# Business case

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| Community & UN SDG(s): | **Community:** Regina Humane Society (RHS), Organizations Receiving Food from RHS, and Suppliers<br>**UN SDG Goals:**<br>Goal 2: Zero Hunger – Ensuring food is distributed efficiently to those in need.<br>Goal 12: Responsible Consumption & Production – Reducing food waste and improving how resources are managed. |
| Date: | **February 8, 2025** |

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| **Proposed Project** | WhiskerBytes is a digital food donation and distribution management system designed to streamline RHS's current processes. It will provide a structured, automated, and transparent solution to reduce the administrative burden on staff, improve food tracking, and enhance efficiency.<br>The current process at RHS relies heavily on manual tracking, phone calls, and spreadsheets, making food donation management time-consuming, error-prone, and inefficient. WhiskerBytes will digitize this workflow, ensuring better coordination between suppliers, volunteers, and RHS staff.<br><br>**Key Features & Benefits**<br>• Suppliers can log donations directly into the system, reducing miscommunication.<br>• RHS Staff can track food inventory in real time, manage distribution, and generate reports effortlessly.<br>• Volunteers can log food pickups and distributions digitally, eliminating the need for paper logs.<br>• Community Organizations can submit food requests online, simplifying coordination.<br><br>Importantly, community organizations will not have access to live inventory tracking but will benefit from a structured request submission system, ensuring their needs are met efficiently. |
| **Date Produced** | February 8, 2025 |
| **Background** | The Regina Humane Society (RHS) is dedicated to supporting animal welfare by coordinating food donations, volunteer efforts, and distributions to pet owners and rescue organizations in need. Over the years, RHS has built a network of 11+ food suppliers and 490+ volunteers, ensuring that food donations reach their intended recipients.<br><br>**How the Current Process Works**<br><br>• **Food Donations:** Suppliers such as Cowtown and Sobeys call RHS to confirm food donations. RHS staff manually record these details in an Excel spreadsheet, which is then used to track inventory.<br>• **Volunteer Scheduling & Distribution:** Volunteers sign up for food distribution shifts using My Impact, a third-party scheduling tool. However, My Impact is not |

integrated with inventory tracking, requiring volunteers to manually log food pickups and deliveries on paper logs.

- **Food Requests:** Community organizations and individuals call RHS to request food. Since there is no structured request submission system, staff must check Excel records manually and confirm availability over the phone.
- **Inventory & Reporting:** RHS relies on Excel spreadsheets to manage inventory and track distributions. Reports are generated manually, requiring significant staff time and frequent data consolidation.

While this system has worked in the past, the increasing volume of food donations and requests has made it difficult to manage manually. RHS staff spend considerable time handling phone calls, updating records, and reconciling data, limiting their ability to focus on broader community initiatives.

The limitations of this process highlight the need for a more structured, efficient, and automated approach to food donation management, leading to the proposal for WhiskerBytes.

**Business Need/ Opportunity**

With the growing scale of food donations and distributions at RHS, the current manual tracking system is no longer sustainable. The organization requires a centralized, digital solution that improves efficiency, accuracy, and transparency in food donation management.

**Key Gaps & Challenges in the Current System**

1. No Real-Time Inventory Tracking
    - Food inventory is tracked manually in Excel, requiring staff to enter updates by hand.
    - Since updates happen only when staff have time, inventory levels are often inaccurate, leading to overstocking or shortages.

2. High Administrative Workload
    - RHS staff spend a significant amount of time consolidating reports, answering food request calls, and updating records.
    - The reliance on phone-based coordination and paper logs makes tracking donations and distributions time-consuming and inefficient.

3. Lack of a Structured Food Request System
    - Community organizations must call RHS to request food. There is no digital system to track pending requests, leading to delays and follow-ups.
    - RHS staff must check Excel sheets manually to verify stock, further slowing down the process.

4. Volunteer Efforts Are Disconnected from Food Tracking
    - Volunteers use My Impact for scheduling but record distributions manually using paper logs.
    - RHS staff must later transfer these handwritten records into Excel,

increasing the risk of missing or incorrect data.

5. Limited Data Insights for Better Decision-Making
    - Without automated reporting and analytics, RHS cannot easily analyze donation trends, volunteer impact, or food demand patterns.
    - Decision-making is reactive instead of proactive, limiting the organization's ability to optimize food distribution and outreach efforts.

**The Opportunity: Implementing WhiskerBytes**

WhiskerBytes will address these gaps by creating a centralized, digital platform that:

- Automates inventory tracking, ensuring up-to-date stock information for RHS staff.
- Provides a structured food request system, eliminating the need for phone-based coordination.
- Reduces manual workload by replacing spreadsheets and paper logs with an integrated system.
- Connects volunteer efforts with inventory management, allowing for seamless tracking of food distributions.
- Enables data-driven decision-making, helping RHS plan for future donations and resource allocation.

