

How Chu & Waters Scaled IT for the Future

CASE STUDY

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“Parachute enables us to plan strategically and align our business goals with the technology and processes we need to support our growth.”

JEFF CHU,
*Director of Operations,
Chu & Waters*



Chu & Waters

CPAs and Advisors

Chu & Waters is a full-service accounting and advisory firm in San Francisco. Their skilled team of over 20 seasoned professionals is equipped to navigate any financial venture with expertise and personal service.

HIGHLIGHTS

Challenges

- Updating and optimizing an old IT environment
- Resolving networking challenges
- Increasing security
- Appealing to younger recruits in a time of talent scarcity

Solution

- Parachute Managed IT Services
- Technical Account Manager
- Audit and roadmap
- Enhanced security
- Migration to the cloud
- Upgraded networks
- Iterative implementation

Results

- Optimized, scalable tech environment
- Agility to quickly implement new ideas and solutions
- Strong cybersecurity stance
- Ability to attract the new generation of accounting recruits

Challenges

A 25-YEAR-OLD TECH ENVIRONMENT

For the past 25 years, Chu & Waters has grown steadily in size and production offerings. But its tech environment didn't keep pace.

Jeff Chu, Director of Operations, explains, *"We're a 25-year-old firm that was looking to find new efficiencies."*

The inefficient tech stack hindered productivity and the firm's ability to respond quickly to new opportunities.

The IT environment also had networking challenges, which negatively impacted communication among employees—further compounding inefficiencies in workflow and operations.

Security was another area of concern. Jeff worried the firm could be vulnerable to data breaches and cyberattacks. The firm was subject to phishing schemes and attempted hacks daily.



"We had a lot of spam coming in and a lot of issues where people were trying to hack into our emails," says Jeff.

Jeff had another reason to optimize the firm's IT environment: the new generation of accountants has little patience for outdated technologies and inefficient processes.

"Younger people in our industry want the latest technology, the latest software, and the most efficient processes," says Jeff.



This issue was particularly urgent due to the shortage of accounting talent. Jeff describes the scope of the looming crisis:

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“Our industry is changing dramatically. The number of accountants entering the industry has halved in the past 20 years—and about 60% of existing CPAs are baby boomers. Knowing there’s going to be fewer accountants entering the industry, we want to structure ourselves in a way where we’re using the latest tools, including AI.”

“We’re a 25-year-old firm that was looking to find new efficiencies.”

Solution

PARACHUTE MANAGED IT SERVICES

Initially, Jeff considered hiring a full-time, in-house employee to update the firm's tech stack. However, he concluded that approach was limiting.



"We needed a new set of eyes—someone who would not only improve our processes, upgrade our hardware, and create better controls but also look to the future and align with where we want to take the business," says Jeff.

After evaluating several Managed IT Service Providers, Chu & Waters chose Parachute.

TECHNICAL ACCOUNT MANAGER

Parachute assigned a Technical Account Manager to Jeff early in the process. The Technical Account Manager would coordinate Parachute's experts and resources to tailor solutions for the firm's specific challenges and goals.

The Technical Account Manager took a consultative approach, taking the lead on initiatives while keeping Jeff informed.



"When our Technical Account Manager doesn't have the answers, he loops in people who need to be looped in to keep everything rolling. He allows us to stay nimble," says Jeff.

Throughout, Jeff held the deciding vote in every decision.





“Parachute doesn’t shove things down your throat. They give you exposure to the opportunities that you can have,” says Jeff.

COMPREHENSIVE AUDIT AND ROADMAP

Parachute commenced the engagement with a thorough audit of the firm’s existing tech infrastructure.

“The first thing they did was sit down with us and figure out our business goals and understand our current technology ecosystem. It was a one-two whammy of ‘where are you now?’ and ‘where are you trying to go?’” says Jeff.

Parachute identified and prioritized issues, and then created a roadmap to resolve them.

ENHANCED SECURITY

Parachute quickly took steps to enhance the firm’s security posture. The team implemented solutions and resources such as next-generation antivirus protection (SentinelOne), dark web monitoring (ID Agent), and security awareness training (Proofpoint).

The Parachute team also implemented email security solutions to mitigate cybersecurity threats, such as advanced protection features in Microsoft 365.

Jeff appreciates how Parachute walks the fine line between implementing strong controls and not overburdening users.



“We’re doing a lot to enhance security but we also don’t want to be too Big Brother with our employees. And Parachute totally gets that,” says Jeff.

MIGRATION TO THE CLOUD

To enhance scalability and flexibility, Parachute migrated the firm's tech stack from its antiquated on-premise servers to cloud platforms.

UPGRADED NETWORKS

Parachute improved the firm's communication and collaboration among employees and clients through high-speed connectivity and optimized configurations with Meraki equipment.

ITERATIVE IMPLEMENTATION

Throughout the process, Parachute took an iterative approach to implementation, addressing critical issues promptly and refining solutions to meet evolving requirements.

“When our Technical Account Manager doesn't have the answers, he loops in people who need to be looped in to keep everything rolling. He allows us to stay nimble.”

Results

SCALABLE IT SOLUTIONS FOR CONTINUED GROWTH

By partnering with Parachute, Jeff is relieved of the burden of transforming and managing the firm's tech environment.



“Our Technical Account Manager stays on top of all tasks that need to be executed as well as new processes, procedures, hardware, and software. He’s been consistent since day one,” says Jeff.

He continues:

“Parachute is a member of our team. Knowing that they can execute on time and at a reasonable price is really comforting because we have so many other things going on in our business.”

Whenever one of the firm's younger recruits requests a new technology, Jeff relies on the Parachute team to assess it.

“When we want to implement things, we can get sound feedback from our Technical Account Manager and his team. We can get a group of people on the call and suss out whether the idea makes sense or not,” says Jeff.

When ideas are greenlit to move forward, Parachute moves quickly. When the group agreed to implement Microsoft Copilot, for example, Parachute started the implementation in mere days.



“Microsoft Copilot wasn’t in our plan—but that’s what’s cool about partnering with Parachute. You can have these ideas and implement them pretty easily,” says Jeff.

Jeff sleeps better at night now, knowing that the firm has a strong security stance—and has taken proactive measures to foil phishing attempts and hacks.

“Knowing that they’re on top of our current security issues and on the lookout for ones that might be coming our way is a big comfort.”

Today, Chu & Waters is not only prepared to scale into the future—but also remains attractive to new talent.

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“Parachute has our ambitions in mind and makes sure that we have the right platforms and processes to support our future growth,” says Jeff.

“Parachute is a member of our team. Knowing that they can execute on time and at a reasonable price is really comforting because we have so many other things going on in our business.”

In-house IT, outsourced.

Make Parachute a part of your team and build scalable solutions for continued growth.

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