



## Microsoft Customer Solution Customer Solution Case Study



**Customer:** St. John's University  
**Web Site:** <http://www.stjohns.edu>  
**Customer Size:** 100-5,000  
**Country or Region:** United States  
**Industry:** Higher Education  
**Partner:** IMPACT Management

### Customer Profile

St. John's is one of America's leading Catholic universities – recognized for its superb academic programs, diverse student life, BIG EAST excitement and New York vitality.

### Software and Services

- Products
  - Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007

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## University Streamlines Faculty Tenure Process Using Microsoft SharePoint

“This system makes it easier to review a faculty nomination from anywhere at any time. Our University Personnel Committee informs us that because the process is so fast, they actually have time to give a more thorough review to the applications.”

Joseph Tufano, Vice President, St. John's University

*St. John's University faculty members, like faculty at many colleges and universities, strive for tenure. The manual, paper-driven application process, however, had proven to be very cumbersome. Recognizing a need for a streamlined, automated tenure application, St. John's University commissioned IMPACT Management to implement an online review system using Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007. The resulting system saves hours of time and mountains of paperwork for tenure-track professors at St. John's. This SharePoint implementation was part of a broader initiative for St. John's University that has streamlined many processes across campus and even earned the university a CIO 100 Award nomination by CIO Magazine.*

### Business Needs

Academic tenure is a seven-year process requiring an annual application that includes accompanying documentation of the professor's yearly accomplishments, such as speaking engagements, books written or articles published. Faculty members at St. John's University needed an automated

process to better facilitate this paper-based, review-intensive procedure.

The original process required a professor's application to go through a chain of command in the department, throughout the college and across the university. On average, applicants replicated up to 45



copies of the submission and were required to back up all entries with documentation of journal articles, books, manuscripts and other support materials. With all documentation included, each application could take up as many as 60 to 100 pages and cost as much as \$200 in copying and printing fees. One professor applying for full tenure status submitted 16 file boxes with 20 years worth of support material! The process was not only frustrating and time consuming but also tough on the environment. St. John's University recognized an opportunity to "go green" by making this process easier and more efficient.

St. John's University searched both internally and externally for IT staff with the capability to develop an automated system for tenure submission and review. After preliminary internal efforts did not yield the required results, St. John's sought the assistance of IMPACT Management. After a thorough review of the university's needs, IMPACT recommended a solution based on the Microsoft Office SharePoint Server platform. Under a tight timeframe, IMPACT worked closely with the school to implement a system that incorporated highly integrated workflow functionality to better manage the tenure application process.

## Solution

St. John's University and IMPACT Management worked closely together to deploy this implementation in just five short weeks.

The new system immediately simplified the process for faculty at St. John's. A single portal page replaced the maze of reviews and approvals previously required for application review. The new system also eliminated the mountains of paperwork involved with each year's tenure application by making much of

the documentation available for review electronically. Workflow technology necessitated only a single upload of each document; the documents were subsequently reviewed by each committee member at the SharePoint site. To prevent faculty from feeling tentative about such a simple submission process, IMPACT built in automated e-mail alerts to notify faculty as the documents moved through the review cycle.

The new system's calendar and agenda functions also significantly benefited the university staff charged with reviewing each faculty application. Submissions were organized by status within the review cycle, which meant that each committee member could choose to view only those submissions that were already approved by subordinates. To make the review cycle even more efficient, the calendar view allowed each committee member to see an agenda of which applications to review for each meeting day.

## Benefits

The SharePoint system that IMPACT Management implemented for St. John's University simplified the tenure application process for faculty and reduced the time involved in overhead for staff. Committee members can spend more time reviewing the salient details within the content of an application's submission rather than dealing with logistics. As an interesting benefit, the faster review cycle subsequently resulted in more thorough reviews.

- Faculty applying for tenure now can submit a single electronic application rather than 45 hard copies requiring mountains of duplicate paperwork.

- The new system saves the university and faculty an estimated 225,000 sheets of paper each year.

- Approval committees now review electronic submissions rather than paperwork, allowing reviewers to come to approval meetings better prepared and without copying redundant paper.

- The preparation time required for the University Personnel Committee meetings has dropped from two or three hours down to about 15 minutes.

- Review time is shorter, and committee members have more business insight into the application status.

- Workflow functionality on the SharePoint solution helped to facilitate applications efficiently through every level of the approval process.

- Staff now has a comprehensive and easily accessible database of faculty expertise within the SharePoint site, which is helpful when the university is applying for a federal grant.