

The Situation:

A Chicago Commercial Real Estate developer managing over \$500 million in assets sought a new IT support company after years of struggling with their previous Managed Service Provider. Employees constantly requested costly support for recurring issues that were never remediated permanently. They struggled to receive a timely response when they had problems, resulting in costly downtime and frustration.

Many of the problems arose when working from home became standard during the COVID-19 pandemic. Employees constantly lost access to shared drives because VPN connectivity failed abruptly and repeatedly. Internet experience was slow across all three of their locations.

When their contract was almost up they began vetting new IT companies. In this process, TechNoir was on their list.

The Task:

After initial meetings, TechNoir determined that the potential client sought a Managed Service Provider who could increase response times for helpdesk support and eliminate their long-term issues for good. During a brief meeting and complimentary onsite visit, TechNoir identified problems with the corporate internet connection and aging hardware. To further complicate matters, the incumbent IT company owned the servers hosting the client's email and backups, and issued mandates to cease service to the client upon learning that they were not renewing their contract. This meant that the client did not own the hardware that their email and backup was stored on, and that the incumbent was not obligated to transfer that information to a new provider.

TechNoir designed a plan that would prevent downtime, increase responsiveness, and ensure a seamless transition despite these challenges. It consisted of two complicated phases:

1. Establish independence from incumbent IT company
2. Investigate, test, and improve network stability

The Plan in Action:

TechNoir started with a rip and replace of networking hardware laden with software installed by the incumbent provider that limited the client's ability to make changes. The gear was aging and needed to be replaced anyways. Per the terms of the incumbent's contract, the client was unable to uninstall this software and the incumbent denied their request to remove it. In two days, TechNoir created 3 completely new networks at each location - fully owned by the client, managed by TechNoir. Next was migrating the client's Office 365 service off of the incumbent's proprietary servers.

The incumbent blocked tools and access to settings that would allow the client to automate the migration of their email data to their own hosted service. With days left before the contract expired (and subsequently their configurations, settings, and data), TechNoir spun up a cloud server on the client's behalf and manually migrated all of the data over the weekend without any downtime or data loss.

Finally, TechNoir manually removed software installed on the client's servers after creating a new backup from scratch. This last step completely removed the incumbent's ability to hamper the client's operations and transition. We then created a roadmap to decommission the aging server and move the backup into the cloud. The client could now say that they had full ownership of their IT environment.

Our last task was to resolve long-term connectivity issues. TechNoir discovered they were running a VPN service over an insufficient internet connection (50mbps download/12mbps upload) and that service would lapse anytime an employee attempted to access or share a large file. TechNoir coordinated with a local ISP and a riser company to run fiber to the client's corporate office where the VPN was hosted, as well as the two other sites. Once the fiber connection was installed, there was sufficient bandwidth to run business as usual with no downtime.

Resolution:

The client enjoys a service today where their users quickly receive support for their minor issues that arise. TechNoir conducts quarterly reviews with the client to foresee large projects and upgrades so the client has sufficient time to budget and plan. The client went from being frustrated by the recurring IT problems and a difficult previous provider, to enjoying technology that runs in the background. When there is a problem, they're assured that TechNoir will solve the problem quickly and permanently.