



It's been a year of significant change at CrossWinds Counseling and Wellness, formerly the Mental Health Center of East Central Kansas. A new name, a fresh logo, the reopening of a residential home and the opening of crisis homes for children and adults signaled significant growth for this mental health services organization that's been serving seven rural Kansas counties for 50 years.

CrossWinds' CEO Rob Runquist had a pivotal role in the transition. He was brought in to create a framework to turn CrossWinds into a modern healthcare organization with positive cash flow and high levels of patient satisfaction. He quickly discovered it wouldn't be an easy task.

He struggled to get a firm grasp on the scope and capabilities of CrossWinds' on-premises IT network run by four internal staff. Equipment, including \$100,000 worth of new servers, wasn't functioning properly. And when their network went down, it was down for days—not hours or minutes.

mindSHIFT revives the IT of a rural healthcare services organization through prompt response, partnership and cloud services

Challenge

The situation reached a breaking point when CrossWinds' network went down for four days and services ground to an abrupt halt throughout its 17 locations. They couldn't administer injections to patients because systems weren't available to verify what medication should be administered. Patients came in for therapy sessions, but there was no way to track appointments or clinician schedules.

"It was a complete disaster and nothing was getting resolved," said Runquist, Chief Executive Officer for CrossWinds Counseling and Wellness.

Runquist knew it was time for an in-depth assessment of their IT network. Even during normal uptime, the network was antiquated and slow. Remote access was another concern. Half of CrossWinds' staff works outside of their offices, and all systems were locked down—preventing work from being done anywhere, anytime, from any device.

CrossWinds' telephone system was also outdated and undermanaged. They had phone lines throughout its locations where phones didn't exist, multiple phone vendors and unique account numbers for each location.

"It was a mess," said Runquist. "We didn't know if we were using all the phone lines we were paying for and we had aging technology where we couldn't change messages or make time changes."

Also, Runquist wanted to move its IT infrastructure to the cloud. Outsourced IT was on the table, but no local providers were big enough to handle the scope and larger providers in major cities more than an hour away were uninterested.

During an internet search for alternate providers, CrossWinds came upon mindSHIFT, a Ricoh company. After a quick phone call, a face-to-face meeting was scheduled and mindSHIFT came onsite to understand the full breadth of the situation.

"mindSHIFT gave us a quick assessment and quote for an audit of our IT systems and the issues we were experiencing," said Runquist. "I think they expected me to blush at the cost, but I knew what we had lost from our network being down four days and what we were paying in IT salaries. We hired mindSHIFT to do the assessment."

“When we first went down, I knew we needed a larger vendor to come in and build our network the right way.”

Rob Runquist
Chief Executive Officer
CrossWinds Counseling and Wellness
East Central Kansas

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Solution

Within a few days, mindSHIFT assembled its IT experts from Boston, New York and Virginia to conduct the onsite assessment of CrossWinds' existing IT infrastructure and recommend ways to fix and monitor the network. During the process, mindSHIFT uncovered a variety of factors that had led to the frequent downtime and persistent instability of the network.

"We were a bigger mess than we realized," said Runquist. "mindSHIFT discovered one issue after another. Our network even went down while mindSHIFT was here, but they had us back up and running in 20 minutes."

The team suggested that CrossWinds adopt a private cloud strategy to host all of their current servers in the mindSHIFT cloud environment. The solution included both virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) and cloud servers as well as Tier 3 application monitoring and backup. VDI was a critical element to give CrossWinds' staff the ability to seamlessly perform work in the field using their tablet or laptop.

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CrossWinds gave mindSHIFT the green light. The team proceeded to decommission all of CrossWinds' legacy servers and migrate the healthcare services organization to a secure, stable, highly scalable platform in the cloud. During roundtable discussions for the cloud strategy, mindSHIFT analyzed the data circuits for all of the CrossWinds' sites and discovered that the current spend plus an additional 15 percent could replace the intermittent connectivity with highly reliable Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) circuits. These circuits would guarantee performance of the cloud strategy and support a cloudSHIFT VoIP solution to dramatically improve CrossWinds' telephone technology.

Next up, mindSHIFT is bringing its team to CrossWinds to implement a SharePoint intranet site that had been tabled by the previous in-house IT team. When finished, it will be a repository for policies and procedures that employees can access anywhere, anytime to stay up to date and share information.



Results

CrossWinds now has a much more efficient, well-rounded approach to their IT network. With the cloud network in place, CrossWinds is able to move forward and focus on its mission to provide more flexible, patient-oriented care.

“Our network issues affected all of us—patients and staff,” said Amanda Cunningham, Chief Operating Officer at CrossWinds. “We feel a lot more secure knowing we won’t be off network for days.”

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Model Partnership, Cost-effective Support

CrossWinds’ IT department has been transformed from a cost center to a partnership that supports the organization’s business objectives. Through its Total IT Management solution, mindSHIFT provides a dedicated helpdesk, account manager, technical consultant and primary engineer to ensure the health and stability of the organization’s network. CrossWinds’ IT staff remain on site for escalations and to collaborate with mindSHIFT on Tier 3 support.

Sizeable Cost Savings, Improved Workflow

mindSHIFT performed a forklift upgrade of the phone system at the same time as the cloud and circuit installation, realizing a savings of more than \$100,000 compared to the cost of doing the work separately. VDI provided significant workflow advantages for CrossWinds’ staff that work outside the office. If a device is lost in the field, all data is located on mindSHIFT servers and inaccessible to anyone who might find the device. With a company-issued tablet or laptop, everyone now has the tools at their disposal and a secure, desktop experience that mirrors their in-office environment.

“The cost of laptops with fingerprint scan and double entry is high,” said Runquist. “With VDI, the amount we spend on laptops is significantly less.”

Outside Perspective, Fresh Approach

Runquist and Cunningham understand the hesitancy many organizations have about bringing in outside IT partners to evaluate the state of the network. But doing so often results in a strengthened network that runs more reliably and enhances capabilities.

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Find out what we can do for you.

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