Veteran's Society

An Integrated Veteran's Charity Operating System

Team 57

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Executive Summary

Veterans Society is a web application that will serve as the operating system for veterans-focused charities. North Carolina based veterans charity, Boots to Health, is already deploying our application to their members and has been providing feedback to us over the past 8 months.

Our platform provides an integrated platform for charities to streamline operations and foster community engagement. The application's features include customer relationship management for members, chat, group coordination, fitness and health resources, donations portal and more. We have had several conversations with other veterans charities that could potentially also use the Veterans Society platform moving forward.

Problem & Value Proposition

Through discussions with multiple charities and extensive conversations with Boots to Health, we identified common pain points faced by veterans charities. A gating issue is often that charities struggle to establish a meaningful online presence due to limited technical expertise and resources. They struggle to even develop front ends to allow new members to learn about their services. If they get past these issues, small charities still face difficulties managing their data online, particularly customer data, which is extremely important for understanding and meeting the needs of their members. Fostering communication is also another challenge that they face which isn't necessarily technical but rather a broader issue that veterans charities face.

Veterans Society addresses the challenges faced by small, veteran-focused charities in managing their operations and engaging their communities. These organizations often lack the tools to keep members and donors excited about working with the charity effectively over time. Charities have expressed a desire for an integrated platform that simplifies these processes and allows them to focus on their mission rather than on their online presence. Veterans Society fulfills this need by offering a unified solution that empowers charities to operate more efficiently and cultivate lasting relationships within their communities.

Stakeholders

Veterans Charities

Veterans charities are the primary users of the Veterans Society platform. Organizations like Boots to Health rely on the platform to manage customer relationships, facilitate communication and streamline their operations. Their needs and feedback drove our feature development and enhancements, particularly the needs that are shown to us by Boots to Health.

Veterans and Members of Charities

These are the end users of the platform. The platform's effectiveness impacts the veterans' access to resources like fitness and health information, support groups and community interaction. The members of a charity also include individuals who support charity operations.

Donors

Charities often depend on donors for funding and our platform will enhance the transparency and donation operations of Veterans charities.

Development and Maintenance Teams

These are the folks that maintain and improve the charity's websites. To satisfy them, our codebase has to be maintainable and easy to use.

Market Research

We conducted extensive market research to understand the needs of veteran-focused charities and their members. We engaged with both Veterans charities as well as their end customers: veterans.

Some of the veterans charities we engaged with included Team RWB, K9s for Warriors and our main charity Boots to Health. Throughout semester one, we also tried to gain insights into their operational challenges. Team RWB, one of the largest veterans' charities in the U.S., utilizes a sophisticated and highly customized Customer Data Platform (CDP) to manage data and relationships. However, smaller organizations like Boots to Health and K9s for Warriors lack the resources to adopt such complex systems, making them more interested in a simpler, integrated operating system like we will provide. These smaller charities we spoke to emphasized the need for an affordable and user-friendly solutions that streamline data management and strengthen member engagement.

We also looked at smaller charities tech stacks to determine what they needed in order to manage their customers. Below are some of the tools that these small veterans focused charities use:
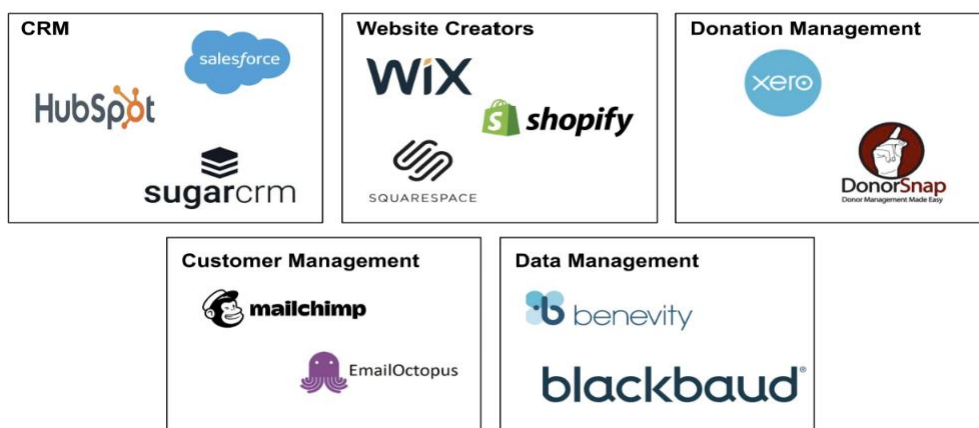

In addition to speaking with charities, we gathered feedback from veterans receiving care at the Veterans Affairs (VA) hospital near Penn campus. Veterans shared that in addition to working with the VA, they try to work with charities that are eager to help. They therefore

often struggle to stay in touch with charities and navigate the numerous resources available to them. These veterans expressed a strong need for online tools that simplify access to these resources and foster better connections with organizations. This feedback highlights a critical gap in the market: smaller charities need an accessible system to manage their operations, and veterans require an intuitive platform to connect with supportive services effectively.

