

CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT VARIETY - THE CHILDREN'S CHARITY NSW/ACT



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— David Sexton, CEO, Variety

Since 1975, Variety - the Children's Charity NSW/ACT has been committed to helping children who are sick, disadvantaged or living with special needs to have an improved quality of life.

But over the past few years, the landscape in which Variety operates has changed significantly, particularly with the introduction of the NDIS.

At the same time, the nonprofit sector more generally has undergone significant change, particularly regarding the expectation on charities to measure and report their social impacts.

“Gone are the days when a corporate organisation or major donor would hand over a significant amount of money and say ‘go do good with this’”, says CEO David Sexton.

“Before it's even at that point, now there are questions asked right upfront including, where is this money going to be used? What's the impact going to be? How are you going to measure that impact? How are you going to report that back to us?”

Finding Solutions For The Future

Variety's primary focus is supporting the thousands of children and their families who come to them with a diverse range of needs. Last year alone, children with over 200 different conditions received support through the organisation.

The charity provides support through grants, empowering and educational programs, scholarships and inclusive experiences, all aimed at bringing joy to children facing difficult circumstances.

Variety - the children's charity
NSW/ACT is powered by:

Raiser's Edge NXT™

The level of complexity involved in the day-to-day operations at Variety coupled with a desire to provide more in-depth feedback to their donors means the organisation must continue to change and evolve to ensure it has a significant role in helping to care for children in the future.

Variety's Biggest Challenge

One of the biggest challenges Variety has faced over recent years is managing the flow of data and keeping accurate records on individuals, families and organisations.

While Variety did have a system for handling information about clients and donors, David Sexton says that “the majority of the team weren't actually using the software” when he took over as CEO.

That meant Variety faced a growing problem that many nonprofits endure – no singular source of truth.

While Variety connected with many people – both those in need and donors – David admits that they couldn't easily tell “who they were or how we engaged with them.”

Outside of the incumbent system, data was also spread across Excel spreadsheets and Word documents saved on a network drive, which not only made it difficult to access the right information at the right time, but also became what David called a “huge risk”.

“We couldn't get an overarching view of the organisation, about where we were at,” he explains. Without addressing the issue, this was a problem that became more costly for Variety year after year.



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– David Sexton, CEO, Variety

Searching For A Solution

When David came on board as CEO, he shares “One of the first things I did was look at bringing on board a new system.” David and the Variety team began by seeking to understand their needs, brainstorming about where they wanted to be in the future, and describing their ideal system.

Variety knew they needed a system that could support them in all areas of their work – from managing grant applications from families in need, to reporting back to significant donors.

David and the team reviewed six different providers, eventually settling on Blackbaud's Raiser's Edge NXT:

Raiser's Edge NXT is a cloud-based CRM specifically designed for nonprofits, so it was the ideal choice for Variety to centrally manage their large donor base and advance their work in the community.



A Single Point Of Truth

Six months after moving Variety across to Raiser's Edge NXT, David has already seen a major positive development – unlike the old system, staff are actually using Raiser's Edge NXT.

“The whole organisation is now using Raiser's Edge NXT – some more than others – but every single person within the organisation has interaction with the solution, including myself,” David explains.

“Fundraising, Marketing and Communications, Events, Finance... in fact all of our operational staff across the board – 28 staff strong.”

For an organisation that previously had their key data spread across several locations, this is a momentous shift that has allowed David to get a clear picture of the state of affairs for Variety and move the organisation forward accordingly.

Variety now has that “single point of truth” that so many nonprofits crave.

Helping More Families

As part of their work, Variety receives and responds to grant applications from families in need. For example, a family may apply for a grant for a wheelchair to support a child with a disability, or for an education grant for a child experiencing financial hardship.

David and his team wanted their new CRM to be able to manage the grant process, and they are delighted with how the Blackbaud Grantmaking module has been implemented to smooth this process.

Previously, it took a member of the Variety team 2 days to review grant applications, create response letters and run a mail merge – but now David says, “It is only a half-hour process with the new system.”

Variety can now get through more applications more quickly, so that more families can receive help as soon as possible.

That's a huge win for the organisation – and for the families that we support.

Connecting With More Donors

Variety receives very little government funding and is totally reliant on donors to fund their important work.

The need to manage donor relationships and report back on outcomes was a key part of the decision-making process as the Variety team selected their new CRM. “We need a system that enables us to grow our revenue stream to ultimately help more kids,” David explains.

“We are supported by community, corporate partners, major donors, event participants and community fundraisers. Variety have a good number of corporate partnerships, the biggest being Woolworths who are an amazing partner.”

Now with Raiser’s Edge NXT in place, the whole team is able to collect and collate data on different funders, from major corporate partners to individual donors.



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The relationships are managed far more effectively, allowing Variety to take their supporters on the journey of engagement that is so crucial to ensuring a reliable and consistent flow of funding.

Furthermore, Variety is now able to easily pull reports from Raiser’s Edge NXT to show the outputs of their work to donors who are making a difference in the lives of children across NSW and the ACT.

Having Raiser’s Edge NXT in place has made a significant difference for Variety and the families they support, enabling them to help more people, more quickly.

[Learn more](#)



About Blackbaud

Leading uniquely at the intersection point of technology and social good, Blackbaud connects and empowers organisations to increase their impact through software, services, expertise, and data intelligence. We serve the entire social good community, which includes nonprofits, foundations, corporations, education institutions, healthcare institutions, and the individual change agents who support them.

