



## Expanding the Expertise of Your IT Team Through Staff Augmentation

Tom Peters is ITS manager at Central Community College (CCC). His department provides IT services across three central and western Nebraska campuses and it's Peter's job to keep this geographically diverse institution running smoothly. That's not easy when you've got just a small team.

"When we wanted to take advantage of VoIP," said Peters, "I had a young rock star who helped us launch it before anyone else could implement it for us. Unfortunately, as eventually happens, the rock star moved on. I now found myself with the challenge of finding someone to replace them."

"Intellicom was a natural fit to provide staff augmentation for us at this time. I could focus on hiring the full-time network administrator I needed and bring in a specialized expert from Intellicom who could help us manage the VoIP part of our system."

Today that expert from Intellicom is Scott Sheldon, who sits with the IT team weekly. "Scott deals with service requests and incidents on our VoIP system.

Specifically, he provides guidance towards their resolution and the CCC team deploys the solution. The return on investment has been fantastic. Scott brings a level of expertise that would cost me a six-figure salary if he were on staff. I'm easily saving over 50% of what his salary and benefits would be."

These are just the savings that are easy to measure. "Scott works with us one day a week helping us solve our hardest problems. That means he's gaining experience working with other organizations like ours the other four days of the week, and he brings that experience back to us."

"Scott also knows our network, our personnel, and our vision. When you bring a services vendor in off the street, it can cost thousands of dollars just to get someone up to speed. Because Scott already understands our network, we get to start at mile marker 10, not 1. This is worth a tremendous amount to me."



# Intellicom



## Becoming Part of the Team

As many IT managers know, building a team is often an uphill battle with company management. "Here at the college, they understand what a biology professor is and why they need to hire one. But many times they don't understand what IT needs. Anyone who has tried to hire a security analyst or security officer knows this challenge. Until the bad event happens, security is not treated as a priority."

"Intellicom provides CCC a way to expand the expertise of our staff without the expense of salary and benefits as I can work them into our budget under professional services. This also allows me to set aside money for when we need guidance to resolve an issue or expand our network. This is useful because I don't always know in which years I'll need to do that."

The IT needs at CCC change from year to year, depending upon what changes and new capabilities Peters wants to bring to the network. "I'm a coach in sports. And with my IT department, I've got a great team and an outstanding starting line up. But with any team, if you look down the bench and don't see anyone sitting there, you get kind of nervous. I'm running my staff efficiently, which means I don't have the people to spare when a project comes up and I need to pull wire for several days. With Intellicom, I know I've got access to the people I need, when I need them, for as long as I need them."

Being able to spread accountability is another important factor for Peters. "My total staff has grown two people in the last ten years, but it's a long list of new services we've added and have to support in that same time. Working with Intellicom allows me to spread accountability and responsibility across multiple people. This makes not just our network more robust but our team as well."

## Building a Long-Term Partnership

To Peters, a long-term relationship with his partners is important to his success. "One of the best parts of working with Intellicom is their integrity. My dad ran a farm and did business with a handshake. I like that I can do business with Intellicom similar to how my dad did. They are straight. I tell them what I need done and I don't have to give multiple specs. We agree on the project, and we can quickly move on it. Neither side is going to say, 'I didn't say that.'"

"I've also found when working with big companies is that there's often a lot of bureaucracy. Some of them take 30 days just to get the paperwork going. With Intellicom, they're working on the project Day 1."

"I see a lot of value in a relationship like this. We can both get up in the morning and feel good about how we work with each other. It takes time to build a good relationship, one that goes a little beyond professional. When you know something about the people you work with, it becomes more of a family than just doing business together."

The value Intellicom puts on relationship only strengthens their partnership with CCC. Peters said, "I've had service companies come and go because I'm not ready to immediately send them a check. Intellicom has been here when I need them. They've even shown up when I didn't know I needed them."

"For example, our campus is geographically diverse and so we work with different telecommunication carriers. Intellicom approached us to act as our advocate with the carriers. They helped us straighten out billing issues like being charged for lines we weren't even using."

"Let me put it this way: I'm looking at reducing my asking budget, for VoIP with major carriers by 35-40% this coming year alone. And that's just from cleaning up billing and renegotiating contracts. I don't think we could have done this on our own. We don't know the ins and outs of working with carriers. But Intellicom does, and they improved not just our budget, but our overall quality of service as well."

Moving forward, CCC is developing new ways to bring remote students into the classroom. Peters wants to replicate their VoIP success with video. "I'm excited about the future. As we move forward, I'm looking to expand our relationship with Intellicom beyond VoIP into security and video. I don't have any imaginary walls put up that this is as far as we can go. If there's something I'd like to do, we're sitting down and figuring out to make it happen."

"Bottom line: I'm very pleased with Intellicom. They are a partner and constantly looking at how we can work together to bring value to the college."