



# CASE STUDY

Baldwin Wallace  
University

3 years and counting, Mixtroz modernizes  
first-year orientation at Baldwin Wallace University

# USING MIXTROZ HAS PROPELLED UNIVERSITY EVENTS TO A WHOLE NEW LEVEL FOR MANY PRESTIGIOUS COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

College orientation is a lot of work for orientation teams who are trying to coordinate with staff on all the minutiae of events, like ice breaker games for college students, activities, and crowd mixing.

Our **MIXTROZ PRODUCT**, a simple app-based tool that attendees download for easy, effective, and efficient group networking, is a data-driven solution that's been used across many Eastern US campuses such as Georgia Tech, Vanderbilt, The University of Tennessee, and Baldwin Wallace University - and we continue to grow.

In this case study, we have chosen to focus on **BALDWIN WALLACE UNIVERSITY**, a private, liberal arts-based university just outside of Cleveland, Ohio, and their success in utilizing Mixtroz with their past three years of orientation.

**We will be sharing information on such topics as:**

- Statistics on the university first-year orientation experience and the impact that successful orientations have on later attrition and retention.
- How Baldwin Wallace University initially introduced Mixtroz in their first-year orientation.
- The student adoption of Mixtroz's app.
- The valuable data Baldwin Wallace gathered using Mixtroz through the Week of Welcome program.
- The tangible outcomes of Mixtroz's impact on Baldwin Wallace University's first-year orientation.



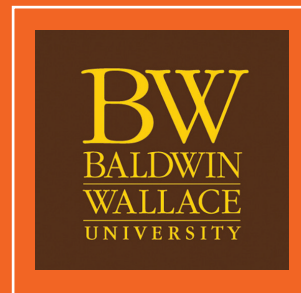
# BALDWIN WALLACE

## UNIVERSITY – AN OVERVIEW

Founded in 1845 and tucked neatly away in the middle of a historic, residential community with miles of recreational parkland, Baldwin Wallace is best known for being one of the first colleges in the nation to admit students without regard to race or gender. They value inclusiveness to this day, and their rich history has continued to drive them toward a personalized approach to education.

Baldwin Wallace University's hallmark is smaller classroom sizes, with faculty who pride themselves on being educators as well as mentors to their students. Because of the University's proximity to Cleveland, students have ready access to regional businesses and thought leaders, giving them exposure to real-life, experiential learning opportunities.

In the latest **US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT "AMERICA'S BEST COLLEGES" SURVEY**, Baldwin Wallace University earned a number of distinctions, including jumping up five spots to number 13 on the "Best in the Midwest" list, which places the University among the leading regional universities for the 25th straight year. In addition, US News ranked Baldwin Wallace number six on the **"BEST VALUE" LIST**, and Forbes ranked the University among **"AMERICA'S TOP COLLEGES."** Finally, Money Magazine placed Baldwin Wallace on its list of **"BEST COLLEGES FOR YOUR MONEY."**



# ONBOARDING NEW STUDENTS: THE EXPERIENCE OF NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

Freshman orientation prior to 2016 consisted of a fairly traditional summer orientation program and their “Week of Welcome” (WOW) program, which is common of other colleges and universities. The orientation team, led by **MARC WEST, BALDWIN WALLACE UNIVERSITY’S DEAN OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS**, prepared fairly conventional programs and events during the WOW program, and prepped his Directors and Student Orientation Leaders to guide first years through the Baldwin Wallace experience.

Like other colleges and universities, they held events during those first year orientation sessions that introduced new students to their clubs and organizations; arts and culture events; service and leadership opportunities; and what to expect in their academic life at Baldwin Wallace.

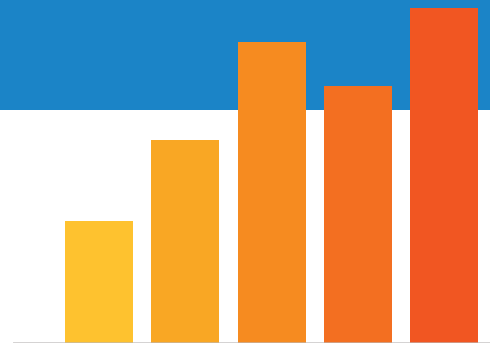
Of course, one of their priorities for the WOW experience is to “mix” fellow incoming first years together in such a way that they would start their college experience having already connected with a core group of peers and new friends. Their ultimate goal is that their first year class will become “Yellow Jackets for Life!”, and all of the different events and activities throughout the WOW sessions are designed around this concept. It is a critically important component of their first year orientation.

