Digital Food For Thought:

What's Your Board's Appetite For Social Media?

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ENGAGING Young Leaders ON Aged Care & Community Boards

SOUTHCARE

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Introduction

Digital Food For Thought: What's Your Board's Appetite For Social Media?

The important role of social media in business as a strategic and communications tool is undoubted in today's context. Whether it's engaging stakeholders, publicising the work of your service or attracting funding and donations; the opportunities afforded to you by social media are significant.

While these benefits may seem self evident from a CEO or organisational perspective, there is also a considerable movement towards the use of social media by Board Directors, in their role as ambassadors for their organisations.

About This Resource:

This resource aspires to create a conversation around the ways Board Directors utilise and harness social media both as individual Directors, and as a Board collectively. This conversation is principally based around an Opportunities and Risks scale, and looks at different approaches and profiles of use, to assist discussion on the elements and user style that may suit the Board, the individual Board Director and the NFP organisation itself.

To drive this message we have constructed four 'profiles' or different forms of social media appetite, each with their own benefits and challenges (or 'opportunities' and 'risks') that we have highlighted to foster discussion. We have Risk Averse Ron, Spontaneous Sue, Conservative Connor and Ambassadorial Amber. These characters represent different approaches, none is the right or wrong approach, and characteristics of each are not mutually exclusive; you may decide that the best approach for you as a Director of your board is a Conservative Connor model, with elements of Ron and a touch of Ambassadorial Amber for the more enthusiastic social media users. Throughout are some discussion points to help you determine where you and your Board may lie currently, and where you may wish to reposition yourself to.

At the end of this resource, are some quick easy to digest 'bites' or tips to easily and effectively enhance your use of social media as a means to harness the benefits that this use can generate for your organisation. Throughout this eBook we provide advice on the possible opportunities that lie in the use of Social Media by Board Directors, and respond with mitigating suggestions to risk concerns that might arise.

Bon Appétit!

Opportunity & Risk

Opportunity

An NFP can leverage the personal brand of its board directors. They can have a big influence on a NFP via social media, which can be used to spread the word about the organisation, advocate, sell tickets to events and generate donations. Social media posts can promote an organisation's mission and vision and, with the right tone, can show how passionate a director is about the cause.

It is also a way for board members to share their expertise and show they are listening to clients, customers, staff and management as well as being across world trends and competition. Board directors need to be aware of differences between the social media platforms ie Linkedin is a more professional audience compared to Facebook that is more relaxed. Board directors should tailor their posts to their followers.

Risk

There is a big difference between using your personal brand to promote a NFP and using a NFP to promote your brand. Board directors need to consider how their personal social media habits impact on the organisation because what a director does on their own social media, whether it's public or private, reflects on the organisation. Everything from what you post, how you present yourself and who you like and follow could impact the reputation of your organisation.

For example, if you come across as the crazy cat lady on your personal social media, people will form a professional opinion of you based on that. Alternatively, it is often obvious when a board director is using an NFP to boost their own brand. They will boast about their involvement with the NFP to boost their own brand rather than the NFP's. There are also risks around defamation (you can defame someone via a social media post) and brand reputation as board directors need to have the organisation's mission and vision in mind when posting. Social media posts can also highlight conflicts of interest. The general rule: if in doubt, abstain.

Opportunity & Risk Conversation Starter

Make no mistake there is a relationship between opportunity and risk when using social media as a board director.

1. What positive outcomes have you already experienced through social media?
2. What are future opportunities available to you through the use of social media?
3. Where do you see the risks in your situation?
4. What do you need to consider to mitigate your risks?
5. What is your risk appetite? In turn, rate the level of opportunity you get from social media? Rate yourself on the scale.

Introducing our four character profiles of Board Directors, representing different appetites for social media use. Each approach has its own opportunities and risks.

Ambassadorial Amber

The Opportunity Seeker

Appetite: Voracious / Ravenous

How can a board director safely use their own personal brand to support a NFP?

Amber, a physiotherapist with a successful fashion blog, has a high social profile. As well as an extensive network of friends and other young professionals, she has a large public following across various platforms: Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blogger and LinkedIn. Amber has recently started as a board director with a small not-for-profit (NFP) that works with vulnerable women.

Amber's Story

Amber had felt increasingly nervous while she got ready for her first event in her capacity as a board director. She had dressed as per her usual personal brand: wearing pre-loved pieces sourced from vintage stores. Now, here at her first public event representing the board and mingling with some of the young women that the NFP supported, Amber suddenly felt very... privileged. Meeting these young women reminded Amber of how fortunate she was.

