

ESM Company Background

Who are we?

Founded in 1995, we established our roots as a sales and admissions organization for seven Colorado-based Sylvan Learning Centers, which were owned by ESM's Chairman of the Board and Entrepreneur-in-Chief, Rick Fort, and other franchisees. It was our success with Sylvan and a sincere desire to help people improve their lives through education that served as the catalyst for ESM to become the premier provider of sales and admissions support for the education industry.

As we gained experience in call center technology, operations, sales and customer service over the years, we expanded our solutions to encompass every stage of the student lifecycle – from the initial inquiry through graduation and then on to the workplace. We act as an extension of a school's in-house teams, including admissions, student services and career placement. Our solutions help schools enroll, graduate and place more students, faster.

We focus exclusively on serving the needs of the education market, specifically entrepreneurially minded and growth-oriented higher education institutions in the for-profit, non-profit and continuing education sectors. We understand the challenges and opportunities our customers face. We are not just another vendor to them, but rather a partner with a vested interest in their success.

We operate out of four U.S. locations, including three in Colorado and one in Ohio. We have more than 600 employees, the vast majority of whom are on the phone talking with students every day.

What do we do?

We operate the largest education-only call center in the country, delivering rapid, cost-effective lead processing with high contact rates and strong conversion rates. Additionally, we provide student retention solutions to improve graduation rates, career placement services to help students succeed professionally and continuing education services to reinforce alumni relationships. Our solutions are designed to help schools maximize their admissions and marketing investment.

Enrollment Solutions

We provide inbound and outbound services, which include lead qualification and transfer to the school's admissions advisors, appointment setting for campus visits, application generation, and full outsourced enrollment. Our teams build relationships with students to guide them through the enrollment process so they don't get lost in the multitude of steps between the initial inquiry and the start of classes.

Retention Solutions

We have studied student attrition and identified three primary factors that affect the likelihood of successful completion – attitudinal, behavioral and situational. Based on information we gather from the school's advisors and the student, we develop an individualized calling profile (e.g., weekly, monthly, end-of-term). Next, we collaborate to identify key triggers that will notify us when additional outreach is required (e.g., failed test, lack of attendance). After making contact, we transfer the student to the appropriate resource within the institution (e.g., financial aid, academic advisor).



Career Services Solutions

We foster employer relationships so that schools can improve the rate at which graduates get jobs in their fields of study. We facilitate the career services process through entrance interviews, employer engagements, internship/externship placement, job fairs, job board scanning, interview setting, and tracking and reporting. This is becoming increasingly important as schools face accreditation challenges when their graduates can't find jobs.

Continuing Education Solutions

We help schools develop and maintain relationships with alumni that can foster their involvement, encourage continuing education and identify friends and family who may become future, satisfied graduates. The net effect is a combination of goodwill and the potential for increased revenue.

How do we do it?

Our people, processes and technology make ESM unique and our solutions effective. We invest heavily in these areas to drive the results our customers not only want, but expect.

People Focused on Education

Our people have significant experience and expertise in the education industry and in student behavior. They are uniquely qualified and knowledgeable, having met rigorous hiring and training standards. The majority of the teams at ESM are school-specific, meaning they are working for one school and one school only. This enables our reps to become well-versed in a school's specific programs and student types, and to represent that institution the way it represents itself. Because our agents love what they do, they create a great first impression, which contributes to a more successful student experience.

Superior Processes

Our exclusive focus on education has helped ESM hone its processes and develop industry best practices that integrate seamlessly with a school's current operations. We emphasize productivity and performance, strive for continuous improvement and align our success with the school's success.

Performance-Enhancing Technology

Using innovative inbound and outbound call center technology combined with alternative contact strategies like chat and text, we can reach more students faster. For example, our Speed to Lead[®] technology attempts first contact typically within three minutes of inquiry submission. In addition, we are able to integrate with a school's existing systems, including their customer relationship management (CRM) system, student information system (SIS) and learning management system (LMS). We deliver customized, rapid implementation, as well as the highest levels of scalability and stability.

Why do we do it?

At ESM, we have both external and internal missions: to partner with educational institutions to help students achieve success and realize their dreams; and to create a winning environment within a culture of excellence. These philosophies are embodied in everything we do, and they are the reasons why so many people come to work for ESM and stay long term.

ESM Fast Facts

2009 Statistics

The strength of our people, processes and technology enabled us to handle approximately 8 million inquiries in 2009. Additionally, we accomplished the following:

- 57,915,732 inbound and outbound calls handled on behalf of our clients, equating to 38,423,037 minutes spent on the phone, or roughly 73 years spent on the phone in just a single year
- More than 500,000 transfers connecting students with educational institutions
- 14,000 appointments set for students to meet with a college advisor
- 11,300 applications taken for college admissions

Key Company Milestones and Accomplishments

Since our inception in 1995, ESM has grown from two employees to more than 600 employees in four U.S. locations – three in Colorado and one in Ohio. At ESM, we believe in providing a culture of excellence by supporting our work family and engaging in local and global outreach. Our people are passionate about what they do and have a sincere desire to help others – this translates into not only a thriving business, but also a stronger community.

