



CASE STUDY: **MERRITT PROPERTIES**

HOW STRATEGIC IT
LEADERSHIP
POWERED EXPANSION
FOR A REAL ESTATE
DEVELOPER



OVERVIEW

Merritt Properties is a full-service commercial real estate developer with more than 17 million square feet of office, warehouse, flex and retail space across Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina. The company acquires land, develops and constructs buildings, leases them, and manages its assets for the long term. As the firm prepared to expand beyond Baltimore, DC and Northern Virginia, leadership realized its technology function wasn't keeping pace with business growth.

A long-tenured IT manager carried most of the institutional knowledge. While capable, he was heavily focused on operational tasks and struggled to prioritize. Meanwhile, an innovative leader in the construction division was championing modern design technologies but wasn't part of the IT function, causing friction and duplicated efforts. Remote offices in Northern Virginia suffered from poor connectivity, and the existing network architecture limited expansion into markets like North Carolina and Florida. Requests for new technology lacked a consistent review process, and an earlier consulting engagement had failed because it reported under the IT manager rather than at the executive level. Merritt's executives needed a different approach to align technology with business goals and enable growth.



CHALLENGES

- **Overextended IT Leadership:** One manager handled operations and infrastructure, creating bottlenecks and making technology feel like a barrier rather than an enabler.
- **Siloed Innovation:** A forward-thinking construction leader introduced new tools outside IT, causing tension and duplicated work.
- **No Governance or Forum:** Technology ideas surfaced informally without a structured evaluation process, making it hard to prioritize investments.
- **Infrastructure Limiting Expansion:** The network was designed for a single region; remote offices experienced unreliable connectivity that hampered market entry.
- **Ineffective Consulting Engagement:** A prior firm reported under IT and lacked authority to drive change, leaving core issues unresolved.



SOLUTION

Hartman Executive Advisors was engaged as Merritt's fractional CIO, reporting directly to ownership. The first step was assessing the IT function and clarifying what the business needed from technology. Hartman then restructured leadership and roles so that the seasoned IT manager could focus on strategy, while operational support duties shifted to the team and managed service partners. The construction innovator was brought into the enterprise technology plan so new ideas could be evaluated and adopted company-wide rather than pursued in isolation.

To support expansion, Hartman led a redesign of the network and remote connectivity, ensuring employees could work reliably from any location. Hartman also established a Technology Steering Committee of executives and department leaders. This governance process replaced hallway requests with a transparent intake and review cycle, giving leaders a clear view of priorities, budgets and outcomes. Finally, Hartman provided coaching and mentoring to bridge cultural differences and foster collaboration between operations and construction, turning former friction points into complementary strengths.



RESULTS

- **Growth Enabled:** Modernized connectivity stabilized operations in remote offices, giving leadership confidence to enter new markets such as North Carolina and Florida.
- **Aligned Decision-Making:** A technology steering committee brought discipline to investments, ensuring projects were funded based on business value rather than informal requests.
- **Stronger Collaboration:** The IT manager evolved into a strategic leader, the construction innovator became an enterprise-wide contributor, and teams began engaging IT early in planning.
- **Improved Reliability:** Connectivity issues diminished, upgrades ran smoothly and support became more consistent, freeing executives to focus on strategic growth.
- **High-Performing IT Culture:** With governance and leadership in place, technology became a trusted partner. The firm's IT team is now aligned on priorities and supports rapid business growth.

Through Hartman's executive leadership, Merritt Properties turned a fragmented, overburdened technology function into a cohesive, business-aligned engine for growth. The company now pursues expansion with confidence, knowing its technology foundation is built to scale.