

# PROFILE

STUDENTFORCE BY STUDENTFORCE.COM, LLC

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## KEY FINDINGS

Our first response to studentforce was, “I wish I had this application when I was in college.” Studentforce has the potential to clarify and streamline overlapping or confusing aspects of college life into a single multi-purpose repository, relieving students to concentrate on educational and social passions. Here’s our analysis.

### Benefits

Studentforce not only recognizes what 21st century students need to function at top capacity, it shows an understanding of the way in which they want to be served.

1. Studentforce organizes the key aspects of the college experience including academic life, financial aid and social life into a single easily accessed service which we expect could become as ubiquitous on campus as iPods. With studentforce there is no more fumbling with multiple paper files to coordinate activities and records, and the risk of loss is virtually eliminated. Everything that is even tangential to your college life is available at your finger tips even if you are using a mobile device rather than a traditional computer (it is Apex Mobile Ready). It can even be accessed years later, when you want to tell someone about a particular novel you read in your American Literature class that was on the tip of your tongue.
2. Studentforce's design provides a user experience akin to such easy-to-navigate consumer Web sites as Amazon.com and YouTube — interfaces to which today's students are already accustomed — that users can intuitively configure it to their needs.
3. Studentforce will be provisioned at no charge to students, which allows users to test it out and explore different ways in which to leverage the application without feeling the financial pressure to commit to something new.
4. Studentforce provides Higher Ed institutions an efficient means to feed necessary information to students. For example, a college admissions office can send a single e-mail to a prospective student that either connects him or her to a university branded studentforce account that includes tasks and calendar events denoting when an application is due or when an alumni representative will be in his or her area or channels this information into a student's existing studentforce account.
5. Over time student force will save institutions significantly on printing and postage costs as many useful documents, from admission materials to course catalogues, can be delivered electronically. Studentforce can also provide institutions the ability to extend investments in systems already made.

## Processes Influenced

Studentforce provides students with the means to manage myriad aspects of the student lifecycle with an interface that combines the intuition of salesforce.com's flagship service with the ease-of-use of consumer Web technologies. With studentforce, students can now take competing pursuits and requirements and monitor them in an organized way, without losing track of important activities — a paper, project, or financial aid application deadline — in the middle of a semester.

Users have a place to store personal data that is portable and instantly available. So for example, a given student negotiating for advanced placement can immediately show an advisor an AP English exam's score to test out of freshman composition — or just as easily show a friend photos of his new girlfriend — without having to rifle through drawers of documents strewn about a dorm room or somewhere at home.

And because studentforce is student-centric, students can use the application as early as in middle school and add and configure it as needed through high school, college, and graduate school. Indeed, it morphs into a searchable body of educational milestones and other accomplishments that a student can access years after earning a Ph.D. or other advanced degree.

### Complementary products

Studentforce can be integrated with popular Web 2.0 sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Flickr, and Blogger, among others and back-end ERP, job and scholarship Web sites, FastWeb and MonsterTRAK, and

## Challenges

Studentforce is a classic long tail application—one that may be a good idea but for which there has as yet been no satisfactory business model and, therefore, no software company prepared to invest in it.

1. Parent company, studentforce.com, LLC, needs to find a viable revenue model to fund deployment. Salesforce.com sells subscriptions to educational institutions at a significant discount in line with its Non Profit and Higher Education vertical business model, and the schools could always pass on the total cost of the user seats through student activity fees or simply by capturing savings from lower overhead. Another option, favored by studentforce.com is the blended subscription/advertising model. Faculty and staff users (subscribers) would have access to studentforce without advertising while the student UI will include contextually sensitive ads targeted specifically to the student's profile. Advertising has the advantage of not requiring the institution to pay any upfront fees and offers the potential of generating some revenue for the school, which should reinforce adoption.
2. Because the ultimate user, the student, is not the likely buyer of the service (the advertiser), studentforce.com needs an infusion of cash to gain a foothold in the marketplace. As a result, studentforce.com finds itself in a predictable bind that can be solved by a sponsorship business model. The company has proposed a sponsor/advertiser revenue model, whereby targeted advertisements and sponsorships would be displayed in designated portions of a browser page. For example, an ad for MIT or Caltech might show up in a box by the page where a student logs high school calculus test grades. More realistically, vendors of products and services like the local pizza place or well defined brands from national vendors, such as computers, software, clothing, some food items, and especially record companies, could find studentforce to be a good and inexpensive advertising medium for a well targeted audience.
3. At the same time, potential sponsors need to feel comfortable that they are putting money into a viable business and in studentforce's on-demand underpinnings there are several positives. On-demand delivery means that studentforce can support incremental adoption of the solution to individual departments within a university-or even something more granular like individual classes; viral marketing could do the rest of the work.
4. Studentforce.com may also want to consider figuring out a way to entice certain high school and college-age technology-adept individuals to build out portions of studentforce to help get it more attention and to help it to become more integral in the lives of a core group of early adopters.

