CASE STUDY

Thank you for your interest in ETTE. We created this case study so you would have the opportunity to see the details of one of our engagements which covered the whole range services that ETTE provides clients. It is our hope that after reading this case study you will see ETTE engages clients in a holistic manner. Should you have any questions after reading this document, please feel free to reach out to me directly on my cell at 240-898-8322.

Warm Regards,
Lawrence Guyot
President & Founder

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Background

The Women in Military Service for America Foundation, Inc. (WIMSA) was founded in 1985 as the organization to raise the funds and build, operate, and maintain the Women in Military Service for America Memorial (Women's Memorial). The nonprofit organization relies solely on private contributions to maintain the Memorial, which is located in Arlington National Cemetery. The organization consists of a staff of about forty, including a small number of paid contract employees, and volunteers, who are able to host nearly 100 events and 100,000 visitors annually.

As is common with nonprofits, finances are tight at the Foundation. As a result, WIMSA had not upgraded information and communications systems in years, and the increasingly antiquated systems were having major impacts on the organization's ability to successfully perform its mission.

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A flexible, affordable solution

Realizing the threat to the organization's and Monument's survival, the leadership group decided in early 2017 to upgrade their information and communications infrastructure. Based on several proposals they received, WIMSA felt ETTE could provide the best value, but their initial quote to make the transition was prohibitive for WIMSA's budget. In response to the budget constraint, ETTE developed an upgrade solution that would meet WIMSA's budget. The upgrade project would be phased, with priority focus on cost saving elements early in the project. Project phasing would also have the effect of spreading out the costs over a period of months, allowing costs to fit WIMSA's operating budget. The first project was a consolidation of WIMSA's telecommunications systems. WIMSA had contracts with three different phone providers. ETTE consolidated the contracts, negotiated a better deal on WIMSA's behalf, and migrated the legacy phones to a Voice-over-Internet Protocol (VOIP) system, saving WIMSA thousands of dollars per year.

Overcoming challenges: service beyond a standard IT project

With projected savings from this first project, WIMSA was eager to proceed. The next step was to update the workstations to improve productivity and functionality. WIMSA was using first generation Mac mini computers. For an affordable, updated solution, ETTE specified a system that was exactly the right size for WIMSA, and not unnecessarily overpowered and expensive. A small quantity of the selected systems would be purchased first, as a pilot test for a complete roll out. While ETTE priced both Mac and PC based systems, the PC solution (Dell Laptops using Windows 10) was substantially less expensive. However, some staffers expressed severe resistance to migrating from a Mac to a PC –based system. To overcome this resistance, ETTE went well beyond the scope of a normal IT services firm, and devoted time and resources to develop a deep understanding of the WIMSA culture. ETTE provided training sessions to acclimate end users to the new interfaces. For most resistant staffers, individual sessions were held with the staffer, WIMSA management, and end users to address the individual's concerns about the migration and change of platform.

Working within the culture to improve solution effectiveness

In addition to the staunchly pro-Mac culture, the staff at WIMSA had strong traditions of information keeping and self-reliance. Unfortunately, these traditions often resulted in data silos where information was not effectively shared and slow resolution to system problems. ETTE responded to these issues by facilitating open connectivity with shared drives on a Windows 2016 virtual infrastructure, and the internal client/server infrastructure. To address the reporting issues, ETTE provided a "proactive helpdesk". ETTE staffers visited WIMSA Offices and the Memorial, and spoke with WIMSA staffers about their systems, provided assistance and repair as needed. Staffers appreciated that ETTE's professionals provided accessible help. Explanations were straightforward and easy to understand, free of trade jargon common among IT professionals. ETTE supplemented the in person support with a remote help desk, which allowed users to get help, sometimes confidentially, and have systems reset or updated remotely. Help was not only for hardware and infrastructure systems, but also extended to the office productivity tools (Microsoft Office 365, which was implemented as part of the technology update).

