

Mark Fitzgerald, director of customer care at Boise State University, is one of the founding members of the Higher Education Forum.

At the HDI 2004 Conference & Expo, several higher education institutions met to discuss the possibility of creating a group like the Forum, and what it would mean to put together something of value for the higher education support vertical. Mark attended this brainstorming session and helped to create the Forum model that exists today. The Forum continues to evolve in response to its members needs, and the addition of a steering committee ensures that selected meeting topics are timely and worthwhile to the entire group.

The Higher Education Forum members meet three times per year—once during the HDI Annual Conference & Expo, plus two separate meetings in the summer and fall—to discuss topics of special interest to their industry. A focused agenda ensures participation, active problem-solving, and the sharing of real-world solutions for specific topics selected by the Forum members and HDI. Each meeting is hosted by a member campus, allowing for an extensive support center tour, as well as the opportunity to become familiar with different campus environments. “Over the years, it’s been so powerful to have the opportunity to tour other campuses and see in person what my peers are doing, how their environments are changing and how they are solving the issues they face, especially since those are the exact same things I am dealing with. *The Forum provides me with the ability to step into other campus’ support centers – it’s really incredible,*” said Mark.

Working Together to Create Results-Driven, Best Practice Solutions for Higher Education

- **Forums focus on providing real solutions to their members.** Although response times, escalations, and password resets are common to the industry as a whole, there are other topics exclusive to higher education, such as online and hybrid support for online classes, social networking, and device diversity, that members can discuss in-depth at meetings or in their online community. “I used the group’s email distribution list to ask fellow members about implementing online course evaluations. Immediate replies from group members provided me with a lot of information quickly: what products and tools were being used and how to develop a successful process implementation plan,” said Mark. “I was able to go back to the committee working on this project at Boise State and share this information and other university’s recommendations. This advice from fellow members saved my team countless hours of research, planning time, and implementation headaches.”



Mark Fitzgerald,
 Director of Customer Care
 Boise State University
 Higher Education Forum
 member since 2004
 Steering Committee
 member since 2005

**About the Boise State
 University User Services
 Center**

Location: Boise, Idaho

Number of users supported:
 23,500

Annual number of
 incidents/tickets: 30,000

Number of support staff: 13

Support channels: Phone,
 email, online, and walk-in

Support delivery methods:
 Deskside, remote

Help desk tools: HEAT,
 Bomgar, Microsoft SCCM,
 and Faronics DeepFreeze

- **Because Forum members participate in selecting the agenda items that are most critical to their needs, members have the information they need to quickly implement processes that will make measurable changes.** Mark has been especially pleased with HDI's commitment to providing Forum members with mastery-level knowledge on topics critical to higher education support. Service catalogs were recently explored. Mark recalls that no one had the same definition of a service catalog, how to implement one, or how to build a robust catalog from scratch. Over the course of several meetings, service catalogs were discussed in minute detail, demonstrations were provided, and Forum members came away with a real start-to-finish understanding of service catalogs. "I not only understand service catalogs and how to build one for my institution, but I see measurable improvement in our services because our catalog continues to mature," said Mark.

A Rewarding, Productive Professional Community

- **Prestige for individuals and their institutions in leading the way for better technology support in higher education.** Reporting on trends, solutions, and benchmarking data against other forum members to Boise State's leadership team has resulted in an elevated stature for Mark's User Services department. Now recognized as the leader of a proactive, problem-solving team, Mark is increasingly included in higher-level conversations that affect the university overall. "It's been prestigious for me to be able to say to my peers at Boise State University that I am helping to lead the way for better technology support in higher education settings," said Mark. He also attributes his involvement on the Forum to other higher education institutions learning from his team's successes, sending a critical message to the education community at-large about the innovation technology support work being done at Boise State.
- **Celebrating successes and managing pitfalls.** One of Mark's favorite aspects of the Forum meetings has been peer presentations, which allow the group to hear the details behind how support is delivered at other colleges and universities. Mark has presented topics to the Forum that includes the millennials, service catalogs, and production-worth checklists. The Forum also incorporates time devoted to celebrating successes and managing pitfalls. "At Boise State, we are constantly striving to enhance our service delivery experience. It's great to hear what has worked for others, but also what hasn't," says Mark.
- **Professional credibility.** Mark is increasingly involved in more high-level conversations and meetings with university administration officials. He credits this to increased credibility from participation on the Forum and the information he is able to share about success stories from other leading universities and from what he has seen during Forum visits to other campuses.

About Boise State University

Boise State University is Idaho's metropolitan research university, located in the state's population center and capital city. It is the largest university in Idaho, with an all-time state enrollment record of 19,667 students. The university offers more than 190 fields of interest. Undergraduate, graduate, and technical programs are available in seven colleges: Arts and Sciences, Business and Economics, Education, Engineering, Graduate Studies, Health Sciences, and Social Sciences and Public Affairs. For more information, visit www.boisestate.edu.

About the Higher Education Forum



The HDI Forums are the highest level of HDI membership. The Higher Education Forum is an all-inclusive annual membership that includes admission to the HDI Annual Conference & Expo, two three-day Higher Education Forum meetings, one Gold membership, and online tools that keep you connected to the Forum group year-round. Forum meetings are codeveloped by the HDI staff and Forum members, hosted by a participating institution of higher education, and specifically targeted to higher education. These three-day events focus on the operational, strategic, tactical, and professional development needs that are necessary to optimally run a complex support organization. Higher Education Forum meetings provide members with a valuable opportunity to learn from each other, network, share ideas and experiences, discuss benchmark ideas, and develop support center best practices specifically for the higher education sector.

About HDI

HDI is the leading professional association and certification body for technical service and support professionals. Facilitating collaboration and networking, HDI hosts industry conferences and events, produces comprehensive publications and research, and connects solution providers with practitioners, while certifying and training thousands of professionals each year.

HDI serves a community of over 110,000 members, followers, customers, solution providers, and contributors throughout the service industry, supporting sixty local chapters across North America. Guided by an international panel of industry experts and practitioners, HDI is the community's premiere resource for best practices and emerging trends.

For more information, visit www.ThinkHDI.com or call +1 719.268.0174. HDI is part of UBM TechWeb, a division of United Business Media LLC.