



**OPENING THE
POWER OF
TECHNOLOGY**
TO SCOTTISH CHARITIES



synovations
Solutions for Nonprofits



“ All aspects of our client engagements are planned, controlled and tracked easily using the system. Funder reports can be produced at the click of a mouse and I have management dashboards providing me with the key information I need on a continuous basis. I wholeheartedly recommend Synovations to any charity looking to move ahead ”

Janine Botfield
CEO of WOW

INTRODUCTION

Synovations is a nonprofit consultancy service. We were established as a Community Interest Company in 2009 to provide advice and support on organisational improvement exclusively to charities. We also provide expertise in selecting and implementing appropriate technologies to facilitate major improvement for charities in service delivery and internal administration.

OUR MISSION

Synovation's mission is founded on two simple observations. First, the nonprofit sector lags significantly behind the commercial sector in its use of technology and access to consultancy/advice. Second, the effect of bridging that gap can have a transformational effect on enabling nonprofits to better deliver services. Cost is not the only issue. Consultancy and technology are not generally positioned in ways that are relevant and accessible to charities. Synovations is radically changing that.

KEY PERSONNEL



Ciaran Hayden
Founder

A long career, beginning in the IT industry in the late 1970's, has seen Ciaran work his way through consultancy into senior management with international consultancy firms such as Deloitte and SAP. He has also worked on education related projects in Africa and set up a technology training centre in Cameroon. Since 2006 Ciaran has worked exclusively with charities and has supported with the delivery of over 200 transformational projects in UK and Ireland.

He was recognised for this work with a major award from Social Entrepreneurs Ireland. He holds a BSc (Hons) from Trinity College Dublin and an MBA from Dublin City University. He also has a part-time presence in the academic world, lecturing in management at post-graduate level in two business schools.

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Helen Egbe
Senior Consultant

Helen has worked in the IT Industry for over 14 years. She has extensive experience in implementing and managing technology solutions for marketing and financial service companies. Prior to joining Synovations she worked with Pioneer Investments and Societe Generale.

Helen now specialises in implementing CRM solutions - particularly Salesforce.com. Nonprofit clients make heavy use of this solution as the licences are generally donated to them by the Salesforce Foundation. Helen has worked with several clients to tailor Salesforce to their requirements, migrate historical data and provide training/support.

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SYNOVATIONS – OUR VALUE PROPOSITION



- EXTENSIVE BUSINESS & IT EXPERIENCE
- EXTENSIVE NONPROFIT SECTOR EXPERIENCE
- DONATED/LOW-COST TECHNOLOGIES & DELIVERY
- CLIENT EMPOWERMENT

There is no doubt that consultancy and software firms seldom position or price their offerings in a way that is appealing to nonprofits. Charities, particularly smaller ones, typically find themselves on the wrong side of the digital divide. This is ironic because the nature and variety of charity work, coupled with resource and budget limitations, mean that basic process innovation and information technologies can be transformational to the effectiveness of a charity.

Synovations is breaking that cycle based on four key elements.

Our team have many years experience in technology, business and management consultancy. We have innovatively cherry-picked the most relevant approaches, tools, templates and technologies from that commercial world experience and packaged them in an appropriate way for use with charities.

By working with hundreds of nonprofits, in several countries, we have refined and augmented the tools and approaches mentioned above. This gives us unique capabilities that can only be built through extensive experience. We have established templates that accelerate projects and reduce costs. For example, we have worked with many counselling services, womens' centres, drug rehab programs, disability services, volunteering centres, childcare services, training centres, youth centres etc. We therefore have established operational templates for each, and have a good understanding of the challenges around planning/control, measuring outcomes, web integration, funder reporting etc.

Our vision is that budget should not be a barrier for even the smallest charity to avail of support. Our affordability is based on two major factors. Many technology providers – such as Microsoft, Salesforce and Symantec – offer their products on a donated or low cost basis to nonprofits. The challenge is with the analysis and consultancy required to select and effectively implement. That is where our unique model helps. Synovations is a nonprofit organisation. Our operating costs are minimal compared to conventional consulting firms. Our team give of their time at much lower cost as they have typically made life choices after many years of commercial sector experience. These factors, combined with the tools/templates mentioned above, mean that projects are typically delivered cheaper, quicker and easier than clients imagine possible.

Our whole approach empowers clients to independently manage any solutions we implement. This results in little or no ongoing cost. It also ensures that process and technology can together scale and adapt to changing organisational requirements.

OUR SERVICES

- PROCESS IMPROVEMENT
- TECHNOLOGY ADVICE/SELECTION
- SOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

Nonprofit organisations are typically involved in a variety of activities – fundraising, event management, advocacy, service delivery, staff management, training etc. Communications with large numbers of contacts, prioritising clients, scheduling and controlling, finance management, reporting can all represent an increasing burden on already strained resources.

