

▶ BrightArrow® Digital Voice Dialer

Interview with Venture Academy, 2011

OVERVIEW

The Venture Academy, a Charter School with 1,200 students in central California, started using the BrightArrow Digital Voice Dialer for parent notification in 2010.

Venture Academy was formed in 1999, and serves K-12, with different locations providing a variety of specialties in the upper grades, such as Technology, Performing Arts, Agriculture, Healthcare, and Energy.

The schools use the BrightArrow system for a wide variety of parent and staff notification purposes. Their technology and fund-raising manager, Donna Bergmen explains one of the benefits: *"The system has really freed us up in terms of being able to communicate something without mass producing pieces of paper."*

Her conclusion: *"We just love it. It's really been great for our staff to be able to have this tool. We appreciate it."*

For a full transcript of the interviews and Venture Academy contact information, reach us at 800-649-9660 or Sales@BrightArrow.com.

▶ DONNA BERGMEN, VENTURE ACADEMY



Donna Bergmen, Venture Academy, Stockton, CA

"When we were looking for a dialing system, one of the first criteria was something that was very user friendly so that most people on the staff, including our Director and Coordinator, would be able to use it. The second, of course, was cost. Our charter school funding was reduced in California last year — we don't get as many dollars per student as we used to. We try to spend most of our money on the students, and as little money as possible on other things like having a calling system.

"So those were two of the big criteria, and then the third one would be the ability to have multiple calling groups so that if we just wanted to call our high school students and tell them something, we could do that. Or if we just wanted to call the students out in the agricultural site we could just choose that group. Another criteria was that your system would be compatible with our Pathways student information system. So when we were looking for a system, those were the things that we were looking for.

"BrightArrow was the best way to go. It is really working out very well."

"It's very user friendly! Usually I do the messages as well as the office staff who speak it in Spanish. A couple of weeks ago our Director wanted to send out a call in her own voice and she was pretty nervous about it. But once she saw how easy it was, she said 'Oh, this is really easy!'



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It was important that it was simple because it made her feel better. She said 'Oh, yeah, I can do this.' That was very important.

"Before using the BrightArrow system, we would try to get information out by sending paper flyers home, which didn't always make it home. Sometimes people had moved and we'd get back mail where they kept their phone number but they changed their address. We've tried e-mail, but we would get at least half of the e-mails bouncing back to us as invalid.

"The BrightArrow phone calling system, to us, was the best way to communicate information to parents.

"Being able to call by groups is a very nice feature in the BrightArrow system. We have Spanish-speaking families, and so we have grouped

the Spanish-speaking families in K-8 and 9-12, which is really important because when we send out phone calls sometimes we are sending them out just to high schools and just to lower grades. It's just really convenient when we can just click on the Spanish or click on the English and group them, and that's the other part that is convenient about BrightArrow – being able to send to multiple groups at the same time. Being able to group them all together is really, really nice because it is very much of a time saving aspect for us. It really is a very nice feature in the BrightArrow system.

"As far as customer support, you guys have been great. You responded quickly when we asked, you provided references for us to get in touch with when we first were looking at system. It's very easy to work with you guys. Very, very easy.



"For the staff here, having a phone calling system instead of using paper has been really kind of a freeing thing. For example, just today we were talking about the high school exit exam. Normally we would have said, 'well, we'll need to print out X number of pieces of paper. Should we mail it bulk? And so on.' It was much more of

an ordeal. Now it's just a matter of making a phone call.

"We went with BrightArrow because it met all of our criteria: It was user friendly, compatible with our student system, allowed us multiple groups, and was very cost-effective... We just love it."

DONNA BERGMEN, VENTURE ACADEMY



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