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TEAM
RUBICON®
DISASTER RESPONSE

7 ways to work smarter in the cloud and drive greater impact

Image courtesy of Team Rubicon

Contents

Teamwork and communication are vital to the success of every nonprofit organization.

With apps like Word, Excel, and Outlook—not to mention Microsoft Teams, that features real-time coauthoring, IM, video, and voice—Microsoft Office 365 makes it easier to create, share, and work together wherever you are, on any device.

In this e-book, you'll learn seven ways you can improve communication and teamwork both within your organization and with your donors and volunteers to accelerate your mission and drive greater impact.

1. Increase productivity by working together in the cloud

Organizations of all sizes are taking advantage of the convergence of cloud and mobile technology to enhance collaboration and productivity, accommodate multiple work styles, and optimize operations. Your staff can work from anywhere using their own devices and cloud-based productivity tools to access and share information, communicate and collaborate more effectively, and engage with donors and volunteers.

In an August 2018 survey of more than 250 nonprofit professionals conducted by NTEN and Microsoft, 75 percent said they use cloud services for at least three purposes[1]. Data storage has the largest use, followed by donor and event management, and document storage. These organizations are finding that enabling their staff to work where and how they want, and on the devices they prefer, can help their organizations deliver more services and make more progress toward reaching their goals.

With Microsoft technologies, your staff can access trusted productivity applications from the device that works best for them—desktop, laptop, smartphone, or tablet running iOS, Android, or Windows operating systems. They'll have a consistent experience no matter which device or operating system they choose.

The ability to securely access and edit documents on a whole range of devices allows your staff to quickly create and update documents and collaborate with peers anytime from anywhere. They'll also have the flexibility to edit documents in real time as a team, so everyone can rest assured they'll be working from the very latest version with all changes saved.

2. Go mobile

The world reached a new milestone in 2017 with 8.4 billion mobile devices in use worldwide, up 31 percent from 2016. That number is expected to reach 20.4 billion by 2020[2].

As mobile technology continues to change how and where people work, organizations have the opportunity to redefine how work gets done. That means embracing mobile users and their ability to complete mission-critical tasks in more efficient and cost-effective ways. Taking full advantage of mobile technology will help organizations attract the best and the brightest staff and volunteers by giving them more options for where they do their work.

With Office 365, you and your staff can install Office programs on up to five devices, and also benefit from advanced data protection, and more. You can view and edit Office documents across Windows, Android, and Apple devices, with a consistent, familiar user experience on whatever device you use.

You can also switch easily from one device to another and pick up where you left off on whatever device you were working on last to help you stay productive when on the go.

3. Synchronize your projects

The nature of nonprofit organizations often finds staff and volunteers working outside the 9-to-5 window. Global organizations often need to communicate and share information with colleagues in different time zones or even in different countries. Cloud and mobile technologies make it much easier to synchronize work, even when team members are working on different schedules. This way everyone will be viewing the latest version of a file no matter where they're working or on what device. The cloud also provides high-level security and privacy while ensuring the access control you need.

4. Next-level teamwork

A growing number of organizations are taking collaboration to a new level by adopting Teams. With features like OneNote shared notebooks, Teams is a way for people to centralize and share project information including photos, videos, and even handwritten notes. When team members work together in the same notebook, OneNote syncs their changes within seconds.

In addition, the adoption of social technology can connect remote staff and further enhance collaboration. About 80 percent of organizations that use social technology say it is very or extremely important for meeting goals[3]. With the right set of tools to support open communication and seamless collaboration—no matter where people work—organizations can unlock greater creativity and productivity to more effectively pursue their mission.

Real-time collaboration tools can be used both within your organization and with external users like volunteers, consultants, or donors. That means everyone can communicate in the moment and stay in the know.

"We expect to halve the amount of time people spend seeking basic operational information. This means we can double our results for children around the world as a result of better use of Microsoft tools."

David Danylewich
Vice President of Strategy and Systems, Right to Play

5. Meetings, simplified

Meetings are an important part of any organization's operation. They provide valuable opportunities for people to brainstorm, collaborate, strategize, and share information. According to information compiled by Atlassian, most staff attend 62 meetings a month. That includes 31 hours a month spent in unproductive meetings[4]. Those unnecessary meetings take precious time that could be used to fulfill your organization's mission.

New communication and collaboration tools like Microsoft Teams make it easy to conduct efficient and productive meetings. Familiar, easy-to-use features plus enterprise-grade security, compliance, and control make virtual face-to-face meetings as productive as physical face-to-face meetings—and, they're a lot more convenient.

Staff members can actively participate from anywhere using Skype for Business HD video calling, coauthoring, app sharing, and presentations. They can host or join a meeting from their favorite device, with just a click or two and easily present, share, and collaborate on documents or a virtual whiteboard during the meeting. If they need an answer to a quick question, they can ping someone using instant messaging, and then add voice, video, and screen sharing as the conversation evolves.

What this means for your organization is that team members in multiple locations can meet face to face using high-fidelity imagery and view the same information, without spending the time or money to travel to the meeting site.

6. Turn your data into valuable insights

An increasing number of nonprofit organizations are using business intelligence (BI) solutions to spot trends, identify risks, and find new opportunities. With one-click forecasting in Office, you can quickly analyze your organization's historical data to guide you in engaging more effectively with donors and enhancing grant-writing efforts.

You can use these new tools to connect, view, and shape data from multiple sources. The improved Power Pivot features within Excel can help you map different datasets with drag-and drop ease and calculate hundreds of millions of rows of data in a snap. By using BI tools, your organization can collect all kinds of data and transform it into easily digestible insights to help you make more informed decisions about how to most effectively direct your resources.

"From measuring our success, to reaching out to a parent, to reaching out to a young person in crisis, to running a really fun activity for teens, technology is the foundation of all of that. Technology allows our people to do what they do best with kids, which is help them have fun, help them have a great experience and ultimately learn and grow."

Rebecca Asmo
CEO, Boys and Girls Club of Columbus (Ohio)

7. Increase your impact

Nonprofits are always looking for ways to maximize their impact with limited resources. Microsoft technology can help you optimize your efforts. Using Office 365 and other cloud-based tools, you can expand the reach of your programs, better anticipate demands, and develop new solutions to better address the needs of the populations you serve.

Providing your staff with these familiar and powerful tools can improve the agility of your organization and boost the productivity and creativity of your staff and volunteers. By applying proven, easy-to-use analysis tools, you and your staff can gain new insights into your constituents' needs and the impact of your programs. Those insights can help drive innovation to improve outcomes that better serve your mission.

To learn more about how cloud, mobile, and social technology solutions can make your organization more collaborative, visit **www.microsoft.com/office365nonprofit**.

1. State of Nonprofit Cloud - Report

2. Gartner, "Gartner Says 8.4 Billion Connected 'Things' Will Be in Use in 2017, Up 31 Percent from 2016," February 7, 2017.

3. Harvard Business Review, Collaboration Tech: Boosting the Midsize Organization, 2016.

4. Atlassian, "You Waste a Lot of Time at Work," accessed November 8, 2017.