Baldwin Wallace University understands well that the more “connected” incoming students feel with their future classmates, the more likely they are to complete their first year and go on to complete their degree, keeping tuition dollars on campus. This is a similar scenario playing out in colleges and universities throughout the United States: prepping early in the process for student engagement that will ultimately result in student retention.

## THE SOBERING STATISTICS ON FIRST YEAR ONBOARDING, RETENTION AND ATTRITION

Colleges and universities invariably worry about retaining their first year students—and for good reason. Over the past 10 years, first year retention rates have steadily declined, resulting in only **61% OF COLLEGE FRESHMEN** returning for their sophomore year. Schools know if the incoming student orientation doesn’t **DRIVE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND CONNECTIONS** that are key to student success as a whole, their school will end up with equally low attrition rates.

**HIGHEREDJOBS.COM** confirms that the key to a successful first year orientation is to know your students. “Our incoming student orientation programs have been tweaked and improved through the years,” remarked Dean West. “Our orientation teams were doing a great job of incorporating the latest and greatest trends, but we recognized we had to do better; move faster, improve success rates, and turn out first years who were prepped and ready for their upcoming Baldwin Wallace experience.”



# INCOMING STUDENTS MUST DEVELOP EARLY RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR FELLOW STUDENTS – OR THE MISSION FAILS

One important area of the WOW experience was to nurture the connections incoming first year students make with one another. Dean West knew the latest research proves that an incoming student's success **IN ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS** is a key outcome when determining whether or not a new student will actually complete their first year.

"Our background in creating effective small groups throughout WOW was rather customary," said Dean West. "We were like other Higher Education institutions. Our methods consisted of dividing the class by last name, and then randomizing them as they entered a workshop or session."

Over time, Dean West and his team found that allowing students to choose their own small groups

resulted in a "birds of a feather" mentality, doing nothing to create diverse groups of students or groups with academic and co-curricular interests in common. Moreover, choosing student groups based on randomly selected students did nothing to connect these first years in productive and meaningful ways.

## "WE WANTED TO LEVERAGE NEW METHODS FOR MIXING OUR STUDENTS..."

"We were open for a change," Dean West stated. "We wanted to leverage new methods for mixing our students, and there had to be technological solutions out there somewhere that could assist us with this goal."

# IN 2016, BALDWIN WALLACE UNIVERSITY INTRODUCES THE MIXTROZ PLATFORM INTO THEIR WEEK OF WELCOME PROGRAM

Dean West became aware of the **MIXTROZ** platform because its co-founder and President **ASHLEE AMMONS** had been a former student of Baldwin Wallace, and the two had kept in touch after graduation. Dean West tells us, "Ashlee had served as a Student Orientation Leader during her upperclass years at Baldwin Wallace. She knew first-hand the good and the bad about our orientation process. The fact that she became an entrepreneur upon graduation and had apparently created a solution to our challenges was intriguing to me."

Kerry Schrader, co-founder and CEO came in to lead a group of fraternity and sorority members in their first experience with the Mixtroz platform. As a result, they were optimistic about its features and abilities, so they agreed to a test run of the platform at their upcoming student orientation in the summer of 2016.



# THE MIXTROZ PLATFORM CREATED COMMUNITY TO WELCOME NEW STUDENTS TO CAMPUS

You might think that your most outgoing new students are going to absolutely thrive during their orientation experience. This is not necessarily so! Even someone like Nalini McCarger (class of 2017), who went on to become the President of Delta Zeta sorority at Baldwin Wallace, had a hard time making friends at first. “As a former New Student Orientation Leader, I was able to see the effects of Mixtroz first hand. When I was a freshman at orientation I had a very hard time meeting people because I was too scared to initiate conversations. I think that is why a lot of new students struggle to meet people...they’re scared. If I had the opportunity to use Mixtroz during my orientation it would have been so beneficial for me in meeting new people because it creates an easy way to engage in conversation with others.”

