IT RadixResource

We make IT Work for You

IT Radix and You...Perfect Together

Technology Challenges Facing Not-For-Profits

By definition, a not-for-profit (NFP) organization is one that does not earn profits for its owners. Some may think that NFPs are slower-paced and less challenging in nature, but nothing could be further from the truth. The reality is that these organizations face the same business challenges as for-profit businesses. All the money earned by or donated to an NFP is used in pursuing the organization's objectives.

Technology challenges are growing for those in the NFP world. Many NFPs choose not to rely on qualified IT support professionals to keep their hardware, software and data up to date and secure via proactive monitoring and maintenance. They make this mistake simply because their boards and donors prefer to support capital improvements over support services with recurring fees even though they help improve productivity, heighten security and reduce costs over the long term.

Just as all organizations rely on the Internet, so too do NFPs. They deal with highly confidential and personal information for many people—employees and clients. Therefore, the security and compliance issues faced by an NFP entity are multiplied here. These organizations need to ensure that their network and premises comply with a host of regulations including: HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act); audits and security standards for hardware, software and processes; and PCI compliance if they are using and/or storing any personally identifiable information (e.g., credit card numbers).

As security and cybersecurity needs increase, NFPs also need to take action or they could be liable for litigation and/or shut down, denying them the chance to serve their clients and achieve their mission. IT Radix advises our NFP clients to put a variety of security measures in place. Some recommended security measures include establishing: policies that encourage strong passwords that change regularly, guidelines for use of computing devices both in and out of the office, and rules for physically securing computer hardware and backups. While other security measures require implementing tactical strategies such as: confirming anti-virus subscriptions are up to date and patched and ensuring adequate automated backup programs are in place and monitored. Additionally, proper encryption protocols should be in place for data and email both stored on your computer and while in transit.

Another technology challenge for the NFP sector is how best to embrace cloud solutions. The cloud offers a host of possibilities including remote accessibility of highly secure and backed-up data as well as cost savings over time. However, the perceived loss of control (data is not stored on a server in the office) and the need for Internet access can sometimes preclude the NFP executive from leveraging the cloud.

Like any organization, those with NFP status can benefit from a discussion of their current technology processes and systems to learn how IT can enhance their overall compliance, productivity and security—enabling them to better serve their clients. Still have questions? Why not give IT Radix a call. Our goal is to make IT work for all our clients so that they, in turn, can focus on meeting their organization's primary objectives.

In This Issue

NEW JERSEY

If you would rather receive our newsletter via email, sign up on our website or send an email to resource@it-radix.com

BLOG

More free tech tips at:
www.it-radix.com/news-blog

Fundraising Tools for Good

A donation is only a click away! Yep, technology tools are paving the way for people to donate more easily!

Today's millennials grew up with technology, so being connected and tech savvy is in their blood. Equipped with the latest technology and gadgets, they are online and connected 24/7. So how should not-for-profit organizations reach out to this up-and-coming generation? Well, with technology, of course! Whether it's mobile apps, social media or touching them where they shop, it's time to get onboard and utilize some of these tech tools to help with fundraising efforts.

You might think that most people would prefer to access a charity's website or pick up the phone to speak to a live person to make a donation. For the most part, that may be true, but people's lifestyles are changing. Believe it or not, during last year's end-of-year giving season, 9.5% of donations were actually made from mobile devices. Yep, there are quite a few **mobile apps** for that! Some fundraising apps enable people to donate by simply pointing their phone at a charity logo. These apps automatically recognize the logo and allow people to select the amount they want to donate right from their phone. Some apps even allow people to donate automatically on a regular basis. For example, you can sign up to automatically donate $1 a day to a variety of organizations. People are then sent a daily email notification featuring the charity for the day. Wouldn't you like your not-for-profit organization to be on this list?

Many charitable agencies are jumping onto the social media band wagon and tapping into the power of **hashtags** on Facebook and Twitter. Services like these enable people to donate by simply using the hashtag #donate in their status updates and tweets. Or, they can simply donate in two taps by either replying to an email or a text message. The days of donors entering their name, address and credit card information into online forms are coming to an end.

