Freeing an Insurance Company to Focus on Insurance: A Case Study

How Leatherstocking Cooperative Insurance Company Has Embraced Technology with Directive's Help

Meet Leatherstocking Cooperative Insurance Company

First providing its services back in 1886, Leatherstocking Cooperative Insurance Company has specialized in providing property and casualty insurance coverage exclusively in New York state. Today, Leatherstocking and its 300 agents provide this kind of insurance to clients of all ages seeking to insure properties of all kinds—homes, rental properties, and businesses. This diversity means that they deal with clients from all generations on a regular basis, with needs that vary based on the region of New York that they live in.

With such a range of clients to serve, it is critical that Leatherstocking Cooperative has technology that offers the flexibility these clients will demand...and the capability to allow their team to effectively perform their tasks.

Back in 2008, They Lacked This Technology...Or Much at All

"Eeeugh." That was the first reaction that the team from Leatherstocking had when reminded of the prior state of their IT. At the time, their entire team of 12 or so people was sharing a single Internet connection and a single email account, gathering in the boardroom to access it. While the team was all committed to the business' success, they just weren't enough and Leatherstocking largely relied on outsourced independent consultants to fulfill their needs.

Unfortunately, this strategy didn't work—these consultants were hard to contact and simply weren't reliable. There were also issues integrating with necessary software that exposed server issues and challenges. Vice President Mary Jane Conroe says they made it work, but as they did so, they were unable to expand or grow.

As she puts it, they just basically kept their heads above water.

Fortunately, a member of the Leatherstocking Cooperative Insurance Company board was familiar with an IT provider who could be of some assistance.

Leatherstocking Cooperative Insurance Company

330 Pony Farm Road Oneonta, NY 13820 ⬤ **(607) 433-2200**

Directive was Contacted, and the Rest is History

Directive came in with a comprehensive plan for Leatherstocking to implement, but the insurance provider wanted to hedge their bets before fully committing to another provider. Rather than strong arm the insurance provider into terms they weren't fully comfortable with, Directive allowed Leatherstocking to ease into their services. As a result, the IT provider was able to build a relationship with Leatherstocking based on earned trust and confidence. Furthermore, Directive was sure to keep Leatherstocking apprised of their pressing needs without putting additional pressure on the insurance company.

In this way, Leatherstocking Cooperative Insurance Company was able to be just that—an insurance company—with the confidence that their IT was in trustworthy hands.

The Improvements Made by Directive Have Already Proven to be Essential

Leatherstocking now has the modern, updated hardware and software to help ensure that their team could collaborate on the business at hand. While some of their software is provided by an external company, Directive is there to assist them with their all-important compliance requirements. A new phone system was also implemented, and when COVID hit, Directive helped them keep their operations going. Again, the nature of Leatherstocking's work means that their security is paramount, and Directive's monitoring and management services are key to accomplishing that goal.

The Approach Was Key to Building Trust

With Leatherstocking Cooperative Insurance Company preferring to start off slow and stick to the bare essentials in terms of the services they wanted to sign up for, the insurance company's team was happy to work with a provider that would educate and provide support.

> *I think it's just the relationship of being able to work with us and understand that our full function is to be an insurance company and that's our job, and we need Directive to be there to support us and get us on the IT side of everything we need to be able to do that effectively.*
>
> *— Mary Jane Conroe, Vice President of Leatherstocking Cooperative Insurance Company*

Leatherstocking Cooperative Insurance Company Appreciates Directive's Cooperation

The insurance company has also saved a ton of time through their relationship with their IT services provider, countless hours spent trying to configure and troubleshoot their own IT now entrusted to the team at Directive—all it takes is a quick ticket submission. These tickets not only make it more efficient to report issues, they give Leatherstocking some internal metrics to reference as well.

Furthermore, technology was not always seen as a budgetary priority, but with Directive's guidance, these investments were able to be balanced more effectively to both fit the company's finances and the needs of their IT.