

## OUTSOURCING I.T. WITH NO REGRETS

### PC SOLUTIONS WORKS SEAMLESSLY WITH INTERNAL STAFF

*Outsourcing your IT really pays off if you do the math. Sandy Livingston, IT Manager at Tierney Brothers, Inc., did the math. She calculated the cost of salary, benefits, vacation time, sick time, office space and equipment – not to mention supplementing skills with the right vendor when your employees lack the specific skills you need. What she found was that it made more economic sense to outsource the IT managed services function to PC Solutions (PCS).*



*PC Solutions brings brings high level expertise to watch over the details while keeping an eye on the big picture.*

Established in 1977, Tierney Brothers is an industry-leading audio-visual systems design and integration firm based in the Twin Cities that employs 100 employees in two locations. Livingston started out working with PCS in 2004 as “fill-in,” she says, to supplement the skill sets that were lacking in their own staff. Over the course of Livingston’s tenure, the IT department has fluctuated from one to as many as four people. When it was time to hire another help desk technician, Livingston interviewed for two weeks.

During this process, she realized she was using the engineering talent of PCS more and more on a time and materials basis for both scheduled visits and *ad hoc* projects to augment their internal IT resources. “I realized it would be impossible to find one person who possesses every single skill you’re ever going to need,” Livingston said. “When I looked at the math and factored in the time and resources it would take to find a replacement when an employee is sick or on vacation, it made more sense to contract with PCS for their Mission Control service.”

That decision ended up being “the best business decision” she’s made for her department in a long time, she says. “I’ve got no regrets.”

## ZAPPING THE OUTSOURCING STIGMA

“At first, when we said the word ‘outsource’ to our employees, it was uncomfortable for them because the word, itself, sounds so impersonal,” Livingston said. However, those feelings disappeared quickly because Tierney had already been working with PCS for more than five years. “Their technicians knew our employees. We were all on a first-name basis. Most importantly, PCS knew the skill set of our employees.”

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Tierney CFO Jim Tierney agrees. “It’s really about the relationship we’ve developed over the years,” he said. “We had received good service in the past, so when our help desk technician was leaving, PCS stepped forward to tell us about Mission Control, a new managed service they offered. They really earned the expanded business.”

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In addition, upper management at Tierney Brothers especially appreciated that the two companies were similarly sized. Still, Livingston covers all her bases by querying all staff members, including executive-level staff, for their feedback regarding their experience with the PCS Support Center.

“I receive positive feedback,” Livingston said, “which helps support the idea that everyone is happy with the service we receive.” The feedback also helps Tierney build a stronger partnership with PCS and fine-tune the process in order to ensure efficient help desk solutions. In fact, one Tierney executive said, “I like working with PCS. We’re getting a higher level of expertise to pull from than with our own on-site help desk.”

The president and CEO, Tom Tierney, said, “In my experience, their follow-up seems good, and they check back to see if I still have a problem.”

## OPEN COMMUNICATION, CLEAR FOCUS

In fact, Livingston targets communication as the No. 1 value-added benefit of working with PCS. “Besides our monthly status meetings, it’s not uncommon for us to talk with each other on a daily basis multiple times,” she said. That way, she can review help requests and modify the priority of them because she sees them real-time.

Livingston’s example: “For instance, I can give more detail or background to assist PCS in solving the problem. Or I can tell them to focus on the printer in the sales department because I know a big proposal is going out today.”

PCS also handles all of Tierney’s proactive needs. “They are always looking with an eye to the future, as well as the daily fire-fighting. For instance, PCS will say

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in advance, ‘Did you know this server is 80 percent full?’ Someone on staff may have missed the impending problem because they would have been bogged down in day-to-day details.”

Jim Tierney agrees. “The care PCS takes in understanding the detail of what’s going on in your account is impressive,” he said. “For instance, they know not to come around with something new or a big discussion around month-end time, because we’re too busy to consider it. They also know all our ‘power users.’ They know and we know we are a high-maintenance account filled with idiosyncrasies and urgent needs. PC Solutions is available to address our needs according to priority with little to no direction from us.”

PCS’ vast experience with a variety of their own clients also impressed Livingston. “Because PCS works with so many other companies, they can give me valuable advice regarding what they learned that worked,” Livingston said. “They can say, ‘This might also work for Tierney.’”

This relationship has worked well for both Tierney Brothers and PC Solutions. PCS’ Mission Control provides Tierney Brothers with confidence in an efficient and reliable network, allowing them to focus on the things that matter most—serving their customers’ needs.