Groop – Voluntary Sector Case Study

Building Capacity, Developing National and Local Volunteer Programmes, and Supporting Community Resilience

About the Voluntary Sector

Charities and other Not-for-Profit organisations, e.g. Housing Associations, provide a range of services that benefit people and communities across the UK. A large part of charities and not-for-profit's workforce are volunteers.

> The voluntary sector contributed £18.2bn to the economy in 2017/18, representing about 0.9% of total GDP.
> The sector employs approximately 910,000 people, about 40,000 more than in 2018.
> The value of formal volunteering was estimated at £23.9bn in 2016
> *UK CIVIL SOCIETY ALMANAC 2020*

With cuts to funding levels and increases in the costs, *voluntary organisations are reviewing their services* to improve productivity, deliver in more effective and efficient ways and make savings.

Increasingly voluntary sector organisations are recognising the need to move to using digital systems to support and *improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their work in communities and with volunteers.*

The Opportunity – Covid-19

Volunteering and providing help in communities has taken on a greater level of significance in recent months due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Many more 'working age' volunteers have come forward offering their help, often for the first time.

Over the coming months there is an opportunity to:

- *Build on the legacy of these volunteers* who better reflect the demographics, i.e. age, ethnicity, income, of local communities
- Overcome the resistance to *changing to use digital solutions* by older volunteers as their digital capacity has accelerated during lockdown.

The Challenge

Society is increasingly relying on volunteers to support communities however volunteering is recognised by the voluntary sector as at risk of 'racing towards a cliff edge' as the existing volunteer force demographic continues to age.

The Risk

That the Voluntary Sector misses this once in a lifetime opportunity to grow volunteering into the future and build capacity and resilience that will help individual volunteers and communities' long-term wellbeing and support economic growth.

Voluntary sector organisations must deliver services and collect and share data in line with the Information Commissioner Office (ICO) and GDPR requirements.

They must ensure that any tech systems they use are compliant and do not leave them open to risk of challenge.

"We offer a system (Groop) for our co-ordinators that ticks all the boxes"
Rebecca Kennelly – Director of Volunteering, Royal Voluntary Service

Any tech system they use must be both *sustainable and scalable* to ensure that it can grow with the services it enables and transfer between departments and individuals.

The current pandemic crisis has often led to one designated person being 'in charge' without a tech solution which risks lack of sustainability for the future

Growing Volunteering

Groop is committed to supporting the growth of volunteering across the country and across all communities and are recognised and valued by our target markets for this commitment. We operate an annual conference that brings practitioners and leaders together to discuss how to develop and champion new approaches to volunteering across all sectors; this generates significant leads within national charities for us.

> **Disrupt Innovate Change – New Approaches to Volunteering - Groop Conference 2019**
> *For volunteering as a topic to be given such a tremendous platform for debate, discussion, engagement and enrichment speaks volumes to the importance all those in the sector truly believe it holds for the charity and public sectors but also society at large.*
> Rebecca Poppleton, Senior Volunteer Acquisition Manager, Cancer Research UK

Groop's Community Management Software

Groop offers a full circle eco-system, provides an organisational overview, and delivers a range of features that support the management of a voluntary organisation across its structures, linking staff, volunteers, beneficiaries or members and citizens. With online tools and a Mobile App designed with the 'end user' in mind, Groop enables data collection, payments, communication, managing people, governance processes, and impact reporting.
Groop is:

- **Cloud based** - Hosted by UKCloud, a highly secure hosting service accredited with all appropriate ISO accreditations that is trusted by UK Government for HMRC, Home Office and the NHS.
- **Scalable –** Architecture to handle millions of users
- **Resilient –** Resilient architecture that copes with the failure of individual components
- **Secure –** 2048-bit layer of encryption
- **Separated -** Allows separate services to be developed in tandem and easily integrated into the stack

Our customers include: Alzheimers, Football Association of Wales, Horton Housing, Jamie's Farm, Woodcraft Folk...

Groop Solutions

1. Crisis and Disaster Recovery - Groop enables Charities to *co-ordinate a rapid response* via direct communication with their grass roots community and volunteers in a crisis; to implement a consistent infrastructure and deliver *safe data-sharing*.

2. Insights and Impact - Recording and Reporting - Groop enables Voluntary organisations to *record and report on all activity,* communicate with grant givers/commissioners/trustees and upload required documentary *evidence of spend and impact.*

3. Community Management Platform - Groop provides a range of tools to enable *management of their staff and volunteers, activities and payments* securely, enabling evidence of outcomes/impact, and enabling Covid19 **'Track and Trace'** through registration at activities and events

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> Groop offers a one-stop shop for our members to access some of the fundamental tools they need to support the delivery of quality services in Manchester.
> Ross Grant, Development Manager, Young Manchester Partnership

Return on investment

By having all your features in one place - Groop - less time is spent switching between other tech applications, spreadsheets, word documents. Staff and volunteers can save from 0.75-5hours a week.

Ongoing Development

Groop's Community Management Platform will continue to evolve and introduce additional features.

Groop also plans to develop other products in collaboration with national charities, e.g. Royal Voluntary Service (RVS), Cancer Research, NSPCC, and sport national governing bodies, e.g. English Cricket Board (ECB), Swim England, who have a shared ambition to develop a digital accreditation tool that supports volunteer skill development and a sector wide digital volunteer recruitment tool.