Egmont Foundation

EGMONT

From applications to audits: How The Egmont Foundation saved time in every aspect of their grantmaking process.

At a Glance

Turning the corner on their 100th year of operation, the Egmont Foundation had been running an exhaustive and time-consuming grantmaking process living on physical files in a cabinet. While some applicant and grant data was housed in a central spreadsheet, information went missing or incorrectly entered. SmartSimple developed a system powered by SmartSimple Cloud that centralized all data in one location, automated key processes, handled payments, and gave administrative staff more control of quality data.

"We didn't want to be constrained by how the system worked, and we didn't find that with SmartSimple Cloud."

Jakob Roepstorff
Program Manager

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Egmont Foundation is a SmartSimple Cloud user

Request a demo and learn more about SmartSimple Cloud for Corporate Social Responsibility at www.smartsimple.com

SmartSimple client since: 2018

Type of giving: Grants to help provide equitable access and opportunities to education in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #4

Dollars awarded: €13 million annually

Old system: Physical papers and spreadsheets

SmartSimple product/services:

• SmartSimple Cloud for Corporate Social Responsibility

Key pain points:

An inefficient and error prone manual grantmaking process through Excel spreadsheets and physical paperwork.

New system must-haves

A system that centralizes all data in one central place, has robust reporting capabilities, and handles payment processes

About The Egmont Foundation

The Egmont Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the leading Denmark-based global media corporation, Egmont Group. The Egmont Group works in the digital and print media sector in countries including Denmark, US, China, Sweden, and Australia. Established in 1920, the corporate foundation works to alleviate the consequences for children and families living in poverty. Today, their mission is to protect young people against "modern poverty" – the lack of learning and life skills. Since their inception, they've spend €13 million (US $14.5 million) on philanthropic activities per year and have donated a total of €410 million (US $450 million) to date. They actively work toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #4 – Quality Education.

1000s of applications. 1000s of headaches.

The Egmont Foundation works with an annual budget of €13 million (US $14.5 million). Being such an established foundation, they receive a lot of applications. However, this doesn't mean that every application is in alignment with their philanthropic mission. To make matters more difficult, it was a daunting task to review each physical application that came in. "Our application process wasn't effective and was a waste of time weeding through applications that didn't have relevance to our work," says Jakob Roepstorff, Egmont Foundation's Program Manager. So the team moved to an invitation-only process where they find projects they want to fund. In fact, half of their initiatives were a result of outreach alone. After they find programs they're interested in, they ask them for a two-page inquiry.

In their mission to address SDG #4 – Quality Education, the corporate foundation needed to devote more time to applications that focused on driving outcomes around this primary cause. By making their grantmaking more efficient, this outreach-based intake method narrowed down the review process from 1000 applications to 100. However, even when an application is approved, their grantmaking process was still a lengthy one. "Each application is handed back

and forth at least four to five times with the applicant," says Roepstorff. The Egmont Foundation wanted a system to cut down administrative time on paperwork and correspondence and create more time for meaningful conversations with applicants.

Data getting lost in the shuffle

"Our data was all over the place. We were working with old-school, physical files in the cabinet," says Roepstorff. The Egmont Foundation's grantmaking process was hinged on "one gigantic spreadsheet" for storing all its data. While it was only meant to be this way for six months, it stuck for ten years. As the spreadsheet got bigger and bigger, so did the administrative strain. "With four to five people working on this spreadsheet, lots of data went missing and was entered incorrectly," continues Roepstorff. Information kept getting lost and working with physical mail as the form of correspondence with people wasn't helping the issue. "Staff would print out forms, set them down, and lose them," says Roepstorff. "We needed a new grantmaking system for a long time."

An automated system without constraints

When working with SmartSimple, Egmont Foundation was delivered a fully tailored system powered by SmartSimple Cloud that centralized all of their giving data in one place. This flexible system was configured to not only automate some of their key processes, including receiving and managing inquiries, processing payments, and reporting finances, it also had the robust capability to report specifically to their SDG efforts. Most importantly, it was a system that carefully fit their needs. "We didn't want to be constrained by how the system worked, and we didn't find that with SmartSimple" says Roepstorff.

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Jakob Roepstorff
Program Manager

While many foundations have grants management systems where anyone can log into, the Egmont Foundation created a different approach with theirs. "We had a discussion and proposed the idea that applicants and grantees wouldn't need to have access to the system, which would cut out unessential communication from within the system," says Roepstorff. This access control helped with only including important and relevant mail for the process, ultimately leading to much more control over their giving data.

More efficient application submission models

"We've saved a lot of time internally with looking at applications," says Roepstorff. With their system powered by SmartSimple Cloud, the Egmont Foundation has a more proactive approach to looking at applications with more efficient application submission models. Internally, their processes are also running more efficiently. "Our staff have customized dashboards with relevant grantmaking activities. Also, the Foundation's payments are done by a third-party and it makes the auditing process much easier because all of the financial numbers are accurate and reported," says Roepstorff.

Building for a brighter future with SDG's

After only a year, the Egmont Foundation has ideas on how to build on their system. "We're building on the reporting aspect with OData (Open Data Protocol) for real-time data in our system," says Roepstorff. By having clear models of data reporting, they can more effectively report against their SDG goals, their impact and create larger strategies to address global issues. "It's been fun in getting to know the system and discovering how we can develop it even further. The amount of possibilities are huge. It's all about figuring out what you want to do," says Roepstorff. ●