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Overview

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Nonprofit—Charities

Customer Profile

The American Cancer Society (ACS) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to finishing the fight against cancer. Based in Atlanta, Georgia, ACS relies on nearly 6,200 staff and millions of volunteers.

Business Situation

A fragmented IT structure across 900 offices and 11 different Divisions made it difficult for ACS to collaborate effectively with its staff and volunteers.

Solution

ACS realized that in order to create a more cohesive, efficient experience for employees, volunteers, and donors, it needed to consolidate its business processes. After evaluating options, ACS chose Microsoft Office 365.

Benefits

- Frees up US\$1.5 million each year that can be redirected into more business-critical and lifesaving projects
- Enhances collaboration across employees, volunteers, and donors
- Mobile employees can now be productive anytime, anywhere

Cancer Research Nonprofit Uses Technology to Raise More Funds and Save More Lives

“Going to the cloud with Office 365 has given us a stable platform that keeps increasing our ability to be more and more efficient. That means we can stay focused on the mission and get far more done with the time that we have.”

John Hctor, Vice President, Government Relations, American Cancer Society

For more than 100 years, the American Cancer Society (ACS) has worked relentlessly to create a world with less cancer and more birthdays. Together with its millions of supporters, ACS helps people stay well, get well, find cures, and fight back against cancer. Over the course of its history, this grassroots organization evolved to include 11 Divisions with 900 offices—each with its own business and technology processes. In 2012, ACS realized that a fragmented IT structure was hampering its ability to generate donations, provide essential services, and fund research. After evaluating options, ACS decided to consolidate its technology across business Divisions using cloud-based collaboration and communication tools in Microsoft Office 365. Now ACS employees and volunteers can spend more time, and devote more donor dollars, to supporting its vision of a world free of cancer.

“The American Cancer Society is an exceptional brand doing exceptional work, and Office 365 gives us exceptional technology to back that up.”

Lauren McShea, Senior Director,
Distinguished Events,
American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society (ACS) is a nationwide, community-based health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem. Even though more than 1 million people in the United States are diagnosed with cancer each year, ACS remains undeterred in its goal to create a world with less cancer and more birthdays. The Society continually rises to this challenge with cutting-edge research, dozens of lifesaving programs, and fundraisers that are inspiring, uplifting, and filled with camaraderie and compassion.

One example of the Society’s innovative outreach is the Road To Recovery® program. Too often, what keeps patients from getting treatment is simply that they can’t get to the treatment location—they don’t have a car or are too sick to drive. Every day, the Society matches thousands of patients with Road To Recovery volunteers who give them a ride, wait for them while they receive treatment, and bring them home.

When Jay Ferro joined ACS as Chief Information Officer in 2012, the organization was composed of 11 Divisions spread across the United States. “Each division had its own technology stack and ways of running its business,” Ferro explains. “For example, the mission of the Road To Recovery program was the same in every division. But the way it was executed could be very different—from the spreadsheets they used, to the vendors they chose, to the ad campaigns they ran.”

With increased awareness about the program, more patients requesting rides, and hundreds of volunteers to coordinate, the Road To Recovery service was becoming an organizational challenge. It was clear to everyone involved that the divisional model—with its disparate, unconnected systems—was hampering efficiency and preventing ACS from getting as many people as possible to their appointments.

“My department is constantly in the field, working with volunteers and constituents to organize and grow our grassroots fundraisers,” says Lauren McShea, Senior Director of Distinguished Events for ACS. But the Division model was problematic for the team. “Our lack of connectedness to volunteers and staff was blunting our ability to raise funds to fight cancer.”

Government relations is also an important aspect of the Society’s mission. John Hctor, Vice President of Government Relations for the Society, leads a team that’s dedicated to making the fight against cancer a national priority for government. “Our role is to work with state legislatures and advocate on behalf of cancer patients, caregivers, and their families,” says Hctor. “One way that we educate law makers is to testify through the committee hearing process.” Bills are often added to a state legislature’s calendar at the last minute and Hctor’s team must be prepared to react quickly and be productive on the go. “As advocates of the Society’s goals, the Government Relations group often needs to be productive in inconvenient places, such as developing white papers while sitting in a committee hearing or waiting to be called to provide testimony. In the past, if users couldn’t find Wi-Fi to access the VPN [virtual private network], they wouldn’t be able to work efficiently outside the office,” Hctor explains.

Time for a Change

In 2012, ACS realized that consolidating business processes across its Divisions would create a more cohesive experience for employees, volunteers, and donors—and ensure that the organization could use more of its donor dollars to help save lives.

“But in capturing the benefits of standardization, we needed to preserve our grassroots presence,” says Hctor. “It was important that we not lose sight of our reasons for consolidation: to make sure programs such

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Jay Ferro, Chief Information Officer,
American Cancer Society

as Road To Recovery are even more successful in helping people get the treatment they need.”

After evaluating the options available in the marketplace, ACS chose Microsoft Office 365 as the technology that would best support its consolidation efforts.

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The Society has millions of volunteers and most of them use Microsoft Outlook for messaging. “Now that ACS also uses Outlook, we save a lot of time by instantly sharing calendars and setting up meetings with our volunteers,” McShea explains. “This may seem like a small thing, until you realize this happens hundreds if not thousands of times a day.”

Hector also relies on the new collaboration tools. “I’m often on the go,” he explains. “When something critical happens—such as new research results being released—I now feel fully connected. I can receive email and documents about it, accept invitations to meetings that arise because of it, and schedule ad hoc meetings with people across the country to talk about how we want to respond.”

Microsoft Office Online—which includes web-based versions of Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint—is very important for the Society’s highly mobile environment. “We have 4,000 mobile devices connected to our network,” says Keith Weller, Vice President of Infrastructure and Operations. “Our employees can now use their favorite Office applications right from a browser—anywhere, anytime.”

Staff and core volunteers nationwide can also use the Yammer Enterprise social network to

instantly come together for conversations about research breakthroughs, organizational updates and news, fundraising success stories, and tips on how to better engage volunteers. “By using Yammer, we’ve been able to blow down the walls of the Society’s previous communication silos,” Weller says. “It is our first line of mass communication and the organization, at every level, is getting involved.”

Helping to Create More Birthdays

Now that its technology, procedures, and people are in sync, ACS is directing more donor dollars to research, connecting more volunteers to cancer patients, and making it easier to coordinate successful, community fundraising events.

The Technologies Involved

The American Cancer Society replaced its Lotus Notes communication environment and now subscribes to a combined 10,000 Microsoft Office 365 E1 and E3 licenses. The organization relies on Microsoft Exchange Online for email. Staff members conduct audio and videoconferencing and instant messaging through Microsoft Lync Online, use Yammer Enterprise for knowledge sharing and peer-to-peer communications, and Office Online for anywhere, anytime productivity.

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers in the United States and Canada who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: www.microsoft.com

For more information about American Cancer Society services, visit the website at: www.cancer.org

Microsoft Office 365

The new Office provides anywhere access to your familiar Office applications—plus email, calendar, video conferencing, and your most current documents—on almost any device, from PCs to smartphones to tablets.

[For more information about Microsoft Office 365, go to:](#)
www.office365.com

Software and Services

• Yammer

- Microsoft Office 365
 - Microsoft Exchange Online
 - Microsoft Lync Online