IT PSYCHIATRIST
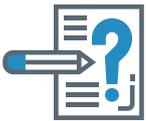
The IT Psychiatrist works with Research Review to deliver a smart and sustainable digital environment

The challenges of a large subscriber database

Research Review, an online medical publishing business, emails free and regular summaries of the latest medical research and literature reviews to hundreds of health professionals. Bringing together leading studies in over 50 therapeutic areas – from cardiology to diabetes, oncology to psychiatry – they help busy medical practitioners stay informed. Plus, the included commentary from New Zealand experts helps health professionals quickly grasp breakthroughs and changes, with a focus on how this may impact their practice.

Delivering across New Zealand and Australia, Research Review was storing their large database of subscribers in the back-end of their website. Although accessing the basics was easy enough, they were highly dependent on their website provider for database queries. This was an unsustainable model and caused unnecessary to-ing and fro-ing and delays.

The cost of redeveloping the website plus database seemed excessive for the additional benefits that would be delivered. They needed a solution that was smart and efficient.

What's more, they didn't have in-house IT support. They needed someone who could steer them in the right direction with their IT structure and strategy.

Thanks to a chance meeting at Toastmasters in 2018, I met Research Review's director Felicity Hopkins and we had a chat about how the IT Psychiatrist could help.

Creating an IT vision and structure

First, to gain an accurate overview of the business and ascertain what was important, I spoke to people at different levels of the business. Felicity says:

> *"One of Ant's strengths is relating to owners in a visionary sense and talking to people who are on the ground… [Ant has a] wide understanding of different systems, processes and applications."*

And her fellow Director James noticed that:

> *"Ant was really quick to understand the business model and our processes and IT structures".*

Research Review don't have the capacity to hire a full-time senior IT professional. They initially hired me on a monthly basis, but now they ask for my support whenever they need an outsourced IT consultant. Felicity values how I can give:

> *"expertise at a strategic level [yet explain] things in plain language".*

Future-proofing the business

Next, we developed a roadmap. We agreed the most pressing thing was getting the database right – as it's a vital, long-term asset.

I recommended decoupling the website and database yet ensuring they could still seamlessly sync with each other.

New and robust policies and processes

I also reviewed, developed and helped implement their security, storage and IT policies and processes. They previously didn't have the resources to get this critical but often overlooked work done.

Confidence in what's next

Felicity says they now have much more clarity and awareness:

> *"of where we're going and what the possibilities are… working with Ant has changed the way we make decisions about IT structures and support systems".*

Proud to play a part

When health professionals have the latest information at their fingertips on new drugs, the changing nature of diseases, and more, it helps them provide optimal care to their patients. Research Review's enhanced digital infrastructure will help take care of their day-to-day success and sustain their critical work for years to come.

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