IT Strategic Assessment Report

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# Executive Summary

The Kentucky HBPA exists to live the purpose of “horsemen serving horsemen.” They have brought us, a team of students from the University of Louisville, in to audit their current system, identify weaknesses, and provide recommendations for improvements that can be made to not only give them a competitive advantage but to assist them with better means to serve their purpose. Information Technology systems are an integral part to providing a modern day organization with a competitive advantage and generally making the lives of both the employees and the consumers easier.

The Kentucky HBPA serves their purpose through several business processes. These processes include benevolence programs for horsemen and backstretch staff, claiming coverage for medical treatment of horses including but not limited to euthanasia, tracking the membership of the Kentucky HBPA for regulatory reasons as well as to receive funding, lobbying for legislation that is in the best interest of the organization, and interacting with the public on a regular basis. The primary business function is lobbying for pro-racing legislation.

There are many different issues with the current technology the organization has. These issues include the ABC’s provided by the organization for the site they want implemented that will be elaborated on later. The issues also include, but are not limited to: insufficient knowledge of IT and lack of training on programs and systems that are used daily, insufficient knowledge of maintenance of current site, many points of failure that currently exist within their system, no standards being set for anything related to information technology, not using resources they currently have to the best of their ability, and difficulties of communicating with members constantly and consistently.

Recommendations for closing the gap between the Kentucky HBPA and their organization as well as taking steps to resolve the issues above include: implementing standards and controls, improving their current website drastically, improving the IT infrastructure by implementing easy and free tools, planning for mass communication and keeping in touch with their customers (possibly outsourcing this to a third party), and utilizing free tools to improve the organization’s social media presence and overall online presence.

Overall, the Kentucky HBPA is primed for launch into a much greater position by taking advantage of many easy improvements that can be made to their current IT system.

# History and Purpose

## History of the Kentucky Horsemen’s Benevolent and Protective Association

When horse racing was in its infancy, it was a very simple sport. Horses raced and that was that. There wasn’t any simulcasting, super testing, computerized betting, or discussions of appropriate marketing strategies. There were no organizations representing horsemen’s interests.

In 1940, a group of people committed to the sport of horse racing from New England brought the Horsemen’s Benevolent and Protective Association, with the mindset that horsemen have a habit of taking care of their own. When a horseman was down on his luck or sick, they would take up collections for them. It provided many services for horsemen that later became what the HBPA is known for. The founders are Irv Gush, Doug Davis, John Manfuso, Dr. Alex Harthill, Johnny McDowell, Mort Wolfson, and Jack DeFee. Now, there are over 29,000 owner and trainer members across the US and Canada.

The Kentucky branch of the HBPA is the largest of all the branches in the national level organization. While the Kentucky branch represents the state of Kentucky, it provides services for horsemen that come from all over the world to race.

*“The HBPA, established in 1940, is an organization of Owners and Trainers, approximately 40,000 nationally in 23 states and Canada, and over 6,000 in Kentucky. The association is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of Owners and Trainers volunteering their time and elected by the membership every three years. The HBPA is committed to working for the betterment of racing on all levels.”* – KYHPBA.org

## Purpose of the Kentucky Horsemen’s Benevolent and Protective Association

The purpose of the HBPA comes from the about page of the national level HBPA organization:

“*The betterment of racing on all levels and collectively adopting the following mission statement: – We are committed to the future of horse racing; – We are horsemen who have one horse and a dream; – We are horsemen who spend millions of dollars; – We are horsemen who race throughout the country; – We are horsemen who represent different breeds of race horses; – We are owners, breeders, and trainers. Big and small, young and old; from one end of the country to the other — we horsemen are the HBPA. We are Horsemen Helping Horsemen*.”

The Kentucky HBPA supports thoroughbred owners, trainers, and all backstretch employees for each track in the state of Kentucky. This support comes through many mediums. The organization participates in lobbying efforts in racing legislation that focuses on therapeutic medications, relationships of horsemen and the tracks in the state, and how much horsemen get in royalties from simulcasting.

