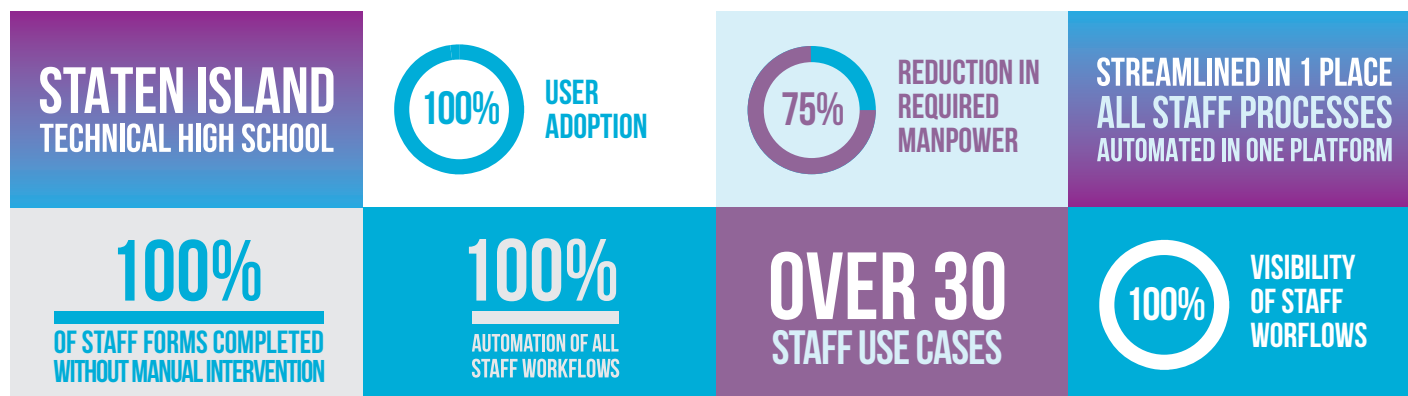# How Staten Island Technical High School invested in digitizing and automating staff processes, reducing the manpower required to perform them by 75%.

Staten Island Technical High School

Staten Island Technical High School is a New York City public school with a strong emphasis on academics, entrepreneurship and preparing students for the demands of a globalizing world. Founded in 1988, Staten Island Technical was granted status as one of New York City's eight Specialized High School by the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) in 2005. Staten Island Technical comprises 120 staff, over 1300 students, is second on niche.com's ranking of New York's best public high schools, and 57th on usnews.com's national ranking system.

But, for all its academic achievement, Principal Mark Elenwein saw an opportunity to streamline Staten Island Technical's staff processes, empowering his workforce to spend more time on what matters most – student learning outcomes.

Summary of Results

STATEN ISLAND TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL	100% USER ADOPTION	75% REDUCTION IN REQUIRED MANPOWER	STREAMLINED IN 1 PLACE ALL STAFF PROCESSES AUTOMATED IN ONE PLATFORM
100% OF STAFF FORMS COMPLETED WITHOUT MANUAL INTERVENTION	100% AUTOMATION OF ALL STAFF WORKFLOWS	OVER 30 STAFF USE CASES	100% VISIBILITY OF STAFF WORFLOWS

CareMonkey

The Challenge
Layer upon layer of manual processes

Erlenwein knew something had to change. Effectively communicating with staff, including distributing and collecting information, was becoming increasingly difficult.

"Our staff workflows were horrible," said Erlenwein. "Everything was manual and paper-based for at least some part of the process — from field trip planning and approvals, to reimbursement and leave requests. In addition to paper, we also used a mis-match of separate standalone tools like calendar apps, Google Forms and spreadsheets. This led to a lot of inefficiency and a lack of visibility.

"For example, in my outreach to staff and faculty — from acknowledging and complying with new school guidelines and chancellor's regulations, to routine policy management, or annual teacher self reflection surveys — I never knew who had completed a form or survey. A lot of manual effort was required by both teachers when responding and administrative staff who chased them down. Then, collating and using that information in a meaningful way was a constant challenge."

To make matters worse, communication and compliance demands were only growing.

"Increasingly, all of our faculty, administrative and NYCDOE compliance requirements demand more data, traceability and transparency than ever before," said Erlenwein. "And ultimately, all our mechanisms for meeting both NYCDOE requirements and the school's staff workflows came down to a human being doing something. There was layer upon layer of manual processes. And, because I have to certify that new policies and regulations have been presented to, read or signed-off by faculty, it was a constant nightmare."

