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How Target State helped Community Governance inspire and educate our amazing not-for-profit leaders.

Kiwis are a generous bunch who care about making a difference. This is reflected in the statistics: There are around 150,000 not-for-profits/non-government organisations and 27,000 registered charities nationwide.

Alongside fundraising and attracting the right staff, governance is one of the biggest challenges facing charities today. Too often, leaders in the sector feel they don't have enough resources, time, and support which can lead to mistakes, burnout, or a fear of participating in the sector.

Charitable trust, Community Governance believes it shouldn't be this way. That's why they inspire, engage, and educate not-for-profit leaders right across Aotearoa to govern effectively and confidently. They work at a grassroots level to develop and rollout initiatives made for smaller and less established charities – as often the larger charities are already well-resourced and have the right systems in place.

Community Governance's initiatives include a chair-to-chair mentoring programme and a nationwide governance programme designed at a local community level. For both programmes, not-for-profits get partnered with someone with governance experience. It helps reassure board members that they're doing a good job with support around topics such as: governance versus management; how to work with your board; and policies, documentation, and governance frameworks.

The problem:
Wading through content to try and find answers to governance questions.

The difficulty in the not-for-profit sector is often when you're looking for guidance on how to govern you're forced to sift through a lot of content before you find what's relevant for you.

That means online educational content for not-for-profits can be typically overwhelming and not geared to the smaller grassroots charities. Resources can be hard to find, hard to navigate, and hard to understand.

The opportunity:
The need for a resource hub.

To tackle this challenge, Community Governance wanted an online resource hub for boards to easily find governance material. Their mandate was clear – the content had to be presented in a clean, clear, and concise way so people could quickly find answers to their questions and make informed, confident decisions based on best practice and the latest information.

Chief Executive Officer, Rose Hiha-Agnew engaged Ant McMahon from Target State, to guide them through their request for proposal (RFP) process. It was crucial they found and chose the best website provider who could deliver excellent results at a fair price and turnaround.

The process:

Finding, shortlisting, interviewing, and choosing the best provider.

Rose and her team knew they needed a reputable website company to help with the design and build of the website. While Community Governance had a good sense of how they wanted the website to look, they didn't have the technical knowledge to know what skillsets and experience were important from their provider.

That's why Ant helped create a one-page RFP which included all the relevant criteria. This enabled Community Governance to confidently go out to market.

After receiving several tenders, with Ant's guidance, they made a shortlist of three candidates.

Next, Ant sat in on the interviews for two of the shortlisted organisations. And, finally, he told them his preferred company.

As a result of this thorough tender process, Community Governance confidently appointed Auckland-based company, Scratch Limited.

The benefits of working with an experienced tech consultant.

Rose believes other not-for-profits can benefit from working with Target State. She said:

> *"Having Anthony was really valuable – to lean in on his skillset – and his connections. He was able to provide impartial advice about the different strengths [of the providers]. It was important that we undertook a good due diligence process. Having Anthony there meant we had impartial selection as well, which is very important to us and [something] other not-for-profits [could benefit from]."*

Rose also mentioned that Target State helped them in the following ways:

- **Revealing blind spots** – you don't know what you don't know.

- **Translating tech-speak** into plain English.

- **Providing advice** based on Ant's knowledge of both the tech sector and the not-for-profit sector.

- **Adding transparency** to their processes.

- **Doing a reality check** on pricing to make sure they pay a fair price.

- **Having a deep understanding** of the technical side of tenders – when this, understandably, might not be your zone of genius.

- **Appreciating that no question is a stupid question** when you don't feel confident about tech.

The result:

Helping not-for-profits with their personal development so they can feel confident and govern well.

The project was a success. Community Governance pulled off a complex job in around three months and were delighted with Scratch Limited's work.

Crucially, their new website has tons of great features, functionality, and material without compromising on their mandate. Not only is it useful, but it's also easy for users to navigate, find and understand the content and it's geared towards smaller, less-established charities.

The website is also home to video content for their mentoring programme. And visitors can browse and find free events to learn from top sector leaders about different relevant topics.

Want to know if you're on the right track? If you can release minutes? What to do if a member is not on board with a project? You can find answers to these questions and more on the new website.

The experience:

What it's like working with Target State.

Rose also mentioned that Ant was a good fit for the role because of his experience and passion for the not-for-profit sector. Rose explains:

> *"[Ant's] got such a great way about him. He's very to the point and it's so needed when you're talking about cyber-tech. He's involved in other not-for-profit work and writes articles about supporting not-for-profits. You can tell if someone hasn't worked in the not-for-profit sector."*

Should other not-for-profits engage Target State? Rose thinks so!

If you're a not-for-profit leader questioning if it's worth getting independent advice, here's Rose's advice:

> *"Don't be scared to ask experts. Lean on people that have experience and expertise. The best leaders don't have all the answers, but you can get people with expertise to help you through."*

Want to find out more?

Please get in touch with **Ant** here to see how Target State can help your not-for-profit succeed on your next tech project.