The purses from racing are transferred to the horsemen via the HBPA so that the organization can make sure the horsemen receives the purses are compensated well enough for their performance. The Kentucky HBPA also provides insurance coverage for horse care including but not limited to euthanizing services, and free medical care and consultations for backstretch employees.

One of the biggest initiatives of the Kentucky HBPA is the Kentucky Racing Health and Welfare Fund. The funds from tickets that go unclaimed at tracks are put into this fund. The fund is then used to provide the financial support the clinics need for the backstretch employees to receive free healthcare and consultation services.

The Kentucky HBPA also lobbies for a number of different pieces of legislation that increases their influence. A good example would be the Interstate Horseracing Act, which made betting and over the internet and via other remote methods legal. Now because of this act, over 80% of horseracing wagers occur online instead of at the track. This requires someone to lobby for legislation that makes sure an equal distribution of the revenues that are generated by this go to the horsemen.

The executive director of the Kentucky HBPA, Marty, made it very clear that the organization takes a favorable standing towards therapeutic medications that are used in horse racing. The Kentucky HBPA as well as the other HBPA organizations across the country believe that medications that are outlawed in many countries across the globe are necessary for the humane treatment of the horses and in order to keep the horses healthy. Lasix, which is an anti-bleeding medication, is an example of one of these drugs. It is widely used in the US but outlawed almost everywhere else.

# Management and Business Processes.

## Benevolence for Horsemen

Kentucky HBPA provides medical care to the backstretch workers who are primarily from low income Hispanic families that rely on these services due to the lack of time and money they have to spend elsewhere. This is provided through the Kentucky racing Health and Welfare Fund.

Sensitive documentation that must follow regulations set by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) must be completed by both the people receiving the care and the organization in order for this program to be available.

## Claiming Coverage

Claiming coverage is an insurance service that provides coverage for the cost of euthanizing in the case of a horse being injured or dying on the racetrack. From the KYBHPA.org site, “The Kentucky HBPA will pay one-half of the claiming price up to $10,000 to any qualified owner.” This requires quite a few things, most notably having a practicing veterinarian certifying that the horse died during the race or that the veterinarian euthanized the claiming horse, the trainer of the claimed horse signed a Kentucky HBPA membership card, and the claiming of the horse was made at a racetrack licensed by Kentucky Racing Authority.

## Tracking Membership

For any of the services and benefits that the Kentucky HBPA offers, the recipient of the services and/or benefits must be members of the Kentucky HBPA. The processes of membership are handled both by the main office in Louisville and one employee working from Lexington, KY. Most applications are handled in person due to the nature of the people submitting the applications. Not many people like to use technology to submit these applications simply because it is what they are used to. There are some applications that come via fax, email, or other means other than in person. These applications are tracked by an Excel spreadsheet which is where the joint handling of the worker from Lexington and the Louisville office comes into play.

If the Kentucky state government were to ask the Kentucky HBPA for an official headcount of the number of members of the organization, they would have to submit their membership cards for a count. If the card is not present, the person is not considered a member. These cards are of high importance to the organization because of this fact.

## Lobbying for Pro-Racing Legislation

This is the primary function of the Kentucky HBPA. Any legislation that could have an effect on horse racing in Kentucky is something that the Kentucky HBPA has a very large interest in. The interests of the organization, as mentioned above, include pro-therapeutic medication for horses and making sure horsemen receive equal and fair compensation across the state.

While this is their primary function, the IT system overhaul will not directly impact this function. There may be side effects of having an improved system such as improved organization or communication across the executive level of the organization which results in improvements in lobbying efforts, but the IT system itself will not directly benefit their lobbying efforts according to their wants and needs for a better system. Should the requirements change at any point in time, this may change.

## Interactions with the Public

Other than the lobbying efforts that Kentucky HBPA take part in, they do interact with the public and the horse racing community through other means. This includes social media such as an active Facebook page, Twitter, and Instagram that are all managed in house. The current Kentucky HBPA website has many archived newsletters and news posts that do not seem to be used much anymore. There are links to publications such as *The Horseman’s Journal* available on the organization’s site as well.

