



Introduction

When Events Administrator Olivia O'Leary and the team at New York University's Tandon School of Engineering were preparing for their return to Brooklyn's famous Barclays Center, they were in search of a new partner to bring efficiency, expertise and precision to their Spring 2022 ceremony. They found what they were looking for at MarchingOrder. Under the guidance of her dedicated Client Success Manager, Olivia used our ProNounce, Say-It-Right and GradPass tools to deliver accurate, polished name announcements in a smoothly-run ceremony that impressed graduates, their families and university officials.

Olivia's Story

After the disruption of the pandemic, Tandon was ready to resume in-person graduation exercises for Spring 2022 with a new team, at a new location. Fresh in her role as Program and Events Administrator, Olivia was tasked with finding a partner to help manage the immense organizational and technical challenges of producing a massive graduation ceremony, recognizing three different graduating classes.

"This was our first time using MarchingOrder. And it was the Barclays Center's first time using MarchingOrder ever, so it was new for all of us." To host an elite event, they needed elite help.

The main factor that brought Olivia to MarchingOrder was name pronunciation. Serving a global student body, centered in the Big Apple, brings immense pressure to pronounce each and every name properly and confidently. As a former name announcer herself, Olivia understood the risks involved with live name announcement.

"Getting the name right was pretty much the reason that I wanted to do MarchingOrder in the first place. When I was in high school, I was one of the people reading the names. I'll never forget... it was somebody that I had known my entire life, but I was nervous in that moment and I messed up his name. I felt so horrible because I know how big of a moment that is.... It was very important that we got that right. We just couldn't let that slide anymore."

Meeting Challenges

Nerves are just one risk factor that can affect the delivery of live name readers. Others include lack of rehearsal time, fatigue from reading a long roster of graduate names and intangibles like weather and illness. **ProNounce**, MarchingOrder’s professional name recording service, allowed Olivia to sidestep all of these risks and make sure every graduate’s name was pronounced properly, confidently and efficiently. No more hesitations, coughs, blips, microphone fumbles or do-overs. Just smooth, seamless name announcements from start to finish.

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Serving a diverse student body is fundamental to the values of equity and inclusion that are the foundation of Tandon’s relationship with their students. “My biggest thing with ProNounce was that it was an equitable experience for all students. We have a lot of international students at our school. In the past, there’s been a struggle with announcing names. I chose someone who specialized in international student populations. It was great... and much better than what we had had in years past. I heard positive feedback from the students. It went without a hitch.”

Behind each professional name-recording is the preparation required to set them up for success. **Say-It-Right** is our online pronunciation tool that allows graduates to record their own name multiple times, slowly and clearly, so that our readers know exactly how to say their name when they are recording. Say-It-Right comes standard with the MarchingOrder Assistant website and is included on the ceremony registration form so graduates can RSVP and record their names all in one stop.



Finally, with thousands of graduates to process across the stage, spanning the classes of 2020 to 2022, the team needed to run an efficient ceremony that stayed on schedule. Olivia and her team deployed our Live Ceremony tools to get more than 6,000 students across the stage in one afternoon, and make sure each of them felt recognized. Our suite of tools, including electronic **GradPass** and the **MarchingOrder Ticket Scan App** all work seamlessly with the **MarchingOrder Director** software (for graduate check-in and name announcement) to provide end-to-end service at the ceremony.



Training the Team

While Olivia was responsible for managing Tandon's MarchingOrder tasks, like reviewing printing proofs and graphics samples, the school would need a team of events personnel on graduation day to handle check-in, stage crossing and last minute graduate support. The Tandon team prepared for the big day by using MarchingOrder's on demand training materials and live webinars to get ready for a brief on-site prep window. 15-20 minutes before the house opened for guest seating, Olivia conducted an on-stage rehearsal with her scanning team and camera operators. Using familiar QR scanning technology and running the software from their own laptop made it easy for seasoned Barclays Center AV technicians and new student volunteers alike to run a MarchingOrder ceremony.