Later, the moment came back into Amber's mind. I wonder if these women know about my online profile? Would they think I'm a just a snobby instagram personality? Amber opened up her profile and flicked through. It was time to revisit her social media profile with her role as a board director in the forefront of her mind.

Amber's approach to her board directorship and social media

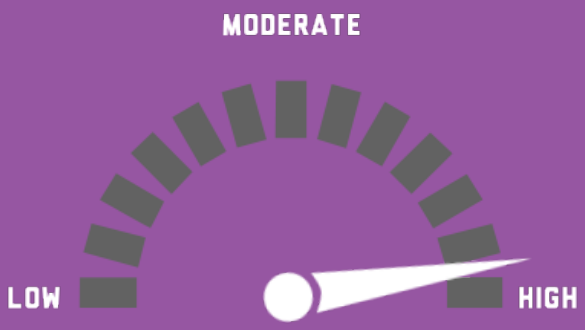
That week, Amber put aside a few hours to read over the NFP's confidentiality and media policies and work on her online profiles. She had gained approval from the CEO and the NFP's marketing manager to announce her involvement with the board to her thousands of followers. They also discussed the importance of contributing positively to the NFP's reputation and mindfully balancing this with Amber's own public image.

Amber updated her blog and Instagram, excited by the opportunity to promote the NFP to her followers. Next, she moved onto her LinkedIn profile and added her new board position, along with a description of the organisation's mission and vision. She carefully crafted a post about the new cause she was working with. For a personal touch, Amber added to the post one of her own photos from the recent event, which she had permission to post publicly.

Reflections

Opportunities:

Amber's creative and enterprising approach to social media engagement, combined with her existing 'brand,' raised the public profile of the NFP. The cross-promotion generated a significant increase in volunteers and donations. Amber also had a creative idea for an Instagram series featuring young women dressed in affordable vintage clothing for job interviews.
The NFP's Communications team was nominated for an industry award for this series, which brought further positive attention to the organisation.



Risks:

Amber will need to ensure that she is not leveraging her position on the board to build her own personal brand. It is key that she utilises her own brand to support the NFP as an ambassador, not the other way around. Amber will need to ensure that her passion for social media does not lead her to stray into operational meddling. Amber will need to remember:
Nose (and heart) in, fingers out.

Risk Averse Ron

The Trusted Advisor

Appetite: Hungry for something light

Can a board director maintain currency without social media?

Ron is a retired teacher, a mad-keen fisherman and he is on his third term as a board director of a large NFP that provides aged care services. Although he gets a good chuckle whenever his wife tags him in one of those "memes" on Facebook, Ron has (until now) been reluctant to foray into the world of social media. He prefers to leave that to the next generation, including the up-and-coming board directors that he mentors.

Ron's story

In between Winnebago trips up and down the east coast, Ron fits in a one-day conference on digital innovation in the aged care sector. The personal highlight for Ron is hearing a young bloke in his early 30s talk about the business model of an international entrepreneur, Musk someone? Ron can't recall, but there was a slide with a great spaceship animation, and Ron walked away with a tremendous realisation; social media is incredibly important to how your organisation is perceived!

Ron sets about with some urgency to identify what his organisation is doing with social media. Sure, Ron still doesn't feel like he's got the hang of this 'tagging' and 'twittering' that everyone's talking about, but he and his fellow board members need to know what controls the organisation has in place to protect their image.

Ron's approach to his board directorship and social media

Ron arranges to take his tech-savvy daughter, Julia, out to dinner to pick her brains. Ron knows he can count on her for sensible advice.

After dinner and a subsequent discussion with the board, the CEO confirms a one-off session with the organisation's marketing and communications manager for the non-executive directors. Tracy, the manager, describes the organisation's media and confidentiality guidelines, the purposes of social media use, and how they apply the NFP's standard risk management framework to social media. As requested by Ron, Tracy also provides the board members with an overview of how to use LinkedIn to follow industry news, events and aged care related research. Almost immediately, Ron and several of his board colleagues create LinkedIn profiles. They start following the organisation's profile and liking and commenting regularly. Of course, Ron ensures that his Facebook settings are set to private.