# Current IT Environment

## Hardware

Kentucky HBPA’s employees at the office the team visited used various models of laptops with no real standard set. The laptops are considered the personal property of each employee and are replaced as needed – when one seems to start performing poorly or breaks physically. The hardware at other offices and offsite was not accounted for during our visit. There were two desktop systems, both Dell. One is unused, the other is used by the executive assistant.

The organization’s internet service is provided by AT&T business. The service is distributed through a Netgear switch as well as AT&T’s modem/router combo provided by AT&T. Each employee seemed to prefer hardwired connections to their laptops even though their devices were more than capable of wireless connectivity. This may suggest a poor performing wireless access point. Said access point was in the floor in the corner of one of the offices.

The organization has regular telephones in each office. There are no VOIP enabled devices in the building.

Each employee’s files are stored on their own personal devices. There is a membership “database” that lives on two PC’s – one in the office in Louisville and one in Lexington. The “database” is an Excel spreadsheet of members. There is one external drive that contains “critical member financial information” in a fire safe in the Louisville office.

The security system that is present in the building was not active at the time of our visit, but the organization made it clear that it was scheduled to be activated before the end of November.

Each employee has a small Canon printer of various models on their desk. There is one network-enabled commercial printer in the lobby of the building that is not used very often unless it is being used for fax.

## Software

Kentucky HBPA’s current software setup is unorganized. They have multiple computers running multiple operating systems running from Windows XP to Windows 10. There is at least one laptop that is a Mac running an unknown version of OS X.

Excel is used as their “database” of members and customers. Each person they need to send an email to is contained in an Excel spreadsheet that the executive assistant just copies out of each time they need to send an email blast. Since there is no cloud based storage or backup, it is hard to maintain. Every time someone updates it, they have to make sure each person that needs the spreadsheet gets the latest version.

The organization has a subscription to Office 365 which gives all employees access to Microsoft Office products including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

Kentucky HBPA’s web presence is kyhbpa.org. It seems that the website’s backend is powered by WordPress, while the front end is an outdated plain site. Previously, the site was managed by Jockey Club Information Systems which charged HBPA $300/month or more to manage their site and also performed requests made by Kentucky HBPA at a very slow rate. Kentucky HBPA has since cut ties with Jockey Club IS and now uses a third party called Blue Million which charges them $25/month plus an additional fee for content updates.

Outside of the home page which contains relevant headlines, links to partner organizations, links to WordPress posts on the site, and a social media link, there are a few other pages on the site:

* News – Redundant with the relevant headlines on the front page. They show identical news stories.
* About us – A place that has HBPA’s mission and information on how to become a member with a link to the membership card
* Board of Directors – a table of the Board of Directors with their name and email
* Benefits – a page with a list of benefits that Kentucky HBPA offers for their members.
* Calendar – a page with an interactive calendar of events by month
* Links – a page with links to many other relevant organizations
* Contact Us – a page with contact information for the organization as well as information about the location of all the offices located in Kentucky.
* How to join – a page with information on how to become a member and a link to download the membership card.

## Staff IT Skills/Training

Kentucky HBPA’s employees have very little IT skills and no formal training. It was noted that a few employees are *very* lacking in IT skills. One such employee will not use Microsoft Word to create a text document even though the organization has an Office 365 subscription. Instead, he expands cell A1 in Excel and writes all of his document in that cell. Another such employee uses a typewriter to type certain reports instead of any of the Office products that the organization has a subscription to.

## IT Budgeting and Spending

Currently, HBPA pays a third party called “Blue Million” $25/month every time they want an update to their site. This is the current budget for their IT. Everything else is paid for on an as-needed basis. If something breaks, the organization buys another to replace the broken piece of equipment whether it be laptops, cell phones, or anything IT related.

