Innovation in Volunteer Management

Volunteers are the lifeblood of most community service organisations across Tasmania.

For many, the challenges of coordinating a large number of volunteers has become a significant part of their organisation's day-to-day workload, particularly for organisations in Tasmania's aged-care sector.

Whether it be recruiting, inducting, training or rostering, Tasmanian community service organisations are increasingly seeking solutions to strengthen how they manage their volunteers.

Community Transport Services Tasmania (CTST) is one such organisation leading the way in adopting innovative volunteer management approaches.

A not-for-profit organisation operating across Tasmania, CTST provides a door-to-door community transport service for people over the age of 65, and those with disability.

Helping many Tasmanians maintain their independence and continue living in their own homes, CTST has a team of 40 paid staff working alongside more than 400 active volunteers.

Faced with growing demand for their services, and an ageing volunteer workforce CTST chief executive Lyndon Stevenson says that they purposefully sought to improve their volunteer management practices.

"The demand for our services has been growing by more than 300 new clients every month, and because our organisation relies on volunteers we knew that we had to be proactive in making it easier for Tasmanians to volunteer with us, but also improve how our organisation could manage such a large number of volunteers."

Managing a vehicle fleet of more than 80 vehicles, and volunteers located statewide ranging from the Tasman Peninsula, to Smithton and everywhere in between, CTST knew that improving their information technology system would be key.

"We embarked on the introduction of a new transport management system called TRIPS, which has enabled us to streamline our administration processes and significantly improve the experience of our volunteers."

Prior to the introduction of TRIPS, volunteers were required to manually complete paperwork and instructions to drivers about routes and directions were all paper based.

Following the installation of iPads into every vehicle, the need for paperwork has been removed and volunteers are able to record trip information through the press of a button, which is now as simple as 'green' for go, and 'red' for stop.

With all of their vehicles connected through to their offices through the iPads, the TRIPS system now enables CTST to more effectively record trips, schedule bookings and retrieve accurate data and reports.

TRIPS management system has also simplified how CTST records vehicle use, rosters volunteers and captures volunteer hours.

"We have seen improvements across all of our general business operations, but the most significant improvement has been how TRIPS has improved our volunteer experience. Our volunteer workforce is incredibly diverse, with people from all walks of life and for some the requirement to handle large amounts of paperwork was difficult. Sometimes it was a barrier for people wanting to volunteer with us."

"By introducing TRIPS and removing any unnecessary paperwork, not only have we witnessed higher volunteer retention rates but also a 40 per cent growth in our services."

In addition to improving the day-to-day experiences of their volunteers, CTST acknowledges that the process of reviewing their volunteer management systems has led to other improvements.

"The decision to introduce TRIPS was a part of our intention to review our broader volunteer management practices. We also implemented recognition initiatives such as our Volunteer Awards Program, letters of appreciation, feedback mechanisms and volunteer surveys, and feature stories focusing on our volunteers."

Volunteering Tasmania commends CTST's for investing in information technology to strengthen their volunteer management practices.

Whilst, investing in information technology to improve business performance is not a new concept, it is not as common for managing volunteers.

CTST has shown that investing in volunteer management information technology systems can deliver a direct benefit not only to their volunteers, but also their paid staff, their clients and the Tasmanian community.

facts

- There are over 400 active volunteers

- On average CTST drives 3 million kms each year

- Service is provided to 27 Council areas

- CTST volunteers donate over 100,000 hours

- Valued at in excess of $3M annually

- CTST work with 100 community service providers

- In 2017 over 5000 Tasmanians were assisted

- CTST aims to deliver over 134,000 trips in 2018/2019

"Since implementation, CTST has seen a higher retention rate of volunteers and clients, and experienced a 40 per cent growth in our referral service"

Lyndon Stevenson, CEO CTST

For more information on CTST
please visit www.ctst.org.au

For more information on Volunteering Tasmania
please visit www.volunteeringtas.org.au

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