



Spinal Research is the UK's leading charity funding medical research to develop effective treatments for paralysis caused by spinal cord injury.

“ Having Access thankQ has freed up 10 hours a week for me to concentrate on what's really important to the charity – fundraising. ”

Challenge

- Bespoke and tailored fundraising software that was difficult to use
- Wanted a database that would meet all the impending GDPR regulations
- Reporting was 'trial and error'

Approach

- Implemented Access thankQ to help drive down manual processes within the charity especially concentrating on reporting, compliance and with data selection

Result

- Freed up 10 hours of working time a week per person
- Easier to see Gift Aid donations and returns
- Reduction in import of financial information from 2 hours to 20 minutes
- Future-proofed and GDPR compliant system

Access thankQ has helped Spinal Research be more efficient by freeing them from their manual processes

When Danielle Houliston arrived at Spinal Research, she found that the charity were using a relatively unknown fundraising software that had been especially tailored for the charity. It had very specific add-ins and was cumbersome for the team of nine to use.

'The first thing I noticed was how difficult it was for me to get any reporting out of the system – it was almost like there was two different systems, where the front and back ends didn't match and none of the fields were corresponding. With GDPR looming, I decided that we needed a database that was fit for purpose and also compliance safe,' Danielle commented.

'The other thing that I was really concerned with was that there was only one support person who knew how to use this database – which is not the best way for any charity to operate.'

Why choosing thankQ was an easy decision for Spinal Research

When it came to looking for a new software provider, Danielle conducted extensive research on the internet, as well as with direct marketing groups and other fundraisers in groups that she belonged to. From these groups, someone mentioned about Access' thankQ and the good reviews about the software and the company.

“ I narrowed it down to thankQ and Salesforce. And whilst Salesforce would have been free for us a charity, the cost of having to hire a consultant to do the implementation and tailoring, was extremely costly and not something that we could really justify. Plus we didn't want another tailored system. ”

'Also, once I had the demonstration from Access on thankQ, I could see how easy it was to use, as well as easily configurable and could be personalised to fit our needs. I also like the easy integration with other applications, like Mailchimp, and even though we haven't purchase it yet, I can see how the 'Justgiving' application could also help us further streamline our processes – the scope and potential to do more was extremely attractive.'



“ I have found that our relationship with our trustees has been strengthened considerably because we are able to provide them with the relevant information they want. ”

Greater visibility for Spinal Research

Spinal Research started noticing straight away how having the solution helped improved and refine their process. Firstly, they have been able to look up their supporters geographically on the map – which has been a real game changer, as before they would have to do this manually. Previously, they would have had to look at nearby counties, look at the supporters who are closest to the event, which would not be accurate and they could have potentially invite the wrong people.

Another relevant piece of functionality is the ability to log communications directly from Microsoft office, which they were doing manually before. ‘We use this every day and because it’s so simple to use with the aid of a template within the system, all communications are automatically logged against a record – saving us so much time and making us more efficient,’ Danielle mentioned.

‘It’s so easy to use, the team is logging things more quickly. This has allowed us to be more professional, especially when a supporter calls to talk through a communication, we are able to deal with the enquiries quickly and has really helped us strengthen our relationship with our supporters.’

With greater visibility on what’s happening within their system, Spinal Research have been to react quickly to requests and errors which wasn’t possible before Access thankQ. ‘An example of this has been ‘Gift Aid’ management, where we can see the gift aid amount and sign up, allowing us to do more analysis which we weren’t able to do before due to us being such a small charity and our resources were limited. Whereas now, I am able to really interrogate the data and look at the percentage of signups from the gift aid side of things.’

Another example of how Access thankQ has helped improved and reduced time was with Gift Aid returns which used to ‘take about an hour to do and was difficult. If we had to remove someone from the database, it was hard for us to do because of how the returns would attach itself to a record and would out put on to a HMRC form, and we couldn’t remove it from their records – meaning that it would show that they have gift aided their donations when they haven’t. However, with thankQ, we no longer have this issue and the whole process takes about 15 minutes to complete.’

Having Access thankQ has safeguarded the data and has allowed us to be more compliant

Before Access thankQ, Spinal Research were having issues with recording peoples’ consent coupled with the manual process behind the data selection, resulted in the charity spending more man hours than necessary to rectify the situation. With the introduction of the Access ‘Consent Portal’ module, many of these issues were quickly dealt with – with all their new records using this and migration of their old data to benefit from this.

‘Now with GDPR in place, I was really concerned about the reputation of the charity and compliance, which is one of the biggest drives for us, as a charity, to change to a new system,’ commented Danielle.



However, Danielle decided to undertake the data integration piece herself as nobody knows 'our data better than we do. What I found with Access thankQ was that there's a place for everything which made it easy for us to import from our existing database and we didn't have any customisation. So, even from a basic level, we were able to migrate our extremely complex data.'

Working with Access has been simple and easy

From the beginning, I had a really good relationship with the Access team. From the start of the sales process, I found that our sales person really understood us – what we needed and wanted. We weren't pushed into anything that we didn't require. The project management side was really good and we had really good training as well, with the trainer coming on site and teaching us how to use the system.'

The best thing about having implemented Access thankQ has been the greater visibility that has allowed Spinal Research to do more – 'because we have greater understanding, we are able to react quickly to requests or to errors, which is something we weren't able to do before due to our limited resources. This has really helped us properly understand where we stand in terms of donations, letting us get on with what we do best,' Danielle concluded.



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