There was no budget given for the future IT budget, but a ballpark figure of $1,000/month was given as an informal maximum. It is quite clear that the board of directors is very on board with getting the best system they possibly can, which suggests that they are very motivated to spend money on a system that will give them a large advantage over their competitors and greatly increase the value over their current system.

# Envisioned IT Capabilities

## Leadership’s Vision

Kentucky HBPA’s leadership was clear in what they want their new system to be. **They want kyhbpa.org to be a central location for all employees and horsemen to be able to come to for information, marketing, contact, and more.**

The organization wants to make sure that they retain a majority of the membership over their competitors. Kentucky HBPA believes that having a great website that they can direct people to will help them achieve their goal of retaining a majority of members.

They also want a central hub for horsemen to come to be able to perform activities they now need to visit an office to do. These activities include signing up for membership, making a claim, and submitting documents for Kentucky HBPA’s benevolence package.

## 

## Top 10 Technology Issues

Many of Kentucky HBPA’s issues have been given to us in the form of “ABC’s.” A’s are must have requirements for their new system, B’s are would like to have but not mandatory, and C’s are nice to have features. These requirements are straight from the organization and are valid issues that I agree with, so they are part of their technology issues. The requirements are listed below as they were given to us:

**Mobile first is a very big requirement. Many of their users will be using mobile devices to access their site, so it is a top priority.**

**A’s: Must Haves**

1. About us page – a page describing their mission statement and the services that Kentucky HBPA offers.
2. Board member biography pages – photographs, about, committees the board member serves on, and a contact link which allows emails to be sent to the specific board member that is shown.
3. Calendar – a page with a calendar of events that has hare buttons for all social media sites. This page could include messages from the president or the executive director.
4. The site must be user-friendly and easily updateable by the Kentucky HBPA staff
5. Printable resource page – allow the user to print out various documents needed by the organization
6. A page with membership benefits listed with an easy to use sign-up option with an outline of membership requirements
7. A page for their benevolence program that outlines the guidelines and application process. The user should be able to print an application from this page.
8. A page for meeting minutes between the horsemen committee members.
9. A page that allows the users to sign up for HBPA’s newsletter.
10. A page with links to partner organizations such as TAA, the KY Race Tracks, and contact information for each partner.

**B’s: Would really like to have**

1. A carousel of photos to have an attractive home page
2. An interactive piece that HBPA can use to push horsemen into action on issues they see as important
3. News archives that a user can search through
4. An ability to create polls
5. A place for links to an online version of Horse Journal
6. A page that presents trainers with links to their profile pages on ownerview.org or the ability to create their own profile pages

**C’s: Nice to haves**

1. Interactive injury reporting for claiming coverage
2. Uploading of documents for benevolence applications
3. Credit card processing for online donations and reports
4. A page for racing education, becoming an owner, and becoming a trainer.
5. A place where horsemen and fans can post photos – photos must be approved before the posting goes live
6. A blog for Jennie Rees

While these requirements are the issues that Kentucky HBPA provided themselves, most of them are valid issues that constitute being in the top list of their technology issues. However, there are some other issues as well.

1. **Insufficient knowledge of IT and lack of training on programs and systems that are used daily**

Kentucky HBPA’s employees are not very experienced when it comes to using computers and the programs that are on them. One instance of this is an employee refusing to use Word and just expanding cell A1 in Excel to write text documents. Another instance is an employee that uses a typewriter to write certain reports and documents because that is all they know how to use.

1. **Insufficient knowledge of maintenance of current website**

Although the executive assistant has expressed interest in learning how to maintain a website, the current site is maintained by a 3rd party that Kentucky HBPA pays to process updates on their site. This makes updating their current site very difficult

1. **Many points of failure currently exist**

Kentucky HBPA only has one external hard drive where all of their important information is backed up to and kept in a fire safe. This means that every workstation that an employee is using is a point of failure. The external HDD is not backed up regularly, so every time an employee does work on a workstation, their work is at risk of being lost. There is no synced cloud storage – it is all local.

