

Consortium of Florida Education Foundations



About CFEF

The Consortium of Florida Education Foundations (CFEF) is the professional association for Florida's education foundations that serves over two million students and 295,000 educators across 67 county-wide school districts.

The CFEF serves as the conduit for business and philanthropic investment in Florida's classrooms by creating state and regional partnerships that directly impact student achievement at the local level.

Challenges

CFEF was in a position where they had outgrown their previous grants management system. As the CFEF granting program grew, the system remained stagnant. It was unable to accommodate new processes and meet evolving business needs. The grant application form, for instance, could not be edited or changed to any degree.

"There was little flexibility with our old system," says Tracy Burger, the Associate Director of Programs at CFEF. "This became problematic because of the costs and time involved in making changes."

CFEF began their search for a management software solution that was adaptable and scalable – in other words, a system that could easily function under the duress of change. Due to their relatively small staff, they required a solution that was simple to learn and easy to master.

Selecting SmartSimple

While the Request for Proposal stage of software acquisition is daunting for many foundations, CFEF's choice became clear once they were presented with SmartSimple's GMS360° grants management system.

"It was a combination of many factors," Tracy says of choosing GMS360°. "Straightforward presentation, simple pricing structure, the assurance of strong technical support, and the ability to adapt the system to our needs made SmartSimple stand out above the rest."

Additionally, SmartSimple's strong presence in the grants market, experience in implementing cloud-based software, and the robust features of its platform made GMS360° the obvious choice for CFEF.

How SmartSimple Helped

Once SmartSimple entered the picture, CFEF was able to relay the issues they had with their previous system, and SmartSimple responded accordingly.

CFEF's old system was antiquated to the point where administrators did most of the processing by hand, with paper applications entered manually into their online database. With GMS360°, that process has been completely streamlined thanks to its online cloud-based infrastructure. Additionally, application forms are now configured specifically for the foundation.

"Having the review process online has been a great time saver," Tracy expressed. "I can download individual scores if needed, post reviewer comments directly to the application, and tally scores very quickly."

External users have also been very vocal about the improvements to CFEF's granting processes. GMS360° has enabled CFEF applicants to easily toggle back and forth between application sections, and save at any point they choose. The foundation's reviewers have especially enjoyed the ease of viewing applications online and entering scores at the same time – an important feature that simply was not possible with the old system.

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Implementation

SmartSimple performed the implementation of CFEF's GMS360° system in several phases. This was done to ensure that CFEF was able to interact and grow comfortable with GMS360° throughout its deployment process. This method of project delivery also ensured that SmartSimple was able to incorporate CFEF's valuable feedback in stages throughout the process.

Implementation began with the configuration of application templates and the migration of CFEF's existing contacts and organizations. After the application review processes were built, post-grant functionality (such as reports) was completed. Quality assurance testing was completed shortly after, followed by the implementation of payment tracking functionality.

CFEF staff were closely involved throughout the deployment process. Tracy and her team were particularly impressed by the malleability of GMS360° during its build. "The system has a myriad of capabilities beyond its grants program. SmartSimple staff were able to recognize our needs, create a system to meet those needs, and make it manageable for us, a non-technical staff."

"We were incredibly pleased with the attention we received during implementation. Our one-on-one relationship during this stage felt exclusive, which limited any frustration for us."

After a meaningful and collaborative deployment process, the system officially went live and feedback from both CFEF staff and grantees was immediate and positive.

About SmartSimple

SmartSimple is a SaaS (Software as a Service) provider specializing in process automation. A cloud-based platform, SmartSimple's technology gives you the ability to track all your data and build automated processes that suit the needs of your organization. Endlessly configurable with highly flexible tracking and reporting features, SmartSimple provides a personalized system that meets your unique business needs; we work with you to create your system, your way.

SmartSimple saves you time, paper and resources – no more printing and shipping of reviewer documentation, applicant communications or board reports. Everything can be created, managed and stored online, making it accessible from anywhere through individualized user portals. That means your community members only see what they need to see in the way you want them to see it.

To learn more, visit www.smartsimple.com and request a demo. Alternatively, you can reach us by email at sales@smartsimple.com or call toll-free +1-866-239-0991.