Protecting data and inspiring confidence for Advocacy for All

Data security is a hot topic that concerns everyone. For a charity that supports the vulnerable, a reliable and secure data handling system is not just critical; it's mandatory.

Challenges

Even though Advocacy for All isn't a large charity, it's not without its complexity in terms of IT provision. So, when things go wrong, it's a major issue. As Jon Wheeler took his seat as CEO, the IT situation needed attention; the organisation was experiencing regular downtime and system crashes.

It was frustrating to say the least. Jon shares the gory details: "For four Mondays in a row, I came in around 7.30am, and it took us about two hours to get the system back up and running. That's 50 staff just sitting around twiddling their thumbs. We probably lost a fortnight's worth of productivity."

Jon's other chief worry was data security; the charity has a serious responsibility to keep their clients' information safe. Some of his clients demand compliance with Information Governance Level 2, but all of them need to see a system that's demonstrably secure, which includes encrypting emails and having a disaster recovery plan. With an unreliable system, much of this was barely achievable.

Company Background

Covering much of the South East, Advocacy for All is a charity specialising in providing advocacy and empowerment support to a wide range of people.

Challenges

- Poor connectivity with regular downtime
- Unable to confidently assure clients regarding data security

Solution

- A new, robust broadband connection installed
- Organising the transfer of all data to two new secure servers
- Disaster recovery plan in place

Results

- Improved staff confidence in the reliability of systems and support
- Greater productivity due to less system downtime
- The ability to assure clients about data protection, which helps in the tendering process
- Disaster recovery plan passed the test in a real-life situation

Solutions

Changing provider was one of Jon's first jobs. We won the contract on quality, but, having worked in the field of Advocacy for several years, we also had an affinity with the many challenges Jon faced. We knew he was looking to us for strategic leadership. Establishing improved connectivity and reliability with a new broadband line was our starting point. Next, we transferred all their data to two new servers, hosted in a data centre. From a security perspective, it is easier to police than the public cloud. We were also able to help them save money while updating their software packages; we knew that, as a charity, they were eligible for certain freebies.

Results

The disaster recovery plan we put in place was tested this year during the heavy snow. We were able to divert all calls and emails to staff mobiles, so the organisation could continue their vital work even though the office was unreachable. It's this kind of reliability that gives Jon confidence in their new IT systems and processes. His staff repeatedly tell him what a difference it has made. He's also noticed increased productivity and efficiency, due, in no small part, to the lack of downtime. Any issues are resolved swiftly by our helpdesk team, who Jon admires immensely: "The helpdesk people are just lovely. And they're very good with my staff; the ones that aren't IT savvy are never made to feel stupid."

While Jon certainly appreciates the technical improvements and support, his strongest feelings about our service are inspired by our approach. "One of the many things I like about Beaming," He says, "is their integrity and honesty; they're clear about what exactly they can offer us, and I absolutely trust their judgement on that. It's a really nice relationship, and there's a real sense of comfort in having that kind of trust with your IT infrastructure provider." Another unexpected benefit of having us as a partner that Jon discovered is the ability to use our credentials in the charity's tenders. We hold ISO 9001 and ISO 27001, and they can enjoy that vicariously. It gives them credibility and reassures their clients.

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> It's not only their skill, knowledge and professionalism that's important to us; it's also their honesty and integrity. I genuinely think we share the same ethos and values as Beaming. They're a company, and we're a charity, but we're a really nice fit."
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> **Jon Wheeler,**
> CEO,
> Advocacy for All

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