1. **No standards for IT in place**

Kentucky HBPA has no standards for their IT systems. When an employee’s laptop breaks, they just buy whatever new one that happens to be the “best” at the time. They also have multiple operating systems within the same building which could create some problems for compatibility and cause issues if security every becomes an issue.

1. **Not using the resources they currently have to the best of their ability**

This is a summation of a number of smaller issues. For example, they have a commercial printer in the lobby of their small house they’re using as an office that is capable of wireless printing, but each employee has their own printer. Using this commercial printer could reduce costs. The resources they have in terms of software are not being used as effectively as they can be due to a problem mentioned before – lack of knowledge. As mentioned, there is an employee that is still using a typewriter for some reports. Paying for an Office 365 Subscription and then not using every feature it has is very costly.

1. **Difficult to communicate with members constantly and effectively**

Kentucky HBPA currently does not have a way to communicate with their members effectively. The ability to send out email blasts, have a newsletter, poll their member base, and keep in touch with their members is a massive problem that Kentucky HBPA wants to solve.

# Closing the Gap

## Implement Standards and Controls

In my opinion, the biggest problem that the Kentucky HBPA has is the lack of standards and controls they have for their entire IT system. There are no standards set for the equipment that their employees use which results in some incompatibilities with programs they need to use on a daily basis and makes general maintenance of hardware quite difficult (and in Kentucky HBPA’s case, nonexistent since they just replace poor performing hardware). There are no controls in place that limit the software that employees can use in order to direct them to better, more efficient methods of doing things they do now. Too many controls and standards can be harmful to a system because it would limit the employees too much, but having a number of controls and standards somewhere in the middle can be beneficial to both sides, resulting in improved efficiency and performance and therefore happier customers.

One such standard to implement is choosing which laptops and other hardware the organization uses. There are many big name corporations that will partner with businesses to give them a discount on powerful hardware that will allow each employee to have a device that will perform in a similar manner to those of their peers. Not only will each employee be familiar with devices that they may receive as replacements or upgrades, but they will also become familiar enough with the devices to be able to help other employees who may be having issues. Not only that, but they will be easier to maintain as through these partnerships you can generally send in hardware for maintenance if you ever have issues with any of it, instead of just buying a new piece of hardware that likely costs much more. As for specific examples of corporations that will likely partner with Kentucky HBPA, Dell has a partnership program for businesses with information that can be found [here](http://www.dell.com/p/?l=en&c=us&cs=uschn1&s=chn) (http://www.dell.com/p/?l=en&c=us&cs=uschn1&s=chn). Another organization that engages in partnerships quite often is Lenovo, whose products are very powerful and easy to maintain. Even if Kentucky HBPA does not enter a partnership with these corporations, the business line of their products is powerful enough to meet any need that Kentucky HBPA may have for a relatively cheap price. Dell’s Latitude line which is tailored specifically for businesses starts at $379.00, and Lenovo’s ThinkPad line is an extensive line of powerful machines that start at around $350. This is more than affordable for a business with an anticipated budget as high as Kentucky HBPA’s and will make their lives generally a lot easier when it comes to hardware.

Another control that should be implemented is constant updates and making sure everyone is using the same version of software like the Microsoft Office Suite. Having mismatched versions, or just old versions in general, presents a multitude of problems. The biggest of these problems is security. Many times, organizations patch their software due to a security flaw that had been found and fixed. With as small as Kentucky HBPA is and with the small amount of skill that their employees possess in terms of using computers on a regular basis, it makes them a prime target for any malicious user attempting to gain information or anything else from the Kentucky HBPA. With information protected by HIPAA behind their network as well as a large financial portfolio, security should be a primary concern. Implementing a control that requires users to update their hardware on a regular basis is an easy way to bolster security and make usability that much easier. This can be accomplished by something as simple as checking each employee on a regular basis (monthly, maybe?) or something as advanced as setting up a group policy for the organization. Either way, it’s a very easy way to greatly improve their current system.

## Improve the Website

Kentucky HBPA has made it abundantly clear what they want to accomplish with a new website by outlining the requirements they want from it in the ABC’s mentioned above. While these requirements are very specific and will drastically improve the site they have in place right now, there are other improvements that need to be made to the site other than what they asked for.

