

Case study reveals 100% of business students at Calvin College find PathwayU helpful in career decision-making and recommend its use.



Calvin College is a highly rated, 4-year liberal arts college in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Founded in 1876, Calvin College is an educational institution of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Calvin's business programs challenge their students to see their future work as entailing more than just a great career. Rigorous courses, real-world learning, leadership development opportunities and global study empower them to see business as a powerful tool to create a better world.

This case study reveals the results of Calvin College's survey on the value that PathwayU brings as a tool to facilitate and support student career decision-making. Calvin College administered a survey to 59 students in four sections of Business 360 (Management and Organizational Behavior) during the Spring 2015 semester. The objective was to evaluate the PathwayU instrument that the college piloted with these students.

Challenge

The Business Department at Calvin College was looking for an assessment to help enhance students' self-understanding within a business course. The value that PathwayU offered in accomplishing this, while also extending the reach of traditional career development services with the use of online tools, made it a good option. A tool that could align with and support the existing services provided within the college, and within the business program in particular, was especially desirable. Evaluation of success would hinge upon usability, user experience, value to the end user, affordability and ease of implementation.



Solution



PathwayU was created from years of research and development in the area of predictive analytics pertaining to curriculum and career paths. The results of these analytics help develop strategies that students, alumni and job seekers in general can implement to identify and pursue career paths that fit them well. The end goal of this process is to foster student success and help job seekers build satisfying and purposeful careers.

The product is a SaaS-based user portal containing assessments, personal reports, a job matching instrument, and “how-to” tools designed to help students and job seekers find a path that fits them well, make informed choices about education and career options, navigate the job search and interview process, and shape their work in ways that make it meaningful.

The online platform is the perfect complement to services that faculty, academic counselors, career services centers, and alumni career path programs offer. When provided as an overlay to the services you already deliver, PathwayU extends your reach and helps you serve a broader array of students and alumni by offering 24-hour access to assessments, tools and support that they can use on their own or with the help of an available service provider.

Results

Results revealed that 58% of respondents reported that the information provided by their PathwayU assessment reports were “mostly helpful” (46%) or “extremely helpful” (12%) as they explore their career options. No respondents (0%) found them “not at all helpful.” 100% of respondents recommended PathwayU for further use at Calvin College. Furthermore, 90% of the students indicated that the assessment results either supported their understanding of themselves or offered new insights that they found helpful and valuable.

Several students commented that PathwayU assessments compared favorably to other assessments that they had taken in the past. According to participants’ comments, **PathwayU career assessment results were easy to understand and provided accurate suggestions of job matches.** Many students mentioned that the workplace preferences assessment was new to them and the results were insightful, helping them identify key aspects of particular work environments and how they would fit into them as they embarked on their careers.

“It helped me understand the parts of a career that I hadn’t thought about before such as workplace preferences and values. But I will definitely look at those as I move forward.” – Calvin College Business Student

Multiple participants stated that the results gave them a **better understanding of what careers offer the most promising pathways for success** and encouraged them to think about career paths that they hadn't considered before.

Impact on Career Decision-Making

79% of the students who took PathwayU career assessment commented that the results had a positive impact on their career decision making, re-affirmed that they had chosen the right study program/career path or helped them to choose between areas of study/narrow their options.

39% of the students specifically said that the results about their workplace preferences helped them realize the importance of finding a good match and helped them identify the jobs they would find most satisfying.

"It seems to be 100000x more useful than the Myers Briggs. It is easy to use and to understand. The feedback also seems to be very accurate in the suggestions of job matches." – Calvin College Business Student

Additional Student Feedback

"The scores, feedback, and job matches reaffirmed the career decision that I had made. I used the jobZology tools to compare the characteristics of the career I am looking to get into to what the assessments told me my strengths were and found a favorable match-up. I also discussed this with my advisor during academic advising and he agreed on my conclusion."

"I remember thinking it was very accurate. The workplace preferences were the most interesting to me as I had never considered them before but can see how those would be important to know when looking into a career that will be a good fit."

"The workplace preferences in particular gave me great insight into what I look for in a job situation. I found the personality traits to be a valuable insight into how I should react and cope with situations that happen in my life."

"I think testing with the combination of values, interests, personality, and workplace preferences causes you to evaluate the importance of finding a good job match."