

“ FinancialForce.com provides just the right amount of functionality for a unique situation like ours.”

- Carl Herman, Director of Operations, Sales Excellence Institute, Bauer College of Business

## Success Story

The Sales Excellence Institute (SEI) is part of the University of Houston’s C. T. Bauer College of Business—Houston’s most comprehensive business school and one of the leading business schools in the nation. SEI’s undergraduate and MBA programs in sales and sales leadership are widely considered the leading programs of their kind in the nation.

In its ongoing effort to stay on top of technology, SEI began looking for an accounting system that would integrate with Salesforce CRM. SEI implemented FinancialForce Accounting in just one week. Since going live, SEI has provided its students with instant historical information, so they can spend more time selling, and has integrated the sales and finance functions to teach its students the importance of keeping all team members on the same page.

### Real Sales Require a Real Accounting System

Every year, SEI awards approximately 200 sales degrees to students who have proven their ability to secure customers. “There’s only so much you can learn about sales by reading a textbook or participating in role-playing exercises,” explains Carl Herman, Director of Operations at SEI. “To graduate from SEI, you have to sell real products and services to real companies.”

SEI students work from target lists to identify prospects and use Salesforce CRM as a dashboard for all their sales activities. Next, they qualify leads, get signed purchase orders, and either bill their customers or collect payments on the spot. Over the course of a semester, significant amounts of money change hands, with deals ranging in size from \$250 to \$50,000.

“Because our accounting processes were haphazard, our results were not as precise or detailed as they should have been,” Carl admits. “As our students began closing more deals each semester and the average size of deals began to grow, we realized we needed more control and consistency in our processes.”

## Customer Profile

### Company:

The Sales Excellence Institute/  
University of Houston

### URL:

[www.salesexcellenceinstitute.org](http://www.salesexcellenceinstitute.org)

### Company Size:

Large University

### Industry:

Education

### Results:

- Enhanced prospecting by giving sales students complete historical information on each account
- Gives students practical experience in collecting payments for sales they closed
- Integrated the sales and finance functions, enabling better customer service
- Built on the same platform as Salesforce CRM, allowing seamless integration between the two systems
- Industry-standard functionality prepares students for real-world sales jobs
- Salesforce CRM and other Force.com solutions

### Salesforce Integration lets Future Salespeople Close the Books

Looking for an accounting solution that would integrate with Salesforce CRM, SEI quickly selected FinancialForce Accounting. Not only is the application built on the salesforce.com platform, but it also works within Salesforce CRM to add billing and collections to the standard CRM process. The school now uses the solution as a key part of its sales excellence training program.

“We were able to use out-of-the-box functionality and go live on FinancialForce Accounting within a week,” explains Carl. “We now use the solution as a tool to give our undergraduates practical experience in collecting payments for sales they’ve closed.”

Regardless of the payment terms of any deal, SEI students can use the FinancialForce application to complete any accounting tasks. Many of SEI’s clients pay by credit card or check as soon as a deal closes. In these cases, SEI students use the solution to perform back-end accounting. For larger transactions—such as major sponsorships—SEI uses FinancialForce Accounting to send invoices and statements. Once per semester, SEI can easily produce detailed reports on its performance and send them on to the Bauer College Foundation—the organization within University of Houston that acts as SEI’s accounting department.

### Historical Data Provides an Edge in Prospecting

“Thanks to the FinancialForce application, our salespeople-in-training can quickly pull up any previous order and invoice, giving them a deeper understanding of each account,” says Carl.

When SEI’s graduates do get jobs in the real world, they often express disappointment with the tools they’re using. “Our alumni come in all the time and tell us that the sales and accounting tools they used at SEI are more advanced than what they’re now using in their jobs,” says Carl. “That’s a testament to the power and ease of use of Salesforce CRM and FinancialForce Accounting.”

Helping Sales Students Make the Grade“Most of our professors at SEI were successful salespeople long before we became teachers,” says Carl. “We know from experience that if you treat sales and finance as completely separate functions, you won’t serve your customers very well. FinancialForce Accounting’s seamless integration with Salesforce CRM allows us to keep all of our people on the same page as they deal with any account.”

“I don’t think any undergraduate sales program offers the same caliber of hands-on experience that we do,” Carl concludes. “We ‘pay’ our students with grades, so if they don’t get credit for a sale, they won’t pass the program. FinancialForce Accounting is easy to access and easy to use, increasing the chances that our sales students will be able to resolve any billing problems in time for graduation.”

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FinancialForce Accounting lets SEI students access historical information on 25,000 sales transactions within seconds.

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