Many of the requirements they laid out in their ABC’s are requirements for how the website looks and the content that will exist on the website. A team can put this content on a page and create multiple pages with content, but that will not do Kentucky HBPA any good if they cannot keep people coming back to their website. After visitors have seen the content that exists on this static website once, they have no incentive to come back again unless there is new content or functionality that exists that they need to use on a regular basis. If a University of Louisville team is tasked with implementing a site for Kentucky HBPA, they will do just that – implement a site for the organization and nothing else. There is no further expectation of the team to maintain content or extend functionality once the team implements the solution. The content of the site is what keeps users coming back, which is what needs to be stressed here. The long term maintenance of the site is the most important part regardless of how it looks after it is implemented.

With only one person in the organization *showing interest* in learning how to maintain these things, it is critical to develop a strategy for maintaining the website, whether that be hiring a third party to put out continuous content and maintain it, hiring a student after a team implements their solution, or learning how to do it in house.

With that being said, the current solution is WordPress which has a much smaller learning curve for publishing content on the site. This would need to cut ties with the national level HBPA WordPress site in order to be maintainable in house with WordPress’ content management system, but it would make it much simpler for Kentucky HBPA to put out new, interesting, and engaging content on their site to continue bringing their customers back.

While continuous content is very important, there are several other requirements outlined in Kentucky HBPA’s ABC’s that I agree with and are relatively easy to implement. Online payment systems, a calendar of events, being mobile friendly, an about us page, etc. All of these are great features that can be easily implemented to create an enjoyable experience within Kentucky HBPA’s website. All of this is functionality that, as mentioned before, will increase the retention rate of Kentucky HBPA’s website users. They will keep coming back to use functionality that is convenient and useful for them.

Another feature that would be great for an improvement to their current site is an online forum. Forums present a great place for people who have similar interests to come and have conversations online over topics that they share interests in. Kentucky HBPA is primarily organized around lobbying efforts for legislation that the organization supports. This will provide yet another incentive for people to keep coming back to their site to provide input on whatever conversations may be taking place in the forum that day.

If Kentucky HBPA is chosen as the client for the University of Louisville’s CIS program’s non-profit software services program, a team of students from the University of Louisville will develop very extensive documentation not only on the requirements that the organization has laid out but as well as other requirements that may come up during the time the team is working with Kentucky HBPA. It will be similar to the ABC’s that the organization has provided, but with much more detailed documentation and use cases that will help both sides better understand the *exact* requirements of the Kentucky HBPA.

An improvement in the website is a great undertaking with great rewards. But, improving the website is all for naught if you cannot retain customers and users with constant content updates and meaningful functionality that will continue bringing users back. If you’re looking for a good example, take a look at [www.lifehacker.com](http://www.lifehacker.com). It is a site that I visit on a daily basis due to the content that they release dozens of times per day. Establishing a regular schedule of content that is related to the organization’s cause and things that their customers and users of the website would be interested in is key, which is exactly what the team at Lifehacker is able to accomplish. The site is very user friendly, but it is the content that keeps people coming back.

## Mass Communication and Keeping in Touch

Jennie Rees is in charge of communications and general PR at Kentucky HBPA. Her job consists of many different responsibilities including but not limited to publishing news stories, keeping up with Kentucky HBPA’s social media presence, and more. This means that putting out constant communication with members of HBPA and people that support their cause is not something that she can do by herself because that responsibility is a full-time job in and of itself.

Constant communication means keeping in touch with anyone that reaches out to the organization, publishing newsletters, creating full-scale marketing campaigns, and more. On top of that, a new system and website in place for the organization requires understanding of how it works in order to put out content on the website on a regular basis. Kentucky HBPA either needs to hire another consultant to take care of this marketing presence for them, or outsource it to a third party. A good third party to hire for this can be found at [www.constantcontact.com](http://www.constantcontact.com).

