

# CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT St Peter's School



ST PETER'S  
CAMBRIDGE

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Set on farming acreage in Hamilton, New Zealand, St Peter's School is a leading educational institution with a rich history and even richer community of students, staff and parents.

But when Sharon Roux began as Director of Advancement, she knew that the St Peter's community was missing its alumni in more ways than one.

An undeveloped engagement plan had led to community events that didn't hit the mark – and to countless missed fundraising opportunities.

It was a double-edged challenge: low donation income had limited the school's budget for investment in their students, but it also meant that the community suffered a thin relationship with its alumni.

Sharon puts it bluntly: “No one understood what professional fundraising and alumni relations looked like when I arrived.”

## Laying a Strong Foundation

When Sharon started, she knew that her team needed a strong, reliable system that did more than manage data. The school needed something that would help them cultivate relationships.

St Peter's School is powered by:

Blackbaud  
Raiser's Edge NXT™

“We didn’t have any fundraising or alumni relations – it was very ad hoc and inconsistent. So we needed to lay a strong foundation.”

Sharon knew that fundraising was secondary to a stewardship plan, focused on cultivating relationships with ex-students, and so she needed a tool that would provide the data and means to do so.

And that’s because for Sharon, fundraising is all about building relationships. “The ask is the last 5% of the work,” she said.

Tasked with taking on a complex role with a number of moving parts, Sharon was given only a limited budget, an experience she’s quite familiar with.

“It’s a big challenge in New Zealand. People want to reap the benefits of fundraising, but they don’t always want to resource it accordingly. So you need to maximise your funds,” she says.

Eventually, the team settled on Blackbaud’s Raiser’s Edge NXT, a cloud-based CRM geared to simplify and centralise the task of donor engagement for nonprofit organisations like St Peter’s School.



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## ” A Unified Solution

What initially attracted Sharon to Raiser’s Edge NXT was its all-round functionality; every problem she faced found a solution in the software.

“Raiser’s Edge NXT really caught my attention. It had it all – event registration, online donations, even e-news capability,” Sharon explains.

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Since adopting Raiser’s Edge NXT, St Peter’s has turned around its low donor engagement levels markedly.

Sharon says that 2019 was the first year that St Peter’s ever focused on fundraising in any meaningful way. But now, with a unified software solution, Sharon and her team are on the same page as other important stakeholders in the school, with the vision and tools needed for building relationships and enabling financial partnerships.

Having specialised in major gifts fundraising in previous positions, Sharon explains that NXT has been particularly beneficial for managing relationships with high-profile donors. “I haven’t come across any other tool which helps major gifts fundraisers as well as Raiser’s Edge NXT.”

## The risk that paid dividends for St Peter's School

Despite the glowing praise for Raiser's Edge NXT, Sharon admits that adopting the new software was initially a risk.

"I put my reputation on the line to bring on board Raiser's Edge NXT but it has definitely started to pay off. When you are managing a large portfolio of potential donors, you don't have time to use solutions that just don't work."

And with only one and a half full time staff in the advancement office, compared to a more standard team of three or four, Sharon was relying on the software to provide functionality beyond the capabilities of her current team.

"I truly believe that if you are a super user of NXT and you use it well it can replace a full-time equivalent staff member," Sharon says. "It really drives efficiency."

This new-found efficiency gave Sharon the tools to personalise a donor engagement strategy – a critical ability, given the diversity of the St Peter's alumni/donor profile.



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“We've got a very diverse alumni population within the school. We started as a prep school for boys, and now we are a co-educational school with boarders.”

St Peter's sees diversity within its student body as a fact worth celebrating – but it comes with a challenge that many nonprofits struggle with.

“What works with younger alumni doesn't necessarily work with the older generation, so you have to tailor your programs to suit. The data from Raiser's Edge NXT enables us to do this.”

“It's given me a very good handle on what stories are most resonating with our alumni students – we have over 50% open rates for our newsletters.”

At the same time, Sharon notes how the software isn't reliant on a wealth of technical knowledge.

“You don't need to be a database expert,” she says. “I don't have to rely on our IT team. The more we can reduce their workload the more both teams can focus on their top priorities.”



## Focusing on the goal

Sharon and her team have only just begun reaching deeper levels of donor engagement. But they're excited about how increasingly strong relationships with the alumni will continue to sharpen the school's mission to provide the highest quality in education.

But it's not a secret that the team at St Peter's School are trying to keep to themselves.

"There are so many schools that want to get involved and don't have many staff on board that would find Raiser's Edge so useful," says Sharon.

Providing the highest quality in education under a tradition of excellence is just the tip of the iceberg at St Peter's. Standing behind their mission is a tight-knit community that depends on its alumni relationally and financially for success.

That's why, for Sharon, Raiser's Edge NXT has provided a springboard for reaching out to a potentially worldwide network of supporters – and why she's planning on using the tool for the long term.

"It provides a wealth of information that will come in handy for many years into the future as we look after our relationships with our donors and alumni."

To find out more about how Raiser's Edge NXT can help drive deeper levels of donor engagement for your mission, contact us on +61 2 8918 1200 or [sales@blackbaud.com.au](mailto:sales@blackbaud.com.au)

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### 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.

