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ECLEVA expertise automates Child-Safety Certification for Baptist Association of NSW and ACT.

Company Size: 100+
Industry: Non-profit

The Challenge

New governmental requirements drive a need for greater operational efficiency

The Baptist Association of NSW and ACT is the peak body supporting the ministry of over 350 Baptist churches across two Australian states. It is responsible for running Creating Safe Spaces (CSS), a mandatory educational program for key church workers and volunteers who work with vulnerable people and children.

CSS was introduced in anticipation of new training and documentation requirements arising from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The program combines online modules and face-to-face workshops that must be completed by all staff and volunteers that work with vulnerable people every three years. Systems used to operate the program included WordPress plugins such as LearnDash, Events Calendar and WooCommerce, along with email, calendar, and document applications.

To meet governance requirements, the training history of every participant must be tracked. This presented considerable challenges as the CSS program engages thousands of participants from hundreds of churches and multiple denominations across hundreds of workshops and online training modules every year.

Multiple systems caused a multitude of problems

Tracking the training history of every participant meant downloading information from all digital systems manually and collating this into Excel spreadsheets along with details from paper-based workshop attendance forms.

Emails to provide course and workshop details were managed from a single individual's account. A large

effort was required to identify participants that had to complete training or undertake the three-yearly renewal, in order to issue email reminders.

CSS certificates of completion could only be generated once it was fully verified that a participant had completed training, and each certificate was also manually generated, one at a time.

The result was very slow, time consuming and error prone process that saw participants waiting a long time before receiving their certifications, or not being notified that their certificates were about to lapse. This left participants unable to support local church community initiatives, creating frustration for teams across New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

"We wanted to be leading the way in creating safe environments for vulnerable people within our churches" said Aaron Veart, Communications & Events Team Leader with Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT. "But with new government regulations coming in place we were also trying to work within the limited resources and limited technology we had to meet those needs."

To improve the administration of the CSS program, the Baptist Association needed a solution that could:

- Automate communications around course curriculum and completion requirements
- Reduce data capture to a single-entry point
- Enhance governance and information security

The Solution

Underpinning a culture of collaboration and efficiency

Business applications consultancy ECLEVA was selected to work with the Baptist Association on improving CSS program operations. ECLEVA had previously implemented Microsoft Dynamics as a back-end system for Baptist Churches, and their knowledge of the existing IT environment was to prove an advantage to the project.

From the outset, ECLEVA identified that the core need was a scalable data management solution.

● ● There was a highly detailed, very segmented process that we need to go through, with a lot at stake. If there are errors or problems, you're potentially talking about the safety of vulnerable people.

– Aaron Veart, Communications & Events Team
  Leader, Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT.

"There was a lot of double-handling of data, and a huge opportunity to automate more business processes within the organisation," explained Cristina Northcott, Client Success Director, ECLEVA. "We wanted to provide a solution that could systematise the entry of information, management of that information and course curriculums so that data would all come straight into the system."

ECLEVA proposed leveraging the existing Microsoft Dynamics 365 system to provide contact and account management to the CSS program administration team. Dynamics Marketing would be added for event management, along with a custom event management portal allowing workshop attendance to be digitally recorded from the classroom. Power Automate would be deployed to correlate course participation and completion data, and to distribute reminders to those needing to complete or renew their CSS training.

As the CSS data is used across the whole Baptist Church organisation, the first stage of the project involved mapping the various stages of the CSS course delivery, identifying and addressing a range of dependencies and integrating the entire operational process for CSS with the overall business requirements.

The project team co-ordinated with groups across the organisation to gather and map requirements from existing systems to the new solution, set up data structures and access privileges, before migrating structured and unstructured historical data into the new application environment.

rhipe actually did a proactive analysis around the impact of licensing cost changes and how they were going to affect our clients ... That was just brilliant.

– Cristina Northcott, Client Success Director, ECLEVA

The entire project was backed with extensive internal and external communications from the executive leadership team, and ECLEVA also delivered comprehensive user training. The approach was planned to not just improve CSS program operations, but to support an organisational culture focused on efficiency and collaboration.

Making a Difference with rhipe Not-For-Profit licensing expertise

ECLEVA called on its cloud distribution partner, rhipe to ensure the Baptist Association was supported to take advantage of specific licensing pricing discounts provided for charitable institutions and the not-for-profit sector. At every stage of the project, rhipe provided ongoing monitoring of the organisation's Microsoft Dynamics 365 application usage and where pricing changes needed to be factored into future plans.

'rhipe actually did a proactive analysis around the impact of licensing cost changes and how they were going to affect our clients," Northcott said. "That was just brilliant, because they had already done a lot of the analysis and I could just go talk with clients about the changes."

The expertise provided by rhipe helped keep the licensing structure as cost-effective as possible, while ensuring the Baptist Association could remain responsive to the changing needs of its users over time.

The Result

Efficiencies have saved the team 40 annual days of work

Digitisation of the Creating Safe Spaces program workflow has dramatically improved the organisation's efficiency. Participant data that took weeks to be downloaded from multiple systems and re-entered into spreadsheets is now captured once, and automatically flows across systems and processes as needed.

Reminders are now fully automated to complete training or to enrol for the mandatory three-year renewal. CSS certificates of completion are created in the system and distributed as soon as a participant is logged as finalising their training, meaning local churches can bring volunteers on board much faster. Records are kept safe and centralised, data is easier to access, and accurate statistics are readily available to track progress and plan future events.

The new system has saved 3 hours of administrative work for each CSS event run by the Baptist Association. This equates to the work effort of 40 days annually freed up from administration and focused on initiatives that are of much greater value to the Baptist Church and its congregation members.

"We were looking for something that would scale with us as an organisation, and ECLEVA took the time to actually understand us," said Veart. "What we're looking at now is a system that will grow and develop with us – and not actually hold us back."

Future Goals

The solution provided by ECLEVA will be crucial to supporting the Baptist Association achieve its long-term goal of becoming a movement of 1000 healthy churches in a generation. Reaching this goal means adding around 26 churches every year – something that would not have been feasible without the scalable data management platform now in place.

ECLEVA
INNOVATIVE IDEAS
DELIVERED SIMPLY

Baptist Churches
of NSW & ACT

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Efficiencies have saved the team 40 annual days of work

Enables local churches bring volunteers on board much faster than before