

# THE GREATER FLINT AREA'S TECHNOLOGY EXPERTS

BY MICHAEL G. THODOROFF



MICHAEL GLEASON PHOTOGRAPHY

FRONT ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT) GINA SUFFEL, HAROLD TRAIN, AARON HAMP, CHELSIE CANTIN  
BACK ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT) DARRIS HAMILTON, MIKE MATTHEWS, DAVID CANTIN, JEREMY HOWELL



It all started with a challenge, cloaked in a veil of personal determination. While initially engaging in a career selling insurance products by day, Aaron Hamp immersed himself in the technology of computers by night. He soon found himself building computers from parts purchased at local retailers. From there and with budding confidence, he offered to try to fix other people's computers with a simple but effective pledge: "If I can't fix it, you pay nothing; absolutely no charge!"

**T**his approach compelled him to find solutions through persistence, learning along the way. To that end, he set aside his insurance vocation and enrolled in Baker College's computer technology program while constantly tinkering with every aspect of computers. Word was rapidly spreading around the Flint community that this guy Hamp was good and fast at fixing computer problems. So in January of 2004, "this guy Hamp," along with his longtime friend Dan Dosh, formed I.N.C. (Intelligent Network and Communication) Systems.

They started their business in 2004, running it from a classic old house near downtown Flint on the corner of Court and Asylum Streets. There were two distinct divisions. The IT division repaired computers and set up networks. The Computer Audio Video (CAV) division handled the installation and service of products such as home theater systems and complex audiovisual equipment. As the business was doing very well, dictating a move to a larger facility on Miller Road, Hamp came to a glaring realization.

"I had such a passion and love for technology, I said yes to everything," he recalls. "We would promptly do a project, get paid and move on. It took me a few years to realize monthly recurring revenue is the key to stability and growth."

With a renewed strategy in 2013, he purchased Dosh's stake in the business, dissolved the CAV division, and focused solely on recurring revenue. Hamp admits he lost some revenue, but he also cut expenses. Since that transition, I.N.C. Systems' push has been to focus on working with business clients who consider IT a critical need to their company. "By doing this," Hamp says, "we take the full responsibility of the client's



*"I have said from the beginning that our goal is to always make the client happy... and I have learned the best way to do this is by keeping my staff happy so we work hard at maintaining a positive, fun and engaged workplace." - Hamp | Michael Gleason Photography*

network as we become a partner, due to the fact that we will handle all of their technology pieces and needs of their organization."

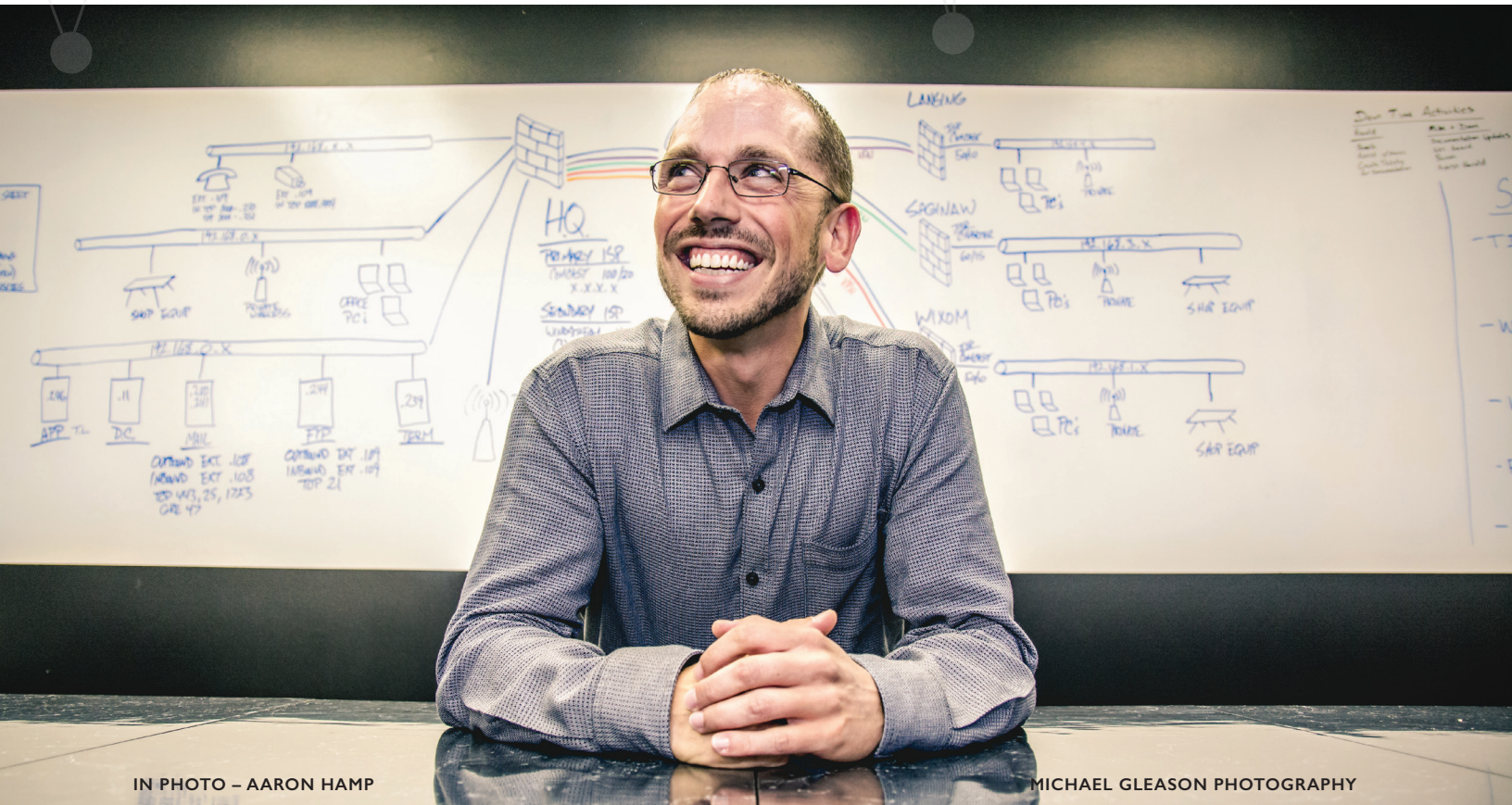
Hamp reveals that when they engage a client, they are very selective because they not only examine the technology factor, but they also take an in-depth look at their culture, ultimately looking to realize a good fit for both organizations. He expounds on this thought. "I personally talk to the decision maker of the business, and if they do take technology seriously and understand how critical to success it is, we will send a high-level engineer on site to do a full technology assessment. We will then provide an in-depth, yet easy-to-understand proposal that has an analysis of the current systems, along with our recommendations and minimum requirements."

