CUSTOMER SUCCESS

Founded in Victoria in 2014, Backpacks 4 VIC Kids is a not-for-profit charity organisation that provides quality filled backpacks and gift packs for children, birth to seventeen years of age who are entering out of home care or emergency accommodation in the greater Victoria area. With over 45,000 children placed into out of home care in Australia every year, to meet the community's growing needs, Backpacks 4 VIC Kids quickly expanded from a home-based volunteer group, to an incorporated registered non-profit with several sites managed by employees and staffed by a host of volunteers.

The organisation helps support displaced children and teens with gift bags filled with essential items to help them feel more comfortable during their relocation process. Each gift bag includes size and child appropriate items, such as toiletries, clothing, sleepwear, a flashlight, blanket, and a toy or activity that will belong to the child and remain with them if they are relocated again. Operating solely on donations from fundraising, grants and sponsorships, the Backpacks organisation has managed to keep their overheads to a minimum, relying on the time and skills of their loyal volunteers and partners.

CHALLENGE

As the organisation grew from its initial core group of volunteers into an active full-time operation with numerous departments running simultaneously, Backpacks' founders knew they had to make some operational changes – and fast. "The biggest problem was that our Excel spreadsheets could no longer carry the load of a now hectic office, and back office", said Helen Brown, SCM Consultant and Backpacks volunteer. "As we're a not-for-profit organisation, we did not have the funding, nor the resources to even consider updating our legacy software. We just struggled with our spreadsheets and other manual processes to manage our day-to-day operations and control our inventory as best we could."

For Brown and her team, the continuous surge in requests for backpacks meant increased inventory levels and the need for improved operational, financial, administrative, and stringent inventory control. They knew they had to find an intuitive, easy to learn and easy to implement business management system to get the job done. With the help of volunteer IT professionals and a pro-bono consultant, Brown scanned the market to find an optimal solution to meet their immediate needs. They were introduced to Medatech, Priority Software's authorised reseller in Australia, and shown a system demo. "From the get-go, we knew Priority ERP was a good fit," said Brown.

For Brown and the team, consisting mostly of volunteers with varying levels of technical expertise, a set of unique problems arose. "It's not a 9-5 job, and our staff don't use the system day in and day out as they would in a normal workplace," said Brown. Concerned about the learning curve and just how long it would take for her team to familiarise themselves with Priority ERP and be able to work independently, Medatech's project management team were there, every step of the way. "Medatech's professionals trained our staff, hosted onsite learning workshops, and were a tremendous help throughout the entire implementation process. What we anticipated would be a long and gruelling training period with a tough learning curve, surprised us all – we were up and ready to go in no time!"

Brown credits Priority's highly-intuitive user interface supported by responsive HELP tools, that made learning the system, quick, easy, and enjoyable. "We especially like Priority's customisable screens that enable users to

really personalise Priority to suit individual needs and roles, with a smart and user-friendly dashboard, shortcuts to open tasks, and the ability to conveniently pin your most used items right up front for fast and easy access," said Brown.

Priority ERP was customised to meet Backpacks' unique operational needs. Basic modules and functionality included Project Management, Financials & Accounting, including purchase orders, invoices and receipts, CRM, to efficiently manage their customer base and customer service, track potential to active donors, Inventory & Warehousing, to effectively manage and control stock, Distribution, to handle accurate and timely deliveries, and more, all from a single platform.

With Priority ERP, the Backpacks' team were able to improve operational efficiency across the board. For the first time ever, they had a comprehensive view of their entire operations, from receiving and storing donated products and merchandise, to filling the backpacks based on individual orders, and distributing them according to delivery schedules – all in Priority. "With Priority ERP, our staff can even insert and print packing labels, saving us valuable time, resources and costs," said Brown.

Although the Backpacks team still consider themselves novice Priority users, a collective mix of volunteers who donate their time and efforts to serve their community, over time, they've made great strides in learning, customising and optimising Priority to meet their needs. By implementing Priority's built-in CRM (Customer Relationship Management) module, Backpacks are able to manage their interaction with current and potential customers and donors. Priority

CRM provides a holistic view of customer data, including data analysis tools, to learn about a customer's history, requirements, feedback, and more. For Backpacks, Priority CRM enabled them to enhance and maintain business relationships with suppliers, vendors and customers, with a focus on donor retention, to ultimately grow their business.

More recently, Backpacks relocated their operations from a member's home to a large and functional factory facility, enabling them to better manage the business, house inventory, and facilitate distribution from a single location. "We quickly understood that it's all about the data," said Brown. "With Priority, we have a real-time view of our business data, from anywhere, at any time. Especially during this pandemic, being able to manage operations remotely whilst being accurately informed and up to date, is essential to our sustainability and to meeting our customer's expectations. Plus, with Priority, we can easily generate reports with real-time information on our finances, manpower, inventory, and customer base. We can now make smarter, better informed business decisions, and always know where we stand."

We asked Brown about the most important takeaway from her team's Priority experience, "We've managed to save on manpower, resources and costs, and that's critical for any not-for-profit organisation," said Brown. "Our teams no longer have to perform their tasks manually, saving us valuable time and reams of paperwork. We also have a clear and accurate view of our stock, which means less estimating (or guessing!) our inventory counts, and fewer errors. We've also improved communication and collaboration between our teams, now that we all have access to the same data at the same time."

At Backpacks, the future is bright, and Brown sees Medatech as a long time and valued partner as they continue to grow their operations in Victoria and the region. "We look forward to enhancing the system to meet our business needs," said Brown. "I'm confident that as we expand and will need to add new modules and functionality to the Priority system, we'll be able to do it just as easily as we did from the start. We couldn't be more satisfied with what Priority ERP has done and will continue to do for our business."

Backpacks 4 VIC Kids is supported by valued Authorised Priority Partner, Medatech Australia, (www.medatech.com.au)

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