

Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

AskRose Homework Help

Improving student lives with easy access to
AskRose via chat, email or phone



Customer: Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

Industry: Higher education / not-for-profit

Location: Terre Haute, Indiana

Agents: 130 tutors (agents)

Challenges:

- Eliminate outages, downtime
- Reduce heavy reliance on IT
- Work with innovative vendor making strides into non-voice communication channels

Platform:

- Genesys PureCloud platform

Shifting needs of the student demographic

For nearly two decades, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology has been ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as the number one undergraduate engineering school in the nation. Its homework assistance program, "Ask Rose," is staffed by 130 undergraduate tutors who provide free math and science help for students in grades six through 12 via phone, chat and email.

"Our primary business and IT goal is to be available for students in the way they want to contact us," said Lindsay Hull, Associate Director of Rose-Hulman AskRose. "When students are struggling with homework, it can be emotionally difficult to ask for help, so it's important for us to have multiple modes for students to easily reach out and interact with us."

What started in 1991 as three hardwired phones in a storage closet in the basement of the library has grown significantly. Today, non-voice

channels like chat and email have become middle and high school students' preferred way to communicate. In the 2017-2018 school year, they conducted 32,349 sessions: 52.6% by phone, 22.7% by email and 24.7% by chat.

While chat was the fastest growing service at AskRose, outages were rampant with their previous on-premises system. Chat was down more than a quarter of operating days: sometimes for an hour, sometimes for the whole night. In one case, a student had to start 28 chats in the same night due to a browser/operating system combination that kept closing his chat windows. On top of reliability and support issues, their previous vendor was failing to make strides into new communication channels.

Something had to change.

"Students couldn't count on us, and we were losing customers," said Hull. "Our customers are early adopters of tech, so we need to be early offerers of technology."



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Lindsay Hull

Associate Director of Rose-Hulman AskRose

Delivering reliability, innovation

In 2016, Rose-Hulman switched the tutoring service over to the Genesys™ PureCloud® platform, which delivered:

- Expansion to multiple channels—voice, chat and email, initially, with the intent to incorporate newer channels like SMS and messaging apps in the future
- A quick implementation process—they were up and running in less than a week
- Reduced IT requirements—critical for their limited staff
- Reliability—they’ve had zero downtime since switching

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That reliability is a big deal. Hull works 8 AM-5 PM, but AskRose is open evenings: 7 PM-10 PM, when students typically need help with homework. In the past, she and the IT staff would often have to return to campus to deal with an outage—even something as simple as a password change. Now, the rare issue can be handled by logging in to the PureCloud web-based interface from the comfort of her home. And she can now make updates on her own (e.g., adding a new message to the IVR) instead of tapping IT.

Since the PureCloud implementation, Hull’s reliance on IT has dramatically decreased (if not been altogether eliminated), freeing up time to focus on what’s truly important: helping students succeed.

Vastly improved agent satisfaction

Since switching over to the PureCloud platform, both tutors and students have benefited from a dramatically improved customer experience.

One of the biggest wins is the ability to see an entire email thread. Since tutors are focused on helping students understand the process—rather than providing answers—there may be 15 or 20 emails exchanged about a single math problem. Previously, one tutor may respond to the initial question, but then another would address a follow-up response the next evening; if they couldn’t see the entire history, they were limited in the level of care and support they could provide. The PureCloud solution opens up visibility into the entire interaction with the student, no matter how many emails are exchanged.

Tutors can also now transfer calls, emails and chats amongst each other: if a student needs help with AP Chemistry homework, send him to the tutor majoring in Chemistry. And if one tutor is unable to get to the query, the call or chat is now automatically rolled over to another agent.

Another benefit of the cloud solution is the ability for agents to work remotely; if students need help with homework while Rose-Hulman is not in session, tutors can log in and handle interactions from wherever they are. This enables AskRose to operate at full scale and meet the needs of students, regardless of the academic calendar. Tutors also take advantage of built-in collaboration tools to chat and video with each other when they’re not in the same room—an unanticipated benefit of the platform.

“Our tutors are thrilled. The PureCloud user interface is really nice, and the whole platform

“Genesys, by giving us the best technology, has allowed us to provide the best possible service and change the lives of the students that contact us. Without this platform, we wouldn’t be able to help nearly as many people as we do.”

Lindsay Hull, Associate Director of Rose-Hulman AskRose

makes it so simple for them to do their jobs,” said Hull. “It feels good to be able to give them a tool that lets them focus on helping students without worrying about what’s going on with the technology.”

The bottom line: helping students

Hull isn’t focused on traditional call center metrics like average handle time (AHT); what matters most is that students get the help they need, no matter how long it takes.

“PureCloud gets us there by making it easy for students to connect with us and creating a really great experience,” said Hull. “This is how we run our business. Without it, we don’t operate.”

In the first year after Rose-Hulman switched to the PureCloud platform, they saw a 14% CSAT increase for chat. Instead of complaining about issues, students rave about how thankful they are to get the help they need. That customer satisfaction is the bottom line that Hull cares most about.

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A platform for whatever comes next

The Rose-Hulman team knows that Genesys is looking to the future and ready to provide

a platform for whatever new communication channels come next.

Already on the horizon for the PureCloud platform are video messaging and asynchronous messaging for popular applications like Facebook, Line and WhatsApp.

“That’s what our students use and expect, and we’re excited to be able to offer that,” said Hull. “Switching to the PureCloud solution has been really great for everyone involved. It’s been a phenomenal change and I would recommend it to anybody considering a move to an all-in-one cloud solution.”

To learn more about the solutions featured in this case study, go to www.genesys.com.

RESULTS

Up and running

in less than 7 days

100% uptime

since going live in 2016

14% increase

in CSAT scores for chat

ABOUT GENESYS

Genesys® powers more than 25 billion of the world’s best customer experiences each year. Our success comes from connecting employee and customer conversations on any channel, every day. Over 11,000 companies in more than 100 countries trust our #1 customer experience platform to drive great business outcomes. Genesys on-premise and cloud solutions are built to be fluid, instinctive and profoundly empowering. Combining the best of technology and human ingenuity, we work the way you think.

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