Reflections

Opportunities:

Ron is reassured that the organisation has appropriate social media governance in place. He is now able to relax while fishing on the banks of the Noosa River, at the same time as sharing posts that promote the organisation's ethos of 'Independence with compassion'. Ron has also discovered that LinkedIn is a great way to keep his knowledge current for conversations with his mentees - and even better, help him think of good industry questions to ask the CEO next time he's back in town!

Risks:

When Ron speaks people listen. His trusted reputation and wide network position him favourably to make a positive impact through social media. However, Ron is paralysed by the fear of not understanding how to use social media, leading him to believe it is way too risky to his reputation. However, Ron doesn't realise he is at risk of being perceived as a 'dinosaur' if he continues in his ways. Especially as more social-media savvy Baby Boomers access aged care and want to interact with the agency via social media. Ron needs to educate himself and develop a social media strategy that will provide a platform to make the most of the opportunities available.

Spontaneous Sue

The Pacesetter

Appetite: Has a taste for everything

Does your board understand the purpose and governance of social media?

Sue sits on the management committee of a struggling, not-for-profit recreation centre in a regional town. With more and more families relocating to the city, and the few kids left preferring video games and SnapChat over fresh air, memberships at the rec centre are dwindling.

Sue's story

Sue held back tears and took another large mouthful of Classic White. Why did she bother, really! As if working full-time and being a single mum wasn't enough, tonight, as the designated rec centre Facebook page custodian, Sue had managed to inadvertently offend one of the other school mums. How was she to know that the woman would misinterpret an innocent post about the importance of preventing obesity? Sue had, of course, meant no offence. She had apologised immediately for the misunderstanding and updated her original post after speaking with colleagues. Sue sighed, put down the empty glass of wine, and resolved to make a fresh start of the situation tomorrow.

Sue's approach to her board directorship and social media

The following day, Sue made some phone calls to her fellow board committee members, apologised again, and outlined her plan to prevent similar issues occurring in the future. Sue obtained out-of-session approval to arrange a Skype conference with a social media consultant in the city. Sue finds the meeting extremely inspiring and immediately makes positive changes to the rec centre's relationship with social media.

- Sue facilitates a session with her management committee to 'deep-dive' into the brand of the centre. As a team, they articulate the brand clearly so that future social media use aligns with the agreed values and goals, and uses appropriate language consistently.
- Sue pitches to the group how social media can be used to retain and attract customers e.g. posting class timetables weekly, and running regular online raffles for a free membership.
- To make life easier for herself, Sue decides to discontinue the rec centre's longstanding email newsletter. Instead, she makes more frequent posts on Facebook and Instagram, using good news stories from the rec centre and other positive content.
- Sue approaches another member who is willing to act as a social media buddy and support Sue in this role. Together they write up social media guidelines for all rec centre staff.

Reflections

Opportunities:

Sue's actions mean that the rec centre now has a clear purpose for using social media, messaging will be clear and consistent, and there are strategies to manage any issues that might arise. Sue has a social media buddy to bounce ideas off - and to gently remind her to save the vino for after the Facebook posting! Sue's social media engagement program, combined with some traditional print media and an innovative program involving the local physio, result in club patronage climbing to a five-year high.

Risks:

Now that she has defined the rec centre's brand, Sue will need to remember the importance of staying on brand. It is important that all social media messages link back to the goals and purpose of the organisation. As someone who likes to constantly try new things, Sue will need to carefully assess the benefit of adding any other social media platforms to her strategy. Her time is valuable and there must be return on any further investment.

Conservative Connor

The Sage

Appetite: Everything in Moderation

The public is speaking on social media: is your board listening?

In addition to working as an occupational health and safety manager, Connor volunteers as a board director for a medium-sized, not-for-profit disability services agency. With the recent funding changes, Connor and the other board members are acutely aware of growing competition within the sector. The funding changes are also increasing frustration among consumers and carers, who are struggling to navigate the new system.

Connor's story

Pressing 'post' with one hand, and sipping his health shake with the other, Connor leaned back. He prided himself on his clear and professional online presence among his 500+ LinkedIn connections. He routinely shares the posts from the NFP's communications team he regularly likes and comments on the 'safe' messages relating to the sector and he is always careful to keep his personality from coming through too much online.

Today though, biting off some more celery, Connor noticed some niggling thoughts at the back of his mind. Are there other ways I can use social media to obtain broader market information? How can I find out what consumers are saying about us - and about the competition? Connor wondered if he needed to step a little outside his social media comfort zone. He rolled up his shirt sleeves and started Googling: "What do board directors need to know about social media?" Research, in Connor's opinion, was always the best first step.

