

Title: Swizznet's QuickBooks Hosting for Business Takes Pennsylvania Nonprofit to the Cloud

Customer: Pennsylvania Advocacy and Resources for Autism and Intellectual Disabilities (PAR) – Lemoyne, PA

Products: QuickBooks Hosting for Business

At a Glance

Customer: Pennsylvania Advocacy and Resources for Autism and Intellectual Disabilities (PAR)

Industry: Nonprofit

Location: U.S.

Challenge: Incorporated in 1970, PAR is a statewide, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to build the capacity of the private sector to support Pennsylvanians with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and/or intellectual disability (ID) with the services they need to live as independently as possible. PAR has grown tremendously over the decades - its member organizations now provide over \$1.7 billion in autism and intellectual disability services and support in Pennsylvania and employ over 32,000 Pennsylvanians.

PAR's rapid growth and need to meet the demand for information left the organization grappling with a complicated, server-based IT infrastructure that no longer met its needs. PAR needed to find cloud-based solutions that offered reliable, multi-user access to secure files without compromising speed or security, and ones that could be accessed remotely as needed.

Results: After reviewing several competing products, PAR selected Swizznet's premier QuickBooks™ hosting and online accounting solution powered by Citrix. Swizznet gives employees anywhere/anytime access to secure work files and applications and eliminated much of the hardware required to run its former network.

Products: QuickBooks Hosting for Business

Take away quote:

"Swizznet is the first piece in our multi-step process toward becoming less IT dependent."
- JoAnn Reitz, bookkeeper

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Headquartered in Lemoyne, the Pennsylvania Advocacy and Resources for Autism and Intellectual Disabilities represents service providers in every region of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. A membership-based organization, PAR's mission is to build the capacity of the private sector to support Pennsylvanians with autism and intellectual disabilities.

PAR handles its bookkeeping and basic accounting needs internally, but several of its employees work from home. It uses an outside payroll company and has an accounting firm on call for its annual audits. It also has some unusual nuances to its bookkeeping system, such as a process for enabling scholarships for professional meetings.

Challenges

In the wake of the economic downturn, PAR was short-staffed and still reliant on an outdated server stack with an offsite system administrator for its network needs. Data storage was problematic, requiring tapes to be manually switched. Although a consultant managed to overhaul the network so that it was multi-user, security then became an issue as it went back and forth between single- and multi-user to accommodate remote workers.

"In order to share secure files with those offsite, we had to use QuickBooks routed through a virtual private network," bookkeeper JoAnn Reitz explained. "Because 99 percent of our invoicing is done electronically, this slowed down our workflow considerably due to a sluggish network. We eventually determined that the only way to do invoicing efficiently was from the main office – not an ideal situation if someone needed to work remotely."

Then came the classic "silver lining" scenario. When PAR was notified it was losing its lease, it was the organization's chance to make a change in its IT system. Although the staff's first task was to find a way to keep PAR running smoothly, the second priority was to eliminate its outdated server tower and the need for an out-of-state administrator to make any network changes.

"The possibility of losing our office space gave us just the motivation we needed to find a solution that allowed us to become less dependent on hardware and remote IT personnel," Reitz said.

Solution

After researching several product offerings, PAR selected Swizznet's QuickBooks Hosting for Businesses as the ideal solution for meeting its needs. Swizznet's hosting and online accounting solution ties the versatility of Intuit's QuickBooks with Citrix's technology and the reliability of the Swizznet network for fast, secure online access to any file or application. With Swizznet's QuickBooks Hosting for Business, all employees –

onsite and remote – can stay connected for collaborative efforts and can connect to the cloud 24/7 via any computer or mobile device.

“Moving to Swizznet was the first step in being less IT dependent,” Reitz explained. “With our previous system, people were spending a lot of time trying to complete IT tasks they didn’t fully understand. Now, Swizznet’s technical support team replies in a timely manner with real can-do help.”

Reitz added that Swizznet’s knowledge, response time and seamless integration have been a pleasant surprise. “The initial migration to the Swizznet platform went very smoothly,” Reitz said. “I came in one morning and everything was ready to go. Now our staff has reliable real time access to our files and a fantastic support team from Swizznet to answer any questions they may have.”

Results

Although PAR is using Swizznet’s platform, the organization has not kept analytics that compare the before-and-after benefits; still, Reitz points out that, as PAR’s bookkeeper, she no longer relies on IT support, but feels well supported by Swizznet’s on-call customer service staff. She also feels that the Swizznet platform’s security is more than adequate for the organization’s needs.

“Because there is no VPN, Swizznet makes the experience of working at home the same as working from the office,” she said. “Multiple users are not an issue. Best of all, when a new technology is introduced, there is usually a learning curve for the team. But with Swizznet, we have the ability to call or do online tutorials to solve our problems.”

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