- We have been voted one of Colorado's Top Ten Best Companies to Work For three years in a row.
- We have been voted as one of Ohio's Best Companies to Work For after less than two years in the Columbus market.
- We've evolved from an admissions and sales organization to a provider of student lifecycle solutions to keep students engaged from prospect to placement, ultimately helping them achieve success and realize their dreams.
- We are a Gold Level supporter of the Imagine America Foundation, contributing to the organization's 21st Century Workforce Fund for scholarship programs and research.
- Our employees have donated time and money to the following charitable organizations:
 - American Red Cross, UNICEF and UMCOR for the Haitian crisis
 - Libraries for Kenya/Uganda
 - Pennies for People
 - Kenya Scope
 - Race for the Cure
 - KBDI PBS
 - Earth Day
 - Habitat for Humanity
 - Boys Hope Girls Hope
 - Tennyson House
 - Mile Hi United Way Youth Success
 - Denver Rescue Mission
 - Ohio Connections
 - Ohio Make a Difference Day



ESM Executive Management Team

Rick Fort, *Chairman of the Board and Entrepreneur-in-Chief*

After a 12-year career in Human Resources with Fortune 500 companies in the aerospace and telecommunications industries, Rick moved into the world of education when he bought a Sylvan Learning Center franchise. In 1995, he founded a customer contact center for a handful of Sylvan Learning Centers in Colorado, which grew into ESM. On July 1, 2010 Rick made the transition from his role as CEO to Chairman of the Board and Entrepreneur-in-Chief. Rick earned a bachelor's degree from Louisiana State University, a master's degree from Northeast Louisiana University and is currently working on his Ph.D. in organizational psychology as an online student at Walden University. In recent years, his adventurous spirit has led him to the Galapagos Islands and the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro. In the summers, you might find him on the golf course or tooling around the Colorado Rockies on his motorcycle. His emphasis on building a winning environment and shaping a culture of excellence has led ESM to be recognized as one of the Best Companies to Work For in Colorado and Ohio.

Doug Kelsall, *Chief Executive Officer*

After serving as ESM's President and CFO since November 2007, Doug assumed the role of CEO and acting CFO on July 1, 2010. Doug is the former president and COO of eCollege, the NASDAQ-traded online learning services provider that was acquired in 2007 for \$538 million. Under his leadership, eCollege grew from \$4 million to \$125 million in revenue with 550 employees in four cities. The former director of the Colorado Institute of Technology, Doug brings more than 30 years of experience in operations, technology, financial management, sales and marketing for start-ups and large private and public companies in multiple industries including online education, software development and financial services. He is a graduate of the University of Colorado at Boulder and earned his MBA at the University of Denver.

Marcy Suntken, *President and Chief Operating Officer*

Marcy joined ESM in January 2009 with over 20 years of executive leadership experience in the education field. She became ESM's President and COO on July 1, 2010. Marcy was most recently president of Knowledge Learning Corporation's School Partnership division (formerly owned by Aramark). During her 16-year tenure she had responsibility for sales and business development, operations and ultimately general management of the division. She participated in multiple acquisitions, three of which were specific to her division and resulted in annual revenue growth from \$55M to approximately \$100M. Her entire career has been in the education industry with client-centric organizations and she brings a wealth of experience in account management, strategic planning and operations to ESM. Marcy holds a master's degree in education from Iowa State University.

Murray Smith, *Chief Marketing Officer*

Prior to joining ESM in 2003, Murray spent 25 years in sales and marketing at both large and small companies including Dun & Bradstreet, Wang Laboratories, MCI, KN Energy, Convergent Communications and Qwest. He has a broad range of professional experience, including direct sales, marketing, sales support, product development, corporate communications and executive management. Murray holds an MBA from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

Paul Konkel, *Chief Information Officer*

Paul has two decades of experience leading operations and technology teams to produce peak levels of performance, service delivery and profitability. His core areas of senior IT executive expertise include strategic planning and execution, business intelligence and analytics, call center operations, process improvement, IT service management, and software and system development. Throughout his career, Paul has held senior leadership positions at Experian, MetaSig6 Advisors, True Logic Financial Corporation, Narex Inc., Mellon Ventures, and AUB- IVY Group Inc. In addition to earning engineering and developer certifications from Microsoft, Cisco and PeopleSoft (Oracle), Paul is Six Sigma certified and has a degree in Economics from the University of Pennsylvania. He also holds several advisory positions with various small to mid-size technology, call center and manufacturing companies.

Media Contact: Kristi Emerson ■ 303.885.9896 ■ kemerson@esm-sls.com