

Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt)



“Othot shows us each individual student we should be talking to; what we should be saying; and where we should be spending our marketing dollars.”

Chris Wright, Dean of Admission and Enrollment, Massachusetts College of Art and Design

THE CHALLENGE

Founded in 1873, MassArt was the first freestanding public college of art and design in the country, and the first ever to grant a degree. Today, with an enrollment of 1800, MassArt attracts students from across Massachusetts, America, and the world. Because of the school’s specialized, niche curriculum, it does not compete with traditional state universities or liberal arts colleges for students. It also can’t use the same analytics tools to identify the most impactful ways to yield a student or optimize financial aid spending. “Because MassArt is such a unique school, I quickly learned that no one could build models for us. We had to find a different analytics solution,” said Chris Wright, MassArt Dean of Admission and Enrollment. “But outsourcing and other approaches offered by consultants weren’t sustainable.”

THE OTHOT AI-POWERED SOLUTION

Othot enabled MassArt to create models customized for the School’s most important data points. Key components of the solution included:

- models built for each phase of the enrollment funnel
- “what if” scenarios that showed in real time the impact of an action
- access for counselors to the full power of the Othot platform at any time

THE RESULTS

“They have been able to provide a turnkey solution that delivers something actionable.”

With Othot, MassArt was able to identify the types of students who would be a best fit for their school and more efficiently leverage its limited budgets to entice the right prospects with the right action or message at the right time. It also gave MassArt a better understanding of which students would enroll, persist, and likely graduate. “As the first strategic enrollment leader at MassArt, I can’t make enrollment decisions without the power of that data,” Wright stated.

Using Othot, MassArt came within two percent points of their enrollment goal; had a discount rate less than projected, and achieved one of the school’s best years ever for net tuition revenue. “The relationship between Othot and its customers is very valued. Othot genuinely wants colleges and universities to achieve their enrollment and persistence goals. And what they have been able to provide MassArt is a turnkey solution that delivers something actionable. That’s the big game changer,” said Wright.

Othot’s prescriptive analytics also saves the School’s counselors time and resources by identifying the specific action that will have the greatest impact on each individual student. Added Wright, “I don’t have to wait a week or two for a report from a consultant. My team and I are in the Othot platform every day, running scenarios in real time, empowered to make decisions. It also made us more responsive to our applicant pool because it shows who we should be talking to, what we should be saying, and where we should spend our marketing dollars.”

WHAT’S NEXT

“This year our NTR is projected to be the highest in the history of the College”

For the current enrollment cycle, MassArt is building towards results that will exceed these outcomes across the board. After that, MassArt plans to roll out the Othot platform to the retention side of the team and build out a model for persistence and graduation.

“This year, we will again fall within two percentage points of our enrollment goal. But our NTR is projected to be one of the highest in the history of the College without hindering our academic quality or diversity. In fact, on average we are giving out more financial aid that is impacting those with need in a bigger way while still making our cost after attendance attractive to those who don’t have significant need,” says Wright.

Looking forward, MassArt will be integrating Othot predictions directly into Slate, a CRM platform for higher education institutions. Othot is a Slate Preferred Partner. Slate Preferred Partners have a deeper understanding of the Slate product functionality and processes and add unique value to the Slate user community. For MassArt that means Othot’s predictions will be easily accessible in Slate so that its admissions team will have the most up-to-date insights where and when they need them.

TAKEAWAYS

Higher education institutions are at the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Big Data and analytics. According to Wright, those schools that combine data with machine learning are going to be the innovators in the industry. As that happens, Wright thinks the need for true consultants will be less. “With Othot, you won’t need a data analyst because the product does the modeling and the math for you,” says Wright. “It delivers prescriptions that are actionable.” Wright’s advice for those reluctant to embrace advanced analytics: “Don’t be afraid to take the plunge. It will pay dividends.”



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