

# BENE'S CAREER ACADEMY

HOW A MULTI-SITE CAREER COLLEGE  
GREW WITH ORBUND

Bene's Career Academy is a Florida career college founded in 1977. The academy's three campuses prepare students for new careers in some of the nation's most innovative and respected styling boutiques.





# STUDENT SYSTEM FOR CLOCK-HOURS ACADEMY

When senior administrators at Bene's Career Academy first started considering Student Information Systems, they learned that most SIS platforms served traditional four-year colleges and universities. Career schools, however, have very different requirements than non-profits.

Bene's Academy is a clock-hours school—its students must satisfy a Federally-regulated, designated number of hours to graduate. Students clock in and out of classes each day. Full-time students track on the order of thirty hours a week, doing hands-on work in addition to classroom attendance.

## GOALS FOR GROWTH

“For years, Bene's was a mom-and-pop operation,” commented David Bracken, Chief Operations Officer. “We had two schools and almost all of our administrative processes were performed manually by six full-time employees. We had seventeen filing cabinets filled with student files.”

“Before we started reviewing software solutions,” described Bracken, “we developed a specific set of goals. Our primary objective was to automate all our manual business processes.”

Bracken and his team knew the future called for integration of workflows to make growth possible. Top targets for transformation were student registration, grades, and tracking each student's

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)—to ensure timely graduation and meet Department of Education standards.

“The system needed to track our tasks, action items, and due dates. Most of the knowledge related to school administration was walking around in the heads of our employees,” cited Bracken. “They had to remember what tasks to do and when to do them. If an employee wasn’t there or decided

to leave, that know-how walked out the front door.”

Moving to next generation technology, Bracken expected greater efficiency. But the leadership also wanted to expand student services. The more self-service, the more today’s tech-savvy students could do when it was most convenient—rather than waiting for the doors to open at their closest campus.

Orbund’s student information system (SIS) automated Bene’s marketing, student services, academics, and operations.

**370 STUDENTS**



**3**

**CAMPUSES**



**GPA INCREASE**

**10%**

**40%**

**STAFF EFFICIENCY INCREASE**



**35%**

**INCREASED STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

# ORBUND'S PRICING MODEL

## Bene's undertook a competitive process, Orbund's SaaS model prevailed.

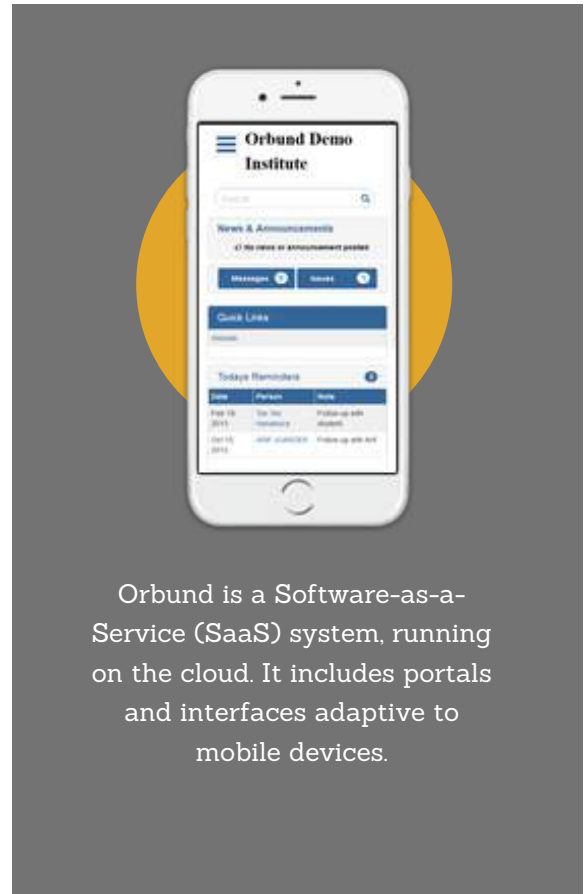
"The majority were optimized for large universities," Bracken shared.

"They charge site license fees, and their implementation and training costs were out of range for a smaller school. Orbund's model is per-student, per-month pricing. It allows us to add locations and increase enrollment in a cost-controlled way."