" The potential to automate staff-focused processes was very exciting," said Erlenwein. "But, nobody had been able to digitize and economize that analogue labor in a meaningful way — until CareMonkey. "

The Solution
Light at the end of the tunnel

Erlenwein said that when he was introduced to CareMonkey, it was like seeing light at the end of the tunnel for the first time.

" Walking through CareMonkey's process automation platform, I knew this was THE tool that was going to make life easier for all the people in charge of paperwork at Staten Island Tech," said Erlenwein. "

But, it wasn't just the eradication of inefficient paper processes that excited Erlenwein. It was the ability to consolidate numerous workflows in one place, while customizing that systemized approach to meet the school's specific needs.

"CareMonkey can be implemented in many different ways," said Erlenwein. "It's enabling us to streamline the management of different staff services and processes we're already undertaking — from teacher support or copy center applications, to PA announcement and room requests.

"The customization also differentiates CareMonkey from other systems. Whilst the platform has best practice templates set-up to suit New York City schools, you can create the exact forms and approval processes you want.

"You can add any steps or fields that recipients need to adhere to — from payments, purchase receipts, file attachments and signatures. It's completely adaptable to whatever information you're trying to gather and outcome you're looking to achieve."

Having learnt from rolling-out "huge" Learning Management Systems in the past, Erlenwein said that Staten Island Tech was focusing on staff adoption and usage as a first priority.

"We're building massive internal trust with staff," said Erlenwein. "That's critical in order to successfully broaden implementation to parents and guardians."

CareMonkey

The school's first CareMonkey project was to introduce a digitized workflow and form to staff for its For-Your-Calendar process.

"Staff use our calendar when organizing any sort of trip or event at the school — so it's a really important use case to get right," said Erlenwein. "We're now able to use CareMonkey whenever staff book any type of event — from receiving a guest on campus, to applying for field trips. With the success of CareMonkey's staff workflows, we've also extended our use of the platform so that parents and guardians can respond to event and permission requests too."

STREAMLINED IN ONE SYSTEM

Staten Island Tech went from using five or more products, to organizing, automating and tracking everything in one place.

100% USER ADOPTION

All staff are successfully using the CareMonkey platform.

75% REDUCTION IN REQUIRED MANPOWER

"If something took four people and four steps, it now takes one person and one step."

100% VISIBILITY

From zero, to total, visibility over staff workflows: From requests and approval processes, to survey and form completions.

The Results
"The manpower behind the automation is amazing"

Since deploying CareMonkey, Erlenwein said staff adoption had been overwhelming, using the platform extensively and providing positive feedback.

"Overall, when you start counting-up the number of touch points our manual processes consumed — that is, the number of times a person has to intercede to complete a process — you're approaching thousands in the course of a year," said Erlenwein. "CareMonkey has reduced our workflow steps by 75 percent. If something used to take four people and four steps, it now takes one person and one step."

Staten Island Technical High School has created and automated over 30 staff-facing forms and approval workflows in CareMonkey.

"Not only are we receiving very high response rates from faculty, all the work getting done behind the scenes is a life saver," said Erlenwein. "The automated distribution, reminders and tracking saves so much time — particularly for our admin staff. There's no more chasing faculty members.

"With CareMonkey, you can set-up unlimited approval workflows, with each step customized to your needs. Each person in the chain is instantly notified when action is required. And, staff members can monitor the progress of their application in real-time.

"We just let the workflow take care of all the steps and hold each person to account for their part in the process. The transparency, and reduction in required manpower due to automation, is amazing.

> *Trip plans and approval requests used to get lost moving from one faculty member to another. Since using CareMonkey, we haven't lost any forms or experienced any approval process bottlenecks.*

Erlenwein said that — while staff had been vocally supportive of the rollout — silence was sometimes the greatest feedback of all, noting that he'd received zero concerns about the school's new CareMonkey-based For-Your-Calendar process. But, Erlenwein added that while silence could be golden, his secretary's outspoken reaction had been priceless.

"At the start of each school year, $250 is given to each teacher to purchase classroom supplies under the 'Teachers Choice' funding initiative," said Erlenwein. "Previously, my secretary had to work directly with every teacher and keep a record of physical receipts. When she found out that she didn't have to worry about it anymore, the look on her face was memorable and filled with joy and wonderment.

"With CareMonkey, teachers do it all automatically in one end-to-end digital workflow. They just take a photo of any receipts on their phone, complete the form and upload them. Done. It's a really huge win."

Digitizing and automating onerous paper-based workflows has delivered significant operational efficiencies for Staten Island Tech and its staff. But, the ability to consolidate different processes within one platform has also proved important.

