

Customer Highlight on...

Sandi Dingman



College

Created in 1969, Eastern Idaho Technical College (EITC) is a state-funded, public two-year technical college that provides high quality education programs that meet the diverse needs of the citizens of its nine county service area and the State of Idaho. The college serves by being a minimal cost, open-door institution that advocates for the needs of the individual. The college champions technical programs, customized industry training and retraining, development and basic skill instruction, workforce and community education, economic development, distance education and student services. EITC has 850 full-time students and a large segment of part-time students. It also provides workforce training for over six thousand individuals per year. The student body consists of students newly graduated from high school, workforce students and students that are degreed and non-degreed who are returning for purposes of career advancement or career change.

How purchasing works at EITC

Sandi Dingman is the Purchasing Agent for EITC. She has been in this position since 1976 and has been a Bellwether customer since 1993. As the sole purchasing agent in her department, her responsibilities include overseeing all purchases, contracts and leases – school wide. She is also responsible for ordering goods and services for 110 full-time employees and 30 part-time employees. Because the school offers such a diverse curriculum, “goods and services” cover everything from facility maintenance and support to instructional supplies and equipment. Sandi’s spend budget per year is about \$3MM, and several hundred vendors are used to meet all the school’s supply demands. Business Purchasing Cards were recently implemented on campus for small dollar purchases, and EITC produces approximately one thousand purchase orders per year for high dollar major purchases.

Prior to becoming a Bellwether customer, EITC was on a manual, paper system. “That’s right,” Sandi commented. “It was the typewriter and I generating a whole lot of paper!” In time, an in-house system was developed by a faculty staff member, and, while very cumbersome to use, was in place for 1½ years.

EITC meets Bellwether

Sandi said, “Because the system was so difficult to use, ‘faculty buy-in’ did not happen. They simply would not use the system, so we knew we had to find something that was easier. We reviewed several packages, including some that had to be custom built. About the same time we were evaluating different packages, Bellwether sent us a direct mail piece, and, because of that, we decided to look at Purchasing Management eXtra. We requested an evaluation copy, and we let a select group of faculty test it. Their conclusion was that not only was it very easy to use, it also exceeded our expectations in getting the job done.

Once we had Purchasing Management eXtra in house, it didn’t take long to implement. The learning curve was very short, people were trained quickly and they liked using the new software. This was important to us, because requisitions can come from any one of our 110 full-time and 30 part-time employees.”

Sandi commented that while implementing Purchasing Management eXtra, they also assigned new vendor codes to each of their hundreds of vendors to conform to their federal tax ID number. “That was a task,” Sandi offered, “but we had everything up and working within a month. We implemented the Requisitions, Purchasing and Request for Quotations modules, and, in so doing, we cut our cycle time in half.”

Benefits of PMX

Sandi further commented, “Because we are a state-funded college, we are required to conduct business in a certain way. For instance, we are required to bid out all goods and services. We have many repetitious items from year to year, so the material file, which contains all those items and their descriptions, really cuts down on the amount of work required to put a bid together. Everything is already set up, so the bidding process is greatly simplified and the time involved is minimal.

The reporting capability of Purchasing Management eXtra is also a great benefit for us because we have to submit reports regularly to the State of Idaho, for example, the activity report is generated monthly for the State.

Purchasing Management eXtra is a very easy system on which to train new users. The learning curve is short, and people like using it. I really don’t have to spend very much time training new users.

Some of the immediate benefits we realized after implementation of Purchasing Management eXtra were the ease of tracking activities and the fact that there were no more lost or delinquent requisitions! The software also improved our time scheduling and ability to track processing time from requisition to purchase order.

As we used Purchasing Management eXtra, we developed a relationship with the Bellwether technical staff. They are always helpful, responding immediately when there is a problem. That is crucial for us because, in our business environment, our system can’t be down.

Bellwether Software has certainly made my job easier, and I would recommend it to anyone, especially colleges and universities that operate under a special set of guidelines.”

Learn more about Eastern Idaho Technical College by visiting their web site at www.eitc.edu