



“Working with Kelley Connect means we know we have what we need every day to make the right decisions. For a nonprofit operating on thin margins to support the community, that feels pretty awesome.”

- Shae Johns, President/CEO, Southern Oregon Goodwill Industries

The elevator speech for Southern Oregon Goodwill Industries is beguilingly simple.

“We accept donated items from the public, resell them, then use the revenue to fund employment training programs in the community,” said Shae Johns, President/CEO, Southern Oregon Goodwill Industries.

Of course, the perception of simplicity is intentional. Everyone in retail understands revenues result from creating an accessible, understandable, and comfortable environment for every customer that walks through the door.

But retailers also know, that just behind the curtain, lies complexity. Something Shae Johns is familiar with when it comes to operating the IT side of things.

“We have 10 locations that span retail stores with donation drop-off, as-is outlets, and job connection centers,” explains Shae. “Before Kelley Connect, we had what felt like millions of servers to keep it all going. Not to mention computers from Best Buy we hoped would last because they were cheap. So no consistency, yet we were spending a lot of money on technology.”

Plugging IT holes to focus on operations is a common theme we see among our retail partners because selling to the next buyer is easier than changing infrastructure. But in this case, Shae knew “easier” was not the point.

“We needed to operate wirelessly,” said Shae. “And unite our IT. But to do that in-house is a huge investment, and technology changes so fast that unless you can also invest in continuing education, you quickly fall behind.”

Time to modernize. We got together, talked bottlenecks and long-term strategy, then went to work.

“Now we have one server in each location, wireless, and the ability to work remotely,” explains Shae. “We can add capacity across locations, and consistent maintenance lets us move forward without buying new hardware. And we’re using Microsoft Office 365. Everything is cloud-based. We’re a totally different organization.”

But it’s still an infrastructure change. At Kelley Connect, we don’t just drop solutions on our retail partners’ laps. We work within the organization to make sure they stick—and that everyone can see the better path forward.

“Kelley Connect brought insight, knowledge, and an ability to navigate difficult situations,” said Shae. “That’s huge for me. They were respectful and worked hard to evaluate both the systems in play and the people on the team, so we’d have buy-in because change is hard for everyone.”

Now Shae can focus on what’s most important: helping the community.

“I’m most proud of our GoodWorks programs. Our GoodWorks Intern Program is a paid internship for job and power skills, after which participants are either employed by us or the community. Our GoodWorks Advancement program for employees supports their personal, financial, educational, and professional goals. That’s really why we’re here,” concluded Shae.