"It's already technology you know how to use. You already have a working knowledge of it. It's just how to implement it for your ceremony. I was a little concerned about it, but we didn't have to spend time teaching folks how to use it. It was just 'here's where you stand'. It was very simple."



The Moment

“The presentation, especially with the graphics on the screen, looked so much better. The names on the Jumbotron were a nice touch, because we’ve never had that before. The pronunciation was amazing. It filled up the whole room. The moment when the name is actually right, in a venue like Barclays, it’s a very powerful moment. I think the students feel very empowered by it. They are being recognized in the fullness of who they are, confidently and without any hesitation. You can see how good they feel.”

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The Outcomes

“Using MarchingOrder this year helped us to think a lot deeper about the systems we use and that we build out for ourselves. We hadn’t even thought about using digital student tickets or a communications portal with templates. It helped us to think deeply and intentionally about systems we can streamline and how we can do better each year. Our primary goal was name reading, but we got a lot more out of it than we initially expected.”

The Client Success Manager Relationship

From the moment Olivia signed on, she was partnered with a dedicated Client Success Manager, Kim Olson, who assisted her in planning her ceremony, trained her on how to use our tools and software, and prepared her to run her own ceremony.

As Kim puts it, “Early on in the planning process, I urge my clients to see me as a part of their team and as a resource that is available to them throughout the entire planning and execution of their ceremony. Sometimes clients apologize for taking up my time and I always reassure them that my job is to support your success and this is the very reason I am here.”

This connection was foundational for Olivia. “Kim was amazing. Having her as a direct resource who knew our ceremony details was a great comfort... She was always very flexible and available. There were times I called her in a frenzy. She was very open and real. It never felt like we had to chase her down. We got through it. We had the confidence in her to show us how to use the system.



Even during the ceremony I knew we had someone to count on, but thankfully we didn’t need to call her. We built up a relationship and a trust, with a lot of training and knowledge, that empowered us to be able to put on that ceremony ourselves.”

The client/CSM relationship is something that MarchingOrder values deeply. We want you to feel confident, prepared and empowered by the day of your event. And we’ll be there every step of the way to offer support, answer questions and help solve last minute issues.

The Response

Despite the preparation and training, of course there were butterflies on the day of the ceremony, and some doubts. But the results spoke for themselves. “People were very nervous. But the thing we were most nervous about [the software] worked seamlessly. Once they saw that it could work, then the doubters, myself included, we all came around. We realized somebody created this for a reason, people have been using it, and it works. After the fact, everyone on our team was like ‘Wow, that actually worked really well and I don’t know how we have functioned without that.’”

“We did a lot of debrief conversations after commencement. One thing there were no questions about was whether or not we were going to use MarchingOrder. We knew for a fact – from the midst of the ceremony – that we were definitely going to use them in the future. Because the quality of work and collaboration was so amazing.”

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Consider MarchingOrder

After nearly two decades in the higher education event production industry, and producing thousands of ceremonies recognizing millions of graduates, MarchingOrder is uniquely qualified to help partners of any size or scope deliver amazing graduation ceremonies. But don’t take our word for it—our clients, like Olivia, say it best:

“Even if you think there are no ways to improve your systems, MarchingOrder helps you rethink that. It’s very helpful to have a collaborator to help you streamline. It’s a lot to balance. It’s very helpful to have a collaborator that specializes in this to help steer you and streamline your ceremony.... Take the risk. It’s worth it.”





Title: How NYU Tandon Used MarchingOrder's Live Ceremony Tools For Their Ceremony at Brooklyn's Barclays Center

Client: New York University-Tandon School of Engineering

Industry: Higher Education & Graduation

Interviewee: Olivia O'Leary
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Illustrations by katemangostar via Freepik and edited by MarchingOrder Design Team

Published: October 2022