

A partnership built on trust is 'life-giving' for the Brain Tumour Charity

A fast-growing cancer charity needed an IT partner that would enable it to work from anywhere in the world and provide the very best IT services it could afford.

The Brain Tumour Charity was founded in 2013 as the product of a merger of three charities and subsequently two smaller charities. Today, it's the world's leading brain tumour charity and the largest dedicated funder of research into brain tumours globally.

Brain tumours are the biggest cancer killer of people under forty, and the biggest cancer killer of children. Tumours affect people regardless of who they are, and the outcomes are the same no matter where people live. However, research is grossly underfunded.

Sarah Lindsell, CEO of the Brain Tumour Charity says it has grown rapidly to support global needs. *"We do three core things: fund world class research across the globe; provide support and information to help people improve their lives and navigate a very complex health system; and raise awareness of signs and symptoms. We have two very clear goals - to double survival within 10 years and halve the harm brain tumours have all quality of life within 5 years."*

Growing rapidly

One of the charity's biggest challenges is around scale and growth. In a matter of years, the charity has grown from 6 to 120 people - spread across the UK - many travelling internationally.

"Being able to open your laptop and have exactly the same experiences if you were in the office when you're in San Antonio for a conference or you're in Inverness for a fundraising event is really important. And that's exactly what we have."

IT was biggest frustration

Sarah Lindsell had used Bluecube in a previous organization and had a very positive experience. *"When I moved to the Brain Tumour Charity I had a truly awful experience with the IT provider. When asked what the one thing was we could change about the charity - everyone said IT. And, IT should never be mentioned ... ever."*

Every staff survey flagged a deep frustration with the IT and became an excuse for not achieving things. It was impacting staffing too, as the charity had to employ internal IT people, however it wasn't able to attract the best people because it didn't offer remote working. *"I thought, we can't do this. This is going to hamper our growth."* So, the charity went out to tender.

Enormous value for money

She knew Bluecube was fantastic, but not the cheapest. *"I wanted the cheapest and the best. I knew that they were going to deliver the service that we needed. And, not promise what they couldn't do. It was very easy to make that decision. They're absolutely the very best, which makes Bluecube enormous value for money."*

"My brief was - sort it out! I don't want to spend any money on it! And, in a year's time, I want no one to ever mention IT ever again. And, Bluecube delivered on that."

Sarah Lindsell, CEO of Brain Tumour Charity

Open, transparent system

Today, Bluecube is one of the charity's favourite corporate partners. *"Everyone in the charity can tell you who they are, what they do, and why we rely on them. That's rare. Everyone knows that Bluecube enables us to do our work. We're able to communicate with each other, to keep in touch, to share documents, we run a very transparent system. We're very open - you can access all the folders, calendars, email. Having a system that enables you to do that is really important."*

Strategic advice valued

The depth of the relationship is an unexpected benefit, *"Bluecube know what we're trying to do, and they will help us do that. I know that if I've an issue I can have a conversation with James Hawker, as a fellow chief exec."* When Sarah mentioned a potential merger, the team went away and thought about how that would impact systems. *"Not many IT companies do that. Understanding what we'll need and seeing problems before we've seen them. That sort of strategic advice is really important."*

Partnership is 'life-giving'

Bluecube's like the water in the taps. *"You take it for granted and it's not till some pipes burst that you realise how much you need them. They're life-giving for us. They're the most important thing that we have. If you turned it off, we'd be really stuck."*

The day the UK went into lockdown was the same as any other day. Everyone was able to operate exactly as they did in the office, as many had already been working from home.

The Brain Tumour Charity is moving its telephone system to Bluecube, which it wasn't going to do, because it had a pro-bono supplier. However, it wasn't fit for purpose anymore. *"It is great to get a free service, but sometimes you also need to pay for what you need."*

Everyone's treated with respect

Sarah values that she gets the same service as the chief executive of a blue-chip client, and that a junior member of staff wouldn't be treated any differently.

"Everyone's treated equally and with a huge amount of respect and that's really important." She adds, *"I hadn't anticipated how lovely the service desk team would be. It's the little things that make a difference. When you work in a disease area like ours, where every day you're working with people who are going through huge trauma .. having a thoughtful response is really nice."*

Bluecube is very good at getting people up and running. *"If I can't log in, they'll sort it then. You can hear the smile in their voice. You can hear the fact they want to help you. And will check afterwards that it's sorted in the way that you want."*

Feel very safe

Safeguarding the data of vulnerable people that depend on its services is a critical deliverable. *"The Bluecube systems enable us to do that. I feel very safe. When I take my laptop out and about .. even if I was an idiot and left it somewhere, I know that no one could access the information that we have. It's all safe within our remote desktop. So that's really important to us."*

Relationship built on trust

"When Bluecube see new ways of doing things, they've rung me to say .. 'If we did this, would that benefit you?' I would go, 'Yes! That would enable us to work quicker, smarter, faster.'"

Another company would have made a shed load of money out of us. Not once have they done that. The number of times I've gone back to them and said, I love that .. that's really good, but I can't afford it and they'll go, 'Okay!'. I know that they will do the very best to make those costs as low as possible."

Kindness and generosity

The Brain Tumour Charity is planning to move offices again. *"The team has visited three different offices to provide quotes. I'm a bit embarrassed ringing, but I don't feel that once I'm on the phone, there's a huge amount of kindness, a huge amount of generosity. It's always an .. 'Of course, I'll be there!' I couldn't recommend them highly enough."*

One of the charity's initiatives is to be lean and scalable, with 80 pence in every pound spent on charitable objectives, and 20 on governance. Despite growing very quickly and not having a huge amount of cash, it's stayed within the 80-20 parameters. *"Without doubt, Bluecube's enabled us to do that."*

Everyone's truly appreciative

In the last five years, there's not been one complaint about Bluecube on the team barometer staff survey. *"When we went into lockdown, our team put together this video to say thank you to Bluecube for enabling them to work. Who does that?"*

"If you care about your people, are a values-driven and purpose-driven business - then Bluecube are a superb partner. If you're looking at growth and scale, are strategic in your outlook, know that you need IT solutions, but you don't really care about the detail - Bluecube's a brilliant partner. If you're all over the detail, if you're only interested in the bottom line, I wouldn't bother. They're not a supplier - they're a partner."

"Being able to grow rapidly and to scale, to do that with an organization that is prepared to go on that adventure with you and advise you on that journey has been critical to our growth."

Sarah Lindsell, CEO of Brain Tumour Charity



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