National Youth Choir of Scotland

The National Youth Choir of Scotland was formed in 1996 starting with a single choir, they now have four national choirs, 14 regional choirs, quite a large education remit, and lots of events and conferences. There is a fundraising function on an individual choir basis, and a trust and foundation basis.

The Challenge

When Peter Muir, director of marketing & communications for National Choir of Scotland, joined the organisation four years ago everything was operated from filemaker databases, so there was an individual database for each choir, for each year and then more for various other things, and they weren't linked together.

Even basic tasks, like analysing what proportion of regional choir members move up into a national choir, would've involved combining 14 different databases in one place, and then combining four others in a different place. As an organisation they were siloed, as they were following these data structures and there data internally was fragmented.

As a result of this they were giving really poor customer service, every time someone came into contact with the organisation, they didn't know if there was any previous interaction.

It was to the point that they weren't actually doing any membership engagement work, or marketing. So Peter decided to fix the fundamental problem. "There wasn't really any data in a useable format and it was incredibly difficult to get any analytics, intelligence or insights out of the data," said Peter.
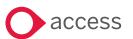
The Solution

After securing funding through Ambition Scotland, they discovered Access thankQ CRM through a google search, and arranged a demo. Peter continued' "They talked a language that was relatable and understandable to staff, and as it was a new system it needed it to be easy-to-use and simple to understand. It spoke the language of an NFP and avoided corporate speak. Everyone took to thankQ and could really see the advantages."

The fact they could add modules, such as Trading as they grew was a big influencer for them.

The Results

Now they can do analysis and effectively target people in particular areas, or the right age, when they're ready to move up. The National Youth Choir of Scotland started doing things that they've never done and seeing the benefits of that "We're understanding the organisation a lot better," continued Peter.

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>
> Peter Muir,
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> Communications

> In terms of membership management everything is much more centralised, there are 14 area choirs with 2000 children, they renew every single year for up to ten years, and they all do it at exactly the same time of year.

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Communications

They now have a 360 degree view of the organisation and its members, whereas previously it was fragmented. They sell publications and can see the tie up between sales of these publications and training events. They can track member and contact activity.

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It's quite a highly pressurised time of year, as we're recruiting new members, auditioning them and renewing existing members, so it means that that enormous task can now be split amongst various people, whereas previously it fell on the shoulders of one person. It was all paper based, so there were boxes upon boxes of paper forms, and everything is now electronic, which is much quicker and cheaper for the charity," Peter explained.

This has made a huge difference to the organisation as now they just import the new people in. "The import tools in thankQ are great, better than any other system I've used previously."

Benefits

The choir used to spend £21,000 a year on postage for membership renewals and other activities, so just in postage alone they're seeing a saving of thousands of pounds a year.

There have been huge benefits to Peter's role day-to-day "I can now be more strategic. As we used to sit in a room with just opinions, with no data to back it up. Now there is an evidence base, and we can ask questions and find out an answer, and that's the huge difference."

"We're adding to the system as we grow. We've added the web portal which allows people to pay for their membership online whereas previously we were using cheques, and doing credit and debit card transactions manually. So that's another huge timesaving for us," concluded Peter.

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About Access

Access Group is an established software solutions provider to the not-for-profit sector. We help organisations improve performance, increase cost efficiency, and make the most of their funds by delivering integrated organisation-wide solutions. Solutions that enable you to fully manage your CRM, membership and fundraising, run your finances, projects and documentation, as well as streamline your entire HR and talent management process.