The need for smarter working has never been greater. We have a wealth of experience in driving improvement, reducing duplication, reducing risk and helping charities to become more efficient and effective. The starting point is focused workshops that step through all the key processes, identifying pain-points, data capture, paperwork, risks, outcomes, inefficiencies etc. From this we can draw up a report making clear recommendations.

TECHNOLOGY ADVICE/SELECTION

Core to our value proposition is the fabulous opportunity that that technology holds for most nonprofits. The issues mentioned above can often be alleviated with appropriate technology tools. The challenge is with analysing requirements, identifying the right tools, and understanding how they can be implemented. Having worked with over 100 charities, that is now a core competence for Synovations. Solutions must be robust, scalable and have a minimal ongoing cost.

SOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION

Key success factors are the selection of appropriate solutions based on organisational goals and requirements, followed by a well managed implementation. This typically results in dramatic improvements in management efficiency and service delivery. The failures/overruns of IT projects are typically down to weaknesses in planning and project management rather than technology issues.

The Synovations team has a wealth of project management and implementation experience across large and small projects using a wide variety of software packages. Our approaches are well established and proven with many charities. We are sensitive to the need to manage change, communication and training. A key measure of success is the empowerment of the client to manage any solution with little ongoing need for outside support. We are also sensitive to the importance of budget constraints and we seek to minimise cost at every stage.



**DO YOU
RECOGNISE
THESE TYPICAL
ISSUES THAT
NONPROFITS
OFTEN FACE?**

Find it Increasingly difficult to track clients and other contacts?

Bewildered by Technology?

Increasing demand for services and declining budget?

Difficulty planning/controlling service delivery?

Financial pressures reducing your resources?

Duplication of information and effort?

Poor integration between your website and other information/processes?

Struggling to track outcomes/trends?

Accurate reporting/analysis for management, board and Funders?

Information spread across too many sources?

Organising and managing events/participants proving tedious?

Year end headaches with Financial Accounting?

Concerned about Risk?

Unsure about your Data Security?

Worried about consequences of losing key staff?

**SYNOVATIONS IS FINDING ANSWERS
FOR MANY ORGANISATIONS**

SYNOVATIONS – SALESFORCE.COM IMPLEMENTATION SPECIALISTS



Online System to Manage Membership, Donations, Events, Documents, Sales, etc.

Salesforce.com is an on-demand technology service. It enables over half a million customers to manage sales, support, marketing and partner information on-demand (on-line). This service takes away the need for servers, software licences, backup systems and support staff. Customers pay an annual licence for the complete service.

This innovative technology is donated to Nonprofit organisations through the salesforce.com Foundation as part of their 1% model of integrated philanthropy: a commitment to deliver 1% of time, 1% of equity and 1% of product to nonprofit and educational organisations.

BENEFITS

Most Nonprofits / charities struggle with information management: membership, donors, clients, events, sales, contacts, documents and of course emails. This 'on-demand' model has an easy-to-use interface and functionality that make it as easy as possible to share and manage information. All you need is broadband and a browser.

Salesforce.com is used by 1500 charties worldwide including the Red Cross [US] and UN Food Programme. Scottish users include ProjectScotland, Women onto Work and Abused men in Scotland. It is widely used in the UK by a wide variety of charities including counselling centres, drug treatment centres, womens' centres etc.

Salesforce.com donates 10 full licences free of charge to a registered charity and offers additional licences at 80% discount. The value of the donation to a charity is over £12,000 pa.



CASE STUDY WOMEN ONTO WORK

Women onto Work is a Scottish charity that supports women who face barriers to work and helps them move towards fulfilling employment.

Many are lone parent mums, live with health problems, are struggling on low incomes, or lack qualifications or work experience.

WOW provides a safe and motivating environment. Each client works with a personal coach to set goals and develop a tailored action plan. Each client is assisted with accessing the services, training and supports they need to achieve their goals, and to develop the skills, knowledge, confidence and experience they need to succeed.

WOW have seen a significant increase in demand for their services and have responded with a sizable increase in staff and by improving organisation effectiveness through process improvement and technology.

Implementing a new Client Relationship Management solution based on Salesforce CRM has been a transformational experience for WOW. This was achieved in partnership with Synovations (www.synovations.co.uk), a social enterprise that specialises in supporting charities with organisational improvement and technology.

