

## Stay Metrics, University and Students Gain From Collaboration

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SOUTH BEND -- Expanding relationships with staff and students at the University of Notre Dame are helping a new South Bend company build a reputation as an innovator in its field and also proving the value of collaborations between business and the university.

Stay Metrics, with offices in Innovation Park at Notre Dame, works with trucking companies to reduce the rate of driver turnover. "In some companies, turnover exceeds 100 percent a year. Nationally, the cost to companies and the economy is several billions of dollars a year," said Tim Hinds, Stay Metrics president and chief executive officer.

Stay Metrics has built a unique package of tools, starting with a research-driven driver survey that gets to the reasons drivers quit their companies or the industry. That survey was developed with the guidance of Dr. Ying Cheng, an assistant professor of psychology at Notre Dame.

In its most recent example of Notre Dame collaboration, Stay Metrics has just started working with an information design class to help shape how survey results and recommendations will be delivered to client companies.

"We're excited about this project because we will be involved in the actual product. It gives the students benefit of real-world experience while also helping solve a real problem in the industry," said Andre Murnieks, assistant professor of graphic design. All six students in his information design class, offered through the Department of Art, Art History and Design, "will be helping to build the working space from which all Stay Metrics data will be delivered," Murnieks said.

Rather than a PowerPoint or printed presentation, Murnieks expects the project will take the form of an iPad app, making it easier for clients to move data and compare data points. Giving the client more control over the experience will make the reports more engaging and useful.

Relationships with the university have helped Stay Metrics, a small startup with three principals and only a few employees, launch an innovative approach to solving a long-term problem plaguing the trucking industry. The survey is part of a complete package of tools to improve recruiting and retention that also includes a driver recognition and rewards program.

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Hindes praises Dr. Cheng's help in developing the driver survey. "With 80 questions, some in the industry wondered whether drivers would participate. In fact, they have embraced it," Hindes said. Almost 100 percent of drivers who start the survey complete it. What's more significant, Hindes said, is that initial results from pioneering clients show reduction of driver turnover by as much as 60 percent.

It is an example of how collaboration with campus – crossing the street between Innovation Park and Notre Dame -- can benefit both the university and startup businesses. In addition to psychology and design, Stay Metrics has worked with the law school and engineering and entrepreneurship students in the ESTEEM program and is using interns to help process data gathered in the survey.

Such collaboration was one of the goals when Innovation Park opened in October 2011.

Theresa Sedlak, director of private sector engagement for Innovation Park, said: "We deeply value opportunities to connect Innovation Park clients with Notre Dame students and faculty members for mutual gain. The clients benefit from the talent they can engage in their ventures, and the students and faculty appreciate their enhanced exposure to accelerating ventures. These connections advance the Park's commercialization focus in support of the University's mission."

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