Once a client agrees to the company's proposal, it will take approximately 90 days to fully implement it into the client's network. And when I.N.C. Systems are aboard, they are looking to have clients for life. Hamp emphatically states there is no reason for the client to leave if his company is doing their job of helping them be more efficient with their day-to-day operations, and keeping their staff happy with the technology. Simply stated, I.N.C. Systems has a single clause in all of their contracts that asserts their 100% satisfaction guarantee. If at any point I.N.C. Systems is not delivering their service per the contract, a 30-day notice is all that is needed to end the package.

Hamp reasons that if they lock a client into a contract, complacency may set in. But, when the notion exists where a client can leave at any time, it engages positive



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IN PHOTO – AARON HAMP

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pressure on I.N.C. Systems to constantly deliver. In addition to working as the client's vendor liaison, they offer complete support "24/7/365." Hamp deadpans that when it comes to IT activity, he believes it is a "no-love" industry because nobody calls to say how everything is working great. "We want to make sure to deliver a great customer experience. To do that, we must believe in our work, our team," he says.

Not resting on their laurels, I.N.C. Systems is evolving with continuous improvement. In early 2011, Hamp worked with a service consultant who opened his eyes to the highly crucial dynamics of a successful business operation. "I am constantly working at becoming a better leader in this organization," he affirms. To that end, he recently joined the Iowa-based Heartland Technology Group Peer Group,

an international community of experienced managed service providers and IT industry vendors focused on business and personal growth, execution, and accountability.

Hamp is one of 12 people who own similar companies that do not compete geographically. This group holds regular online meetings where they act as one another's board of directors. "We set quarterly goals, give status reports, and hold each other accountable to those goals," he explains. "It's an incredible way to put pressure on me because it is not a right to be in this group; it is a privilege. If I don't deliver, I can get voted out."

While Hamp continues to help I.N.C. Systems develop and grow, he has always helped community of Flint grow too. Always involved in community charitable organizations, he recently chaired the

Greater Flint YMCA's Partner with Youth fund-raising drive for two years, spearheading the campaign to record-setting totals. Now serving as the Y's Board of Directors' vice president, he will certainly be in line for that organization's board presidency.

"I believe in our community; I'm here to stay," he says. "I want Flint to be great again. I truly believe that by helping the small businesses in our community be more successful, we can impact positive change in Flint. We can do our part in that approach through our service and our belief in helping out the community. If it's Flint, I'm in!"

I.N.C. Systems is located at 10761 S. Saginaw St., Suite H, Grand Blanc, MI 48439.

Phone: 810.496.0351 | Fax: 810.496.6243  
Visit their website at [www.inc-systems.com](http://www.inc-systems.com).