

# Case Study

## GroupSystems Success Story: San Francisco State University

### *Facilitating Civic Engagement in San Francisco*

Mayor Gavin Newsom of San Francisco invited several hundred residents to participate in an event called San Francisco Listens, hosted at San Francisco State University. Mayor Newsom and his staff wanted to provide residents with an opportunity to give feedback about his budget plans for the future of the city.

During the first part of the San Francisco Listens event, organizers wanted to collect the participants' ideas about nine major topic areas, such as homelessness, housing, public safety and transportation.

A core team would then need a way to sort and code the data before creating an interactive presentation for an electronic Town Hall meeting. During the electronic Town Hall meeting, participants would get a chance to vote on the different budget plans using audience response systems.

### **GroupSystems in Action**

The Public Research Institute (PRI) at SFSU worked with the San Francisco Mayor's Office to find almost 400 participants and over 100 volunteers for the event.

For the first part of the San Francisco Listens event, the 400 participants were broken into tables of ten people. Each table also had a facilitator conducting the group discussions and a note taker typing each individual idea on one of sixty laptops loaned by Apple Computers. The ideas went directly into a web-based database created by Academic Technology staff at SFSU.

Over twenty people from PRI, SFSU, and the Mayor's Office used GroupSystems running on IBM laptops in the SFSU Collaboratory to conduct a complex sorting and coding process.

The first tier coders took each individual idea from the database and put it into GroupSystems. Using the GroupSystems Categorizer, they were able to quickly sort over 4000 different ideas.

The second tier coders then used the GroupSystems to merge ideas by clustering similar concepts and keeping a count of the number of people who made specific suggestions about the Mayor's budget.

The third tier coders used this data to construct nine different interactive presentations for the afternoon session.

At the electronic Town Hall meeting, Mayor Newsom and an SFSU faculty member conducted interactive presentations. Participants used audience response systems to vote on the different budget ideas and suggestions given during the morning session.

### **Customer**

San Francisco State University

### **Business Benefits of GroupSystems**

- Ability to sort and code over 4000 ideas in three hours
- Reports were easily created to analyze the huge amount of data
- Everyone's voice and opinions was heard



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