



Choices, Inc.

Expanding reliable automated fax without infrastructure costs



Established in 1997, Choices is an Indianapolis, Indiana-based nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization providing management, support and training for communities with the goal of keeping youth in their homes and communities. A national leader in systems of care development, Choices is at the forefront of a nationwide effort to serve youth involved with the child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health and special education systems. Approximately 5,000 youth and families are served annually through Choices programs.

Challenge

While Choices had an Esker Fax server solution in place at its Indianapolis location for several years, documents that required a signature — including HR documents and documents from child protection services agencies — still came into Choices' five subsidiary locations via manual fax. Administrative staff had to determine where all those faxes needed to go, which sometimes meant walking paper documents around the building when a fax was sent to the wrong fax machine.

Along with recognizing the need to streamline processes and reduce staffing requirements for handling faxes, Choices had also experienced the typical issues with server hardware. "As computers age, hard drives go out, fans go out and pretty soon the server is down," said Jeff Chapman, IT Director at Choices.

Choices first explored expanding deployment of the fax server software it already had in place. "In looking at different desktop faxing solutions, we considered putting an Esker Fax server in each location," said Chapman. "Ultimately we wanted to avoid the expense of not only the server computer but also the software, fax boards, and phone lines."

Solution

Working with Esker to find a solution, Choices determined that desktop fax as a service was the best way to keep the project cost-effective and minimize investment of capital. Rather than installing and maintaining additional fax hardware and software at the subsidiaries, Choices leverages Esker-hosted fax infrastructure in a Software as a Service model. Choices brought the other locations online quickly using the on-demand fax service from Esker.

"After the initial prep, we got all five locations up and running on the Esker fax service in one weekend," said Chapman. Today the service manages approximately 2,600 inbound fax pages per month across all of Choices' locations. Outbound faxes account for nearly 800 pages per month, concentrated primarily in the Ohio location.

Benefits

Reliability

Improved reliability has been one of most positive outcomes of moving to desktop fax as a service. "We're no longer dealing with fax outages in the middle of the night or first thing in the morning on a Monday," said Chapman.

Security

Chapman also reports enhanced security and confidentiality with the Esker service. "Faxes go directly into users' inboxes, so only the right eyes get to see them," he said. "And faxes don't get misplaced or misrouted."

Cost reduction

Choices now makes more effective use of its employees' time. "We've gone from four admin staff managing fax to two, largely because they're not dealing with the manual paper tasks," said Chapman.

With the Esker service I was able to bring all of our locations online at once, and they all have 800 numbers. Faxing is now more reliable and less of a cost for us.

Jeff Chapman ■ IT Director ■ Choices, Inc.

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