

IT Strategy Virtual IT Director (vCIO)

missing people

“Smartdesc have helped us develop a new mind-set for IT and Digital. With their expertise and practical application, they have created plans that have enabled us to secure new funding to kick start our IT and digital transformation”

Jo Youle, Chief Executive,
Missing People



the role

Background

Missing People is the only charity in the UK which is dedicated to bringing missing children and adults back together with their families.

Missing People were looking for an external partner to review their approach to IT & Digital and establish a strategy aligned to the organisation's ambitious five year plan.

Situation

Missing People were operating a sound IT network that had grown over time, but a proactive forward-looking IT strategy was needed to ensure the tools and systems staff use remain both fit for the present and can take advantage of developments in technology in future.

As well as creating the IT Strategy, Missing People needed ongoing accountability for the delivery of the various projects that made up the strategic programme.

Strategy, Planning and overall accountability of this nature requires specialist knowledge and a mixed skillset – blending IT with business stakeholder engagement and project management. This work is often carried out by senior leaders such as IT Directors or Heads of IT, that can command salaries in excess of £90,000 in London.

Smartdesc was chosen by Missing People to deliver this role, owning and ultimately being accountable for the successful creation and delivery of the IT Strategy.

Solution

Smartdesc installed a "Virtual IT Director" – otherwise known as "vCIO" – to be based on site at Missing People owning and leading the IT function.

The engagement is an ongoing one, flexible in nature, but structured around 2 days per week on average.

The IT Director brings with them a wealth of shared knowledge and experience from other Smartdesc customers, and the role is structured to ensure maximum productivity whilst also minimising costs – considerably less than a full time equivalent with little overhead for the charity.



Moving Forward

The Virtual IT Director created a comprehensive programme of improvements, signed off at the highest level by Missing People, and now owns the ongoing implementation programme.

The Virtual IT Director has also supported Missing People through a successful funding grant application allowing them to implement new front line digital services, while conducting regular tasks like vendor management, IT budgeting, service improvement and more.

Results

- **The skills, knowledge and experience of an IT Director at a fraction of the full-time cost.**
- **A proactive, forward looking IT Strategy with clear ownership and accountability.**
- **Ongoing IT improvement programme that is visible to the business and delivering benefit.**
- **A leader responsible for 3rd party vendor management, contract negotiations and more.**
- **A senior escalation point within the organisation, representing IT at Board and Trustee level.**
- **Fully flexible arrangement; input can scale up and down depending on demand, with zero HR overhead for the charity.**

**missing
people**

Registered charity in England and Wales (1020419)
and in Scotland (SC047419)

A lifeline when someone disappears