## Presence in Social Media and Improving PR

During our time at Kentucky HBPA, the use of social media was widely discussed as a means of public relations and online presence. The organization wants to use social media to drive them to the new website they want developed as well as to continue delivering content to their members and supporters on as many platforms as possible. Kentucky HBPA can easily improve the use of their current IT system to allow them to take better advantage of their social media presence.

One of the requests by Jennie Rees was the ability to be able to publish content updates to multiple social media platforms at once due to the inconvenience of having to maintain several accounts at once. Some supporters may be aware of the organization’s social media presence on one platform, but not the other. There are many tools that are available *for free* that will allow functionality like this.

One such tool is built into many of these social media platforms already. Instagram will allow you to post your current publication to Facebook and Twitter with the push of a button. Facebook allows you to “share” content to other platforms as well. There are user-friendly tutorials provided by all of the services on how to connect them with other social media services.

Another tool that was brought to light by another team member was IFTTT, or “IF This Then That.” IFTTT provides some prepackaged programming that allows you to create “recipes” for pretty much anything that you want automated, including posting content to multiple social media platforms at once. Further investigation of this tool could allow for some great uses, but this directly solves one of the specific requests of the Kentucky HBPA.

## Improve the Infrastructure of the IT System

Many small businesses suffer from the lack of understanding of infrastructure that leads to a poor setup, and Kentucky HBPA is no exception to this. While Kentucky HBPA may not be considered “small,” their IT infrastructure is. There are a few flaws that very much *need* to be addressed.

One of these flaws is the lack of backups of critical customer data. While locking away an external hard drive in a fireproof safe is a good practice, there are better ways to approach keeping the data safe without creating a single point of failure by only having one backup. The easiest way to accomplish this is through the use of Google Drive (<http://www.google.com/drive>). This cloud based solution is completely free to use with the ability to pay for expansion, and they have business plans available. With the small amount of data that Kentucky HBPA needs to back up, there shouldn’t be any need to pay for any extra expansion. This will allow the organization to keep an up to date backup of their customer data available to anyone that needs it at any time. Not only will they be able to back up this critical data, but any documents that anyone works on can be accessible by anyone within the organization if needed, and each employee’s personal work can be backed up as well, removing the single points of failure that exist at each laptop every employee uses due to the lack of backups. Dropbox is a good alternative to this if they do not opt to use Google Drive. Should the needs of the organization grow to require more data to be backed up in a very efficient manner, opting for an enterprise solution may be something to investigate.

Another very cheap and easy improvement that could be made is to hook the commercial printer in the lobby up to the network to allow each employee to print off of it. It’s hardly an inconvenience to the employees, and will save on the cost of ink and potentially paper that the employees in the office inevitably use all of the time. Even if an employee of the organization cannot perform this themselves, there are plenty of IT consultation companies that exist in Louisville that would likely perform this setup for a very small fee.

During the visit to the office, we saw that there was a strong preference of a hardwired connection as opposed to the wireless that was available throughout the entire office. This could be a multitude of reasons including poor wireless performance or lack of understanding of the network.

While there are many more improvements that could be made to the infrastructure of the Louisville office of the Kentucky HBPA, these are likely the cheapest and easiest of them that will make a drastic improvement over their current setup – namely the use of cloud services like Google Drive.

# Conclusions

There is a common misunderstanding that improvements to an organization’s current IT system have to be both expensive in both capital and time. While this is true for some improvements such as a revamp of the website with tons of functionality being added, or buying everyone in the office a new laptop, many improvements can be done at **absolutely no cost whatsoever.** Kentucky HBPA is a prime candidate for implementing many of these improvements immediately to increase their efficiency, member retention, user interaction, and online presence.

One of the improvements that does cost is the improvement in the website. Even though if the organization is selected by the University of Louisville for a new site to be implemented, it is very important for the organization’s executives to understand the long term goals with the new system they will have. Short term is easy because it will be done for them, but in the long term is where the focus needs to be if the Kentucky HBPA wants it to be successful.