Connor's approach to his board directorship and social media

After discussion with his fellow board members, Connor approached the CEO about developing a social media precis to go in the board packs. Connor hadn't always seen eye-to-eye with the CEO, Janine, especially since that time she heated fish in the lunch room microwave. But Janine had accepted his request very cordially and the Communications team did a great job expanding on their usual written update. In a single additional page, the board received relevant statistics from the organisation's official social media accounts; themes from consumer feedback received online (alongside any formal complaints and focus group feedback) and – most importantly – a summary of themes in competitors' and industry social media pages.

As part of his research, Connor also learns that audiences prefer authentic voices over the carefully-curated LinkedIn posts that Connor has traditionally shared. So Connor arranges for the board to be provided with 'good news' stories at the end of each meeting. This makes it very easy for Connor to craft messages that reflect his own voice and highlight his personal connection with the agency's vision. Additionally, Connor makes an effort to start posing thought-provoking questions and (polite) challenges on his LinkedIn profile.

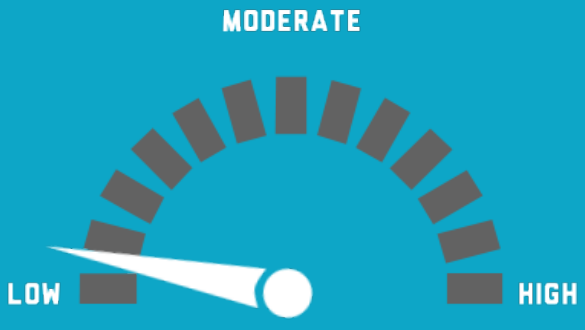
Reflections

Opportunities:

By going out on a limb on his LinkedIn profile and actively seeking dissent, Connor was able to collate diverse perspectives on the funding model changes. These new angles were able to inform Connor's thinking and ultimately positively influence the board decision-making process and advocacy. The social media 'scanning' of other disability services helped identify a largely unmet, niche market that Connor's NFP board saw the organisation well-equipped to move into.

Risks:

With his more proactive approach to posts, Connor needs to ensure that he facilitates balanced, open-minded and constructive discussion with his connections. He doesn't want to alienate people who may hold a different opinion and he wants to keep his contacts engaged with the great things happening at his NFP. Connor also needs to continue using a distinctive 'Connor' tone in his posts so that followers can connect and feel comfortable with his online presence



Have the conversation: use the following discussion points to reflect on our characters and their opportunities & risks to determine how you may utilise social media going forward.

Discussion Points

A Deeper Analysis

1. What are your assumptions?

- An assumption is a thing that is accepted as true or as certain to happen, without proof. Assumptions inform behaviours and mindsets. To learn and grow it is important to challenge assumptions. Have a think about the following;
    1. What are my attitudes and beliefs about social media?
    2. How much do I really understand about social media?
    3. Identify 3 assumptions about social media you hold?

2. What's the difference between personal and professional use of social media? Do you understand the key differences?

- Whether used personally or professionally a board director's use of social media should ALWAYS align with the organisation's aim and should ALWAYS support the mission.
- Do you know your organisation's social media strategy?

3. What's your purpose on social media?

- The aim of using social media can vary greatly. Some people will use social media for multiple purposes. However, it is important to identify your purpose.
- What are the specific reasons for using social media as part of this, and not other types of media?
- How much are you, as a board member and an organisation, willing to invest in social media?
- What is your expected return on investment? Social media is not free - it requires time.
- Here are some examples:
    1. Building your brand for your professional career endeavours
    2. Building organisation reputation
    3. Advocacy
    4. Fundraising and attracting donors
    5. Conversation - calling for opinions and perspectives from the community and your current and prospective clients
    6. Networking - would you like to reach different and wider audiences
    7. Knowledge gathering
    8. Be yourself, share your personal opinions

4. How much do you know about the different social media platforms?

- The number of social media users worldwide in 2018 is 3.196 billion, up 13 percent year-on-year. There are many platforms including LinkedIn, Blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Ask yourself;
    1. Do you know the difference between the various platforms?
    2. How do you intend to use each platform?
    3. Do you have a strategy or usage across platforms?
    4. Would you like to keep your professional and personal life separate on social media. How will you do this?