Not-for-profit charities are even partnering with local businesses to assist in their donation efforts. Think about the last time you were checking out at your local pet store and the cash register pay pad asked if you would like to donate $1 to a local animal shelter. Likewise, many restaurants, grocery stores and department stores ask if you'd like to "round up" to the nearest dollar and make a donation for the difference to a worthwhile cause. **Checkout Charity** raises money from the masses at very little cost to the not-for-profit. "People are more inclined to give when their wallets are already open," says Leslie Lenkowsky, a professor of philanthropy and nonprofit management at Indiana University.

Are you a not-for-profit organization looking for ways to make the most of your fundraising efforts? Maybe it's time to harness the power of technology! Give IT Radix a call…we're here to help make IT work for you!

Winning Hashtags

These NFP hashtags consistently reach a large number of social media users:

#volunteer – round up new volunteers

#charity/#causes – general remarks and announcements

#donate – request financial support

#change – reach a broader audience

#activism – comment on current events

#dogood – showcase how you're helping

#fundraising – advertise upcoming donation opportunities and thank donors

#philanthropy – promoting news

Remember, your nonprofit's social media strategy will be bolstered by a relevant Twitter feed that's engaging and, above all, conversational. Keep it social!

OUR CLIENTS SPEAK OUT:

THE BUZZ

"We were so pleased with the launch of the IT Radix Helpdesk Support for our staff throughout the U.S., that we expanded our contract to include hardware support and consulting. This allows our staff to focus their energy on strategies and tasks that benefit our mission most."

Pat Wiley – Renew International

Reaching the Promised Land

Recently, the Morris County Chamber of Commerce held its annual Not-For-Profit Conference. The goal of the conference is to provide information, education and new strategies that leaders in the not-for-profit community can integrate to propel their organizations forward. The keynote address was given by Bill Graham, CEO of Graham Communications. Bill discussed important considerations for great leaders, especially those who work in the not-for-profit arena. We thought it would be valuable to highlight some of the key thoughts that Bill addressed that day.

Change: Bill began by noting that the assembled group was filled with people who are passionate about making a difference, the kind of people who wake up each morning asking themselves, "how can I be better?"   He challenged the group by asking: "Does anything get better by staying the same?"

Roles: When you look at almost any organization, from a small business to the largest corporation, Bill indicated that there are really only three kinds of people "in the boat." The first he said are the *Doers* (they row the boat), the second are the *Managers* (they do things to make the boat go faster) and finally the third are the *Leaders* (they set the goal and share the vision and mission).

Goals: Where do you want to go? Each organization might answer that differently, Graham noted, but to make it understandable to all he said that those leaders in the boat should want to take their team to the "island of happiness" or in other words; the promised land.

Passion: Graham recounted a story showcasing how important passion is in communication for leaders. He shared how important Gospel singer, Mahalia Jackson was in 1963 in encouraging the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. to lead major change from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. She was listening to Dr. King when she thought his speech needed a jolt. Recalling a theme she had heard Dr. King share before, Jackson said out loud to Martin Luther King, Jr., from behind the podium, "Tell them about the dream, Martin." Just then, Dr. King abandoned his notes to improvise his speech—the historic section that famously begins, "And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream..."

Engagement: Research shared by Graham showed that in most organizations over 2/3rds of employees reported not being "engaged" at work. He noted that without engagement, without caring about importance in the mission, no organization will get to the Promised Land. The secret to engagement shared by Graham was to focus on the strengths of your staff of employees. He recounted further research that proved that when a leader focuses on the strengths of his/her people in the organization, that over 73% of staff report being highly engaged.

Mission: Graham reinforced strongly the importance of Mission in galvanizing the staff in any organization, not-for-profit or otherwise. He encouraged all to know their mission statement by heart and that it should be short and easily communicated. Further reinforcing the point Graham said, "If you cannot repeat the mission statement, you have a lost mission."

Communication: Not surprisingly, Graham being a communications expert finished his keynote with the admonition to leaders that above all else, they have to communicate and spread the word. They have to encourage their staff, constantly reinforcing in words and in deeds how valued they are. They must constantly communicate where the ship is headed, getting everybody in line to help all get to the Promised Land.

