



Quick Stats

- ▶ **Most popular question has been asked more than 6,000 times since implementing the product**
- ▶ **More than 800 questions asked and automatically responded to during 2008 admissions season**
- ▶ **Held seven chat sessions with more than 200 attendees, 30 of which have applied to the university**
- Enrollment: 20,400 undergrad; 6,000 graduate
- More than 8,000 faculty and staff
- More than 300 degree programs
- Mission: "To move forward the frontiers of human knowledge and enrich and elevate society."

Challenge

The University of Tennessee prides itself on adding value to the State of Tennessee by educating its students, doing research and creative work that improves quality of life, and reaching out to share expertise with Tennesseans. With more than 25,000 students, UT is known as one of Tennessee's flagship institutions and one of the country's great public research universities. One of the university's biggest challenges was making the most of the time staff members had. Staff seemed to answer the same requests from prospective students repeatedly and needed to find a way to streamline their efforts. UT needed the help of online technologies that would alleviate some of the repetitious request inquiries and make better use of its staff's time, as well as needed a way to provide information 24/7 to students in a way that works with their schedule through multi-media outreach.

Solution

The University of Tennessee realized their need of staying up-to-date with tech-savvy students and partnered with Hobsons to help with an all-encompassing technological plan. The solutions were an online question and answer system (EMT Answer) as well as a virtual open house (Group Chat). As a result of implementing these two products, the university has been able to save staff time while also finding new ways to make contact with students. Some of the positive effects UT has seen due to using EMT Answer and Group Chat include:

- Immediate responses provided to inquiries
- Ability to customize answers
- Utilizing reports for continuous improvement
- Servicing a growing population of Spanish-speaking families as all Answer content is translated
- Continually gather student feedback

UT takes advantage of the solutions from Hobsons as its entire counseling staff use the Group Chat tool. In addition to admissions counselors answering questions during chat events, special guests from housing, financial aid, faculty members, provosts and vice provosts, and members of the Student Success Center have attended to speak with prospective students. Since implementing, UT has held seven Group Chat events with more than 200 attendees. Out of these 200 attendees, 30 have applied to the university.

"Before Chat, students and parents called us or e-mailed us. Chats have been more successful because it's instant rather than leaving a voicemail and needing two or three days to call them back," Cyndi Sweet, Assistant Director of Admissions, said.



**EMT Answer is
so easy and the
information
is quick.**

**Students ask what they need, get
their answer, and they're done.**

*- Cyndi Sweet,
Assistant Director of Admissions*

Results

- From August 1, 2008 through March 31, 2009, 840 unique questions were asked in English and eight unique questions were asked in Spanish.
- The most popular Quick Answer has been asked more than 6,000 times since implementing the product.
- General questions from prospective students are being answered online, thereby reducing number of phone calls and general e-mails to the admissions office.
- Students get answers the moment they want them, 24/7—no need to wait for UT to respond.
- The admissions office has become more accessible to students as UT is using a more current type of communication.
- New tools have allowed “higher-ups” to become accessible to students and parents through chat events.
- Received positive feedback from students and parents.
- Incorporation of chat events into communication plan.

“The questions we get by phone and e-mail now are more specific. Students get general answers from the Web and call us with more specific questions. We can tailor our answers better now because the questions they are asking are more specific,” Sweet said.

About Hobsons

Headquartered in Cincinnati, OH, Hobsons supports education professionals in the preparation, recruitment, management, and advancement of students. With secondary school solutions, integrated marketing tools, enrollment management technology, and retention solutions, Hobsons provides innovative solutions that make it easy to help students make the best decisions throughout the entire education lifecycle.