MONROE WHEELCHAIR

BUSINESS CONTINUITY

MONROE WHEELCHAIR: BETTER EQUIPPED TO FULFILL THEIR MISSION

Monroe Wheelchair was facing numerous tech challenges as it began 2017. With strategic support, a cloud-based solution, and a Business Continuity plan, they're on track for a brighter future.

THE CHALLENGE

A business specializing in creating better lives for people with disabilities, Monroe Wheelchair of Rochester, N.Y., provides complex rehab and mobility solutions across New York State. The company has a substantial amount of business that revolves around rehabilitation, and their team is often on the road providing critical maintenance for complex wheelchairs and other equipment people with disabilities rely on to lead independent lives.

By the end of 2016, the company realized they'd outgrown the capabilities of their longtime IT service provider, despite having an outsourced IT staffer on-site every day. With the increasing complexity of some new, integrated systems they'd already implemented, they found they needed more bandwidth and strategic thinking for IT. They turned to Innovative Solutions to take a close look at their IT infrastructure and help them plug the holes— both known and unknown. Mary Shutes and her team talked with Innovative Solutions about the issues they were facing. They had some decisions to make. They needed an expert who knew the current technology landscape. The company also faced some business risks they didn't yet fully understand.

> *"The windstorm had a terrible effect on us"* Shutes says. *"All of our servers are here in our Rochester office. We couldn't use our computers. Our phone systems were down. Our other locations were unable to operate because our Rochester office was without power."*

Monroe Wheelchair hired Innovative Solutions for a 90-day period beginning in early 2017, and soon after, there came an unexpected wake-up call: a March windstorm knocked them offline for days. Without power to their offices, they couldn't serve the customers who depended on them for much-needed support to cope with their disabilities. Monroe Wheelchair had initially hired Innovative Solutions to help their everyday systems run more smoothly. But now a bigger-picture consideration was suddenly a top priority: Business Continuity in the face of disaster.

WHY WAS INNOVATIVE THE RIGHT PARTNER?

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One of our core values at Monroe Wheelchair is innovation. Prior to working with IS our IT innovation was limited. Day to Day issues were getting done, but larger projects were stalled. We wanted to move forward and do something innovative and different, we needed a different group to do that with. We found that group in Innovative Solutions."

Mary Shutes, COO

THE INNOVATIVE SOLUTION

Innovative Solutions was just getting started working with Monroe Wheelchair when the March 2017 windstorm gave new urgency to their Business Continuity plan. At the same time, IS recognized that their new customer's hardware was nearing the end of its life, and those two issues created an opportunity to help the company mitigate the risk of power loss and modernize their infrastructure at the same time.

The IS team went to work identifying the best potential solutions for the organization as a whole—including the benefits of Business Continuity. To replace the infrastructure that was reaching the end of its life and losing its warranty, IS presented multiple options to the company, explaining the pros and cons of each.

The most important criteria for any solution they might consider:

1	It had to provide plenty of flexibility with security, mobility, and Disaster Recovery power.
2	It needed to be able to operate whether staff were in or out of the office.
3	It had to be scalable, to grow as the business grows.

After looking over the options and the multi-year cost-of-ownership models the IS team put together, Monroe Wheelchair quickly knew the direction that was right for them: **Amazon Web Services (AWS)**. This cloud-based service would enable a fully managed, secure Desktop-as-a-Service solution. With AWS, the company would have a virtual, cloud-based environment so their users could access documents, applications, and resources—anywhere, anytime.

On-site Vs. Off-site: A Revelation.

Monroe Wheelchair ultimately realized it was more important to have responsive, deep support available than it was to have a single person on-site. And the reality was, their on-site support hadn't always met every need. A ticketing system for processing IT issues quickly and efficiently proved to be a crucial feature of the relationship with IS.

> *"We had an IT person on-site but, we had no way of effectively managing his open tasks." Shutes says. "At Innovative, they have a ticketing system, they have people working at different levels," Shutes says. "With the right mechanisms in place, it wasn't as important to have someone on-site. With IS we have a team of people to meet our IT needs."*

THE RESULTS

For Monroe Wheelchair, 2017 turned out to be a pivotal year for their IT infrastructure. When the year began, they were facing end-of-life hardware, gaps in their systems from backup to security, a mountain of office paperwork, and vulnerabilities they hadn't yet imagined. By the end of the year, they had a cloud-based solution in place, a sound Business Continuity plan, and an IT partner they could depend on for always-on availability, strategic thinking, and well-researched recommendations.

> *"IS is responsive,"* Shutes says. *"There are people working at all different levels. Having that group working for us is so important. We do not have someone on site at all times, but we always have the right support and we're never left hanging."*

With AWS, Monroe Wheelchair is moving toward a more predictable, controllable model for their business. It's proven to be the right combination of systems and worldwide servers that enable them to spin up the company's precise environment virtually, on the fly, if disaster strikes and the power goes down.

Now, instead of investing in configuring more desktop computers, servers, and other equipment, they can be created virtually through AWS. Plus, with the touch of a button, Monroe Wheelchair can add more processing speed, diskspace, and more memory. And, because the AWS platform is based on a monthly fee, the company also has greater power to predict what their costs are going to be.

One Year, Multiple Upgrades.

Here are some of the changes that Innovative Solutions helped select and implement to make work life better at Monroe Wheelchair:

amazon web services™

Office 365

New Electronic Medical Document and Imaging Platform

A New Routing System

Improved Employee Onboarding & Offboarding

Ongoing Technical & Consulting Support