**“... IT CREATES AN EASY WAY TO ENGAGE  
IN CONVERSATION WITH OTHERS.”**

In terms of better welcoming new students at orientation, they are asked to download the Mixtroz app during one of the sessions at the WOW program.



Utilizing the user-friendly Mixtroz app, students were asked a number of questions, which were then used to place them in customized groups. As first adopters of technology like apps, these questions take a student less than 2.5 minutes to complete.

When it is time for students to meet they receive push notifications showing the group of 2-9 students they have been matched with as well as a meeting location that they move to in real time.

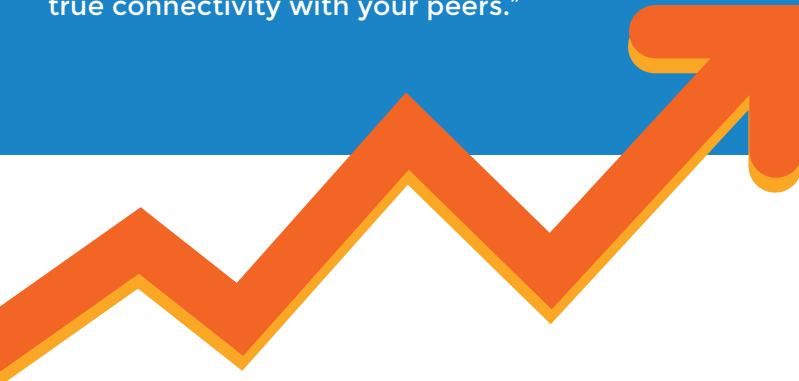
Once student groups are face-to-face the app provides customizable icebreakers or activities to get the conversations started. And thereafter, each and every new student in that session will be easily and painlessly making relationships during the first 5 minutes that will last throughout their college experience and beyond - no matter how shy or reserved they are.



# STUDENT ADOPTION OF THE MIXTROZ APP WAS NEAR 100%

Ashlee Ammons, President of Mixtroz, explains, “This generation of students uses 10+ apps on their smartphones a day. Therefore, the Mixtroz app is meeting them where they already are but getting them to a more crucial point of understanding the importance of being able to connect face-to-face.”

“Personally, face-to-face connection has been a recurring theme in my life; I landed an internship with NBA Star LeBron James through a connection I met during one of my small group events at Baldwin Wallace - this shows the life changing potential of true connectivity with your peers.”



## THE ULTIMATE MIXTROZ RESULTS BALDWIN WALLACE UNIVERSITY

The summer of 2019 marks the fourth year Baldwin Wallace will utilize the Mixtroz platform for their orientation program.

Dean West stated, “It’s easy and convenient for the students to use. At the same time, it’s uncomplicated for our staff. And it’s not like Blackboard, where you need a user manual and months of instruction on how to use every area of the program. Mixtroz is an almost effortless way to manage a session during our first year orientation program.”

Baldwin Wallace University benefited from Mixtroz’s unique take on HCI (human computer interaction), which happens when a technology drives someone to take an action in real life (think Fitbit - “it’s



time for you to move around”), improved program management, and enhanced student engagement. And they gathered actionable data from the participants that is available to use throughout the University in a variety of ways.

With Mixtroz’s experience at such colleges and universities as Baldwin Wallace University, Georgia Tech, and the University of Tennessee, Mixtroz has been able to connect education event attendees thoughtfully through a partnership of digital and physical interaction.

That’s Mixtroz - a tool that can be used any time you bring 50+ together in your campus community.

# ABOUT MIXTROZ

Mixtroz is an app-based tool that engages and improves events for attendees while collecting data for our event hosts - a 360-degree ROI. Users download the app, complete a virtual name tag and survey customized by the host. At a predetermined time, the app simultaneously matches attendees and guides the curated group connection experience IN REAL TIME! While the attendees “mix” the organizer gains the visualized survey data collected from the interactions which can be used to drive future marketing and programming decisions. Mixtroz can be up and running at your institution in no time at all. To get started working less and innovating more, visit Mixtroz at [www.mixtroz.com](http://www.mixtroz.com), or contact us [here](#).



THE ONLY WAY TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT  
& COLLECT DATA IN REAL-TIME

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