Discussion Points

A Deeper Analysis (Continued)

5. Are you ready and comfortable to use social media?

- It is paramount to have the knowledge, resources and strategy to execute your board's social media mission. Consider the following;
    1. Do you have you had social media education/training on how to positively and effectively engage on social media?
    2. Do you have a social media mentor or coach? Do you need one?
    3. Does your organisation have a social media policy? Are you aware of it?
    4. Do you know the risks and responsibilities involved?
    5. Speaking as "one voice" on social media with your fellow board directors - how will you do this?

6. How do you want to be perceived?

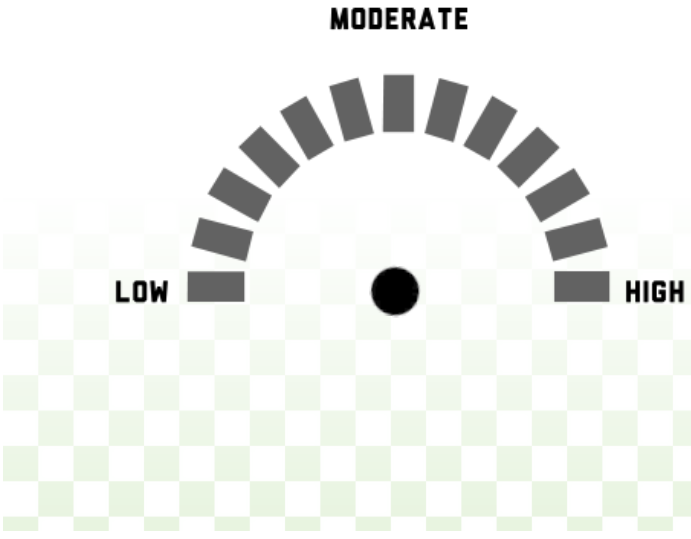
- We are all different in many ways. Life experiences, culture, religion, education, custom, family tradition and genetics shape our personality. It is important to be self aware of this.
- How will these factors impact on your social media use and how others may perceive you and your organisation? Consider the following;
    1. Are you aware how your personality might affect your social media?
    2. What are your unconscious biases?
    3. What is your leadership philosophy?
    4. What's your risk appetite in general?
    5. Do you find it hard to 'put your neck out' and post your opinions?
    6. Are you highly emotive? Can you sometimes 'bite back'?
    7. What strategies do you have in place to separating emotions from factual content when posting?

7. Do you need to have presence on social media?

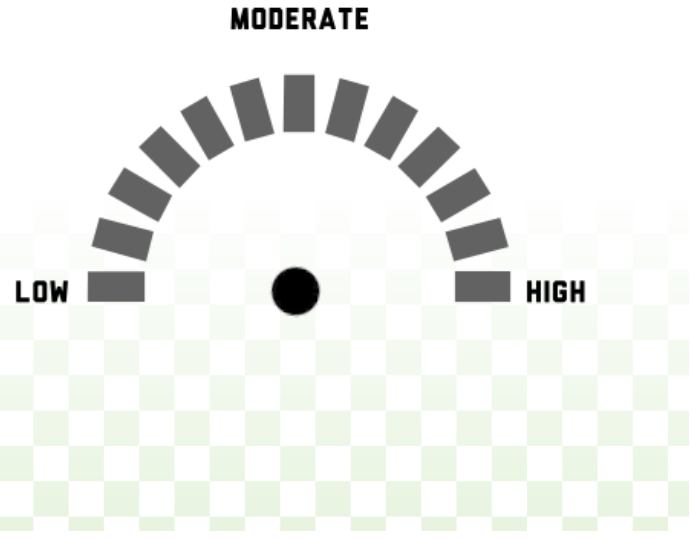
- Is social media a good fit with the organisation's core business and client demographic?
- Do you feel using social media fits your responsibilities on a board? If not, fine. If so, what are you going to do about it? What's your game plan?
- Write down 3 key takeaways you've got from this resource.

8. Now rate yourself again. This time rate where you want to be on the opportunity and risk scales?

Opportunity



Risk



On the following page, you'll find our "What's Your Appetite?" menu. This resource can be seen as some quick, easily digestible "bites" of ready to implement social media tips.

What's Your Appetite?

