



CASE STUDY

Helping Those Who Help Others: Limited by their Office's IT Equipment, Lakota Funds Called on Technology Center



THE HISTORY

Lakota Funds began in the '80s as a micro-lender, providing small but critical assistance to entrepreneurs facing particularly daunting odds on the Pine Ridge Reservation. At the time there were only two Native American-owned businesses on the reservation. Of their first clients, 85 percent never had a bank account; 75 percent had never received a loan; **95 percent had no business experience.** But Lakota Funds stepped in, persevered, and successfully infused some much-needed vitality into the community.

Today, Lakota Funds' mission of *"leading an economic resurgence through culturally appropriate strategies"* is especially ambitious when you consider the numbers:

- A staff of 13 serves a community of nearly 30,000
- The reservation spans 3,500 square miles without a single bank or credit union
- Some residents are 40 miles from the nearest town without Internet, car, or phone
- **Unemployment soars above 80 percent**

THE SITUATION

For Tawney Brunsch, executive director of Lakota Funds, all these daunting numbers are just another day on the job. The work her small staff does every day relies heavily on technology: "We were having issues with our server: even inter-office email was not always reliable," recalls Brunsch. *"I have a staff of 13 and we are going in every direction, full speed ahead. When you've got to stop everything to address those kinds of issues, it can really affect a lot more than just what you are trying to get done."*

Lakota Funds needed an IT partner to address the failing server, look to the challenges ahead, make the most of limited funding, and find solutions that would keep them focused on making a difference for their clients. Technology Center answered the call.



Starting in the 1980s with \$500 loans to local artisans, Lakota Funds now manages over \$440,000 in annual loans—which have created or sustained at least 78 jobs this year alone. Says executive director Tawney Brunsch: **"Any new job we help to create is huge."**

"A business loan is not only great for the individual business owner—it's going to sustain their family—but they can also reach out and employ more people ... and sustain those families."

– Lakota Funds

Lakota Funds also offers extensive educational and training efforts, with programs such as: homebuyer education, financial literacy, business planning, and technical assistance. The staff travels far and wide to reach anyone seeking to buck the trends of poverty that have beleaguered the reservation for decades.

Learn more about the exciting success Lakota Funds continues to foster among the Oglala Lakota Sioux (Oyate) people of southwestern South Dakota: www.lakotafunds.org

For THE SOLUTION turn the page. →

THE DIAGNOSIS

"They really didn't have a crisis when we came in. It was more an issue of keeping up with the steady growth of the company and what they want to do." – **Diane Michelson**, Sales Manager, Technology Center

That failing server definitely needed replacing, but Technology Center also got to the heart of Lakota Funds' challenges and realized that employee productivity was also critical. The executive director herself, constantly on the road and balancing the needs of her staff, her board, and her clients, needed some serious enhancements to her connectivity: "Her smartphone, her voicemail and email—everything had to be connected with the HP server with Microsoft Exchange, so she could be continually connected to her company," says Technology Center's Diane Michelson.

THE SOLUTION

The first step was to upgrade that struggling old server for everyday reliability and easy future expansion. Technology Center selected HP's ProLiant server technology. Built-in redundant power, latest server technology, and HP's warranty sealed the deal.

But the improvements didn't stop there. Technology Center listened to Lakota Funds' needs and determined that they would need new computers, professional-class software, plus an enhanced connectivity to the server.

HP provided the hardware that keeps Lakota Funds ticking:

Server: HP ProLiant ML350T G6 Server

Memory (4): HP 2GB 2Rx8 PC3-10600E-9 Memory Kits

Hard Drives (5): HP 146GB 6G SAS 15K rpm SFF (2.5-inch) HDDs

Uninterruptible Power: HP UPS T1500 G3

Desktop Workstations (4): HP Pro 3130 Minitower PCs

Notebooks (10): HP ProBook4530s 2GB RAM, 320 GB Hard Drive Notebooks

Multifunction Printer: HP Color LaserJet CM2320fxi MFP with HP Carepack

Business Partner



HP expandable servers deliver decades of engineering and integration experience designed to speed the implementation of new business computing technology.

The Technology Center is an HP Business Partner, offering supreme technical expertise and certified service.

What about the old server that Lakota Funds had outgrown?

It didn't go to waste. With some creative planning, it will soon be in place to meet the needs of the proposed Lakota Federal Credit Union.



Featured Product

HP ProLiant ML350 G6 Server

Best-in-class availability, unsurpassed flexibility

- Easily expands to support new users, locations, external storage, and backup
- Redundant power, fans, memory and disk options
- The latest Intel® Xeon® processors and QPI technology



The Technology Center is a team of highly trained and experienced consultants, technicians, engineers, and administrative specialists. Since 1979 we have provided only the highest level of quality products and service. We are expert problem solvers, always putting each client's needs first.

Do you have to be a technical wiz to find success like Lakota Funds? Ask Tawney Brunsch.

"I can be walked through about anything ... most of us here are pretty savvy but we are usually in such a time crunch that we can't take the time to figure it out ourselves. That's where we call Technology Center: They talk us through it over the phone, which usually gets it fixed in a matter of minutes."

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