

Case Study:

State Agency

GDS provides a comprehensive suite of managed services and a virtual CIO to help a Louisiana state agency modernize, monitor, maintain and secure its IT environment.



State agencies have IT needs similar to private-sector companies, but there are key differences.

Leadership can change with election cycles, budgets are set in the (sometimes long) legislative process, and decisions such as buy vs. lease tend to follow different reasoning. However, just as in the private sector, recruiting and managing strong IT talent, making good buying decisions, and managing the IT environment to positive outcomes can be a major challenge.

One Louisiana state agency decided that it made more sense to outsource IT management and support rather than attempt to handle it in-house. The agency turned to Global Data Systems (GDS) for managed services and a virtual Chief Information Officer (vCIO).

When the GDS team first began working with the agency, they determined that there were a number of outdated systems and gaps in IT operations. The agency needed to modernize its IT environment and put more effective processes in place.

GDS took a complete inventory of the agency's IT assets, identified assets needing replacement, and assisted with technology purchases, software licensing and deployment.

GDS then implemented a comprehensive managed services program, with around-the-clock monitoring and management from the GDS Network Operations Center (NOC). The GDS team ensures that the IT infrastructure is kept up-to-date and responds quickly to any issues.



Providing Executive Leadership

A key feature of the program is GDS virtual CIO services. A virtual CIO is an experienced IT executive who performs the same functions as an in-house CIO. The virtual CIO meets with executive leadership, establishes IT policies based upon the organization's requirements, and oversees IT purchases and operations.

The GDS virtual CIO has helped to craft the Louisiana state agency's IT strategy based upon a deep understanding of the agency's mission, functions and budget cycles. The virtual CIO also serves as an interface between the agency's

"business" side and its IT side, framing technology issues in business terms so that leaders can make more effective decisions.

The director of administrative services oversees IT functions internally. There is a small in-house IT staff, including software developers who maintain and update the agency's homegrown applications, and frontline help desk personnel who handle some user support requests. The GDS virtual CIO works in partnership with internal personnel, and coordinates the efforts of the GDS NOC team and engineers.

Ensuring Confidentiality

The nature of the agency's mission requires the handling of confidential information, which creates some very specific technology and operational needs. By partnering with GDS, the agency gains access to an experienced executive who can assist with these requirements and skilled IT personnel to handle the nuts and bolts of day-to-day IT operations. **The GDS team helps ensure that the agency has a robust and resilient network that can support its mission.**

GDS had to meet some strict requirements to partner with the agency. GDS is a SOC 2 Type 2 certified organization, audited

annually to ensure that advanced security controls and processes are in place and followed by all personnel. This certification is an indicator of organizational maturity and the ability to sustain high levels of security, privacy and operational excellence.

Additionally, the GDS personnel who work with the agency's systems and data had to undergo a background check, get fingerprinted and sign privacy and confidentiality attestations. They also undergo annual training in responsible handling of the agency's data to ensure proper handling of confidential information.

Delivering Results

The GDS partnership with the Louisiana state agency is a great example of effective IT outsourcing: organizations refocusing their internal talent on their core business, allowing qualified and capable partners to take on ancillary functions.

Through this partnership, the agency was able to increase its IT maturity and gain more consistent oversight of its technology infrastructure.

Today, the technology stack is well managed and supported, the environment is documented, and proper change management processes are in place.

What's more, GDS has broad and deep skills in industry-leading technologies, and keeps those skills up-to-date. This enables the agency to avoid the risks of IT skills shortage and ensure that there's always someone available to handle IT issues. Instead of hiring and developing a talent base, the agency gains access to a team of experts who will support its IT needs for years to come.

For More Information:

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