By digitizing and streamlining these processes, RHS will be able to distribute food more efficiently, reduce administrative burden, and enhance transparency in food management. Additionally, once the system is successfully implemented at RHS, it can be scaled to support other non-profits in Regina, beginning with the Al Ritchie Community Association.

## Options

In evaluating the best approach for improving RHS's food donation and distribution process, two primary options have been considered:

**Option-1: Do Nothing (Continue Using the Existing Manual System)**
RHS continues using its current Excel-based inventory tracking, phone calls for coordination, and paper logs for volunteer tracking. While this approach does not require immediate investment, it fails to address inefficiencies, leading to delays, errors, and high administrative workload.

**Option-2: Implement WhiskerBytes**
RHS transitions to a centralized, digital system that automates inventory tracking, streamlines food requests, integrates volunteer activity tracking, and generates real-time reports. This option improves accuracy, reduces administrative workload, and enhances operational efficiency.

## Cost-Benefit Analysis

1. **Option-1: Do Nothing (Continue Using the Current Manual System)**

| Factor | Details |
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| Financial Cost | No additional financial investment required. |

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| Operational Efficiency | Staff continue spending excessive time on manual data entry, phone-based coordination, and report generation. |
| Food Tracking Accuracy | Inventory updates remain manual, delayed, and prone to human error, leading to mismanagement, shortages, and food waste. |
| Administrative Workload | Staff and volunteers must manually log donations, track distributions, and consolidate reports, increasing workload and errors. |
| Food Request Handling | Community organizations must call RHS repeatedly to request food, leading to delays and miscommunication. |
| Volunteer Coordination | Volunteers track food pickups and distributions using paper logs, requiring additional manual data entry by staff. |
| Scalability | The current manual process cannot support RHS's growth or expand to other non-profits. |
| Data & Reporting | No structured analytics—data is scattered across Excel sheets and paper logs, making reporting difficult and time-consuming. |
| Risk Factors | Increased risk of food mismanagement, reporting errors, and staff burnout due to reliance on outdated manual methods. |

**Conclusion for Option-1:** While this option does not require any immediate financial investment, it fails to resolve inefficiencies and will become increasingly unsustainable as RHS grows. The lack of automation, real-time tracking, and data insights limits RHS's ability to operate efficiently and scale its impact.

2. **Option-2: Implement WhiskerBytes**

| Factor | Details |
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| Financial Cost | Initial investment in software development and deployment. |
| Operational Efficiency | Automates inventory tracking, request processing, and reporting, reducing time spent on administrative tasks. |
| Food Tracking Accuracy | Real-time tracking ensures food availability is updated instantly, reducing shortages and waste. |
| Administrative Workload | Drastically reduces workload by automating data entry, tracking, and report generation, allowing staff to focus on community engagement. |
| Food Request Handling | Community organizations can submit and track food requests digitally, eliminating phone-based coordination and reducing processing time. |
| Volunteer Coordination | Volunteers can log distributions digitally, directly connecting their activity to the inventory system, improving accuracy. |
| Scalability | Designed for future scalability, allowing other non-profits to use the system after successful implementation at RHS. |
| Data & Reporting | Automated analytics provide real-time insights into donation trends, food demand, and resource allocation. |
| Risk Factors | Initial learning curve for staff and volunteers, but long-term benefits far outweigh short-term adoption challenges. |

**Conclusion for Option-2:** While this option requires an initial investment, it delivers long-term operational efficiency, reduced administrative workload, improved food tracking, and scalability for future expansion. By eliminating manual inefficiencies and introducing automation, structured data management, and real-time reporting, RHS will be better equipped to serve the community and expand its reach.

## Recommendation

After evaluating both options, Option-2: Implement WhiskerBytes is the recommended choice. While the Do-Nothing approach avoids immediate financial investment, it fails to resolve the existing inefficiencies, administrative burdens, and scalability challenges faced by RHS.

WhiskerBytes presents a long-term, sustainable solution that aligns with RHS's mission to enhance food donation management, reduce staff workload, and improve food tracking accuracy. The system's ability to digitize inventory tracking, streamline food request management, and automate reporting ensures that resources are efficiently allocated, food waste is minimized, and operational processes are future-proofed.

Furthermore, implementing WhiskerBytes positions RHS for future scalability, allowing for potential expansion to other non-profits in Regina once successfully deployed. The short-term learning curve is outweighed by the long-term operational benefits, making it the most viable and strategic solution for RHS.