

# The Sweet Smell Of Success

## *Arizona State University Leads The Way*

By Shasta Philpot

**H**OW DO YOU EFFICIENTLY MANAGE A PARKING PROGRAM for a university with 11 parking facilities spread across four campuses, and that serves more than 100,000 students? Obviously it's a monumental task. Arizona State University Parking and Transit Services (PTS) has found that the secret of success can be found through a mixture of strategic planning, working closely with the right partners, and creativity. But even with all of these ingredients, success can't be attained without the support of university administrators.

ASU was named IPI's Parking Program of the Year in 2017, due to creative new programming to better serve the university's students, faculty, and staff. That programming revolves around the introduction of cutting-edge technology, partnerships with industry leaders, and a commitment to delivering superior customer service.

The mandate for superior service actually came from the university's president, who called upon all of the university's departments to improve customer services. PTS responded by revamping the department's customer service approach, incorporating service blueprinting into its culture in 2011. Blueprinting is a versatile and practical technique that visualizes services processes and delivery from a customer's point of view.

Numerous PTS employees have completed service blueprinting workshops and programs facilitated by ASU's WP Care Center for Services Leadership. The blueprinting process led to a number of improvements to policies and procedures, including modifying the university's permit renewal and guest reservation processes to create a more seamless experience for customers and adopting the customer relations management (CRM) tool within the Salesforce application to streamline communication between customers and PTS.

### **Gaining An Edge With Technology**

When it comes to customer service, ASU has upped its game by introducing the latest parking technol-

ogies. In fact, according to Melinda Alonzo, CAPP, university director of parking and transit services, an important element of the university's success has been the addition of the latest parking technologies.

"I think the thing that sets ASU apart is our use of technology in key operational areas," says Alonzo. "We've implemented an integrated system that combines various technologies and allows us to cater to the many different stakeholder groups that we serve."

According to Alonzo, the university has been fortunate to find technology partners that are willing to integrate their products and who share the university's vision.

"We've partnered with T2 and ParkMobile, and their technologies have made a big difference in how we manage access for our campus community," says Alonzo. "Also, we've been using Kimley Horn's Park+ software, which allows us to more accurately plan for necessary parking infrastructure without overbuilding and wasting critical resources."

Alonzo says that one of the most important benefits of the university's technology suite is that it provides a more complete picture of how their parking resources are being used, while allowing them to keep track of the operational costs associated with parking.

"Now we also have a better idea of how much parking we need," says Alonzo, "and how to manage the parking efficiently."

Since the university implemented these new technologies beginning in 2015, annual revenues for transient parking have increased by almost 50



percent and permit revenues have increased by 14 percent, by improving access and maximizing the use of existing inventory.

Finally, with the addition of LPR equipment, enforcement will become more streamlined. The university enjoys high compliance, and enforcement is focused more on education than punishment. Through the university's "Give Me A Break" program, first time violators are given a written warning, rather than a ticket. The idea is to educate people about campus parking resources and how they should be utilized.

The university's parking program, including its technology package, is also focused on promoting sustainability. ASU is committed to being carbon-neutral by 2025, and the parking and transit department is playing its part. There are a number of ways that PTS promotes sustainability, including a robust intercampus shuttle that students, faculty, and staff can use to get to and from each of the four campuses. The university also offers

generous subsidies to encourage students, faculty, and staff to use public transportation.

Going forward, the university is getting ready to unveil a unique partnership with Lyft through which students, faculty, and staff will be offered subscription packages that they can use to get rides from Lyft drivers.

"Rideshare services can be an important part of a campus transportation plan," says Alonzo. "Our partnership with Lyft will provide another transportation option to help encourage a more multi-modal commuter population versus owning and driving a single occupancy vehicle. It's an exciting initiative and we hope to become a model to other schools.

### Success Story

The story of Arizona State University Parking and Transit Services is a success story that has made ASU the envy of universities across the United States. The awards earned by the program and its employees speak for themselves. In addition to being named Organization

of the Year last year, ASU staff have also brought home numerous awards: JC Porter was recognized as Emerging Leader of the Year in 2017, Alonzo was named Parking Professional of the Year, and Cathy Harris was named Supervisor of the Year by IPI in 2016. The department itself was also recognized this year, earning Accredited Parking Organization recognition with distinction. Additionally, all four senior members of the PTS team are CAPP certified.

ASU's Parking and Transit Services reflects the best of the parking industry. The department's commitment to customer service and innovation has benefited students, faculty, and staff alike while, at the same time, promoting sustainability and improving the parking system itself. **P**



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