

CASE STUDY

FROM COMPLEXITY TO CONFIDENCE

INDEPENDENT GUIDANCE HELPED
MONTGOMERY COUNTY BUILD A STRONGER
CYBERSECURITY STRATEGY

INDUSTRY

Local Government/Private Sector Technology

LOCATION

Montgomery County, Kansas

OWNERSHIP

Led by IT Director Jason Clubine and the county's internal technology team

CHALLENGE

The county needed stronger cybersecurity, but leadership wanted objective proof before committing taxpayer dollars, and a clear strategy for whether IT should stay in-house, be outsourced or become hybrid.

SOLUTION

Adams Brown served as an independent advisor, helping the county evaluate its options, compare vendors and models and build a long-term strategy around control, flexibility and cybersecurity resilience.

RESULTS

County leadership gained the clarity and confidence to move forward with a stronger cybersecurity strategy, better visibility and a model designed for long-term success.



Small county, big responsibility. Montgomery County may serve fewer than 35,000 residents, but its two-person IT team keeps roughly 150 users running across seven networks, five campuses and two communities. IT Director Jason Clubine and IT Technician Drew Achong have seen the technology landscape shift dramatically and knew the county's cybersecurity had to catch up. What they needed wasn't just better tools. They needed a way to prove it, fund it and build it to last.

The Challenge

Here's the thing about defending a county's technology on a public budget: the threats keep growing, but the dollars don't. *"I've kind of grown with it,"* Jason said. *"21 years ago, it was much easier to keep everything running. But cybersecurity has evolved so quickly that what once worked is no longer enough."*

Jason knew the county needed stronger cybersecurity, but knowing it and proving it are two different things. County commissioners wanted objective evidence before committing taxpayer dollars to a major investment. So, Jason worked with the county's emergency management team to arrange a voluntary cybersecurity assessment through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The findings confirmed what he had been saying: the county's protections no longer matched today's threats. That assessment also introduced Jason to Brendan Giesick and the Adams Brown Technology Specialists team.

Jason and Drew then spent nearly 18 months researching platforms, sitting through vendor demos and comparing solutions. But the deeper they dug, the bigger the question got. Commissioners started asking a broader question: ***Would outsourcing IT to a managed service provider (MSP) provide a better long-term solution than maintaining an internal IT department?***

The county now faced two critical decisions: how to strengthen its cybersecurity infrastructure and whether its long-term IT model should stay internal, move to an MSP or land somewhere in between. They needed an experienced, independent advisor who could objectively evaluate every option and help leadership make a confident decision.

"Whether it's intentional or not, everybody has a preferred outcome. Having someone with no skin in the game gives decision-makers confidence that the recommendation is based on what's actually best for Montgomery County."

– Jason Clubine, IT Director

The Solution

Rather than start over, Adams Brown built on the groundwork Jason's team had already laid. They reviewed vendor proposals, challenged assumptions and surfaced factors the county hadn't fully weighed like FedRAMP authorization, incident response readiness, long-term vendor flexibility and the importance of owning the county's own technology stack. Then they answered the bigger question head-on: *internal, outsourced or hybrid?*

The proof point came in a single, powerful document. Adams Brown turned months of technical analysis, vendor conversations and strategic questions into what Jason calls the *"Battle Card,"* a clear side-by-side comparison county leadership could easily understand. Complex trade-offs became a decision commissioners could see, understand and act on.

The recommendation went well beyond picking software. Adams Brown advised Montgomery County to purchase its cybersecurity tools directly, keep ownership of system configurations and security data, continue managing the environment in-house and bring in an MSP only where supplemental expertise or overflow support made sense. The result: **outside expertise without giving up control.**

"It took all this complex information and put it into an easy-to-understand format," Jason said. *"That became the document we used to present our recommendation."*

Strategic Value Delivered

- ▶ **Independent Evaluation:** An objective review of every option. No vendor pitch, no sales agenda.
- ▶ **The Battle Card:** A clear, side-by-side comparison that turned technical complexity into a decision leadership could act on.
- ▶ **Ownership & Control:** A strategy that kept configurations, security data and the technology stack in the county's hands.
- ▶ **Right-Sized Support:** An MSP relationship reserved for specialized expertise and overflow, not a full handoff.
- ▶ **Long-Term Strategy:** A durable roadmap built around the county's real needs, not a patchwork of products.

The Impact

For Montgomery County, the difference shows up where it matters most: confident decisions. Leadership could move forward knowing the choice was based on what served the county best; not a vendor pitch, an MSP sales process or internal preferences.

Even with implementation still underway, the results are already clear. New remote management tools let the IT team resolve many issues without driving between facilities, cutting travel time significantly. The county has far greater visibility into its technology environment and a much stronger cybersecurity foundation than before. Best of all, leadership knows it has selected a long-term cybersecurity strategy, not just a shopping cart of new tools.

"I feel that was the piece that pushed them into agreeing with our proposal. Without involving a third party that was truly independent and helping us purely in an informational capacity, I think our cybersecurity initiative might have stalled." - Jason Clubine

Looking Ahead

The biggest lesson, Jason says, was the value of independent guidance when the stakes are high, and the choices are complicated. With a stronger foundation and clear model in place, Montgomery County isn't just better protected today; it's set up to adapt as threats evolve and technology keeps changing. The county now has a framework for making the next big decision with the same clarity and confidence.

Final Thought

Jason keeps his takeaway simple: *"They've been there and done that,"* he said. *"They know what works because they've seen it firsthand. They're not just giving you theory; they're giving you practical advice based on real experience."* For Montgomery County, that experience turned a stalled cybersecurity initiative into a confident, long-term strategy built on control, clarity and the county's own priorities.

Want to know how independent guidance can strengthen your next technology decision? [Learn more at Adams Brown.](https://www.AdamsBrownTech.com)

