



A significant increase in volume and complexity calls for a unique solution for Feeding America

Synopsis

Feeding America's team faced significant challenges handling an ever increasing volume of data, and granting complexities. Their manual process was proving inefficient so an alternative was needed. SmartSimple provided the automation, data storage and quick access to the right information for comprehensive reporting.

Key Stats

Client Name: Feeding America

SmartSimple Client Since: 2014

Dollars Granted: \$50 million in 2016

Old System: Manual Process

Key Pain Points: No central data repository, difficult to work with, data dispersed across a mix of different software programs, manual process was time-consuming and tedious.

New System Must-Haves: The ability to do ad-hoc reporting, a centralized data repository, create workflows and have automated reminders for grantees.



Pictured left to right: Renie Henchy; Anne Bronson; Laura Glenn O'Carroll; Erin Calle

“

We would not have been able to absorb the volume and increasing complexity of our grants without a solution like SmartSimple.

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*Anne Bronson
Managing Director of Member Grants
Feeding America*

About Feeding America

Established in 1979, Feeding America's mission is to feed America's hungry and engage the country in the fight to end hunger. Since then, Feeding America has become the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization, working through a network of 200 food banks across the country. They currently feed 46 million people at risk of hunger each year, including 12 million children and 7 million seniors.

In the beginning

For years, Feeding America's granting activities were managed through a patchwork of different software programs. This meant that staff had to go through the arduous process of manually entering data and re-keying data into multiple programs. "Our internal IT department set up an access database to store information, but it did not really help us manage our day-to-day activities and reporting was very difficult," says Anne Bronson, Managing Director of Member Grants. "A single grant would be spread over several software programs. For example, the main application would be done through Microsoft Word and attachments would have to be sent in via email. Even when an application was done through SurveyMonkey, attachments would still have to be emailed because SurveyMonkey does not accept attachments. Without a central repository, it was very difficult to analyze data to get any real information; everything was spread out over multiple files in different locations."

"I was surprised when I first joined the organization by the amount of work that was being completed by hand," adds Renie Henchy, Manager of Member Grants. **"I saw the pain such a manual system was causing. With the tremendous amount of growth Feeding America was experiencing at the time, we definitely needed a new, automated system."**

A unique foundation with unique needs

"Most foundations – family and community-based – use some form of endowment or have a regular pool of funds with cycles of strategic programming," says Anne. "Feeding America is different. We raise funds from various streams; foundations, corporate and individual donations."

"Each grant opportunity is its own unique process," adds Renie. "It makes management of the overall granting program challenging due to the range of initiatives, timelines and requirements. We also operate with a closed pool of applicants – our member food banks – and their eligibility for specific grants is defined in advance. This means, essentially, that our grants are invitation only. All member food banks have access to our Intranet, where we post all upcoming and active grants as part of our commitment to transparency, but particular funding options will only be visible and open to applicants in the new system if they meet the eligibility requirements outlined by a particular funding opportunity."

"We really wanted to be able to create workflows for all our manual communications processes," adds Anne. "To be able to automate confirmations, report reminders and changes in contact information is huge for us, and saves us many hours of time."

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Feeding America is hosted on Amazon Web Services

With a small team of four, an annual budget of about \$25 to \$30 million, and between 70 and 80 separate grant opportunities to manage each year, Feeding America needed a centralized system that could store, track and report their unique funding activities. “We definitely wanted to do more regular, proactive reporting,” continues Anne. “Our data needs to be updated all the time - dollar amounts, number of grants, coding of grant types and so on. With regular requests for ad-hoc reports based on a variety of programs, donors, and grantees, we needed to be able to access the right data quickly for every individual request.”

After getting input from colleagues and reviewing the Idealware report, SmartSimple became the solution of choice. **“SmartSimple checked all the boxes for us. The other systems we saw just didn’t offer as much flexibility and automation as we saw in SmartSimple,”** said Renie.

SmartSimple not only gave Feeding America the central data repository and automation they had been looking for, they were able to add scheduling, workload management, and both periodic and ad hoc reporting. This provided a complete end-to-end, online grants management process that met Feeding America’s unique grants management needs. “We finally have a one-stop shop for all our programs and activities that is all interconnected and much more automated. **A member of our team used to have to spend at least two or three hours each day going through our email inbox, sorting applications, grantee reports and general mail. Now that takes less than an hour.**” shares Anne.

“SmartSimple enabled us to configure and automate our unique system the way we wanted and needed. The platform was able to automate the unique requirements of our operation and we now have a central repository of information that’s now accessible to those working across all our food banks, as well as our staff. There is no way we would have been able to absorb the volume and additional complexity we currently have without a system like SmartSimple.”

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SmartSimple interacts with over 60,000 unique users a month from almost 250 organizations across every continent in the world.

Visit smartsimple.com to request a demo.

About SmartSimple

SmartSimple is a worldwide leader in cloud-based automation software, with over 250 clients in more than 192 countries. Some of the largest companies in the Fortune 100 as well as global foundations and government agencies choose SmartSimple to create greater efficiencies in their business processes. The company employs over 90 people, with offices in Toronto, New York and Dublin.

About GMS360°

SmartSimple GMS360° is a robust, end-to-end grants management solution that simplifies the way foundations and government agencies manage grants programs, from start to finish.

With the technology to fit around clients' unique application and grants management needs, GMS360° has the ability to oversee the entire granting process, from the initial call for proposals, to reporting on final outcomes. Eliminating hours of paper shuffling and cutting down on administrative workload, GMS360° lets grants managers stay on top of everything from auto-email correspondence and documentation, to tracking acceptance letters and funding installments.

Our commitment to making processes work better and freeing our clients to do more good goes beyond the technologies we create – **it's at the very heart of our business.**

Michael Reid
Co-Founder, Chief Operating Officer
SmartSimple



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Discover more.

Contact us to request a demo that's tailored to your business needs.

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