## PRODUCT SUMMARY

Studentforce represents a new category, Student Relationship Management (SRM), that gives students a “one-stop” application to organize and manage their typically multi-dimensional lives.

course management systems and backend ERP systems geared toward Higher Ed, such as those offered by Blackboard, Oracle (PeopleSoft) and RightNow.

Relevant AppExchange applications can also be integrated with studentforce including Salesforce Labs' applications such as Maildrop, which allows Mac OS X users to import e-mails from Apple's Mail and Microsoft Entourage directly into studentforce and YouTube Mashup, which allows users to share video lists and play videos within the studentforce interface.

## Background

Most higher education applications are geared toward administrators and faculty and feed information to students that is selected by those people. Studentforce is designed along a different paradigm in which students actively monitor the diverse facets of their academic, financial, and social lives and provides an archive of all work and interactions for later use.

Studentforce has been designed by students and developed by Ed Schlesinger whose daughter saw him working with his salesforce.com account and wondered if there was something similar for students. Schlesinger has ample experience in the Higher Ed field, having sold PeopleSoft consulting services to the Higher Ed market and the rest, as they say, is history. Schlesinger developed studentforce to fill in the gaps other systems either did not supply or outright ignored.

## Funding

Studentforce.com, LLC is implementing an advertising revenue model to underwrite the application so that students can maintain an account free of charge throughout their student life cycle. For more information, contact the company.

Based on salesforce.com, studentforce provides users with an easy-to-navigate tabbed interface that students use to track the major components of campus life including:

1. **Academics.** Tracking classes, assignments, projects, and grades; curricula or what classes to take next to fulfill requirements; transcripts, test scores including standardized test scores, and complete records of previous semesters.
2. **Financial aid.** The system also enables students to research and track university and graduate school applications, financial aid and grant applications, and internship and job searches
3. **Social life.** Studentforce can be employed as a central storehouse for tracking and managing students' social lives including all manner of appointments and email.
4. **Centralized electronic media archive.** e-mails, Web-based research, music, video, photos, and PDFs, among other things.

### Example

Students can use studentforce to automatically send grades and financial information to parents, track an internship search, send bulk e-mails to potential Higher Ed institutions, and alert them that a given project is coming due. Studentforce also provides users with charts and dashboards that can be customized to illustrate anything from tuition budgeting to the percentage of fraternities that offer bids.

Lastly, studentforce is Apex Mobile Ready meaning that students may access the application through mobile devices as well as through desktop and laptop PCs.

### CONCLUSIONS

We believe studentforce shows a strong understanding of its target users. At the same time, studentforce.com LLC needs to determine how all-inclusive the studentforce application will be. Its power and flexibility lends itself to being all things to all people, which comes with the risk of diluting its effectiveness.

Studentforce bottom-up focus on students, rather than a top-down approach of so many Higher Ed solutions, uniquely positions it to leverage the technological savvy of the current and future generations of students, who as "digital natives," expect an environment that seamlessly leverages commonly used Web-based interfaces. To them, having an application like studentforce is simply common sense.

## ABOUT BEAGLE RESEARCH GROUP

Beagle Research Group is a consulting and market research organization focused on emerging technologies and companies that will have an important impact on the way business is conducted in the years ahead. Our work is based on professional standards of quantitative and qualitative research which informs all of our publications.

### AUDIENCE

Studentforce is appropriate for college-bound students in the latter half of high school, those at university, and graduate studies level, as well as parents and guardians paying tuition or tracking a student's progress. A Campus Edition enables school administrators, teachers, university career services, guidance counselors and other professionals access to student records and interaction with the student depending upon security settings established by the school and the student.



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