



# Case Study

# **UNIQUE**

## The Library

MidPointe's five branches — Middletown, Liberty, Monroe, Trenton, West Chester, plus a bookmobile — serve a population of about 180,000. In 2018, the system circulated approximately 2.3 million items. MidPointe offers a full range of library services including computer access, mobile hotspots, and a rich collection of traditional and digital resources for educational and entertainment purposes. Ongoing priorities include delivering new, innovative programming and services to patrons and maintaining high employee satisfaction.

MidPointe decided to look at its patron services operations. Before engaging Unique, library staff at each branch provided a wide range of assistance to patrons both in-person and via telephone. Service requests ran the gamut from administrative to help with reference questions and resource gathering.

**MIDPOINTE**  
LIBRARY SYSTEM



Before going live, Unique took the time to get a **complete understanding of our policies and practices**. Since then, Unique staff have been pro-active in seeking clarification when they receive unusual inquiries. I would **highly recommend Unique** to any library system seeking to enhance both patron service and employee satisfaction. Unique's customer service agents **do a great job representing MidPointe Library** and delivering friendly services.

**Travis Bautz**

Director, MidPointe Library System

## Challenge

Public library administrators and trustees deeply committed to the mission of their institutions are skillful stewards of tight budgets. One route to these goals is ensuring that business processes and operations are designed for maximum efficiency. This means finding ways to relieve employees of routine tasks, and sometime stress, so they can focus on higher-value activities that will deliver superior patron experiences.

## Solution

By partnering with Unique Patron Service Solutions, southwestern Ohio's MidPointe Library System has supercharged efficiency and performance in a cost-effective manner. MidPointe chose a custom version of Unique's All Calls, All the Time service model for all five branches. Acting as an extension of the library team, Unique seamlessly handles about 80 percent of incoming telephone calls and includes live chat on MidPointe's website. A majority of these inquiries relate to administrative (e.g., renewals, holds, fines, hours of operation) and technical matters (e.g., downloading e-books). When an interaction does require help from library staff — such as a human resources inquiry or a reference question — Unique transfers the call or sends an email to the designated contact or department.

## Results

Unique handles an average of approximately 3,000 phone calls and 100 chat sessions per month. Over 80 percent of inquiries are resolved without transferring patrons to another party. The majority of MidPointe's incoming calls deal with routine matters. Library employees now have much more latitude to step away from service desks, interact with patrons on the premises, and participate in programming and outreach. They can also respond more quickly to requests that require their specialized skills and expertise.

By implementing Unique, MidPointe was able to cost-effectively extend service hours. The library has been intrigued to see that many patrons engage after library hours; they are pleased to be able to provide this convenience. In addition, when the physical locations need to close for activities such as the annual development training day, patrons can still interact with the library via telephone and live chat.



Fielding phone calls in the midst of addressing patron resource questions can be stressful at times. **Now I can be more attentive to patrons** and dig in deep to the subject matter material without too much interruption, which is **the best part of my job.**

**Casey Binik-Thomas**

Library Specialist, Monroe Branch