

## Case study

# Southern Imaginations helps empower vulnerable communities with easy-to-use cybersecurity from Avast Business

Southern Imaginations was established in 2006 to provide strategic grant management and technology consulting services to commercial, not-for-profit, and for-profit organizations. Their professional consultations mobilize the right people, skills, and technologies to help organizations achieve their goals and objectives by utilizing an efficient, results-oriented approach.

To date, Southern Imaginations has helped over 500 organizations across the continental United States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

Tyrone Short is Chief Operating Officer at Southern Imaginations and helped found the organization in 2006. He sits down with Avast to share his experience with our suite of cybersecurity products and talk about the role Avast has played in helping the customers they support keep their sensitive data protected online.

### Tell us about the organizations you support

**Tyrone:** We focus a lot on early childhood education, but we also support doctor's offices, tax and accounting firms, and places like that. A lot of the agencies we work with tend to be small, community-based organizations. And the communities we work in, many of them are vulnerable and underserved, and our passion is to be there to support them and really make a difference. At the heart of it, we're here to help people who help people.

### What are their biggest needs?

**Tyrone:** With the organizations we support, they typically don't have the funds to be able to hire IT staff, nor do they have the time to be able to figure it out. They need to keep their networks protected with a solution that's simple and really easy to use, so they can go about their day-to-day.

**WEBSITE:**

[southernimagnations.com](https://southernimagnations.com)

**INDUSTRY:**

Technology consulting services

**SECURITY NEED:**

To help protect the sensitive data of the organizations they support

**SOLUTION:**

CloudCare, CCleaner

**RESULTS:**

Delivered cybersecurity that's powerful yet easy to use, helping provide peace of mind for these organizations

For example, the early childhood education childcare programs we support, it's just people who have a passion for children and families. They use computers, but they don't really have anyone with expertise in that field. And sometimes, they hire IT support, but it's very general help that isn't going beyond the basics, so they aren't getting a specific focus, like we provide. But that's where we come in - we help them identify where the weak spots are, and how they can be better protected.

### **Why is cybersecurity so critical for these organizations?**

**Tyrone:** The organizations we support are very simple - many operate with limited staff, technical resources, and knowledge. Some even need help with simply establishing an IT budget - we start there a lot. And when they ask, "How can I stay more protected online?" I try to educate them as much as possible. I tell them, "If you can do your job completely without computers, you should do it, because it's safer. But if not, and if this computer goes down due to a breach, you're going to feel that dollar impact immediately - let's avoid that."

This is where Avast allows me to say, "Hey, I have a cost-effective solution that's simple, easy to use, and will help keep you better protected online, so you can manage your business with more peace of mind."

### **How do you help educate them?**

**Tyrone:** Many of these smaller organizations think, "Nobody's looking at me. I'm not big enough or important enough for a hacker." But I counter that with this analogy: a hacker is like a person walking through the neighborhood, twisting the lock. And if it's locked, they'll keep going. If it's open, they'll walk in. It's as simple as that. So I always tell my people, "I'm going to train you, and I'm going to install a dead bolt lock and a lock on the doorknob."

### **Are there any roadblocks you have to overcome when educating your customers about cybersecurity?**

**Tyrone:** Well, it can be a tough market. With a potential new customer, they first need to feel that they can trust you and know you care about them before they'll give you a chance. And if you don't prove yourself to them, they'll hire their cousin who "knows a little IT" faster than they will a real IT professional. So having confidence in my tools, like Avast Business solutions, is imperative to get that conversation started.

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Having simple tools that do a job like Avast does is critical for me helping those vulnerable communities. Kudos for keeping your solutions powerful but simple.

## **Which Avast Business solutions do you provide for your organizations, and what are the biggest benefits that these products have provided for you and your customer?**

**Tyrone:** We use CloudCare and CCleaner. What I love about Avast is that when I walk my customers through the software user interface, it's super clear. It's so easy to use. I tell them, "That's what this is, this is what that does," and so when I teach them how to use it, they feel confident in being able to use it on their own - it's not like a foreign language. And a lot of technology scares people to the point of where they don't want to do anything. But my Avast solutions aren't like that, they are very simple. They don't get in the way. They say, "Hey, this is the VPN. You use it to stay safe, click here to turn it on." It's very intuitive.

Having simple tools that do a job like Avast does is critical for me helping those vulnerable communities. So, kudos for keeping your solutions powerful but simple. Plus, I have not had any issues with my Avast products, which allows me to recommend them with confidence.

## **How has your experience been doing business with Avast?**

**Tyrone:** When doing business with Avast, everything just clicks – it feels like a family, it feels like a team. The way we work together, that's how I want my people to feel when I go into their organization.

Furthermore, I know Avast is here to help the people that I help. The Avast team seems to understand that, and I feel very supported. And you guys give me that support so that I can give that to my customers. I'm super happy with everything you guys do, because it feels like you've helped me become a trusted partner to my customers.

## **How has Avast helped you grow your business?**

**Tyrone:** I'm very humble with the work that I do, and so I always make sure to have a plan and leverage all my resources before I do anything. So, a lot of what I've done with Avast has helped me be very proactive. I knew a few years ago that I would be here in this position. I knew what I had to do to get here, but I wanted to make sure that I understood what I might have to do when I got here. I don't want to be coming up with stuff after we put a plan on a customer's desk and they ask, "Well, can you do this?" Am I going to say, "Ok, let me look into it"? No - my answer will be, "Yes, we can, and this is how we're going to get there."

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I don't try to push everything I know about onto my customers. I read them, I talk to them, I get to know them, and I figure out what's important to them, So, if I have a tool that they'll use - not just have it, but actually use it - I show it to them. There's no one size fits all, I try to give everybody a tailored solution as much as I can – and Avast helps me do just that.

### Would you recommend Avast to other partners?

**Tyrone:** I would absolutely recommend Avast, mainly because of the support I receive, and that's support that I really need. I like having a strong partner by my side. It's great to have partners, people I can reach out to, people who answer my questions, they answer my emails. I feel supported with Avast and that means everything to me. Loyalty, that means everything to me.

So, I would absolutely recommend the folks at Avast to someone who is built the same way that I'm built. If you need something, if you want someone to call you or someone to talk to you, you want someone to help you be better at what you do, then yes, talk to Avast about how they can be your partner.



Want to see how the Avast Business product portfolio can help you grow your business, unlock additional revenue streams, and win new customers? Visit [avast.com/business/partners](https://avast.com/business/partners) today

## About Avast Business

Avast delivers easy-to-use, affordable, and award-winning cybersecurity solutions for small and growing businesses. Avast provides integrated security services to protect your devices, data, applications, and networks. Backed by 30 years of innovation, we have one of the largest, most globally dispersed threat detection networks in the world. Our cybersecurity solutions are built to provide maximum protection so that you can worry less about cyberthreats and focus more on growing your business. For more information about our cybersecurity solutions, visit [www.avast.com/business](https://www.avast.com/business).