



## CUSTOMER STORY: VMI Alumni Agencies

*“I view VMI’s relationship with Blackbaud as a partnership — one that is constantly evolving. We are not constrained by a budget. We could buy any software program available. But after looking at the overall cost, maintenance, training and flexibility, the obvious choice for VMI was Blackbaud.”*

— David Prasnicki,  
Chief Financial Officer,  
Virginia Military Institute

Founded in 1839, the Virginia Military Institute is a four-year undergraduate college awarding B.A. and B.S. degrees. The nation’s first state military college, VMI has a large alumni body with strong ties to the institution. Each spring, alumni select members of the Board of Directors of the VMI Alumni Association, a separate entity devoted to strengthening the ties of alumni to VMI. In turn, the Board of Directors elects members of the boards for the VMI Foundation, the VMI Development Board and the VMI Keydet Club.

The Foundation’s principal role is to raise money for the general support of both the college and the Alumni Association, while also furnishing administrative and computer services to the Keydet Club and Development Board. The Keydet Club raises money for athletic scholarships and capital projects, including the improvement of athletic facilities and operations.

VMI Alumni Agencies is powered by:

- Financial Edge™
- Raiser’s Edge™
- Blackbaud NetCommunity™
- Blackbaud Consulting Services

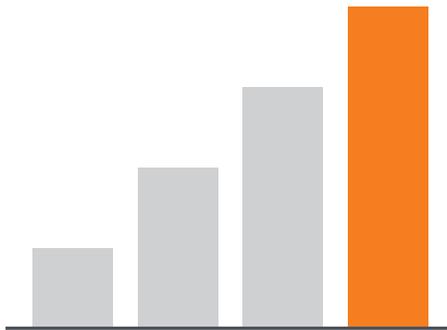
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The VMI Alumni Agencies was relying on a custom-developed solution to manage its fundraising and financial needs, which required programming expertise to access critical reports. By implementing **Raiser's Edge™** and **Financial Edge™** from Blackbaud, the organization was able to offer a self-serve model where key staff can find their own answers to important questions. Collaborating with Blackbaud has allowed the organization to eliminate the need for a programmer, reducing personnel costs by \$90,000 annually, and to attract qualified staff more easily.

## Challenge

Chief Financial Officer David Prasnicki is responsible for providing computer and accounting support to all four organizations, including processing daily information and providing key reports that help staff and volunteer leadership make informed decisions.

VMI was using a custom-developed system to handle its fundraising and financial management. Although the system was engineered to meet the college's information needs, it was costly to run and difficult to learn. In addition to the \$90,000 Prasnicki was paying each year to employ a programmer, he was investing about \$100,000 annually on hardware and software to maintain the system.



**With Financial Edge and Raiser's Edge VMI now has ability to handle future growth without expanding staff.**

Looking to the future, Prasnicki launched a project to replace the aging technology with a state-of-the-art solution with all the capabilities he required today and the flexibility and functionality to meet future needs as well. He had four main goals:

- First, a solution that would handle the requirements of the Alumni Association, the Foundation, the Development Board and the Keydet Club.
- Second, the implementation of a self-serve model that would offer the staff direct access to information.
- Third, a decrease in the personnel costs associated with handling information requests and maintaining the system itself.
- Finally, an ability to handle future growth without expanding his staff.

"We needed a fundraising and financial solution that would grow with us," said Prasnicki. "Moreover, we wanted to be able to push information out to people, empowering staff to do more. The people who were requesting information tended to forget the time and money we had to spend to get them their answers."



**Financial Edge decreases the personnel costs associated with handling information requests and maintaining the system.**



## Solution

Led by Prasnicki, VMI Alumni Agencies set out to identify a system that supported a broad array of fundraising methods and provided integration to a nonprofit-specific financial management solution. In the end, the team selected **Raiser's Edge™** and **Financial Edge™** from Blackbaud as a replacement for the existing UNIX system.

The organization chose Blackbaud solutions because they are functionally extensive, integrated, and would support a self-service model in scale with VMI's needs. With the new solution in place, staff can directly access the reports they rely on to manage their individual programs instead of submitting requests to a programmer. Prasnicki now can provide a consolidated view of all four operations, which was not previously possible. Finally, as projected, implementing the Blackbaud solution enabled Prasnicki to eliminate the need for a high-cost programmer, reducing annual personnel costs by \$90,000.



**With Raiser's Edge and Financial Edge it is easier to identify qualified applicants for job openings.**

Choosing the right technology solution was not the only factor driving Prasnicki's decision. In addition, he placed high value on identifying and selecting a company that was stable, committed to nonprofits, and could provide the back-up support and training over the long-term. "With the Blackbaud solution in place, I know I always have back-up resources available when I need them. When I need someone to be trained, I can either bring a Blackbaud trainer onsite or send the employee to Charleston," said Prasnicki.

With Raiser's Edge and Financial Edge functioning as the organization's new operational platform, Prasnicki also finds it easier to identify qualified applicants for job openings. "When I am looking to hire, I am better able to find someone with experience with the technology. This ensures I don't fall victim to relying on a few staff members who are the only ones who know the solution," said Prasnicki.



**Financial Edge and Raiser's Edge will help eliminate an additional \$100,000 spent annually on related hardware and software.**



## Results

- VMI Alumni Agencies replaced a costly custom system with an industry-standard solution that provides integrated fundraising and financial management.
- Staff is able to get quick answers to their own questions about the Alumni Association, the Foundation, the Development Board and the Keydet Club — both individually and via a consolidated view — instead of relying on a programmer.
- The organization reduced its annual personnel costs by \$90,000 and, as the UNIX system is formally phased out, will eliminate an additional \$100,000 spent annually on related hardware and software.

“I view VMI’s relationship with Blackbaud as a partnership — one that is constantly evolving,” said Prasnicki, who keeps an open dialogue with key company contacts about the unique needs of foundations that are affiliated with state-run organizations. “We are not constrained by a budget. We could buy any software program available. But after looking at the overall cost, maintenance, training and flexibility, the obvious choice for VMI was Blackbaud.”



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