



Data

When the pre-eminent designers of the day assembled in Chicago to plan for the World's Exhibition in 1893, they were given an urgent directive: "Build something novel, daring, and unique." They desperately needed a technological monument to top Paris' Eiffel Tower, which had recently become a worldwide architectural phenomenon.

Chicago's answer was an idea drawn on a table napkin by a passionate bridge engineer named George Ferris who proposed a massive metal wheel fairgoers could ride into the sky. Builders for the Paris tower had more than three years planning time and robust government funding,

but the odds were stacked against Ferris. He faced an impossibly tight deadline of only four months before the fair's grand opening. Even more challenging, the bridge engineer had to raise his own funding.

Despite the time constraints and enormous risk, the determined Ferris got to work. By the time his famed iron wheel was completed, it exceeded all expectations and became the most popular attraction of the fair. "There is nothing in the World Exposition that compares in genuine novelty and sensationalism with the great vertical wheel which stands in the very center of Midway plaisance," one reporter wrote about the very first Ferris Wheel. "The Eiffel tower involved no new engineering principle, and when finished was a thing dead and lifeless. The wheel, on the other hand, has movement, grace, the indescribable charm possessed by a vast body

in action.”

Late in the summer of 2013, Minnesota state health officials faced their own urgent dilemma. The federal government had just announced a host of new audit directives for the state’s Obamacare health insurance exchange website known as MNSure.

Much like Ferris, the requirements put the state Department of Health Services in a bind: Less than 10 weeks away from launching a revolutionary health care website, state officials now had to scramble to pull together an auditing system from scratch or face the political embarrassment of failing to meet federal requirements.

Minnesota was one of only 14 states moving to create its own statewide exchange, separate from the federal government site, where residents could analyze, compare, and sign up for health care plans. The state sites were facing just as many glitches and delays as the federal site, drawing highly critical news media coverage and the watchful eye of groups opposed to the newly adopted health care law.

Even worse, the company hired to build the MNSure system was scrambling to plug a host of technical glitches in the web site’s operating system and didn’t have the personnel available to design and install the newly required auditing checks.

Under normal circumstances, architecting, equipping, and testing an audit process as complex as the one required for MNSure would take two to four years and significant amounts of funding. Minnesota had 10 weeks and a ballooning budget. Under the gun and with zero options, state database experts reached out to the one company they knew would have solutions: Collier IT.

With 25 years of insider perspective, Collier IT is a leading expert in designing, architecting, and implementing information technology

to get it done, and they came up with some great, highly creative solutions that we could implement immediately,” recalls John Kiemen, master architect of the state’s computer systems. “We call it the 28-Day Miracle.”

Barb Geiger, a Minnesota database administration official, credits a good portion of the state’s success to Collier IT. “They laid out for us what the needs were, not only for the big data appliances but what we needed at the immediate moment,” says Geiger. “They brokered everything. They provided the pro-

Collier IT examines its client’s needs not just from one angle, but every angle. Their obsession for exploring IT challenges from multiple dimensions gives rise to entirely new perspectives with new solutions.

systems to a host of diverse clients throughout the Midwest.

Collier IT successfully built the system audit software, installed the accompanying data warehouse, and completed testing in just four weeks. “We were in an urgent mode

gram management and facilitated buying big data appliances—even getting them installed.

“They were instrumental in providing a solution during an urgent situation,” she adds. “They literally saved the day.” ■