Fiber Ethernet broadens horizons for the Harlem Commonwealth Council

Fiber provides the bandwidth to support strategic digital communications including social media, and delivers reliability of voice and data that frees up staff to focus on the Council’s mission versus fixing IT issues. The Council also gains the ability to expand the value of existing technology assets such as its technology lab, and the connectivity to build relationships and partnering opportunities.

In 1967, business owners seeking to revitalize their inner-city community created the Harlem Commonwealth Council (HCC). The nonprofit’s mission was to provide funding and technical assistance for Harlem-based enterprises. Over time, HCC’s mission evolved to include the development of Harlem businesses and its residents.

By 2013, however, HCC was struggling with outdated technology that made it increasingly difficult to remain relevant as digital skills, social media and texting were revolutionizing education, training, employment, and community engagement.

Unfortunately, the nonprofit was located in an old building with no access to fiber. Data and phone service ran on a T1 line.

When Tameika Halliman came on board as HCC’s Director of Operations, she recalls that the phone lines and Internet were frequently down. This not only crippled business operations, it “fried” the building’s security, elevator, fire and emergency alarm systems.

In addition, since the T1 connected the headquarters office to a satellite location, that office would also go down. Halliman became frustrated because the majority of her time was spent tracking trouble tickets.

Starting fresh with fiber
HCC president and CEO Dr. Joseph Tait gave Halliman the go-ahead to explore options, including looking for ways to have fiber brought to the neighborhood. Spectrum Enterprise worked closely with HCC to install fiber—opening the way for HCC to carry out its mission in all-new ways.

During the time it took for the fiber construction to be completed, the Spectrum Enterprise account team

“i’ve had much less stress because of our wonderful Spectrum Enterprise services, and i’ve actually been able to focus more on social media and creating a strategic communications plan.”

—Tameika Halliman

Client Profile
Company
Harlem Commonwealth Council
Industry
Nonprofit Community-Based Economic Development
Services
Ethernet Private Line (EPL), Fiber Internet Access (FIA), PRI, Spectrum Business Voice, Spectrum Business Internet
was able to provide a much needed interim solution: a highly stable 35 x 5 Mbps Spectrum Business Internet connection plus PRI voice service to improve call quality and reduce the load on the emergency systems.

The Internet service enabled HCC to upgrade the functionality of its existing computer technology lab to support a pilot job-training program, Work Now, that teaches teens and young adults industry-specific and digital media skills. The success of this pilot program enabled HCC to make a successful business case—and win funding—for launching additional technologically enabled programs by upgrading to fiber-based Internet service.

Once fiber construction was completed, HCC migrated its PRI service to fiber and Spectrum Enterprise installed an Ethernet Private Line (EPL) circuit, along with a Fiber Internet Access (FIA) circuit offering 30 Mbps of symmetrical and dedicated Internet connectivity.

**The highly stable network creates mental bandwidth**

Halliman is delighted that the Spectrum Enterprise solution gives HCC new ways to address the changing needs and demographics of the Harlem community. She notes that with fiber PRI, FIA and Ethernet Services she has more bandwidth and more mental bandwidth.

“We don’t have to worry about something crashing or going down,” she explains, which means she spends far less time wearing her IT hat and far more time exploring ways to use social media, texting, and Internet connectivity strategically to engage with the Harlem community.

**Connectivity opens new partnering opportunities**

Using fiber’s connectivity and capacity to support innovation, HCC is building a technology platform for launching new programs to benefit the community. With the technology lab, for example, the Work Now job training program is just the beginning. Halliman sees possibilities for using the lab to serve high schoolers, Millennials and even older Harlem residents by creating “internship programs—one we do here internally, or connecting with partners interested in...[programs] to encourage people of color to go into the tech field.”

The Spectrum Enterprise solution is a key part of HCCs’ ongoing evolution. HCC’s capability to optimally service the needs of its community by providing new programs and exploring new partnerships is dependent on Spectrum Enterprise continuing to be a dependable vendor.

“We’re in a place with Spectrum Enterprise where we’re satisfied and all our needs are met...”

—Tameika Hallimani

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**About Spectrum Enterprise**

Spectrum Enterprise, a part of Charter Communications, is a national provider of scalable, fiber-based technology solutions serving many of America’s largest businesses and communications service providers. The broad Spectrum Enterprise portfolio includes Internet access, Ethernet access and networks, Voice and TV solutions extending to Managed IT solutions, including Application, Cloud Infrastructure and Managed Hosting Services offered by its affiliate, Navisite®. Our industry-leading team of experts works closely with clients to achieve greater business success by providing these right-fit solutions designed to meet their evolving needs. For more information, visit enterprise.spectrum.com.

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