



Case Study: How AQ2 Embrace Transformed Donation Processing at Food Share of Ventura County

Organization: Food Share of Ventura County

Location: Oxnard, California

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Overview

In 2017, Food Share of Ventura County faced a growing administrative challenge: manually processing more than 14,000 annual donations, the majority arriving by check. The process was time-intensive, error-prone, and made it difficult to track the specific campaigns generating revenue. To support rapid growth without increasing staffing, Food Share implemented **AQ2 Embrace**, transforming their workflow into a streamlined, accurate, and highly scalable system.

Challenge

Before adopting AQ2, Food Share relied on an almost entirely manual donation-entry process. With 60% of donations arriving as checks, staff spent significant time handling, sorting, keying, and reconciling each gift.

Key pain points included:

- High staff hours spent manually entering donor data from checks and remit slips
- Increased risk of human error, particularly during seasonal spikes
- Limited ability to tie checks back to campaigns, reducing visibility into marketing ROI

- Inefficient workflows requiring multiple staff members for tasks that should be simple

Food Share needed a solution that could improve accuracy, reduce processing time, and deliver the detailed source-tracking necessary for strategic fundraising decisions. **AQ2 quickly emerged as the clear choice.**

Solution: Implementing AQ2 Embrace

The implementation process exceeded Food Share's expectations. AQ2's team provided thorough and ongoing support, ensuring a smooth transition from manual processing to an integrated scanning workflow.

Implementation highlights:

- Hands-on technical support throughout setup
- Comprehensive training before, during, and after launch
- Full transition to a digitized check-scanning workflow within weeks
- Fast onboarding that allowed staff to adopt the system with ease

What had once been a multi-step, multi-person process became efficient, intuitive, and centralized.

Ease of Use

Food Share's team quickly embraced AQ2's user-friendly interface.

Staff feedback highlights:

- The system is intuitive and easy to navigate
- Tasks that previously required several steps can now be completed in minutes
- Check scanning with attached remit slips simplifies both accuracy and reporting
- One staff member can now manage tasks that previously required multiple people

AQ2 rapidly became a trusted tool in Food Share's daily donation processing workflow.

Impact

Since implementing AQ2, the results have been transformative—both operationally and financially.

Operational Improvements

- Annual transactions grew from **14,000 to more than 28,000** without adding gift-entry staff
- Annual check volume increased from **~8,400 to ~13,160**, with no increase in processing time
- Manual keying errors decreased by **at least 80%**
- Donor acknowledgments are sent faster and with greater accuracy
- Campaign and source tracking are now **precise and reliable**, even across thousands of checks

Financial Impact

- AQ2 saves an estimated **15–20 staff hours per week**
- Using a conservative \$25/hour fully loaded labor rate, Food Share saves **\$19,500–\$26,000 annually**
- Improved tracking of source codes allows the team to **optimize marketing spend**, directing funds to the highest-ROI channels

Scalability and Growth

Perhaps the most significant impact: **Food Share doubled donation volume without increasing workload or staff.** AQ2 enabled the organization to scale its fundraising operations efficiently, allowing more resources to go directly toward feeding the community.

Conclusion

AQ2 Embrace has become an essential part of Food Share’s fundraising infrastructure. What began as a solution to reduce manual processing has evolved into a strategic asset—saving time, reducing errors, and enabling meaningful growth.

“Our donation volume doubled, but our processing workload did not. AQ2 allowed us to scale our fundraising without scaling our staff.”

— *Jennifer Caldwell, Chief Development Officer, Food Share of Ventura County*