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How Managed IT Helped a Pasadena Non-profit Expand and Serve More Communities

Helping people end homelessness and rebuilding their lives is already a tremendous task on its own; the hassles of dealing with IT issues can make it needlessly even more difficult.

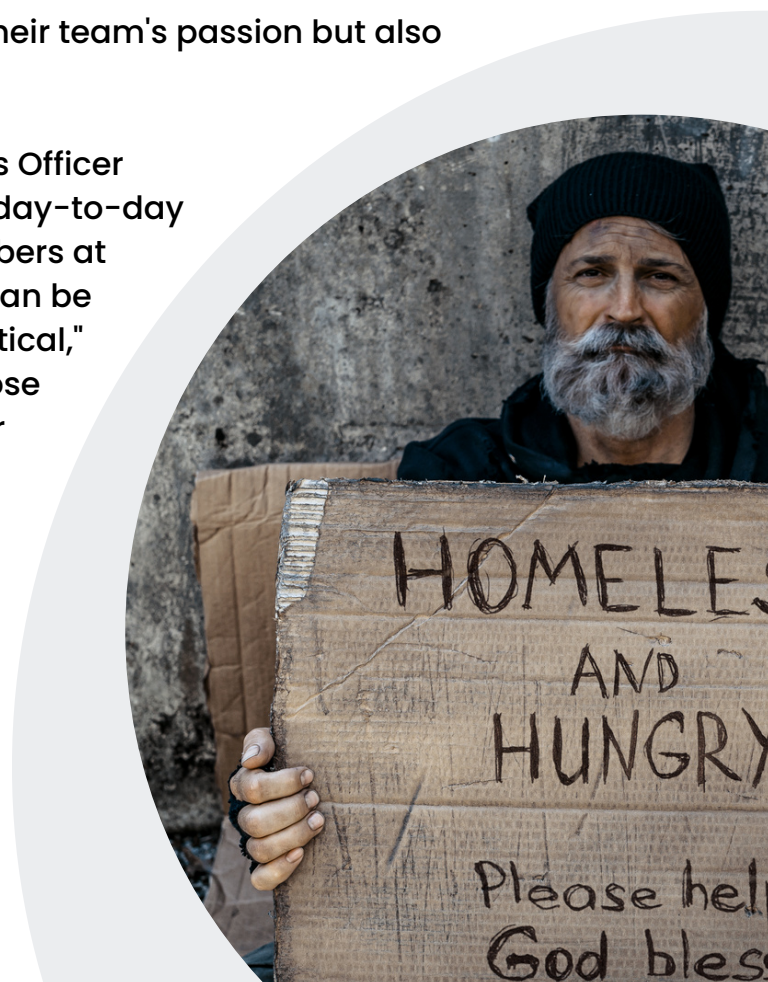
If your mission is to touch lives in your community, you want to appeal to people's humanity, not fuss over your technology. On the other hand, IT is necessary for helping you connect and reach more people. That means the more individuals want to take part in your mission, the bigger the role your technology will have to play.

That is one challenge faced by Union Station Homeless Services in Pasadena, a non-profit organization serving the local community for over 50 years. The organization serves over 4,000 people each year and has housed over 2,000.

Their mission to end homelessness relies on people coming together. However, as the lead agency coordinating homeless services in the area, they serve a combined population of over 1.5 million across different cities and communities. Making a meaningful connection with those individuals and families required the Non-profit to rely not only on their team's passion but also on their technology.

According to Union Station Chief Operations Officer Amanda Green, technology is vital in their day-to-day operations. "We have nearly 300 staff members at 13 different locations. Making sure that we can be connected consistently by technology is critical," she said. "If our technology fails, we could lose critical data for program participants or our donors. It means that we could be out of compliance or that we could fail in our commitments to our contracts," she explained.

Thankfully, they've had a partner they can count on to manage their IT in Intelligent Technical Solutions (ITS) for over a decade.





Connecting with the Community

Union Station was a much smaller agency over ten years ago. However, they have grown significantly throughout that time. They've established new locations, launched new programs, and started initiatives to serve the community better.

Doing all that also meant they had more IT infrastructure and cybersecurity requirements. Unfortunately, they did not have the manpower to meet those needs internally. Union Station only had one technology manager overseeing the IT needs of over 300 staff members across different locations. It's a near-impossible task for one person. Thankfully, they had full support from their IT partner.

"ITS helped ensure that our staff can work from the field and remotely in order to meet the needs of our program participants more effectively," Green said. "We have been clients for over a decade, and they continue to meet our needs as we continue to expand and grow," she added.

Ending Homelessness is a 24/7 Endeavor

Union Station's mission to end homelessness is a 24/7 operation. Rebuilding people's lives requires ceaseless commitment and dedication from both staff and volunteers. However, they need reliable IT to help them serve the community effectively.

Fortunately, ITS has those needs covered. That's because while Union Station's team is dedicated to ending homelessness, ITS is committed to ensuring their technology can help them achieve that goal.

"For us, the ITS HelpDesk is the most critical. Having that 24/7 support is vital in order to ensure that all of our sites are up and running all the time," Green said.

Green says that one of the things her organization appreciates about the HelpDesk is its consistency. According to her, ITS can almost always resolve their issues quickly. One of the reasons for that is because of the close partnership and effective collaboration between both firms. She adds that the HelpDesk is staffed with people familiar with their infrastructure and unique tech problems and how to address them.

That means any unplanned downtime is minimal, allowing the Union Station team to leverage their technology when they need it most.



Protecting the Ones Who Offer Shelter

Humanitarian Non-profits like Union Station are no strangers to the growing number of cyber-attacks across the world. Many often fall victim to attacks that disrupt the critical services they offer to vulnerable communities.

Union Station's long partnership with ITS has helped them successfully fend off such attacks. Because just as they provide shelter to those who need it, ITS shelters Union Station from cyber threats by providing advanced cybersecurity solutions.

"They have assisted in maintaining our cybersecurity and have deployed really successful initiatives in order to ensure that our data is secure," Green said.



A Partnership Built on Mutual Trust

A successful decade-long partnership is only possible with mutual trust between both parties. That is a relationship founded by overcoming both time and trials together. Such is the partnership between Union Station and ITS.

Because of the collaboration and the high level of service by ITS, Union Station has not had to expand their technology department internally, according to Green.

"We've had a few primary contacts at ITS. Overall, they have been very communicative, helpful, and hardworking. They also try to proactively anticipate the needs of the agency," she explained. "We appreciate that they bring their expertise to the table and allow us to utilize their skill set," she added.

Growing Together

Expanding your operations is a difficult task. Thankfully, you don't have to do it alone. Finding partners who can grow with you and help you achieve your goals can help you take your organization to where it wants to be.

"Without ITS, we would not be able to expand to the number of locations nor services we have been able to in the short amount of time," Green said.

That desire to serve more people is an admirable aspiration. It is also a driving force that compels organizations like Union Station and ITS toward growth and expansion. A feat that both have successfully achieved in the past few years.

It's a testament to the dedication they both share to deliver the best level of care to the people they serve. A commitment that will not falter in the face of adversity and one that will hopefully allow them to grow and serve even more in the future.

