



Touro finds a way to simplify procurement for a complex organization.

An eProcurement success story

The Touro College & University System knew it needed more than just a software solution when transforming its procurement process. It needed a collaborative partner that truly understood the procurement needs of higher education institutions.

In 2015, Touro replaced its existing ERP with Ellucian Banner as part of a move to centralize information systems and transition away from paper-based processes. The college initially attempted to digitalize procurement by managing requisitions through its ERP, but users resisted, finding the process too difficult and cumbersome. This experience showed the potential of managing procurement through a digital platform, but it was clear that using the procurement module in their ERP was not the right choice for Touro.

One of Touro's schools, New York Medical College, had adopted a dedicated eProcurement solution but it didn't work out as well as hoped. "Our previous eProcurement solution didn't integrate with our ERP in the way we needed. We had to put a lot of work in to make sure data went into Banner in the right way. We needed a single tool that would support the entire college system, employing one set of policies and one process. So we went on the hunt for a new procurement solution," says Touro's Executive Director of Operations and Procurement, Wanda Hernandez.

Touro was looking for a solution that could simplify procurement within a highly complex and decentralized organization. "We're a unique college and university system in that we have six charts of accounts in use across multiple campuses in five states, all under one umbrella. Maintaining as much consistency as possible is important with that kind of complexity," explains Wanda.

"We wanted to provide the same experience to all users, no matter what campus they were on. The solution needed to cater for the unique and decentralized purchasing model of



TOURO COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

The Touro College & University System is the largest private institution of higher and professional education with Jewish roots in the United States.

Location: New York City, New York

Enrollment: 19,000

ERP: Ellucian Banner

Number of Unimarket users: 1,800+

our network. We also wanted to take advantage of economies of scale, consistent pricing and volume purchasing discounts, even though we have multiple charts of accounts and diverse processes in place," Wanda adds.

Wanda knew they needed a solution partner that did more than just provide the technology. "I wanted a partner that would collaborate with us, that would understand us as an organization. It's like a marriage when you sign up with a new procurement solution. You don't sign up for a year, it's not like a commodity – you're buying a partnership. They need to understand you, you need to understand them, and the culture needs to be similar."

Reimagining procure-to-pay

Touro wanted to transition New York Medical College to the new eProcurement solution before expanding to other schools within the network. And with the contract for their existing eProcurement solution coming to an end soon, there was an incentive to move quickly.

"We had a very compressed timeline and we needed to redesign our procure-to-pay process before transitioning New York Medical College into our new platform. It was important to us that it wasn't a piecemeal approach. We wanted to make sure all of New York Medical College was on the platform at the same time," says Wanda.

Touro went with an initial soft go-live to ensure the system integration had gone smoothly before a full launch the following month. "We'd gone through a bad eProcurement implementation experience the last time so it was very taxing for us to reimagine a procure-to-pay process, but the Unimarket team was fantastic. They walked us through it all," says Wanda.

The new Unimarket eProcurement solution provides users with a simple and easy shopping experience, complete with an intuitive marketplace that users have embraced. This has given procurement the ability to direct spend to preferred suppliers at negotiated prices and has facilitated the move from a transactional to a strategic buying position.

Touro has also benefited from time and cost savings by automating invoice processing. A large proportion of invoices now go through an entirely automated matching process and arrive in the ERP ready to be paid. Only the buyer and the receiver are involved, minimizing inaccuracies and freeing up the accounts payable team.

Working towards a better solution, together

Asked why Unimarket was a good fit for Touro College, Wanda explains: "With Unimarket, everything is structured in a way that works for our larger and mid-sized schools, as well as our smaller school communities. It was important that we were partnering with an organization that understood us, and we understood them, so that we were working together towards a better solution. We didn't want to feel like the small fish in the gigantic pond where our voice wasn't heard.

"Working with Unimarket has been a great experience, and having gone through the process of sourcing a procurement solution more than once, I am extremely happy that I made the decision to go with Unimarket. We've been successful so far and I can see more success coming in the future."

Wanda concludes with some advice for higher education institutions starting on their own eProcurement transformation: "When you're exploring new procurement solutions, you have to look at the overall picture, re-analyze your business process and identify how it needs to be slightly readjusted and realigned.

"You have to step away from what your ERP needs, what your current system needs, and focus instead on the right process. That way you create both the best customer experience and have the best back-end data."

"With Unimarket, everything is structured in a way that works for our larger and mid-sized schools, as well as our smaller school communities."

Wanda Hernandez, Executive Director of Operations and Procurement at the Touro College & University System

Results



Fast and thorough implementation



Time and cost savings through automated invoicing



A familiar shopping experience for users



A consistent and compliant process across all campuses



Flexibility to cope with multiple charts of accounts

Want to know more?

Visit our website for more eProcurement success stories and to discover how we help schools like yours get procurement done right.



Scan the QR code to visit our website



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