

2008 SACUBO Best Practices

Developing an Online Work Request System to Help “Close the Loop”

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Abstract

The Finance and Facilities Department of the college heard complaints that service requests were not being managed and communicated back to department requestors in a timely manner. It began looking for a mechanism to replace the paper work order requests that departments were sending to the Maintenance and Operations section. The college has a small staff and no computer programmers. As an interim measure, Finance and Facilities developed a system using the Task Manager feature of Microsoft Outlook but it did not have the historical reports capability that was needed to track improvement in this area. A search began for programs that could be used. In 2005, the college purchased a software program called Workorderama™ that is now being used for the management of service requests, vehicle requests, asset management changes, and preventive maintenance due schedules

Introduction of the Organization

The Maysville Community and Technical College (MCTC) located in Maysville, KY, is one of 16 two-year, open-admissions colleges of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS). It was formed in December 2004 from the consolidation of Maysville Community College (est. 1968) in Maysville, KY and Rowan Technical College (est. 1970) in Morehead, KY. MCTC is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and serves over 3,300 students with its associate degree, diploma, and certificate program options.

Statement of the Problem/Initiative

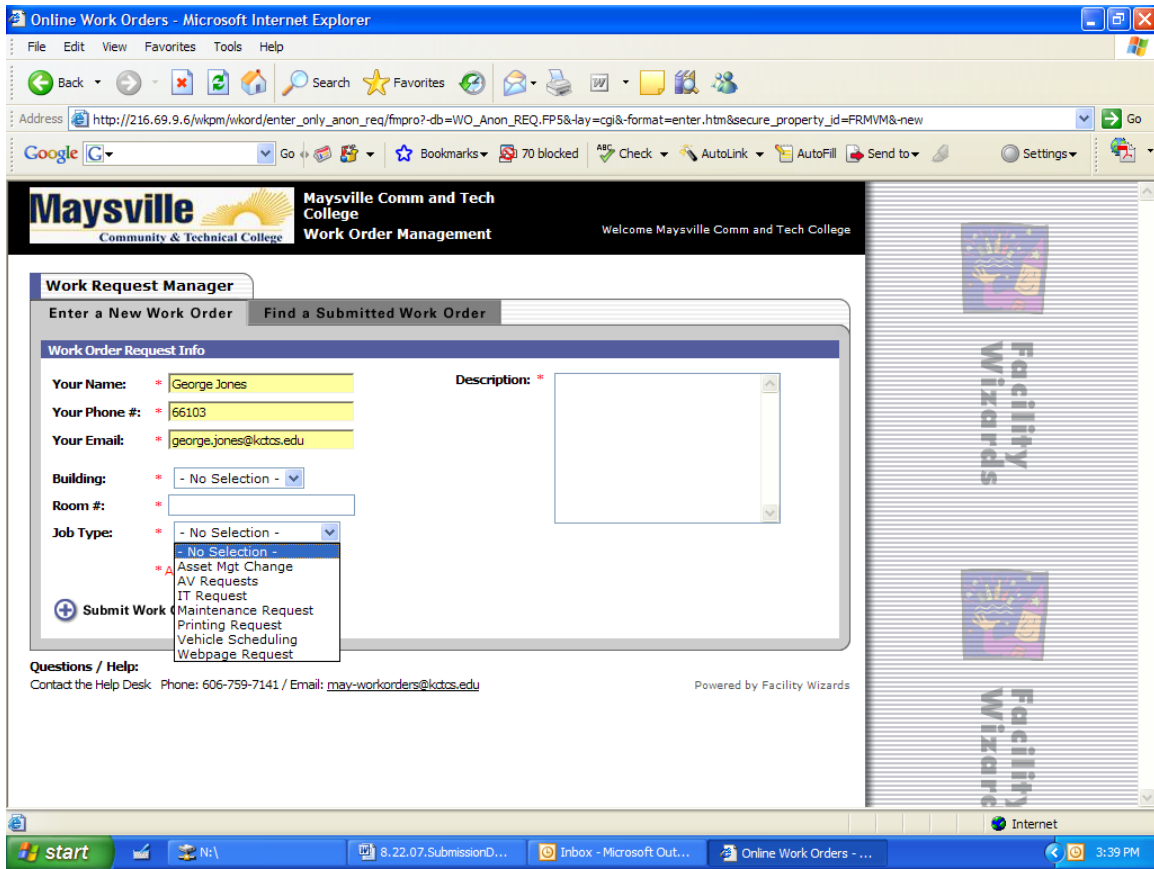
The Maintenance and Operations section, and other service areas, previously received and handled work orders on paper forms. The service areas had no process for tracking how long the orders took to complete or how much activity was actually being done on behalf of the departments. There was a problem in communications and an off-the-shelf software program needed to be found to help address it. The college had no computer programmers on its staff to help and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) had no work order scheduling software system for the colleges

to use. KCTCS does have an Asset Management Module in the PeopleSoft administrative software system that it uses but it has to be manually updated by the college asset management staff. They need for the departments to tell them when equipment is moved to different locations. Inventory location is an area that is checked by the internal auditors. The Workorderama™ off-the-shelf software is used to get these changes into the college asset management staff.

Design

In the design phase, we looked for software that could help us keep track of facilities-related work orders, maintenance activities, and other service requests. We found with the Workorderama™ software that a user can click on a button and find the answer to simple but important questions, such as "how many work orders are currently open ?", or "when was that work order completed ?" The software is scalable depending on how much information you want to enter and track. It can analyze time and money spent on jobs, and summarize findings by trade, department, or location but we did not use the money spent piece. The one-time purchase cost for the software, setup, and training was \$16,980 in 2005 and it included four administrative users and a one-year maintenance agreement. A programmer came on-site to help train, set everything up, tailor it, and she continued to work with us off-site to troubleshoot situations during the implementation. There have been no additional costs since 2005. Also in 2006, the college had its first internal audit with no findings.

Here is an example of the requestor's screen with the drop-down list for the job types.



Implementation

The college now has an effective online Work Order Management System to facilitate the processing of service requests. Employees at all three campus locations can go to a Workorderama™ link that is located on the college intranet webpage and submit an electronic work request from their desk for maintenance service (e.g. key issued, facility repair, room setup, etc.). They can also submit requests for six other services which are as follows: asset management changes, information technology service requests, printing requests, audiovisual services, vehicle requests, and webpage change requests. Employees enter all the required fields and then click on the submit button. Immediately a reply is emailed back to the requestor with a confirmation number. They

then receive updates via email each time there is a status change on the work request (e.g. work assignment to an individual, completion, etc.). At any time, the requester can also enter the confirmation number and check on the progress of the request and what stage it is in. The Work Order Management System is also used to generate Preventative Maintenance scheduled requests on a periodic basis (e.g. filter changes every 60 days, auxiliary generator monthly test, etc.)

Benefits

First, an important benefit of system is the ability to show the academic departments, with reports and bar graphs, the quantity of work being done by the staff and how quickly it was being done. Second, it was also beneficial to have an outside programmer help the network administrator with the training, tailoring, and set up since the college is small and has no programmers on its staff. Finally, it helped to answer inquires and head off complaints by giving ongoing progress status reports to the requestors which helped to “close the loop.”

Retrospect

In retrospect, the only thing that could have been done differently is to add more administrative users at the very beginning since we had other areas like audiovisual services that wanted to join the process after it got started.