



Case Study



NC State University Streamlines Procurement Process by Integrating with Graybar

Customer: NC State University

Challenge: NC State University needed to streamline and automate their ordering and invoicing process for the faculty and staff while reducing costs and risks.

Solution: NC State University built an interactive user interface and relied on Graybar for the electrical, data communications and security products as well as Graybar's contract terms and price protection established by the U.S. Communities contract.

Results: Graybar's integrated catalog and ordering automation enabled NC State University's Purchasing Department to streamline their purchasing process by lowering costs and providing easy access to MRO products.

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Sharon Loosman

CPO and Director of Materials Management



The Customer

As one of the nation's leading universities, NC State University in Raleigh, North Carolina serves more than 34,000 students and 9,000 faculty and staff.

More than 125 years after its founding, NC State University continues to be a powerhouse in science, technology, engineering and math.



The Challenge

For a large research enterprise such as NC State University, procurement can be a difficult and tedious task. With 22 colleges and divisions who have purchasing authority, numerous vendors and massive amounts of invoices and paperwork, NC State University needed to enhance its procurement process. The central Purchasing Department needed a way to streamline and automate the ordering and invoicing process for the faculty and staff while also reducing costs and risks.



How Graybar Helped

The Purchasing Department staff began by reviewing the university's annual spend data sorting it by commodity categories, and by the number of purchase orders processed, as a first step to creating an extensive online marketplace for the faculty and staff.

"We built an interactive user interface that brought together supplier catalogs in 13 commodity categories," said CPO and Director of Materials Management Sharon Loosman. "Graybar covered a number of the categories within MRO, specifically electrical, data communications and security equipment. In addition, the Graybar contract terms and price protection were established with the publicly bid U.S. Communities contract."

According to their website, U.S. Communities is the leading national government purchasing cooperative, providing world class government procurement resources and solutions to higher education, k-12, non-profits,

special districts, and state and local government agencies looking for the best overall supplier government pricing.



Results

Today, every faculty and staff member at NC State University can browse the MarketPlace while 3,700 customers have the authority to place orders.

"There are a number of process efficiencies we've experienced by integrating the Graybar catalog into our MarketPlace" said Loosman. "Graybar's catalog and shopping cart system automatically pushes a complete requisition into our financial system and assigns the appropriate workflows to the order. Now supervisors can approve these orders remotely or after hours and never have to touch paperwork again."

Another benefit is ease of product delivery. Every hour, approved purchase orders travel from the university to Graybar for fulfillment and next day delivery at the customer's location or desk.

But that's not the only way NC State University can shop with Graybar.

"Perhaps one of the biggest time savings is the quote to order function," said Marketplace Manager Eric Shiflett. "For large electrical or communications projects, Graybar can work with our users to create a list of products, assign a quote and place it in the catalog for easy ordering and approval."

"The Purchasing Department is actively promoting the use of the NC State University MarketPlace as the most efficient way to purchase supplies," said Loosman. "This automation allows us to realize \$30 in process efficiency savings per purchase order and we place approximately 1,000 Graybar orders per year."

Graybar's product selection, pricing through the U.S. Communities contract and the ability to handle a high volume of transactions electronically matched NC State University's MarketPlace requirements.

Since then, Graybar's integrated online catalog and ordering automation has enabled the university's Purchasing Department to successfully streamline the purchasing process by lowering costs and providing easy access to the MRO products the campus customers need.

*As of 2019, U.S. Communities is now a subsidiary of OMNIA Partners, Public Sector.

1-800-GRAYBAR (472-9227)

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