Our product aims to bring together the products offered across the tech stack by veterans charities and enable them to create strong web experiences for their populations.

Customer Segmentation

The customers for Veterans Society are Veterans charities. While veterans themselves are a stakeholder they are not the customers that we would charge.

Customer Population Size

1	10	100	1000	10000	100000	1000000
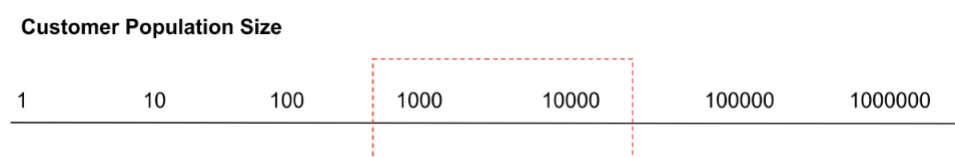
After our conversations with multiple veterans charities, we realized that the ideal charity that we work with would have between 500 and 50,000 veterans in their network. The charities that serve less than a population of 500 often don't need digital or data solutions and can just manage their interactions using spreadsheets and likely wouldn't be able to justify paying a monthly subscription for our platform given their lack of complexity within the organization.

On the other hand, charities that manage more than 50,000 veterans typically have already developed complex in-house, customized tech solutions. When we spoke to Team RWB, which has worked with over 100,000 veterans, they mentioned that they would not be interested in a platform like we are developing. Their tech stack is almost entirely customized or plugged into their customizations.

Our goal is to therefore serve this middle-market of charities and provide them both with a strong backend and frontend to work with veterans.

Market Sizing

There are more than 45,000 nonprofits registered with the IRS in the US that serve the over 18 million veterans.

These veterans organisations collected over $6B of revenue in 2023. If we were to capture 3% of their spend across software subscription fees and donation processing fees we would have a $180M/year revenue opportunity. If we rather take a bottoms-up approach, this would represent ~$4,000/year in subscription fees per veteran's organisation.

The number of veterans charities is not growing but the majority of the opportunity set remains greenfield with a lack of integrated service providers for veterans charities.

Competition

Our competition is very much distributed across three main groups, each addressing different parts of the challenges we aim to solve for small veteran-focused charities.

The first is vertical platforms for general entities, such as Salesforce and HubSpot. These solutions manage different parts of the operations of a Veterans charity. These tools require organizations to integrate multiple solutions (a CRM, an email automation tool, CDP,etc), making them costly and complex for smaller charities to implement and maintain.

The second is horizontal charity platforms like Benevity and BlackBaud, which provide ERP systems for charities. While effective at data management and donation collection, they lack intuitive front-end and population management features needed to engage veterans effectively, limiting their relevance to veteran-focused organizations.

Finally, there are vertical veterans charity platforms like Rally, which offer services directly to veterans, such as job boards or centralized resources. These primarily B2C offerings focus on individual needs rather than empowering charities to manage operations and relationships. Veterans Society bridges these gaps by combining robust data management, user engagement, and tailored features for veteran-focused charities.

Costs

AWS/Server costs, like most software businesses, would be a big cost center. We would need Veterans Society to be deployed on the cloud which would therefore create a large cost case.

The largest cost base for Veterans Society however would likely be deployment costs. Veterans charities for the most part lacks IT teams and therefore part of the burden will be on the Veterans Society team will be allowing charities to successfully deploy our platform. Deployment would likely require (i) implementations with customers and (ii) training for users on the platform which would be a labour-intensive exercise.

Overall, like most software businesses, Veterans Society should be a high gross margin business.

Revenue Model

For our first client, Boots to Health, we are providing them the platform entirely free of charge. For future clients, however, there are multiple revenue sources, all designed to generate income from organizations within the veteran charity ecosystem without placing any financial burden on veterans themselves.

- **SaaS License Fee** - A recurring subscription fee charged to charities for access to the platform, either as a perpetual license or on a per-seat, per-year basis. This would provide predictable recurring revenue. We would charge $0.99/month/veteran that is on the platform.
- **Percentage of Donations** - We collect a 1% charge on the donations processed through the platform.
- **Job Referral Fees** - A 10% of first year compensation collected from employers when veterans are successfully placed in jobs through referrals facilitated by the platform.