FIRST® is the world's leading youth-serving nonprofit advancing STEM education. Through a suite of inclusive, team-based robotics programs for ages 4-18 and backed by a global network of mentors, coaches, volunteers, alumni, and sponsors, *FIRST* has a proven impact on learning, interest, and skill-building inside and outside of the classroom. For 30 years, students from all walks of life have developed self-confidence in STEM and valuable, real-world skills through *FIRST* that open pathways to a better future.

FIRST engaged our team to develop an IT strategy that enables their business strategy and maximizes the value of their IT investments.

Business Strategy

FIRST has aggressive plans to grow 3-5X over the next 5 years.

Current IT Situation

Current IT systems and processes were deployed when *FIRST* was a much smaller organization with fewer programs and much simpler operations. Key challenges are:

➢ Operational success is predicated on the extraordinary efforts of the IT team and the users of the IT systems.

➢ 85%+ of IT budget was dedicated to support programs and to "keep the lights on".

➢ Complex and duplicative systems are not integrated and are missing critical functions.

➢ Data is siloed and difficult to leverage for business decisions.

➢ Technology footprint and processes are not scalable.

Additional Considerations

To enable its aggressive business strategy, *FIRST* intends to upgrade its Field Operations Ecosystems. The purpose is to enable regional growth, improve program quality, and improve sustainability and scalability in support of field partners and volunteers.

Proposed IT Strategy

Effective IT strategies are developed in collaboration with business leaders so that the roadmap and outcomes are aligned to business objectives, timelines and strategy. Furthermore, effective IT strategies consider a blend of four key drivers: People, Process, Technology and Financials.

People Initiatives

➢ Engage a Fractional-CIO to coach the current IT leaders and launch the approved initiatives.

➢ Provide clear stewardship for custom systems.

➢ Leverage offshore development to expedite value creation.

Process Initiatives

➢ Enhance and expand IT Governance capabilities to include all Support Services Initiatives

➢ Assess current business processes with a focus on automation and optimization.

Technology Initiatives

➢ Replace current ERP systems with one system that will simplify current processes and integrate with other systems.

➢ Leverage 3rd party systems to reduce reliance on custom systems.

➢ Develop a data warehouse to increase use of analytics.

➢ Consolidate all training on a common Learning Management System.

Financial Initiatives

➢ Consolidate all financial processes and technologies to fully leverage the new ERP system.

"Ahmad Sinno made sure to understand our business goals and objectives, resulting in an IT strategy and roadmap that prioritized our most-critical needs and addressed key business drivers." - Don Bossi, former President, *FIRST*