

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Austin Board of Realtors

The board brought Frank Robles in to find out whether technology was failing the organization and its members. It was. They asked him to stay a year and fix it.

<div>4x</div> <div>Network capacity, for less than the old T1</div>	<div>2</div> <div>Fiber carriers replacing one T1 provider</div>	<div>100s</div> <div>Issues documented and resolved a month</div>	<div>12</div> <div>Months as interim CTO</div>
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WHY THE BOARD CALLED

A member organization lives on systems it does not own: listing services, member portals, vendors' platforms. When those fail, members blame the association, and the board hears about it before the staff can explain it.

In March 2013 the Austin Board of Realtors engaged Frank to investigate whether technology was letting the organization and its members down. He confirmed that it was, across core IT, policy and advanced solutions.

THEN THE MANDATE CHANGED

The board asked him to stay as interim chief technology officer and fix what he had found. He held the role until March 2014 and ran dozens of projects in that year.

The ones below are the problems most organizations will recognize as their own. The rest of the list follows.

PROBLEMS A BUYER WILL RECOGNIZE

- **We depend on vendors and cannot prove when they fail.** He built a mini network operations center to monitor the third-party systems members relied on and to track each vendor's SLA compliance.
- **We pay too much for too little bandwidth.** He replaced a single T1 provider with Ethernet over fiber from two carriers. Network capacity quadrupled, and it cost less than the T1 had.
- **The board sees numbers late, if at all.** KPI reporting was automated, so the figures arrived on schedule without someone assembling them by hand.
- **We do not control our own code.** A source code control policy and secure off-site custody of the code, so the organization owned what it had paid for regardless of which developer or vendor was in the chair.
- **Nobody knows how many problems there are.** A trouble ticketing system that documented and resolved hundreds of issues a month.
- **Our data is not answering questions.** GIS maps of members and of water districts, putting the membership and the market on a map.

THE REST OF THE YEAR

A replacement network, storage, backup and phone system. Wi-Fi built for 50 staff and hundreds of members connected at once. Document management. The evaluation of a new member management system through to a signed contract. Work with board committees on the new headquarters. And new sites for ABOR.com and AustinHomeSearch.com, started.

INVESTIGATE FIRST, THEN FIX

The engagement began as a question from the board, not a project. He answered it first, across core IT, policy and advanced solutions, and only then took on the fixing.

WHAT WE CAN START ON

An independent technology assessment for a board that suspects something is wrong. An interim CTO to fix what the assessment finds. Or vendor SLA monitoring, carrier renegotiation and code custody as a focused project with Robles Industries.

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