

NOTTINGHAM  
TRENT UNIVERSITY



Case Study: Climbing the league tables through  
smart Co-Operative (Work Integrated) learning



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Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and InPlace Software attended the WACE conference in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in June 2017 and jointly presented at a keynote. This use case contains discussion from that keynote.

## A Rich history of facilitating learning in the region

Nottingham Trent University (NTU) has origins back to 1843. The University hosts over 28,000 undergraduate students and almost 6,000 post graduate students in eight schools, supported by over 5,000 staff across three campuses.

Some of the challenges faced by the University as a whole are shared with many other Universities across the globe such as increasing competition, tightening budgets, employers wanting to be more involved in the portfolio and students' rising expectations about going from completing a degree to meaningful and related employment.

To address these challenges, NTU identified as early as 2012 that a commitment to Co-Operative (Work Integrated) learning was vital.

In 2014 Rachel Heyes was recruited to manage the student work placement program for the whole of the university with a key remit of centralising the model. Rachel set out to achieve this by:

- Building a centralised team who would engage all employers offering work based experiences across all disciplines
- Procuring a software platform that would allow the University to manage all work experience activity in a much more co-ordinated manner Of course, investing to the level proposed needed to demonstrate a significant return



## Why a single placement system?

The need for a placement management software solution to manage the whole University from one place was viewed as business critical.

NTU sought proposals for a single placement solution that could support the total University. InPlace was selected due to the following factors:

- InPlace is an off the shelf solution offering a toolkit and framework to configure a system to meet the exacting requirements of NTU's diverse placement processes
- Ability to adapt and develop the system as the needs of the business changes over time
- 82% match to NTU's 'must have', 'could have' and 'would like to have' requirements
- All 'must have' requirements were met
- Partnership approach to working with NTU
- No other response offered comparable functionality

Rachel's summary of the tender selection was:

***"What's good about the InPlace team is they are listening to Universities all the time".***

***"We benefit from other people in Australia and wherever else for their system development input"***

Rachel was also realistic about the fact that just purchasing a smart technology does not deliver results on its own. The investment from the University into the system is equally important

***"We had to put InPlace to work, we had to make it work for us and we had to make sure that we could demonstrate that it was a very valuable investment for us"***





## NTU's 2020 vision

Just a short time after InPlace was successfully implemented, NTU had the confidence to set lofty KPIs within the NTU 2020 strategy relating to work based learning. In particular, the following approach and KPIs were set as a target for the Employability team and the wider University:

Business Objective - We will integrate the development of intellectual capability, vocational skills, work experience and personal insight into the design of all our courses

Related KPI - 90% of home and EU students will undertake some form of work experience at NTU by 2020.

Business Objective - Curriculum Refresh – embedding learning outcomes and employers involved in the design and delivery of courses.

Related KPI -By 2020, every course will have work integrated learning embedded in it.

The expectation and target outcome was that potential students would select NTU “on the basis that we will be supporting them into the workplace” said Rachel.

## The results so far

In the UK, and most countries, the post 6 month graduate outcome is a key measurable on the success of the University. In the UK, this is the Destination for Leavers of Higher Education (DLHE) survey, which has an approx. 80% return rate from students.

**The 2017 DLHE results for NTU represented rather exciting results**

**95.6%**

positive outcomes –  
percentage of students  
who entered work or  
further studies

**79.2**

Graduate prospects - % of students  
who gained employment at a  
professional or managerial level  
– i.e. a graduate level position.



University League tables are influenced significantly by student outcomes. As a result of NTU's investment in work integrated learning at a relatively early stage, NTU has posted 4 years of improvements.



