

CASE STUDY: RABA KISTNER INC.



ENGINEERING FIRM EXPANDS ITS IT CAPABILITIES

Managed services help an organization tap into powerful resources

Back in 2017, when the employees of Raba Kistner Inc. had an information technology issue, they went to their network manager, Scott Ripper. And when Ripper needed assistance, he went to... well, nobody.

"For a while, it was just my supervisor and me handling IT for over 500 people," says Ripper. "And then my supervisor left the company."

But rather than be overwhelmed at the fact that he was now a one-man IT department for hundreds of people, Ripper and the management at Raba Kistner saw an opportunity to bring in new resources and reassess the organization's needs. Raba Kistner management believed that a managed services approach would help resolve the company's IT problems while building a strong technological foundation for growth.

A fresh start

Founded in 1968, Raba Kistner is an engineering consulting and program management firm that specializes in addressing key risk areas within the industry. The company was currently working with RSM US LLP for its tax and audit needs. With a strong professional relationship in place, and RSM's experience serving engineering consulting firms, it was natural for Raba Kistner to ask RSM for help with its IT issues.

Initially, the RSM managed services team provided Raba Kistner with an interim chief information officer. RSM then created a technology road map for the organization. This road map highlighted areas of potential improvement and verified Ripper's concerns.

"Our network at that point was way out of date," says Ripper. "We were five years behind where we needed to be."

So RSM set out to upgrade Raba Kistner's systems. This involved overhauling the company's network, enhancing cybersecurity and moving all the organization's servers into the cloud. Ripper says that everyone involved knew that it was going to be a long-term project.

"We took everything in bits and pieces and just kept moving forward," Ripper says. "It was fun, and sometimes a little frustrating. But RSM came in and said, 'This is what you do.' And that was a big help and took a lot of the intimidation out of it."

Ahead of schedule

Ripper was pleased that the engagement got off to a strong start—not just in terms of technological improvements, but with regard to the speed of implementation. For example, RSM undertook the management of Raba Kistner's cloud environment. To do so, the firm first had to transfer massive amounts of data to the cloud.

"The time frame to move the data—about 13 or 14 terabytes—was going to be 16 weeks," says Ripper. "We did it in a month."

Of course, it wasn't just about speed. RSM had to understand the complexities of Raba Kistner's enterprise resource planning (ERP) platform and how it interacted with other technologies. Any changes or enhancements had to take into consideration the ERP platform's capabilities. Ripper emphasizes that Raba Kistner was interested in proven technologies with a good track record in the marketplace, and any solutions had to be implemented without affecting the company's ability to do business. Ripper says that RSM overcame these challenges and built a more sophisticated IT framework.

"RSM offered us a resource that we never had before," says Ripper. "Previously, it was just us trying to find the fix via the web. So to have a large group of professionals say, 'Hey, we're proficient in that field,' and to help us solve the problem has been a godsend."

Ongoing support

Because improving an organization's IT functions is a never-ending job, RSM will continue to work with Raba Kistner to meet the challenges of the future. Ripper says that the company has plans for growth that require a robust IT system, which in turn, will necessitate a close working relationship with RSM.

"RSM will continue to be utilized going forward," Ripper says. "There's no ifs, ands or buts about it. Because there's going to be projects that we need their help with."

In Ripper's opinion, Raba Kistner's IT platform is getting stronger every day, and he believes that the company's full integration into the cloud has opened up new possibilities in terms of functionality and applications. He says that end users, in particular, will benefit from the improvements that RSM has implemented.

"The end user is going to love it," Ripper says. "There's just a level of confidence we have in RSM to figure out how to fix problems or come up with an alternative in a timely manner, where before it might have taken us months to achieve."

Working together

Ripper is no longer the entire IT department for his organization. He now leads a small internal team that meshes well with RSM's managed services professionals. The two groups are in constant communication about goals and the next stages of the engagement.

"I don't think there's a week that goes by where I don't talk to RSM and say, 'What about this?' or 'What do we do in this scenario?'" Ripper says. "We focus on what can be done with this product or application to make it perform the way we want it to perform."

Ripper says that RSM has alleviated the pressure on his IT team, and as a result, the day-to-day functioning of the department has improved. He adds that Raba Kistner staff members believe that they can approach RSM with questions or concerns, as well as inquire about technological innovations, because the managed services team has the experience and breadth of services to serve as an effective advisor. Ripper says that because of this collaborative environment, RSM has become an important resource for educating Raba Kistner's staff about cutting-edge technology and the nuances of the IT world.

"My team is tickled to death when they learn something new, and it excites them," Ripper says. "Every one of them loves RSM. Working with them has made our job easier."

+1 800 274 3978

rsmus.com

This document contains general information, may be based on authorities that are subject to change, and is not a substitute for professional advice or services. This document does not constitute audit, tax, consulting, business, financial, investment, legal or other professional advice, and you should consult a qualified professional advisor before taking any action based on the information herein. RSM US LLP, its affiliates and related entities are not responsible for any loss resulting from or relating to reliance on this document by any person. Internal Revenue Service rules require us to inform you that this communication may be deemed a solicitation to provide tax services. This communication is being sent to individuals who have subscribed to receive it or who we believe would have an interest in the topics discussed. RSM US LLP is a limited liability partnership and the U.S. member firm of RSM International, a global network of independent audit, tax and consulting firms. The member firms of RSM International collaborate to provide services to global clients, but are separate and distinct legal entities that cannot obligate each other. Each member firm is responsible only for its own acts and omissions, and not those of any other party. Visit rsmus.com/aboutus for more information regarding RSM US LLP and RSM International. RSM, the RSM logo and *the power of being understood* are registered trademarks of RSM International Association.