

Case Study

Take Off Educational Consultants

THE POTENTIAL OF STUDYLINK'S STREAMLINED PORTAL

Take Off Educational Consultants started using StudyLink Connect to submit student applications three years ago. Managing Director Rahul Gandhi soon realised it was an admissions platform with the potential to standardise the process across all higher education providers.

Take Off advises students and guides them through the process of applying to study internationally across its seven offices in India. Rahul has operated as an education agent for more than 17 years, and Australia is currently the major study destination for most of his clients. He works with almost all Australian education providers, helping 1,000-1,500 students each year apply and begin study.

"We are counsellors, almost like career designers. When students talk to us they have lots of questions about timing and costs," he explains.

"I have strongly recommended StudyLink to other universities – especially when they ask us how they can improve things for agents," says Rahul Gandhi, Managing Director.

Take Off currently uses the StudyLink Connect agent portal to submit applications to six Australian universities. Rahul would like to see its adoption increase further.

ONE PLATFORM FOR EFFICIENCY

Rahul's seven offices submit student applications through his head office. "StudyLink has really added value to our business because it makes this step much more streamlined," he says.

If they submit applications to universities that don't use StudyLink, his agents have to log into the specific client system. Each system works differently, and is often clunky.

When your agents log on, make sure it's with you

Find out why more than a quarter of all Australian universities are already using StudyLink Connect. Email jason.howard@studylink.com for more information or to book an online demonstration.

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Usually the agent will instead email a scanned PDF of the documents to the institution which, as Rahul points out, keeps people on both sides caught up in paperwork and provides little transparency over the process.

This can also create additional problems, such as illegible handwriting, incorrect data on the form, items getting lost in cyberspace, or universities having difficulty opening applications as an attachment.

In contrast, StudyLink Connect makes it easy for agents to submit applications to universities. Agents know they're submitting all the information admissions staff will need to make a quick decision, and can track the status of all applications across all universities in one place. It's also now possible to make payments to accept an offer through the portal, and keep a record of the transaction.

"It's like using social media," Rahul says. "If you're using Facebook you don't want to log into another channel. What makes any software work is when a large number of people participate. To get that ubiquity, it needs to be very user friendly – and StudyLink is."

There's also a significant cost benefit. "In the past, we also had to courier documents for around 99 per cent of applications at \$30 each – at our cost, not the student's. Now we can send them online through StudyLink Connect," says Rahul Gandhi.

ONE PLATFORM FOR ALL MARKETS

"StudyLink is a strong and robust platform to connect with agents," says Rahul. He believes its benefits can extend further in the global education market. "For example, the biggest advantage of StudyLink for the US market is that it's so user friendly. Agents already understand the software, which makes it easier for them to support the students and get applications."

Because it is transparent and offers a clear paper trail for audits, this also protects the industry from rogue operators and can improve the quality of service.



"For example, the university can track how many applications a specific agent has managed. They can see the experience and quality: we can use StudyLink Connect to demonstrate value, trust and goodwill," says Rahul.

It also provides a better experience for students with faster response times with streamlined processes and minimal opportunity for manual errors. And that's better for agents and universities.

Rahul is also President of AAERI, a professional body representing education agents in India. Through this body, he is working proactively with other agents to suggest improvements to the StudyLink software so it can expand benefits for the global market. And he recently formed an AAERI Education Provider Committee with five Australian universities, representing each state.

"We work together because we have common business interests and there are certain issues we need to address jointly. We discuss visa changes, anything to do with student recruitment, anything that enhances education in the destinations we're recruiting for. One of the topics for discussion is how we can make StudyLink even more user friendly."

ONE PLATFORM FOR LEADERSHIP

Rahul is a strong advocate for StudyLink Connect – simply because it works so well for his business.

"I would like to support many other universities to adopt StudyLink," he says. "If a university's software hasn't kept up to date, I'd suggest they simply implement StudyLink."

After all, agents and universities share the same goals: to ensure the best possible students benefit from global education. One easy portal for submitting and managing that process makes it simpler for everyone.

"I want to help StudyLink become the admissions portal for all education providers. I'd like to see it as an industry leader," concludes Rahul.