Bene's gravitated to Orbund's Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) design upon learning that SaaS means no servers and automated, simplified software updates.

"It frees me up to focus on school operations and the business,"

Bracken concluded that Orbund fit their business model, and the SaaS design would avoid having to add more IT and support staff, like the other SIS products required.



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# OPEN TO INTEGRATION

Real-world experience is tied to graduation and placement at Bene's.

"A cosmetology student performs 200 haircuts to graduate," Bracken pointed out.

Customers coming to Bene's clinics on campus enjoy services like hair, color and nails—while students earn credit hours towards academic completion.

Because student hours are continually tracked, Bene's installed a biometric timeclock module. The school also timed its changeover to Orbund with the integration of a new Point of Sale (POS) system. Anyone who visits a salon knows the fast pace. Integrating the student's time with the POS would be critical to not only academic success, but to a smooth experience for the clinic's clients.

"So, if the student has logged in via the timeclock, and she performs a service that is entered in the POS, her student record gets automatically updated. Other systems didn't support the level of integration we were looking for."

Implementation of Orbund included the creation of new and better business processes, uploading student records, and setting up self-service portals.

Bene's three campuses took about eight weeks—but it brought forward nearly thirty-three years of student records. Staff scanned and converted volumes of paper files into electronic records, sending old paper documents to a shredder.

The Academy rapidly realized results. The teacher portal combined with integrated document management capabilities enabled staff to review student records and see their enrollment agreement, associated correspondence, grades, and requirements completed to date.

If students are not meeting their weekly time requirements, the school requires teachers to contact them. Orbund proactively alerts teachers, and any correspondence that is sent via e-mail or text is automatically logged into the student's record.







# REGULATIONS & ACCREDITATION

Many read news about the highly regulated nature of career colleges. Few understand that behind the curtain, technologies like Orbund makes it easier for these colleges to prevent policy lapses from slipping through the cracks.

Because accreditation also was key to the college's growth plans, Bene's sought to ensure meeting or surpassing the requirements of National Accrediting Commission of Career Arts & Sciences (NACCAS). NACCAS routinely audits academies like Bene's to maintain quality in financial and student performance.

"It used to be that our staff would madly scramble to collect all the printed documentation required for an audit," recalled Bracken.

An audit is a grueling experience, one that can come unannounced on any given day. If the auditor cannot be shown the data that is asked, or if any operation they observe does not seem to match the policies, the auditor can write up a finding.

Findings may result in a fine and a return visit. Each visit can cost up to \$10,000.

Now running on Orbund, the academy can instantly produce online every student record upon request by NACCAS auditors. Records get automatically organized in file folders already optimized for how they get reviewed. Auditors can evaluate the information remotely.

# DIGITAL MAKE-OVER

“The results have been incredible,” Mr. Bracken shared. “We are now fully automated, and we are opening another location. We do everything with one full-time and one part-time employee.

And all those paper records?

“We got rid of all the filing cabinets,” he beamed.

Since implementing Orbund, attendance improved by 35% and overall GPAs increased 10 percent.

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Before Orbund, students had to ask each and every question about grades, hours, account balances, and so on to their teachers.

During peak periods like enrollment or mid-terms, Bene’s front desk and business office would be deluged with students seeking very specific, time-sensitive answers.

Now, students and staff access information using an academy-issued Chromebook or mobile phones. The campuses also can send SMS text messages for late-breaking news and updates. This enables each campus to announce things like weather-related alerts only to the students and staff impacted.

Automated alerting really drives staff accountability. For example, when a student is close to graduating, the Campus Director is notified. The notification shows if the student’s graduation requirements have been fulfilled and details any items that are missing.

“We would definitely recommend the Orbund system to other career-based schools,” Mr. Bracken affirmed. “The product is flexible and affordable. The company provides a 24 x 7 support line where you get a live staff member who can actually answer your questions. We can meet accreditation reporting requirements with a couple clicks. It used to take us two weeks. Orbund has made our academy a better institution and a better business.”



*Bene's students graduate and begin their careers at some of North America's most respected salons.*



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Postsecondary schools, academies and online education seek student information systems on the cloud. Founded in 2003, Orbund serves 300+ schools and institutions with its Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) SIS platform. Fully featured, Orbund's SIS includes an integrated CRM and Learning Management System (LMS).