Case Study

Lasalle College of the Arts partners with Flywire to enhance student experience

LASALLE College of the Arts, home to eight art and design schools, easily attracts a variety of students from all over the world. With such an international student population, LASALLE was finding the international educational payment process to be slow, and inconvenient for both their staff and their students.

Challenge for international students

The challenges international students faced when trying to make a payment varied from process related to experience issues. When trying to make a payment, language barriers could prove problematic, especially if a student's parents were not fluent English speakers. "If they call in to talk to us, they may not fully understand our instructions for making a payment," said Glenn Wee, Senior Executive of Accounts Receivables (AR) at LASALLE.

Many of LASALLE's international students were using Telegraphic Transfer (T/T) to pay their tuition. Tan Poh Seng, the Finance Director at LASALLE explained that the payments were often short, either due to difficulties surrounding foreign exchange differences and not knowing exactly how much the payment would be in their home currency, or due to unexpected bank charges. In addition, there was a lag time between initiating the T/T transaction from their home country and the cross-border banking system processing, so students had no idea if or when the funds were actually paid to the College and the education payment was considered settled. The worst case scenario was that a student might just bring in a large amount of cash to the Finance Counter to make their payment.

Tan believed that students needed a reliable payment system as well as assurance that the currency conversion from their home currency to the Singapore dollar was transparent.

Challenge for LASALLE

From the College's side, international payments came with a different set of issues, starting with the inability to identify T/Ts or other fund transfers. Tracing and identifying the unknown payments they received was difficult and time consuming for AR. If they were unable to identify the transaction, then the student whose account would remain as outstanding would receive another payment reminder

LASALLE at a glance

1,040 [1]
International student enrolment

5,000 [2]
International alumni

51 [1]
Countries LASALLE students represent

(1) AY2016/17 Semester 2 enrolment statistics

(2) Estimated, as at 25 July 2017

despite having already sent the money. This meant that the College had to rely on the student to notify them that the T/T had been made, and often the student's parents would get upset from being mistakenly told they had not paid.

The department found the existing process cumbersome, especially since after all of the confusion, the payment, when finally received, might still be the incorrect amount.

Solution

LASALLE was then approached by Flywire, which offered the College a free, secure, and trusted payment solution to streamline the payment process for international students' semester fees. AR had a list of requirements for the payment system, including reliability, accuracy and accessible foreign exchange, and payment identification. They also wanted a solution that was easy to use, with a streamlined payment experience.

Once they had assessed the solution and found there were numerous benefits for both students and staff, the College decided to partner with Flywire. After signing with them and choosing to extend the use of Flywire to include not just semester fees but application fees and hostel bills as well, LASALLE found the setup and implementation process to be quick and smooth. Because the College wanted the solution to be implemented fast and with minimal time, they opted for a standalone portal.

Results

The LASALLE AR team is extremely satisfied that Flywire has fully delivered on its promise to provide value and enhancements to the College and its students. Each of LASALLE's requirements was exceeded, and additional pain points were resolved along the way.

Students found the solution simple, reliable, and convenient. Flywire's localized user interface and multilingual support enhanced the overall user experience from beginning to end. Not only did the platform allow students to send the full amount they wish in the currency they want, they were also able to easily track the payment.

"The platform has certainly made our entire process more efficient," said Dominic Ang, the College's Chief Operating Officer, "especially in terms of payment identification and reconciliation for the AR Team". All of the payer information they require is easily captured on the single payer input page, and AR now has the ability to always identify the student and their payment. In addition, the helpfulness and responsiveness of Flywire's Client Services team ensure that any issues that do arise are quickly resolved.

Although Flywire is not LASALLE's only payment solution, the staff has been encouraging as many international students as possible to switch to Flywire. They are taking a multi-faceted approach to publicising Flywire at their campus, including easy-to-read flyers and small sessions at their orientation program promoting the platform. The College also holds an annual recruitment agent conference and has invited Flywire to attend in order to positively influence payer usage.

The introduction of Flywire has had a positive impact on the student experience. Said Dominic, "I think those students who have used Flywire are satisfied with the payment solution. The College is also happy to have embarked upon this journey with Flywire."

About LASALLE

LASALLE College of the Arts in Singapore is a leading tertiary institution in cutting edge contemporary arts and design education and practice. The college offers more than 30 diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in fine arts, design communication, interior design, product design, film, animation, fashion, dance, music, theatre, arts management, arts pedagogy and practice, art therapy, Asian art histories and creative writing.

Its faculty is led by a community of award-winning artists, designers, educators and researchers, and their practiceled research sets LASALLE apart as an international centre of excellence. Critically acclaimed alumni form the core of the cultural and creative sectors in Singapore and increasingly, internationally.

Founded in 1984 by De La Salle Brother Joseph McNally – a visionary artist and educator – LASALLE is a not-forprofit, private educational institution. LASALLE receives tuition grant support from the Singapore Ministry of Education. Its degree programmes are validated by Goldsmiths, University of London.

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