A trusted extension of the organization

Having proved its value in these projects, ETTE earned a trusted status as an IT vendor manager. WIMSA involved ETTE in key procurements of not only the laptop workstations, but also WIMSA's database provider, Internet services provider, cabling company and printer vendor. ETTE also provided contract oversight for WIMSA's audio-visual update of the Memorial. Additionally, WIMSA had the Memorial's Web site redesigned by a non-employee volunteer, who also provides ongoing maintenance and content updates. WIMSA permitted ETTE to integrate the volunteer's projects into the existing IT "task ticket" system, which ETTE developed to support IT service requests. This approach has two advantages. First, IT requests are all centralized through the same system, making changes easy for end users, and second, placing ETTE between the WIMSA staff and the volunteer creates a level of formality and professionalism in the volunteer's work and delegates Web site responsibility to ETTE. ETTE is also serving as a tech committee member for a coming database overhaul project.

Expanding services without expanding the costs

Since their initial engagement in February 2017, ETTE has performed these services for WIMSA:
- Migrate WIMSA's legacy phone system to VoIP
- Migrate from Power PC Mac minis to Windows 10 laptops
- Implement Microsoft Office 365
- Implement server / client infrastructure (shared drives, etc.)
- Deploy and manage wireless Infrastructure (WIMSA HQ and the Memorial)
- Provide hosted virtual Infrastructure (Windows 2016)
- Provide unlimited proactive in person and remote help desk services
- Vendor management (database, internet service, phone, cabling, printer management)
- Contract Oversight Authority for Audio-Visual Revamp Project
- Serve as tech committee member for large database overhaul project
- Provide managed firewall and endpoint security along with onsite and remote support
- Caught a phishing attack on WIMSA systems, identified the attack point, and sealed the system.
- Daily dark web scans for compromised credentials

Despite the variety and expanding scope of services ETTE provides to WIMSA, other than direct equipment costs, which ETTE does not mark up, ETTE has not changed its monthly billing rate. Thus, WIMSA receives a diversity of IT and communications services, from end user help desk support, to database migration management and is advancing on all fronts of their modernization effort for about 2/3 of the business cost of a simple system administrator in Washington DC.

Outstanding Results

Some of the key achievements of WIMSA's engagement of ETTE are:

- Cost savings of nearly $2,000 per month on telecommunications costs.
- Organization-wide wireless at WIMSA offices and the Memorial, allowing thousands of visitors at the Memorial to access Wi-Fi.
- High bandwidth and audio-visual enhancements allow presenters at the Memorial to stream live, resulting in more rental rate pricing power for the Memorial.
- For the first time, the organization has a centralized file system allowing for shared drives and proper backups. The culture is slowly changing to more openness and information sharing, increasing productivity as staff no longer duplicate each other's work.
- WIMSA now has ongoing tech support in a timely manner.
- WIMSA now has ongoing security at the network and endpoint level.
- All WIMSA staff now have personalized organization branded email

Less tangible, but equally important, is that ETTE's methodology performing the work. While many IT services providers are responsive and/or flexible (as indeed ETTE staff is both), ETTE sets itself apart by diving into an organization's culture to achieve results, a commitment to success unparalleled in industry. Moreover, ETTE delivers superior value to its clients. It bears repeating that ETTE provides all these modernization, IT management, help desk, and security, and other services for less than 2/3 of the cost of a single-function system administrator.

ETTE's quality and commitment to its clients is best summed up by retired US Army Major General Marilyn Quagliotti, who served over 32 years in the U.S. Army. General Quagliotti retired as Vice Director of the Defense Information Systems Agency, and is WIMSA's administrator for their modernization effort:

> "I would not hesitate to say ETTE did a great job for us at WIMSA. Their flexibility, ability to stay within our tight budget without nickel and diming every small adjustment, and willingness to work in support of our tough culture were mission critical to our IT modernization project. In short, ETTE provided and continues to provide outstanding value for the price."

– Retired US Army Major General, Marilyn Quagliotti

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