BREAD Carbs, like Social Media, aren't for everyone so choose your course. You're welcome to indulge in four courses or stick to one or two.	Complimentary
BUT AN **ENTREE** IS ESSENTIAL Who is your target audience? What platform are they using? What action do you want them to take?	Small cost now but get it wrong and you could pay later
MAIN COURSE Like and share posts by the organisation or CEO Always use an image Keep video posts short and sharp Highest engagement is at about 7am and between 5pm and 9pm	A post done right could lead to $$ or expanding the organisation's support network
DESSERT IS THE FUN PART Use a relaxed and fun tone Add emojis Post when you're at events related to the organisation	Free if you tag us on Instagram
NIGHT CAP... BUT JUST ONE Loosen up, have a bit of fun with it. But remember there are some rules - first enjoy your Limoncello	Our prices are reasonable but the cost of defamation can be hefty!

Further Resources

If your appetite still hasn't been satiated and you're hungry for even more, devour the following further resources...

Terms and Definitions

https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-glossary-definitions/

https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-media-terms

NFP Specific Resources

Overview of risks and benefits from a legal perspective - https://nfplaw.org.au/socialmedia

Templates for social media policy - https://www.communitydirectors.com.au/icda/policybank/

Business Resources

EY Report, 'Ensuring Social Media is on the Board's Agenda' -
https://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-Insights-19-Ensuring-social-media-is-on-the-boards-agenda.pdf

Blogs, Articles and Experts

"What your non-profit board must know about social media"
http://www.upturnstrategies.com/index.php/2017/07/23/nonprofit-board-social-media/

Mel Kettle 'Practical ways your Board can use social media to engage with your members" -
https://www.melkettle.com/2018/02/practical-ways-board-social-media-engage-members/

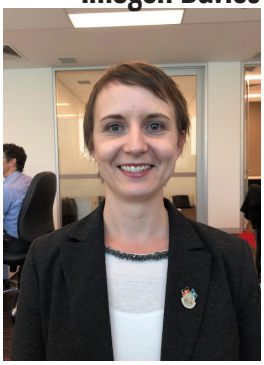
Grant Ainsley Inc. "Preventing Bad Board Behaviour"-
https://www.grantainsley.com/Board-of-Directors-and-Social-Media?

About the Authors

Denise Cahill

Denise Cahill has been an Editor at Community News for more than 10 years currently looking after the Western Suburbs Weekly, Guardian Express and Stirling Times. About 10 years ago, Denise wrote a story about an inspiring Cottesloe resident, who was starting a charity in Nakuru, Kenya. The cause really resonated with her. Since then, Denise has developed a strong relationship with the project, visiting the slums to volunteer five times. Denise has been on the on the committees of her local sporting clubs for over 15 years. Since starting work on this resource, Denise has already taken steps to improve her LinkedIn profile.

Imogen Davies



Imogen worked as a speech pathologist and clinical manager for eight years prior to moving into project management to fulfil her passion for service improvement. Most recently, she has managed a number of large-scale service redesign projects for Perth's South and East Metropolitan Health Services. Imogen's volunteering experience includes participation in the WA executive branch of Speech Pathology Australia, and raising funds for the Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation. She is passionate about optimising use of available health resources, and is looking forward to being part of a NFP board dedicated to improving individuals' quality of life.

Zoe O'Neill

Zoe is a practising solicitor at a NFP law service in the areas of family and civil law and working primarily with marginalised clients. Previously Zoe practised in the the areas of housing, welfare rights and disability discrimination. Zoe sits on the Family Law and Domestic Violence Network Groups under Community Legal Centres of WA. Also involved in the arts sector, Zoe works as a solicitor and lecturer across various creative industries around arts law and IP in film, art and fashion. Since childhood, Zoe has been engaged in volunteer work and has a keen interest in access to justice and community service. Recent volunteering experience includes SAIL, Share the Dignity and the Vic Park Collective. Zoe is keen to utilise her own online presence to garner support for her chosen organisations.

Curtis Reddell

Curtis has 10 years of experience working in the health care sector in both for-profit and for-purpose organisations. Curtis has a clinical background, predominantly in neurological Occupational Therapy. Currently he works as a Rehabilitation Coordinator at a Brightwater Oats St, a residential community-based acquired brain injury rehabilitation facility for young adults. Curtis is passionate about social integration and belonging, as well as building and managing teams. Curtis volunteers as President of Scarborough Amateur Football Club. Curtis has also set up a program for people with an acquired brain injury to volunteer in a grass-roots junior cricket club canteen. This provides an opportunity for people with an acquired brain injury to integrate back into community and build skills for future volunteering and employment opportunities.