



## Is your NFP considering IT investment?

Few organisations can afford to ignore the digital age, surrounded by buzzwords like “process automation” and “digital transformation” and under pressure to deliver more with less. Consumers expect to access the services they need online from their phones or computers, anywhere and at any time.

Information Technology (IT) solutions promise to deliver substantial benefit for not-for-profits, whether enabling them to extend the reach of their services or by eliminating repetitive manual tasks. With a well-designed IT solution, your team should spend less time on administration and more time providing face-to-face assistance to clients, putting their valuable skills to good use and achieving greater job satisfaction.

However, the complexity of selecting and implementing an IT solution presents significant challenges to organisations without specialist IT resources. Media articles regularly report spectacular failures in government agencies and private sectors alike, and it follows that not-for-profits may be equally or perhaps even more susceptible to similar sub-optimal outcomes, given their lean funding and operating models.

A review of public sector ICT investment<sup>1</sup> by the Victorian Auditor General’s Office in 2015 highlights that, of the 1249 projects analysed, 35% went over budget well in advance of completion, almost half took longer than originally scheduled and only slightly over 10% realised their expected benefits.

The main reasons for this shocking report card are a lack of governance by the sponsoring organisation, ineffective procurement processes and insufficient solution planning and design. Executives across all industry sectors express frustration that IT projects often deliver only a fraction of their original vision, even after lengthy delays, contractual disputes and significant overspend.

Engaging a Map consulting group consultant with extensive experience in specifying and managing IT initiatives can greatly increase the likelihood of your project’s success by acting as the intermediary between your organisation and the relevant vendors and service providers. This upfront activity may include defining a clear set of requirements with your management and staff from which tender documents can be drawn up, assisting with the evaluation of tender responses and drawing up water-tight contracts.

During this period, the IT consultant will probe behind the respondents’ slick marketing presentations and match proposed functionality with your requirements, making sure the proposed technology architecture will integrate easily with existing IT applications and infrastructure and discovering how the solution will be supported and maintained once in active use.

While the project is underway, the IT consultant remains available to assist with oversight, ensuring the contracted party delivers according to plan and to agreed quality standards. They can also monitor critical outputs such as building adequate cyber-security and data privacy measures into the solution and providing early versions for your team to test and give feedback.

Prior to delivery, the Map consulting group consultant further assists with communication, training and change management plans to facilitate a smooth “go live” transition, helps to resolve issues during the contractor’s warranty period and also periodically checks that the solution is living up to expectations.

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<sup>1</sup> VAGO ICT Project Review Findings, April 2015 - <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/digital-dashboard-status-review-ict-projects-and-initiatives?section=32410--audit-summary>