

With almost 24,000 students, 3,000 staff and more than 400 courses to choose from, Sheffield Hallam University is the country's sixth largest university. League tables in the British press consistently place Sheffield Hallam among the top modern universities, and of the last 18 subject areas assessed by the Quality Assurance Agency, the teaching quality watchdog for universities, no fewer than eight have earned the coveted 'excellent' rating. Sheffield Hallam is one of Britain's most progressive and innovative universities and is determined to set the pace in the 21st century, attaining new levels of quality, enterprise, innovation and customer care.

It is with this very much in mind that we need reliable and comprehensive software on which we can rely. *The Raiser's Edge* has helped us build and maintain our relationship with alumni and, more recently, corporate contacts through the storage and retrieval of information that is readily available for use throughout the University. It is an integral resource for the University that has far reaching benefits.

The database is a primary resource for the Department of Marketing and Development, through which other departments and academic schools focus requests for information. The software has allowed us to provide increasingly complex and varied information that can be easily supplied in Access, Excel, report or e-mail format. Our original alumni software was difficult to use. It was not a particularly user-friendly product — it was even difficult to achieve simple daily tasks such as printing labels. It became expensive to maintain, as we needed annual programming support to import data from our student records system, which meant hiring external consultants to undertake the work. Our manager had used *The Raiser's Edge* in her previous job and knew it would resolve the issues that were being faced.

Having originally purchased the DOS version, we upgraded to the Windows version of *The Raiser's Edge* without hesitation. Using the software, we regularly mail the alumni magazine, corporate newsletter, invitations to reunions, graduation and other events and provide networking opportunities. This careful contact and relationship management has resulted in a number of successful projects. We have used alumni employment information to generate career profiles for use in the prospectus and to support course quality assessments. Over 20 alumni recently volunteered to participate in our undergraduate open day to offer their knowledge and advice to potential students and their parents. A recent merchandise survey amongst alumni achieved a 25 percent response rate that enabled us to review the merchandise we sell at graduation. Our marketing of courses, particularly postgraduate and short, to alumni resulted in 18 percent of the recruitment to an engineering course coming from a *Raiser's Edge* mailing.

We used *The Raiser's Edge* as a marketing tool for a recent conference. Twelve percent of the bookings were as a direct result of this mailing, which, in turn, led to 13 percent of the total income generated. We were very pleased with this response and the income generated actually means that the system is self sufficient, in that it has paid for itself!

Although our emphasis is on relationship management, the system was used for two fundraising campaigns. Our income through donations is relatively small — around £10,000 a year — but the system has handled the gift processing excellently. Reports are created easily and save a great deal of manual effort. The reports provide accurate projections. The tax claim procedure is time saving and all gift handling is painless.

"We were very pleased with this response and the income generated actually means that the system is self-sufficient — it has paid for its own maintenance contract this year!"

Blackbaud Europe Ltd



www.blackbaud.co.uk

0141 575 0100 • solutions@bbeurope.co.uk