Rachel is delighted and so she should be, the NTU executive are equally delighted. "We have been given the nod that what we are doing is good, how we are doing it is good"

**"I don't think that without the systems that we have to support what we do and how we do it, we would be here"**

## A brilliant business transformation

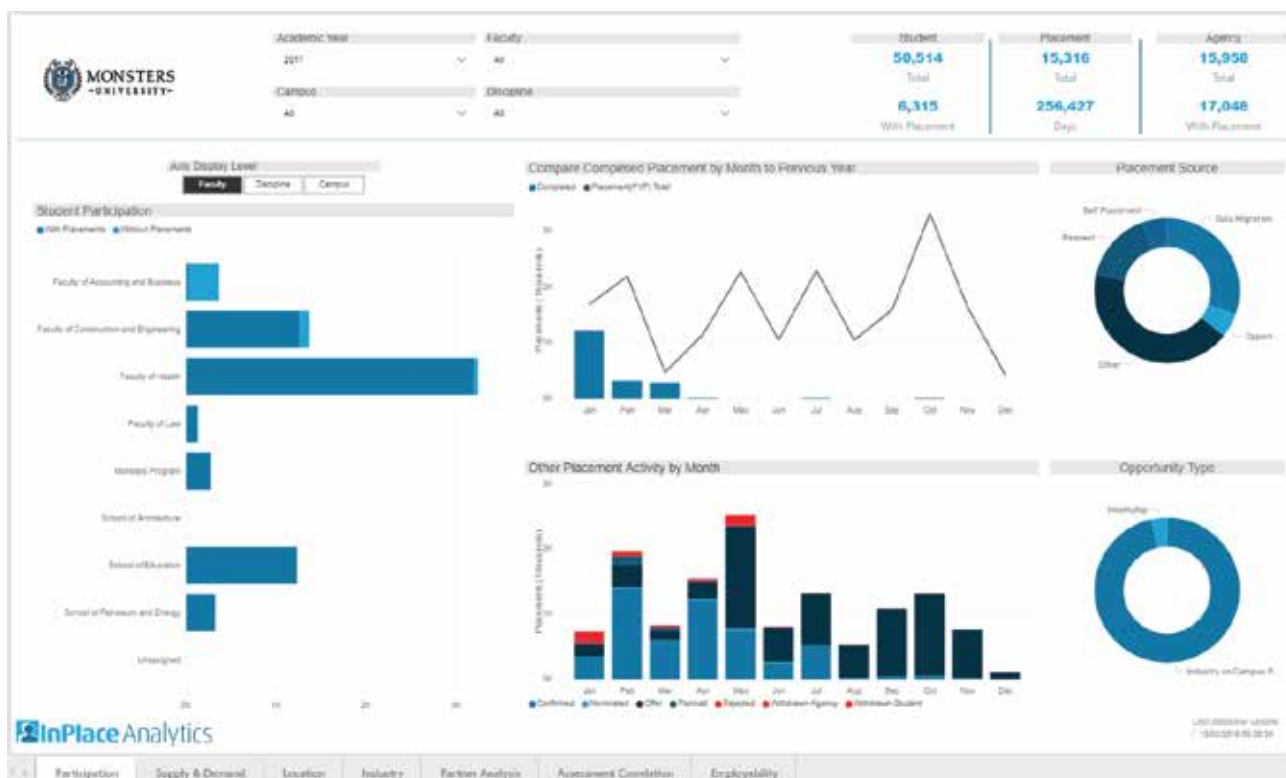
The operational outcomes and benefits of using InPlace have been realised across most of the University. The efficiencies gained by using a smart solution have allowed the NTU administrative team to become more strategic in their role.

As Rachel puts it "We moved what we had as 'placement administrators' to 'business advisors'."

"It enabled the team to be able to use that time more effectively to carry out their jobs, in terms of engaging with students face to face, picking up the phone to businesses, actually going out and visit the organisations."

"Previously their roles had been very administrative, they were very much behind the screen."

"Nobody was made redundant; it was really very much about enhancing the role of the team so they could do their job better."



## In closing

Rachel admits that she is a little removed from the InPlace day to day operations however how she does consider it to be ‘very empowering” to have access to the data that is generated by the operational system.

‘I have the data, it is at my fingertips, I get it real time and the system is clearly working’  
Having the data available real time allows NTU to deliver and measure KPI’s.

As the system usage has matured working well for core workflow, Rachel is now taking the next steps to adopt the vast array of additional functionality that offered by InPlace, “That is why I am very excited to see InPlace Analytics.”

“(InPlace) has created a package that is global, it is so adaptable – you can use it in any country across the world in any curriculum.”