Blackthorn

Customer Success Story

Purdue for Life Foundation

United States | Higher Education | Blackthorn Events

About Purdue for Life Foundation

The Purdue for Life Foundation is Purdue University's dedicated alumni and advancement organization. With a mission to deepen alumni relationships through personalized engagement, Salesforce, Blackthorn, and AI, Purdue for Life has transformed its operations, creating a single source of truth for every constituent.

For Purdue University, every alum is a lifelong relationship. But with constituent data scattered across disparate systems, manual spreadsheets, and disconnected event platforms, delivering a truly unified experience was a major challenge. Now with Salesforce, there was a single source of truth for every alum and donor. This shift broke down data silos and, in just over a year, generated more than $500,000 in donations from event registrations alone.

The Challenge: From Scattered Data to a Cohesive Journey

Previously, the foundation struggled to see the complete picture of its constituents. Event registrations were managed across multiple platforms, leading to inconsistent data and labor-intensive manual uploads. This fragmented approach made it impossible to understand the full constituent journey—from their time as students to their engagement with athletics, clients at the university's vet hospital, and beyond. Purdue for Life knew it needed a central hub to connect every touchpoint.

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Why Purdue for Life Chose Blackthorn and Salesforce

Purdue for Life established Salesforce as its central nervous system for all constituent engagement. By integrating data from every corner of the university through APIs, the foundation created a comprehensive Customer 360—a complete picture of every interaction with a donor, alum, and friend of the university. This unified architecture empowers the team to see every interaction in one place, enabling them to tailor experiences and communications with unprecedented precision.

A critical piece of the puzzle was revolutionizing event management. The foundation's previous system couldn't handle the complexity of its diverse events. They found their solution on AppExchange with Blackthorn, an events application built to provide a seamless and customizable registration experience. Since implementing Blackthorn in 2022, Purdue for Life has seen registrations grow by over 40% and total registrants have increased by nearly 30%.

"Our Salesforce-first strategy simplifies administration and ensures all our data flows into one unified environment. It allows us to see the entire constituent journey and engage with people in a way that's meaningful to them."
— *Rebecca Johnson, Director of CRM Systems, Purdue for Life*

Use Cases: How Purdue for Life Leverages Blackthorn and Salesforce

- **A One-Stop Shop for Events**
  Purdue for Life's annual alumni weekend in Naples, Florida, once required five different emails and five separate credit card charges for a single person to attend various activities. With a single registration and payment process, events are now a seamless and personalized experience for attendees.

- **Measuring the True ROI of Engagement**
  The foundation moves beyond simple attendance metrics. With unified data, they can strategically track how events influence giving, measure the subsequent engagement of first-time attendees, and analyze year-over-year trends for their signature events.

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- **Inspiring Giving at Every Touchpoint**
  Blackthorn's optional donation feature has been a phenomenal success. Since fiscal year 2023, this simple addition to the registration process has generated over $500,000 in gifts.

Part Five

The Impact and The Future: AI-Powered Engagement and a Thriving Ecosystem

Purdue for Life has taken their next big step by deploying the [Agentforce 360 Platform](#), using [AI](#) to drive deeper connections. A custom donor profile report uses AI to summarize donor bios, giving patterns, and interaction sentiments to suggest personalized engagement strategies. They're also looking to leverage AI in email to draft tailored introductions, with the goal of boosting efficiency while maintaining a personal touch.

This commitment to a Salesforce-first approach guides all future technology decisions, from [Agentforce Marketing](#) to [Agentforce Commerce](#).

"The AppExchange is a key part of our future vision," Johnson added. "It gives us access to the latest technology and trusted client reviews, ensuring we always select quality products that will grow with us."

Ready to transform your events into a revenue engine? Discover [Blackthorn Events](#) and thousands of other solutions on [Salesforce AppExchange](#) and now the [Salesforce AgentExchange](#).

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