“Like many charities, we started small and came to rely on spreadsheets, word documents etc. to plan and record activities” reflects Janine Botfield, CEO of WOW. “Such approaches simply don’t scale and we quickly realised that we needed to step back and take a fresh look at our client engagement cycle, processes, staff management and the increasing demands of funders for more detailed reporting, analysis and measurement of outcomes”

An important first step was to thoroughly review organisational processes. As Janine explains, “Synovations have worked with so many charities that they knew exactly the approach needed. Having run a very useful workshop looking at all aspects of our operation, they were able to recommend Salesforce and explain how they would tailor it to our requirements. The whole project was much faster and affordable than I would have imagined. We now have a very robust management information system. Applications from clients are received directly from our website into Salesforce. All aspects of our client engagements are planned, controlled and tracked easily using the system. Funder reports can be produced at the click of a mouse and I have management dashboards providing me with the key information I need on a continuous basis. I wholeheartedly recommend Synovations to any charity looking to move ahead”

www.womenontowork.org

CASE STUDY

PROJECT SCOTLAND

ProjectScotland is a national charity which helps people aged 18 to 30 to realise their potential through volunteering.

Their volunteering projects change their lives and aspirations, and their youth and energy give an enormous boost to the capacity of the voluntary sector and the communities in which they volunteer. Since launch in May 2005 ProjectScotland has exceeded targets placing over 4,000 young people into structured and rewarding placements with over 300 non-profit organisations across Scotland.

From early on, ProjectScotland recognised the importance of technology, and implemented a (then) leading edge Constituent Relationship Management System (CRM). This helped manage volunteers, placements, funders partners, reporting etc. But as the operation scaled and changed, as is inevitable, the system could not easily be tailored to new requirements without significant expense.

Rucelle Soutar, Finance Director of ProjectScotland explains, “Over recent years, our operational model has changed dramatically . Our relationships with funding and delivery partners have become deeper and more strategic. Process and reporting requirements could no longer be met by our old IT system and we didn’t have the confidence or expertise to remodel it”.

On a recommendation from SCVO, ProjectScotland engaged Synovations to help find a way forward. “The whole approach was exactly what we needed”, continues Rucelle. “By running a few detailed workshops, synovations helped us to take a fresh and insightful look at all our processes, reporting requirements and future vision. That enabled the clear articulation of requirements and specification for technology”.

With support from Synovations, ProjectScotland implemented Salesforce CRM, a web based platform that can be readily tailored to a wide variety of business and non-profit scenarios. The base package was donated by the Salesforce Foundation.

Reflecting on the implementation and benefits, Rucelle concludes “within a remarkably short time, and at very reasonable cost, we have an easy-to-use system that manages every stage of our volunteer engagements. It helps us plan and control the development and management of placements, relationships and communications with funding and delivery partners etc. It provides us with very useful snapshot dashboards as well as comprehensive management reports. Thanks to the empowering approach taken by Synovations we are now well able to manage the system ourselves and make changes when needed as our organisational requirements grow”.



CASE STUDY LIGHTHOUSE

Lighthouse is a suicide awareness and prevention organisation committed to providing support services to families who have lost loved ones and people in crisis.

Initially established in 2003 as a community response to a community problem – the exceptionally high incidence of suicide in north Belfast – the organisation has undergone various stages of growth during this time. However, the core purpose of the organisation remains unchanged – “to save lives, offer advice and support those affected by suicide and self-harm”

For many years Lighthouse kept track of clients, appointments, staff etc. using rudimentary technology such as spreadsheets, Word documents, emails etc. This led to a non-integrated approach, inefficiency and major challenges with producing meaningful reports for managers and funders.

Sharon Quinn, Office Manager at Lighthouse, contacted Synovations following a recommendation from another Belfast charity, the Ashton Centre, where a major transformational project had been managed by Synovations.

Sharon recalls her first meeting with Synovations, “We knew that we needed a much more integrated, robust way of managing information but didn’t really know where to start. We had anticipated that leading edge technologies would be way outside our very limited budget. Synovations helped us to articulate the details of our key organisational requirements – managing the whole client lifecycle, managing session/room scheduling, managing communications, staff administration and crucially being able to track outcomes, trends and produce analytical reports for management and funders”

“Thanks to the expertise of Synovations in helping us select the right package, their ability to tailor it to every detail of our requirements and their empowering approach, we have transformed our operations. We are enjoying greater efficiencies, better planning/controlling of client service and our reporting/outcome measurement is second to none. This was all achieved faster, easier and much more economically than I would have thought possible. My only regret is that we waited as long as we did to have the software installed”

www.lighthouseireland.org

SYNOVATIONS RECENT CLIENTS

PROJECTSCOTLAND



LIGHT)(OUSE

WOW
WOMEN ONTO WORK



AMIS
ABUSED MEN IN SCOTLAND

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