Incorporate these important considerations into your business practices and help your company reach the Promised Land.
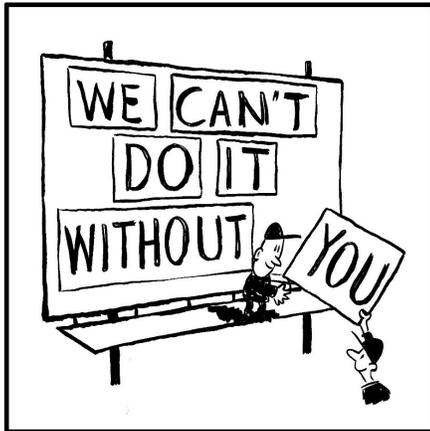
> "We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone."
>
> — Ronald Reagan

Enter and Win!

Trivia Contest

The first person to send an email to resource@it-radix.com with the correct answer to our trivia question will win a NJ Bagel Basket.

Q: What are the nicknames Edison gave to his first two children, Marion and Thomas?

_____

July Trivia Challenge

Q: What does SOS stand for?

(Answer: SOS, the internationally recognized distress signal, does not stand for any particular words. The letters were chosen because they are easy to transmit in Morse code: "S" is three dots, and "O" is three dashes.)

Congratulations to our winner, Audrey Wells of Cornerstone Family Programs, recipient of a NJ Bagel Basket.

From the desk of: Cathy Coloff
Subject: Making a Difference by Serving Others

Everyone likes helping—be it helping a friend with a problem, a child learn a new task, or a colleague resolve a problem at work. At IT Radix, that's what we do…day in and day out. We help our clients solve technology problems and implement solutions. Helping others is the crux of the many not-for-profit organizations that IT Radix services, and I'm proud to call them clients. While resolving a computer problem does not directly touch the individuals that these valuable organizations serve, our efforts help them help others which, quite simply, is great, and adds to our own personal job satisfaction.

As you may have gleaned from this issue, technology advances are changing the world of not-for-profits in a myriad of ways. I, for one, use an app that logs my mileage when I walk or bike and then lets me choose what organization I'd like to donate to. It's pennies, but over time it adds up. Have you given one a try?

Another aspect that I like about the increased use of technology by not-for-profits is that it's become more personal. One of my son's sitters is a school teacher, and through technology, she was able to specifically list what she needed for her classroom in a low-income school in Paterson. Consequently, I was able to easily donate what was needed to make her classroom ready for the kids. It was really nice knowing that I was helping someone I knew with exactly what they needed.

To all those people who are involved in not-for-profit organizations, I thank you! It's through your efforts that others' lives are improved and the world is a better place.

Bell Labs: The Idea Factory

Referred to as "The Idea Factory," the history of Bell Labs is the story behind the country's leading research organization in Information Technology and Communications. Many of the brightest scientists, mathematicians and engineers in the country were employed there.

The roots of Bell Labs lay in the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T), which became the parent organization of Bell Telephone System, founded by Alexander Graham Bell in the 1870's. In 1907, Western Electric, the manufacturing branch of AT&T, created a special research department on the belief that investing in in-house research and development was a sound business strategy. The research effort had grown so large, that management decided to split it off into its own organization. On January 1, 1925, the new subsidiary Bell Telephone Laboratories Inc. began operations, occupying the existing research building in NYC. In the 1930's, the company established new research facilities in New Jersey, where open land was plentiful and cheap, and radio research could be conducted free of the interference found in NYC.

Claude Shannon, of Morristown, NJ, was one of Bell Labs most remarkable thinkers. He was a mathematician and wrote a masters thesis on the use of electrical applications of Boolean algebra to resolve logical and numerical relationships—the basic principal behind all computer programming. In 1948, Shannon published a paper titled *A Mathematical Theory of Communication*, which showed how all information could be converted to a binary code and reconstructed with no loss of fidelity. The zeros and ones of binary is the essence of digital technology and was born in Shannon's brain decades before engineers could apply it.

Today, Bell Labs, the research organization part of what is now the Alcatel-Lucent Corporation, is a smaller but still very important organization that focuses its research on next-generation products for voice and data communication.