

# EMS Case Study *Texas A&M University, College Station*



## EMS Enterprise at Texas A&M University *A "Text Book" Campus-Wide Rollout*

### Beginning at the End: A Very Successful Implementation

By all accounts, the EMS Enterprise implementation at Texas A&M University has been very successful. Just ask Heather Eden, Manager of Hospitality and Events. "I believe our implementation was very successful because we went about the process with a plan and with an emphasis on thinking globally for all parties involved as we made decisions," she says.

On this campus of 49,000 students in College Station, Texas, EMS has replaced an aging system that was being neglected by the vendor (as well as a number of paper and pencil processes) and is used to manage the meetings, events and other activities in 57 buildings and (at last count) over 700 rooms. More than 350 people use the software's Virtual EMS web interface to access the system from around the campus and beyond. In a year's time, approximately 58,000 bookings are created in EMS.

The numbers are impressive, but perhaps even more remarkable is the way a small but determined group of EMS advocates orchestrated what could only be described as a "textbook" rollout of EMS.

### Consensus is the Key

Laying the groundwork for a successful campus-wide implementation meant inviting a wide variety of campus entities to participate in the software demos that preceded the purchase, knowing full well that some of the groups

might not yet be in a position to buy EMS. However, all of the groups appreciated being involved in the evaluation process and that appreciation would help pave the way for the welcoming of a campus-wide solution.

Key decision makers from 14 different departments – everything from IT and A/V Services to Athletics to Dining Services - were asked to attend the sessions. In the end, the software selection committee chose EMS Enterprise because it met their three primary criteria for a campus-wide scheduling solution.

- Powerful - An Enterprise-level system that could serve many different departments
- Flexible – Able to be configured to manage everything from meeting rooms to theatrical space to display cases and tables
- User-Friendly – Both for desktop and web interface users of various skill levels

### Fast Facts

- Texas A&M campus home to **49,000 students**
- EMS used to schedule **57 buildings; 712 rooms**
- **350** Virtual EMS web interface users
- More than **58,000** bookings per year

# The EMS Road Show

Even after EMS was selected, the committee continued to try and build a sense of consensus and involvement, both on campus and off. To that end they “took the show on the road”, doing multiple presentations in which they explained to the different entities on campus and in the surrounding community what EMS is and how it would make life simpler for them as facility users. Attendees were also encouraged to consider using EMS themselves to coordinate activities in their facilities.

## Purposeful Parameters

Ultimately, eight EMS “partner” departments were in the group that initially agreed to begin using EMS Enterprise. To ensure that the system implementation went smoothly, that group laid out a number of parameters – things like:

- Train together with an EMS consultant
- Schedule regular meetings with EMS administrators and users in order to discuss data definition and system use guidelines
- Implementation was to be coordinated by a certified Project Manager
- Established a general timeline and benchmarks
- Each “partner” would have an EMS system administrator with decision-making authority
- Two staff members with extensive EMS training and knowledge would be trainers for all departments

While it took some time and thought to put together the framework for the implementation, that effort paid off in many ways. One of the most telling was that while an effort of this size and scope would almost have been

expected to go past deadline, the first partner to go live did so a week ahead of schedule. “We recognized that this was a team effort on all levels,” says Eden. “We knew we had to work together if we wanted to meet our objectives.”

## The FAMIS Hook

One of the most anticipated benefits of implementing EMS Enterprise was the interface that Texas A&M put into place between EMS and their Financial Accounting Management Information System – what they refer to as the FAMIS Hook. Through this connection, booking-related billing information is automatically uploaded to FAMIS, greatly simplifying the management of meeting/event finances. By one estimate, the FAMIS Hook will save the Hospitality and Events department alone 3-4 hours and a ream of paper every month.

## The End is Just the Beginning

While a successful implementation is an “end” of sorts, for the Texas A&M campus it’s really just the beginning. “Since our implementation we have had two other departments sign on and others that have inquired,” says Eden. “We’re always eager to talk with groups on campus that are interested in learning about the benefits of EMS.”

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