



My academic advisor is very understanding of my situation and she was able to guide me in the right path to education success. We were able to choose a plan together that was right for me.”

— Student Survey Response

Students' testimonials demonstrate positive improvements and more involved and better relationships with staff:

“Allison is able to address my concerns and redirect me towards a more successful solution. She takes her time to fully answer questions, making sure she is understood. In addition to being a wealth of information, she also works to apply the possibilities to my personal goals. Solutions aren't solutions if they don't fit within someone's plans. Allison is targeted in her suggestions and that helps immensely. I'm still attending University of Phoenix as a direct result of Allison's support.”

“He draws from his personal and professional experience on how best I can use all resources available with University of Phoenix for an excellent academic performance. Our interactions have resulted in me getting A's in my last 7 or 8 classes for my Bachelor's degree and getting an A in my first MBA class. I am working towards getting honors in my MBA class and with his support, I am on good footing to achieve it.”

“I was most happy with her involvement and concern with the completion of my degree. I almost gave up a few times due to my disability, but with Linda's support with setting me up with disability services, I was able to complete my associates and am currently working on my bachelors.”



“The Value of My Role”: Counselor training and ongoing improvement

University of Phoenix and InsideTrack partnered to train more than 500 counselors in coaching-based student support. Enhancing the professional capabilities of such a large team required a scalable approach that could be delivered in phases:

PHASE I

InsideTrack trained University of Phoenix leadership in coaching strategies. The curriculum included Trainer Certification, which meant that participants not only learned how to provide coaching themselves, but also learned how to train others to be coaches.

PHASE II

Next, InsideTrack provided coach training to the first cohort of counselors. At the same time, leaders who had completed Trainer Certification began to train subsequent cohorts, guided and observed by InsideTrack.

PHASE III

Over the next few months, University of Phoenix provided coach training to all remaining counselors (23 training cohorts in all).

PHASE IV

University of Phoenix provided ongoing training to all counselors twice a month for 14 months. At the same time, the University analyzed student support interactions and continued to tailor its coaching methodology.

Counselors experienced a greater sense of ownership in their work and felt that the new strategies made a more meaningful impact on student success:

“I find more value in my role and coaching has created more passion in what I do.”

— Counselor Survey Response



“Students are connecting and communicating more with me. There is a clearer understanding of the value of my role and a more personalized connection that was not there before.”

— Counselor

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In order to reinforce counselor capabilities, University of Phoenix established an ongoing quality assurance plan that involved refresher courses as well as a new feedback system for counselors.

Prior to the introduction of a coaching approach, University of Phoenix measured the quality of student meetings based on what the counselor said or did during the call. While the focus of each student meeting was to build a relationship with the student and ensure the student had a plan for next steps, the success of the meeting was measured by the counselor's actions, not by the actions the student took.

University of Phoenix created a new Student Services Call Outcomes evaluation system for the coaching program that focused primarily on student outcomes. The new system prompted managers to evaluate calls by listening for what the student gained from the interaction.

This new evaluation system further enhances the University's student-centered approach and helps students and advisors measurably advance in each of the four domains covered during meetings: Building Relationships, Assessing Core Needs, Advancing and Building Motivation.





Being part of the solution through the change and understanding each step helped me connect the vision of what we want to accomplish with coaching.”

— Academic Counselor

Building for Sustainability: Establishing the people and processes for ongoing success

Even the most promising initiatives — those grounded in the latest research and buoyed by the best intentions — can wither without the right systems in place to maintain them. But at University of Phoenix, the coaching program was incorporated into ongoing efforts already underway to improve the student experience. The partnership with InsideTrack mobilized leadership and counselors to further integrate a student-centered approach into student-counselor interactions. By building support for the coaching program at every level of the institution, the University ensured that the new approach to student success would make a lasting impact.

Demonstrating active and visible support from leadership was critical to the program's success. Committed to leading by example, the university's vice presidents were in the very first training cohort, and at least one VP-level leader attended each training for all 500-plus counselors. But as important as leadership-level endorsement was, the change could only take root if everyone working at the University felt personally invested in — and equipped to execute on — the new approach.

Based on results from a survey of counselors prior to undergoing training, the University developed a change management group composed of counselors that made recommendations to leadership about how to introduce and effectively implement the change, and helped leadership understand barriers to counselor adoption.

One development that emerged from the group's recommendations were panel discussions where counselors who had already been through the training could share their experiences with peers who hadn't been trained yet. Another development was providing managers with additional education on how to better support their teams. These outlets consistently reinforced the goals and purpose of the coaching program, and ensured that coaching remained deeply integrated into the culture of the institution.

As University of Phoenix progresses forward with coaching, it is leveraging the approach across all departments to create a unified service experience for the student. The University is looking at all student interactions to ensure that coaching connects all aspects of the student lifecycle.



InsideTrack is passionate about student success. Since 2001, we have been dedicated to partnering with colleges and universities to create adaptive student success solutions that generate measurable results. These solutions combine professional coaching, technology and data analytics to increase enrollment, completion, and career readiness. Our coaching methodologies and uCoach® Platform optimize student engagement and generate valuable insights on the student experience.



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