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Techwise Solutions Success Story

Industry: Health Care

Client: Minidoka Memorial Hospital

Techwise Guides Minidoka To Efficient, Cost-Effective Solution

“The information Techwise provided was invaluable in helping us assess our situation and move forward.” – Larry Lee, MMH CFO

Client Profile

Minidoka Memorial Hospital (MMH) is an acute and long-term treatment center in Rupert, Idaho that employs approximately 250 people. The facility also includes a clinic.

Situation

MMH was working with an ineffective financial system. In 2000, Chief Financial Officer Larry Lee decided to replace it with a system that would integrate all financial information and reporting for the entire facility, including the clinic. The system was expected to operate as a comprehensive database that could automatically generate invoices for services provided throughout MMH.

MMH selected a vendor that designed and installed a new system, but it began having problems almost immediately. On average, hospital departments reported more than 25 separate issues; one encountered more than 100. In the first three quarters of 2003, the vendor fielded 377 support calls. Glitches led to constant staff complaints, and MMH could not get reliable service. The vendor failed to provide critical documentation, and did not quickly or consistently follow through on promises.

Critical Issue

A solution that should have improved MMH’s efficiency and service only led to frustration and higher costs. A sizable investment would be wasted unless the system could be salvaged. The CFO had to find out if it was possible to fix the fix, then decide if the solution would be worth the expense.

Techwise Solutions

Techwise, with our extensive healthcare industry experience and previous work with the exact software, was the ideal problem solver. We quickly recognized that the solution would involve more than technical skill to fix programming bugs. MMH also needed help addressing larger issues such as usability for employees and the facility’s tenuous relationship with its vendor. Within a week of initial meetings, Techwise completed an evaluation of the MMH system and provided comprehensive assessment documentation. We presented the hospital with three options for the future: upgrade and enhance the current system and try to improve vendor relations; drop the vendor and replace components of its system with “best of breed” products; or replace everything. Techwise recommended a variant of the first option, that MMH continue working with its current vendor contingent upon the vendor’s agreement to adopt specific quality controls and adhere to a clearly defined communication process with the hospital.

Results

Techwise’s expertise enabled MMH to improve its relationship with its vendor rather than attempting to patch together a solution or spending thousands on an entirely new system. In addition, we’ve helped MMH further streamline its systems and processes by consulting on IT staff structure, process and controls regarding how it should handle future software upgrades. MMH is now able to chart a stable – and profitable – course for the future.

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Techwise Solutions Success Story

Industry: Government

Client: North Dakota Information Technology Department

Techwise Leverages Broad Skill Set To Integrate North Dakota Systems

“Techwise performed exactly as a consultant ideally should. We were totally satisfied with the process.” – Kurt Wolfe, ND CIO

Client Profile

The State of North Dakota IT Department is responsible for wide-area network services planning, selection, and implementation for all state agencies, including institutions of higher education, counties, cities, and school districts. It handles computer support services, software development, statewide communications, standards for providing sharing information between agencies and with the public through the Internet, technology planning, process redesign and quality assurance.

Situation

The State needed an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution to help streamline and integrate internal processes. Specifically, the State needed a system to fully integrate and efficiently manage information and finances for both key agencies and the Higher Education System. No other state had attempted to meet the needs of both higher education and state government with a single system.

Finding the right developer depended on creating a request for proposal that fully communicated the State’s needs and required functionalities. Chief Financial Officer Kurt Wolfe also needed assistance coordinating and managing RFP response evaluation. In addition to the complexity of the project, time was a factor. Budget requirements and political pressures demanded that vendor selection be completed before the North Dakota Legislature reconvened. The entire process had to be finished in about six months, half the time normally allotted to this type of project.

Critical Issues

Wolfe needed a company with a wide variety of skill sets, including management and consulting, as well as experience with government agencies. The ability to define business requirements and create a selection methodology was critical.

Techwise Solutions

Techwise brought a range of skill combinations to the table and had a strong history of successful solution selection in similar situations. In addition, we had extensive experience consulting with state government agencies and various higher education systems.

Techwise moved quickly in defining criteria that needed to be met in developing the RFP. Once the State received proposals, we managed vendor evaluation. We moved the project along smoothly and finished it on time without significant setbacks. We did not sacrifice quality for the sake of speed, however. By leveraging Techwise skills and experience, we were able to ensure that the State would make the wisest choice as it moved into the future.

Results

The State eventually selected PeopleSoft, the solution that Techwise recommended, and proceeded with installation. The IT Department achieved its goals within the required timeline, and has been thoroughly pleased with the vendor that emerged from the process.

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Techwise Solutions Success Story

Industry: Automotive Sales

Client: Bill Barth Ford

Techwise Helps Bill Barth Ford Protect Non-Public Consumer Information

“Thanks to Techwise, I’m very confident in administering our safeguarding program, testing it and training new employees. It was the right thing to do.” – Jim Willoughby, General Manager, Bill Barth Ford

Client Profile

Bill Barth Ford is an auto dealership in Mandan, N.D. that has been in business for more than 12 years. The \$35 million a year company employs 75 people who sell 100-125 new and used cars and trucks each month and provide vehicle maintenance and service. There are four other Bill Barth dealerships in Montana, South Dakota and Wyoming.

Situation

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Safeguards Rule spells out steps businesses need to take to protect consumers’ non-public information. It extends the provisions of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act of 1999, which was designed specifically for the banking industry. The Safeguards Rule applies to any business that is “significantly engaged in financial services,” requiring them to have formalized policies and procedures in place and employee training completed. Auto dealerships are a prime example, but the rule applies to any retail store that provides financing. Jim Willoughby, general manager of Bill Barth Ford, had developed a customer information security program with assistance from the North American Auto Dealers Association. He felt good with what he had accomplished, but wasn’t confident his program fully complied with the rule. There was an uneasiness that could only be described as “a gnawing feeling in the back of my mind.”

Critical Issues

The FTC required businesses to have all their testing complete and safeguards in place by May 23, 2003. Businesses are subject to spot checks, and those found to be out of compliance face stiff penalties, \$11,000 per day. In addition, they expose themselves to costly litigation – not to mention costly negative public relations – if an occurrence of identity theft originates in their store.

Techwise Solutions

With our expertise in technology and communication systems, Techwise was the ideal partner for analyzing the situation. Our CPAs are able to understand the financial side of the business, and we have extensive experience completing these types of audits for the banking industry. Techwise conducted a comprehensive, on-site assessment of Bill Barth Ford’s internal and external technology and communication systems and provided specific recommendations for strengthening controls. We followed up the assessment with a written security policy and procedure manual. The process took just two days. Finally, Eide Bailly provided security and technology training for the company’s employees, and supplied materials for training future hires on a CD-ROM.

Results

The gnawing feeling is gone; if the FTC showed up tomorrow, Willoughby wouldn’t have a care in the world. He’s made great strides in implementing the Techwise recommendations, and has the tools necessary to regularly re-evaluate and train new hires. He plans to use Techwise for annual follow-up assessments, and has recommended our services to the other four Bill Barth dealerships.