

CASE STUDY

# USING TECHNOLOGY & FOCUSED COLLABORATION TO BETTER THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



**PennState**



*Managing campus parking operations at a major university can be quite a daunting challenge. There are often political considerations and competing interests to navigate, and the complexity of today's automated parking world can exacerbate them. However, with the right combination of inter-departmental collaboration, technology, and focusing on customer relationships to create a win/win scenario, it's possible for university parking managers to improve the parking experience for students, faculty, staff, and visitors, while also improving the bottom line.*

# A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ENHANCED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Several years ago, Penn State University created a strategic plan for enhancing the parking experience, driving innovation, and improving parking management. Back then, the university's parking operations were antiquated. Parking facilities couldn't even take credit card payments for non-permit parkers. University parking officials knew they needed to turn to modern parking technology.

Due to the University's long and storied history of intercollegiate athletics, improving their parking systems was particularly important. Penn State is a Big Ten school, with 31 sports and 800+ student athletes in multiple facilities spread across campus. Sporting events attract thousands of spectators and parking patrons.

The university upgraded its parking management software, began selling permits online, and replaced their PARCS system. The addition of the new PARCS system allowed the university to take better control of its parking assets across the campus, while allowing 24/7 revenue from transient parkers.



# DOING MORE WITHOUT ADDED STAFF, OR LOSING THE HUMAN ELEMENT

The university needed to get more done without adding staff. Parking planners knew sourcing staff for overnight and weekend hours would be difficult. Upgrading existing technology and introducing new solutions for parking customers was the obvious way to deliver a better parking experience.

University parking planners also knew that automation had the potential to confuse campus parkers. Technology doesn't always work as it should, and the university needed a way to help customers any time there was a problem, whether the parker encountered payment issues, equipment malfunctions, or were confused about how to use the equipment.

## THE FLEXIBLE PARKER TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION

Penn State needed to ensure that every intercom call would be personally answered, 24/7/365. The university implemented Parker's powerful software platform, which puts a dashboard with facility information at customer service representatives' fingertips, for efficient call resolution. During the week, Penn State's parking administration office uses the platform to handle help calls, and on weekends, nights, and holidays, calls are seamlessly redirected to the Parker call center, using the same platform.



Even on holidays when Penn State staff are home celebrating with their families, live help is available to parking patrons. On particularly busy days, like Football Saturdays, Parker Technology's call center stands ready to help the university handle increased call volume. This is particularly important during peak evening hours when there is a general exodus of staff and students from the university's parking facilities.

**“Not much changed for our customers for quite some time, meanwhile the industry evolved. We’ve experienced a significant rate of change over the last 5 years, and our customers come to expect a Penn State feel regardless of the convenience and options that we provide. That meant finding the right partners to provide 24/7 customer service that not only maintained the human element during this time, but actually enhanced it.”**



- Rob DeMayo, Director of Transportation Services



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