

Anthology improves reach of higher education solutions with ISV Connect



Enabling superior student engagement for higher education

Anthology was born out of the combination of four independent educational technology (EdTech) companies: Blackboard, Campus Labs, Campus Management, and iModules, resulting in an EdTech leader that can provide a full spectrum of solutions for higher education institutions to support educators and learners around the globe. Its portfolio of learning management systems (LMS), student information systems (SIS), and customer relationship management (CRM) is currently helping more than 150 million learners, educators, and administrators in 80 countries.

“Anthology as an organization has a passion for making the lives of learners, educators, and leaders within the higher education ecosystem easier,” said Rob Sparks, Senior Vice President of Corporate Strategy at Anthology. “We create experiences that are more informed and personalized to support learning and teaching, and allow leaders to more effectively achieve organizational goals.”



About Anthology

Anthology is a leading provider of education solutions that support the entire learner lifecycle, offering dynamic, data informed experiences so that learners and educators can achieve their goals.

Microsoft Business Applications focus

Dynamics 365, Power Platform

Industry

Higher education

Headquarters

United States

Microsoft partner since

2020

Key customer outcomes

Personalized communication throughout entire student journey

Increased enrollment and retention

Augmented student engagement with career planning

At the core of its capabilities to help organizations create student engagement and streamline financial operations is Microsoft Dynamics 365. “At Anthology, we say every line of code we write is focused on providing value to higher education,” said Eric Wellnitz, Vice President and Chief Architect at Anthology. “Microsoft gives us a platform that we can build on to deliver the capabilities and value that our joint education clients need in the areas of admissions, marketing, recruitment, enrollment, financial aid, student success, alumni relations, and other critical applications.”

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Eric Wellnitz

Vice President and Chief Architect, Anthology

In addition to building education IP on the Dynamics 365 platform, Anthology also uses Power Platform to improve organizational insights and more easily connect to existing systems and data. “We are able to leverage Power BI dashboards and reporting to help organizations visualize the data in our solutions and make better decisions for their students and staff,” said Carisa Stringer, Vice President of Product Marketing at Anthology. “Power Apps and Power Automate are also core to how we look at being able to design and offer extensibility in our framework.”

**ISV Connect
strengthens
engagement with
Microsoft ecosystem**

Based on the strategic joint solution value and impact on clients such as Coppin State University, Microsoft invited Anthology to join the ISV Connect program to help further accelerate the growth of its solutions within the Microsoft ecosystem. The ISV Connect program provides tools, resources, and experts to help ISV partners like Anthology innovate more quickly, create market differentiation, and build new and stronger relationships with Microsoft customers.

“Having the ability to collaborate, innovate, and engage with Microsoft as part of the ISV Connect program, we gain immediate credibility with the higher education institutions that we work with,” said Sparks.

Working with the ISV Connect Technical Onboarding team, Anthology was able to review its offers, AppSource listings, lead setup, and deal registration to ensure the company was following best practices for reaching Microsoft customers. The partner also focused on understanding the Microsoft co sell motion so that its sales force and Microsoft sellers could identify opportunities where there was mutual benefit in solving client problems. “It took us a bit of time to gain traction with co sell, but it’s starting to create a ripple effect,” said Sparks. “We’re definitely seeing broader market awareness, increased visibility, and increased pipeline as a result of our engagement with ISV Connect.”

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Rob Sparks

Senior Vice President of Corporate Strategy, Anthology

Building on Microsoft investment at Coppin State University

For higher education institutions that have strategically invested in Microsoft infrastructure, the fact that Anthology builds its solutions on the Microsoft Cloud is a key differentiator. That was certainly the case for Coppin State University, a Historically Black Institution located in Baltimore, Maryland. Coppin wanted a solution that would help it tackle the challenges of boosting recruitment and enrollment, while also helping to improve student retention.

“What really drove us to leverage the joint Microsoft and Anthology solutions was the need to build a different kind of connection with our students, a way to personalize our relationship and engage them in a much more meaningful way, and Microsoft pointed us to Anthology,” said Dr. El-Haggan, Vice President of IT, CIO, and Professor of Computer Science at Coppin State University.

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Dr. El-Haggan

Vice President of IT, CIO, and Professor of Computer Science, Coppin State University

After investigating the solutions available to higher education and speaking with peers at other universities, it became clear that Anthology Reach was an ideal fit for helping the organization improve communication and student experiences. First, because the solution is built on Microsoft Dynamics 365, it didn't require custom integration work or patching to make it work in Coppin's environment, and the Coppin IT team could also rely on its existing skillset. "I heard about the cost and rarity of talent other schools were struggling with on alternative CRM systems, and I knew that wasn't going to fit Coppin," continued El-Haggan. "Second, Anthology had the breadth of functionality that Coppin State needed to meet its goals. Coppin State realized that because this solution would have campus-wide impact, it couldn't be purely IT-led. To that end, the university formed a working group of 50 department, IT, and operational staff, as well as another student-led group, to provide input on the system scope. Once the final list of desired capabilities was assembled, Anthology was able to meet all the requirements outlined—and more. During the initial Anthology Reach deployment, the team found Occupation Insight, an Anthology application that uses labor market data to help match student skills and interests with employment options to better map their career paths. Seeing the value, they decided to implement it in parallel with Reach. "This is now one of our differentiators," said El-Haggan. "When I talk to parents and students, we are seeing more interest in enrolling because this is not a service offered by many other campuses."

Today, Coppin State has implemented Anthology Reach, including Apply and Succeed modules for empowering student success from enrollment to graduation, as well as Occupation Insight. With improved digital student experiences starting during recruitment, Coppin State has been able to deliver on its vision for student engagement and seen a significant uptick in both enrollment and retention numbers. The university has also experienced improved operational efficiencies of a unified system, including the ability to retire a separate thirdparty system that Succeed has replaced.

“There is already a discussion on campus to potentially add the Anthology Accreditation module to help simplify and reduce paperwork associated with institutional review,” said El-Haggan. “As people use the system more and more, they will come up with different ideas for further leveraging our Microsoft investment. I expect this will only grow over time.”

Read the full Coppin State
University case study