"We used to use a combination of five or more different products to manage many of our staff processes -- from Google Forms to spreadsheets," said Erlenwein. "Now everything is streamlined and trackable in one system with CareMonkey -- from calendar integrations and reminders, updating and sharing Personal Emergency

Contact Cards, to Teacher Preference Sheets."

For example, Erlenwein meets with every teacher at the start of the year. In the past, he and his staff had to collate student feedback from paper-based surveys, which he'd present back to each teacher. The teacher then had to choose two items to improve upon for the coming year, and return their selections to Erlenwein's office as part of a professional development agreement, which they also had to sign. Those teacher agreements were manually collected, stored and included in Observation Reports, which were then returned to teachers as part of their performance review. "The entire workflow was manual, relying on many pieces of paper, endless follow-up and different apps to manage each part of the process," said Erlenwein. "This year, we used CareMonkey. CareMonkey automatically distributed forms and reminded recipients until we had all the information we needed and 100 percent participation.

"Now, collecting signatures and agreements from teachers, verifying commitments made, tracking each participants' progress throughout the process, and using that information for reporting is simple.

"The efficiency, accountability and versatility of CareMonkey is amazing. It's enabled us to get more done. From a leadership standpoint, it's helped me make people happy, productive and empowered in their role. It's the first time I've been able to do that for my people, particularly support staff like Secretaries and School Aids, at scale. CareMonkey is fantastic to work with."

OVER 30 SUCCESS STORIES

More than 30 staff-facing forms and processes are automated in CareMonkey.

100% FORM COMPLETION FOR STAFF SURVEYS

"With CareMonkey, we achieved 100% participation."

100% AUTOMATION OF ALL STAFF WORKFLOW

From distributing information and requests, to sending reminders and collating responses. There's no more chasing people or paper.

A "DREAM SCENARIO"

The school's old trip workflow involved up to 15 manual steps and many different tools. The entire school trip management process is now automated in one place.

CareMonkey

The next success: Conquering parent rollout
"The best days are yet to come with CareMonkey"

With staff embracing CareMonkey and it's paperless workflows, Erlenwein said his attention was now turning to the needs of parents and students. "The biggest thing that excites me about our CareMonkey journey is that the platform is future proofed in terms of innovation," said Erlenwein. "It provides an intuitive mechanism for our whole school community to effectively share information and communicate -- be it staff, parents or students. Finally, we're able to meet parents and students where they live -- on their phones.

"Mobile technology is the future; it's where the majority of communication is taking place. The ability for CareMonkey to be mobile ready out-of-the-box on any device or platform, without having to worry about what it will look like on a mobile device, is amazing.

"I'm tired of working with tools that have a different desktop version or create duplicate information and views for mobile. With CareMonkey, everyone has the same view of 'our' world; anywhere, anytime."

From a process perspective, Erlenwein said the future looked bright, having recently rolled-out Blue Cards (emergency medical forms) and school trip workflows to parents.

"Managing Student Emergency Contact Blue Cards has been a ridiculously time-consuming task for both parents and my Parent Coordinator," said Erlenwein. "Every family had to submit a new Blue Card form, for every child, each year.

"Teachers also had to carry around a pretty interesting binder full of student medical data when on field trips. From a data security perspective, CareMonkey eliminates the need to transport physical copies of sensitive student information, removing the risk of it being lost or accidentally exposed to non-authorized personnel. Trip-specific data can also be automatically archived, and access to it removed, as soon as an activity concludes.

"With CareMonkey, we can also digitally request and collect Emergency Contact Blue Card information from parents once, verify its accuracy with a single click for future use, and only update it if anything changes."

Speaking of field trips, Erlenwein described streamlining, digitizing and automating the entire school trip management process as a "dream scenario".

"The school's old trip workflow involved between seven and 15 manual steps and many different tools," said Erlenwein. "With CareMonkey, we can organize, automate and track the whole thing in one place -- from internal approval, to collecting consent and payments, to taking roll call, reporting incidents or managing emergencies during a trip. Having access to all Emergency Contact Blue Card information for each student on a trip, straight from my phone, is a huge win.

"For families, it means more flexibility and accessibility for parents, as mandated by the NYCDOE, and better student participation rates. Parents can submit permission or payment straight from their mobile device the morning of a trip. There's also no more paper forms lost at the bottom of school backpacks."

And, when it comes to future plans, Erlenwein said that CareMonkey's vision for the continued evolution of the platform was one of the most exciting aspects of working with the product.

> " The future of CareMonkey two years from now excites me; the product direction is very exciting," said Erlenwein. "While present day has been absolutely amazing, the best days are yet to come with CareMonkey. "