SUCCESS STORY:
TOWER HAMLETS EDUCATION BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

Webcurl created a tailored application based on Microsoft Dynamics for London charity Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership which has helped to improve the administration and reporting of its many programmes in the borough.

Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership is an education charity that bridges the gap between students and the world of work in one of London's most complex boroughs.

Tower Hamlets is home to many global financial businesses, employing some of the highest paid workers in London, but also some of the most impoverished communities and has the second highest unemployment rate in London.

Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership (THEBP) therefore plays a vital role, working with employers to help students build confidence and skills, with the goal of ending poverty through education and partnerships with local businesses.

To this end, THEBP runs a number of volunteer partnership programmes in conjunction with local businesses, delivers training and coaching services, and acts as a broker of work experience placements.

EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT
Each year, the charity works with more than 10,000 volunteers, 800 companies and over 100 schools.

David Burgess, Senior Manager at THEBP, describes the situation: "There are a lot of moving parts in what we do, and we needed a modern system to help us keep track of the people, companies, projects and placements we work with."

THEBP had been storing its lists of students and volunteers in a MS Access database, but this was also being supplemented by

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David Burgess, Senior Manager at THEBP

individual spreadsheets that were held locally by programme coordinators. This posed a major problem when THEBP wanted to produce reports about volunteer activity for its partner companies, as Ana Svab, Senior Partnerships & Communications Manager (LCP), explains: "We simply didn't have all the information in one place. By the time we had responses from everyone involved, it could have taken us a week to produce the report. This didn't make us look good in the eyes of our partners."

MS DYNAMICS
It became clear to the team at THEBP that a new system was required for managing the administration of the various programmes.

Ana explains what happened next: "MS Dynamics was recommended to us, as it would enable us to store all the information in one place. When we saw it, we realised it was very intuitive for anyone who is familiar with using Windows. We also like MS Dynamics because it was easy to customise the views and it is possible to develop tailored reports very easily."

In 2014, THEBP started the process of getting a new system by engaging an IT company to deliver a tailored CRM application based on MS Dynamics.

This company struggled to deliver everything it promised and brought in Webcurl to undertake some of the development for it.

David says: "We were very impressed with Webcurl. The team were very responsive and were able to find solutions when we needed them to. They are very professional and on the case."

CHOOSING WEBCURL
As a result, in 2015 THEBP asked Webcurl to completely take over the development, deployment and support of the CRM

system. Following the first phase of delivery, THEBP has been delighted with the ease with which it is now possible to run reports for its partner companies.

Ana explains: "We have a lot of reporting to do for donors and companies as they need information about our activities involving their staff for their annual reports. Those annual reports will be audited, so it is really important that the information we give them is accurate. The new system is far more efficient than the old process we had to go through to gather the necessary information. Because it is all held in one place, we can be sure it is accurate and the information is available in just a few clicks instead of the days it took before. We are able to be more professional."

REAL TIME & COST SAVINGS
As well as time savings, the new system has delivered significant cost savings. THEBP used to send information about DBS checks and child protection policies out by post to each volunteer.

David says: "We would send 100 to 200

out each month, depending on the time of year – in total we sent around 2,000 letters out per year. Now the new system sends all this information out by email and automatically updates the CRM when the volunteer checks a box to say they have read the email. As well as savings on postage, we can be more confident the letters are being read."

If the volunteer doesn't check the tickbox to say they have received and read the information, the system can send an email reminder. The THEBP team simply creates a group of people who haven't checked the box and sends an email reminder to everyone in that group.

Chlöe Dalton, Preparation for Work
Manager at THEBP

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WORK EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT
Following on from these early successes, THEBP asked Webcurl to integrate the functionality of its work experience management application into the same MS Dynamics CRM system.

Up until 2015, THEBP had been using a leading work experience management system that was not integrated with the CRM system. In 2015, Webcurl began replicating the functionality of the existing system within the MS Dynamics solution.

Chlöe Dalton joined THEBP's Preparation for Work team in 2015 and describes her experience of the two systems: "When I joined, I was using the original system for a few months before we moved fully over to the new Webcurl system. As someone who had to learn both systems at the same time, I can say that the Webcurl one made a lot more sense and was a lot easier to use and learn."

In particular, the Webcurl system had the advantage that it combined all the functionality needed to manage the work placements in a single system.

Chlöe says: "In our old software, we had to login twice, once on our side and once on the client side. The Webcurl system is much better. I now login once to access all the information and the information the schools add via the web portal is automatically updated in the system for me. It's also easy to click and change between schools; it takes just a few seconds to do this or to allocate jobs. It's very quick."

FASTER PROCESSES
The biggest advantage for Chlöe, however, has been the capability to automatically send all the details out to schools about placements via email.

She explains: "We used to send out letters as confirmation, and this was very time-consuming. It could take a week for the letter to get there and sometimes it didn't get to the right person. We run to a tight schedule; once the placements are offered everything moves at a fast pace. Now the students can contact the companies immediately, rather than having to wait a week for the letter to arrive. That is one of my favourite things about the new system."

As well as helping students and speeding up back office processes, this has meant significant cost savings on postage. Chlöe's team works with around 3,000 students every year, and used to send out around 2,000 letters over the year – that's a lot of second-class franking eliminated!

"It saves us a week," says Chlöe, "it is much more efficient and better for the environment."
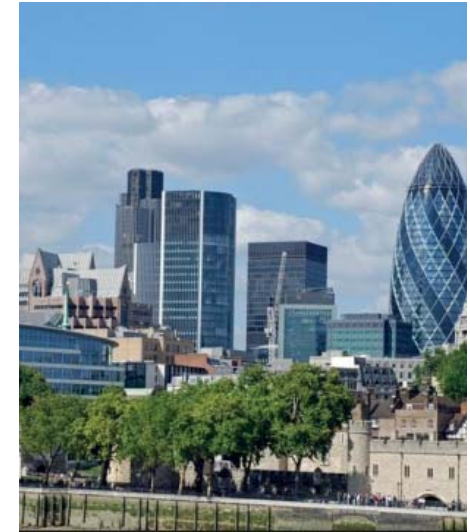
BETTER FOR SCHOOLS
Chlöe is also confident that the new system makes it easy for the schools to access the information they need: "They can print out visit forms for teachers and job descriptions of roles for the students and it is all in one place for them," says Chlöe.

IMPROVED REPORTING
Webcurl has delivered some bespoke report templates and functionality for THEBP. In particular, this has already paid dividends for the industry volunteer programme team, as Ana explains: "For many of our funders it is important for us to show the impact of the work we've been doing.

"Funding my role has depended on our ability to demonstrate this, and the Webcurl solution has made our reporting so much more efficient. I consider that it has directly enabled my contract to be renewed three times – without it, I don't think we would have been able to secure that funding.

"If you need to track impact and be methodical in your reporting I would definitely recommend the Webcurl solution."

David is equally full of praise for the Webcurl team: "We have found them very responsive and helpful – they know their stuff and they provide us with solutions as and when required. I would definitely recommend them."

Chlöe is in full agreement: "I would definitely recommend Webcurl and the system – in fact, I already have! Another EBP from a neighbouring London borough will be coming to take a look at it in the new year."