UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA CASE STUDY

Background

Founded in 1890, the University of Oklahoma (OU) is a public research university in Norman, Oklahoma. The University's Athletic Department is responsible for ticketing and credentials for all intercollegiate athletic events.

Problem

The COVID pandemic caused the OU Athletic Department to reevaluate how they were utilizing credentials. According to Michael Beirne, former Assistant Athletic Director, the department realized they needed to know exactly who was using credentials and how they were utilizing them for each sporting event. They desired a way to better track credentials, how they were being used, and by whom, including media outlets, donors, and guests. Beirne said they needed a more effective way to turn on credentialing features for each event to give specific access to specific individuals to prevent abuse of the system.

They knew they needed more control and understanding of who was going into what spaces beyond what traditional credentialing could provide. The printed credentials they were using for home events were not enough to serve the purpose of their operation.

"A lot of it was about needing data-driven metrics when COVID hit, so we wanted to be more efficient with what we were doing with the credentials," said Beirne."

"Additionally, we were having close to 6,000 extra credentials that we were ordering every year, and it didn't really make sense; we knew we needed to be more efficient and purposeful when it came to the visibility of internal access control."

Solution

Beirne and the department had worked with Weldon, Williams, and Lick (WW&L) for ordering and fulfillment of event tickets and commemorative tickets, and they decided to use the company to streamline and improve their operation and security through credential management.

"I started asking questions—how do we make things better and change when it comes to internal access control?" said Beirne. "We worked with WW&L, and they showed us how we could use their RFID enabled Validate Credential Management software to achieve our goals."

Once WW&L helped the department implement the software, access control and management were far easier and more efficient for Beirne and his team. They could pull up the software on a mobile device and grant access to anyone who needed it in real-time rather than having to run from one side of the stadium to the office to update the system, print a new label for a credential, and then deliver it to the guest.

The RFID venue intelligence platform gave the OU Athletic Department an extra layer of security without needing to hire additional staff and significantly sped up credential fulfillment, streamlining access control and enhancing data reporting and capacity tracking.

OU deployed the credential management software for football, men's and women's basketball, and women's soccer and volleyball and will be deploying it for other all other sports as the seasons begin.

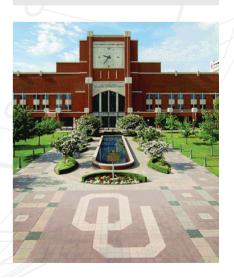### University of Oklahoma

Location:

Norman, Oklahoma

Challenge:

- Needed to be more efficient with access control
- Desire for data-driven metrics including who was using the credential and how it was being used
- Eliminate excess number of credentials that are printed

Key Results:

- Streamlined process to implement changes from 15+ minutes to 3 minutes
- Deployed real-time data reporting and capacity tracking
- Cost savings and operational efficiencies
- Enhanced guest experience

Outcome

Beirne and the OU Athletic Department observed several positive outcomes as a result of using WW&L's Validate Credential Management solution.

Streamlined Credential Fulfillment and Changes

Being able to grant and change access for credentials quickly from a mobile device without having to go back to the office was a game-changer for Beirne and his team. Validate allowed them to create, organize, and implement a credential into the tracking system—reducing the time required to perform the task from 15+ minutes to two to three minutes at most.

"We have sporting events, special events, concerts, and graduations, and each one had a different credential," said Beirne. "Using Validate Credential Management software gave us the opportunity to give an individual one credential they can use to get into all applicable events and spaces, and we can just turn it on and off and change access permissions as necessary, even on the fly."

Improved Access Control and Capacity Tracking

OU needed to know where patrons and guests were going and who was actually using the credentials. For example, although they were regularly giving close to 50 passes to local news outlets, only a few would show up to each event, which seemed like a wasteful process.

WW&L's Credential Management software gave them capacity tracking and real-time data reporting, so they knew exactly who attended the events and where they went at the venue. It also allowed OU security and guest services to quickly identify who had permission to be in specific areas.

"We could turn on access when needed, so we didn't need to give more access than was necessary and just hope they didn't abuse it," said Beirne. "Now, if the credential scans valid, you can go, and if it doesn't, then you can't go, or we can fix it with a click of a button."

Cost Savings and Improved Sustainability

Not having to print dozens of different types of credentials to cover all of the various events has saved OU a lot in printing expenses and operations overhead. Before Validate Credential Management from WW&L, the university printed thousands of extra, unnecessary credential passes and badges each year. These days, they only print a few different credential types and can use them for all events.

The new system has also extended the life of the credential. As a result, there's no need for a new design each year or costly reprinting. Instead, they have one durable, high-quality credential that has all the features necessary to minimize overall environmental impact.

"We're already seeing the return on investment during the first year and now, going forward, we're not going to have to reorder at least 50% of our credentials every year, so it's a big benefit to us financially; it's also saving us time and employee hours."

Enhanced Patron and Guest Experience

OU patrons, stakeholders, and guests also appreciated the switch to new and improved credentials. According to Beirne, it put all patrons on the same level, eliminating hurt feelings and awkward exchanges.

"It's like one donor has access to the field, and the other one doesn't, and they want to know why they have different types of passes," said Beirne. "Our current system helps us balance it out and treat everyone the same, yet we have that behind-the-scenes ability to give special access in a moment when a situation calls for it."

Validate Credential Management software also works toward creating a more positive patron and guest experience by making access at OU events hassle-free.

"You have the ability to use one credential for everything—as a digital parking pass, admission, meal ticket…it makes it easier for our patrons. They don't have to keep track of multiple credentials and tickets, so it facilitates an effortless, more enjoyable event experience."

Weldon, Williams & Lick, Inc.

Location:

Fort Smith, AR

Access Control Solutions:

- All in Books
- Badges & Credentials
- Membership Cards
- Season Sheets
- Souvenir Tickets
- Thermal Tickets
- Wristbands

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Michael Beirne, former Assistant Athletic Director