The Kentucky HBPA needs to understand that a brand new, shiny website is not the end-all-be-all solution for them. While it will drastically help them with the functionality they have outlined in their requirements, there are many other improvements that need to be focused on as well. The current outdated website is **one problem of many**. Fixing one problem and ignoring the others does not fix the one problem. It will still exist because of the others not being dealt with.

With that being said, the Kentucky HBPA is in a great spot. These improvements can be made at no cost, as mentioned before. The website will come afterwards and launch them into an even better position once their underlying structure has been addressed.

# Appendices

## Basis of Analysis

### Organizational Structure

Kentucky HBPA is a functional organization, albeit informal. The board of directors is composed of owners and trainers, and the staff of the organization have a great influence on the direction of the board. The central headquarters located in Louisville houses all of the executive staff. These executives include Martin Maline (executive director), Sara Toomey (executive assistant), and many other executives.

### Five Forces Analysis

#### Competitors

The threat of competition for the Kentucky HBPA is **high**. Funding comes primarily from the Kentucky state government. Who gets this funding is determined by whoever holds a majority of the members in the state. Whoever holds the majority receives 1.5% of all purses earned in the state of Kentucky. Without holding majority, there is no funding. The direct competition to the Kentucky HBPA is the Kentucky Thoroughbred Association. If the KTA retains more members than the Kentucky HBPA, HBPA’s funding will be cut drastically which is why the threat of competition is high.

#### New Entrants

The threat of new entrants for the Kentucky HBPA is **low**. Kentucky HBPA as well as the KTA have been around for a very long time, and they have established something of an oligopoly across the market they sit in. While it is possible for a new association that supports horsemen to be founded, it is unlikely

#### Substitutes

The threat of substitutes for the Kentucky HBPA is **high**. The only substitute for the Kentucky HBPA is the Kentucky Thoroughbred Association, which means that the threat for substitutes is the same for that of competition.

#### Suppliers

The only real suppliers of the Kentucky HBPA are its members. Without members, the organization would have no purpose and it would realistically not exist. While the funding comes from track purses and donations, the members are the real suppliers. Therefore, the bargaining power that Kentucky HBPA’s suppliers have over them is **high.**

#### Customers

The bargaining power Kentucky HBPA’s customers have over them is **high**. Kentucky HBPA is a member owned organization. Combined with the fact that if the Kentucky HBPA loses majority membership in the state of Kentucky they will lose funding, the customers’ bargaining power is very high.

## Technology Inventory

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Quantity** | **Comments** |
| **Hardware** |  |  |
| **Laptops** | 6 | Varying models |
| **Desktops** | 3 | Varying models, one unused |
| **Printers** |  |  |
| Canon Pixma | 3 | Portable Printer |
| Canon Copy/Fax/Print Enterprise Grade | 1 | Network capable |
| Canon Pixma Copy/Print | 1 |  |
| HP Officejet Pro | 1 |  |
| **Phones** | 6 | Landlines |
| **Security System** | 1 | Unknown Provider – install on 11/23/16 |
| **Network** |  |  |
| AT&T Modem | 1 | Modem/wireless router |
| Netgear Ethernet Switch | 1 | 5 port 10/100 Mbps |
| **Storage** |  |  |
| 500GB External HDD | 1 | Kept in fire safe with critical financial information of customers |
| **Software** |  |  |
| **Operating Systems\*** |  |  |
| Windows XP Home | 1 | On an unused Dell desktop |
| Windows 7 | 1? | \*some hardware not available for audit |
| Windows 10 | 2? | \*some hardware not available for audit |
| OS X | 1? | \*some hardware not available for audit |
| **Productivity Software** |  |  |
| Microsoft Office 365 | Subscription-based |  |

## Top 10 Technology Issues

Technology issues are listed in the top 10 technology issues section.

## Strategic Planning/Visioning Documents

HBPA did not provide any strategic planning/visioning documents

## IT Budget/Spending Documents

Kentucky HBPA has stated that they have a *maximum* of $1,000 a month for IT expenditures. There is no other information on their budget/spending.