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Hampton Roads Alliance partners with Port & Starboard to build a collaborative digital platform for regional economic development organizations



Hampton Roads, VA – March 6, 2023 – The Hampton Roads Alliance is collaboratively leading the region in business retention, expansion, and attraction by bringing local economic development organizations and the Hampton Roads Workforce Council together in their Salesforce CRM platform.

“As a regional economic development organization, the Hampton Roads Alliance represents several communities throughout the region. Those communities are partners in attracting new businesses and retaining existing companies here in our metro area,” said Toi Hunter, Vice President of Business Retention & Expansion at Hampton Roads Alliance. “The Alliance set out to ensure increased transparency with our partners, which is why we embarked on a regional Salesforce platform. Our goal was to establish a virtual collaborative workspace that enhanced our workflow and allowed us to communicate more effectively and efficiently internally at the Alliance and throughout the region with our partner-colleagues.”

The Alliance has partnered with Virginia Beach-based technology consulting company, Port & Starboard, to develop a unique digital platform that they have licensed to the Hampton Roads Workforce Council and an increasing number of local economic development stakeholders. This digital platform, powered by Salesforce, allows localities to share select information about local business opportunities, track business retention and expansion projects, and collaborate to bring about positive change and business growth to the Hampton Roads area.

“The Hampton Roads Workforce Council is a key partner to the Alliance. Nearly every project that the Alliance engages with needs the support and expertise of the regional workforce development board,” said Doug Smith, Chief Executive Officer at Hampton Roads Alliance. “Also, the business intelligence garnered by the HRWC when working with existing businesses is crucial to understanding our regional economic ecosystem – and all that information is now captured in the regional Salesforce platform for the Alliance and our partners to utilize. For example, when a leading manufacturer is experiencing a shortage of labor, it is an indicator of a challenge that may be experienced by the industry throughout the region. With that business intelligence, the Alliance and the HRWC are better positioned to collaborate on developing a solution.”

“The platform we’ve built enables the Alliance and the cities to share business data with the goal of increasing economic development opportunities for the entire region,” said Lisa DeNoia, managing partner at Port & Starboard. “The Alliance’s technology is not only a unique service offering for their member cities, it has also resulted in beneficial in-person collaboration, brainstorming, and innovation between the stakeholders.”

So far, the Alliance has brought Isle of Wight County’s and the City of Suffolk’s Economic Development Departments as well as Franklin Southampton Economic Development Incorporated into their Salesforce platform.

“Franklin Southampton Economic Development, Inc. (FSEDI) is new to the world of contact management software, and the Salesforce partnership with the Alliance made it possible for us to obtain top-rated technology and better serve our clients and businesses at an affordable price,” said Karl Heck, president & CEO.

“Adopting and learning our new regional Salesforce platform allows our team to manage projects easier and with more transparency with our partner, the Alliance,” said Chris Morello,

Director at Isle of Wight County Economic Development. “Isle of Wight is leveraging this software for more personal relationships with our existing businesses to help ensure retention and expansion. Training and support from Port & Starboard makes embracing this new technology possible more quickly so we can enhance both the County’s local roots and its global reach in economic development.”

With the help of the technology consulting team at Port & Starboard, the Alliance plans to offer Salesforce memberships to more Hampton Roads localities in the coming months.

About Hampton Roads Alliance:

The Hampton Roads Alliance is the leading regional economic development organization for the Hampton Roads region of Virginia. Their mission is to collaboratively lead the region in attracting, growing, and retaining companies and talent to create a more resilient, inclusive and equitable region of choice.

About Port & Starboard:

Port & Starboard is a technology consulting company based in the ViBe Creative District of Virginia Beach, Virginia. They are passionate about business, IT, and solving technology challenges. They specialize in Salesforce, WordPress website development, and Fractional CIO services.

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