



Beginners Guide to Charity Fundraising

Charity normally means voluntary and voluntary giving means hard work to raise the funds. If you run or fundraise for a charity then you already know this and hopefully this Beginners Guide will give you some fresh ideas about fundraising.

Voluntary giving is always hard, but what does the current economy mean for charity fundraising? One point that is important to understand is the difference between donors who stop giving to your charity and those who are totally fatigued and are not giving to anyone? What can you do about this and how can you reverse donor exhaustion? The key, as with any business organisation, is to strengthen your relationships with donors but in innovative ways! It is not enough to just tell them what you spent their money on with an annual report. Charities need to do more so that they won't get donors who are one-time givers.

No matter the size of your organisation, your charity needs to remember that they are competing with other equally deserving and worthy causes. Firstly, are you covering the basics and, secondly, what can you do to come up with innovative fundraising ideas and strengthen the charity/donor relationship?



To get you started, would any of these suggestions work for you?

- ⇒ Are you getting gift aid on most if not all of the money you raise from individuals? If not why not? You will need to keep records but it's pretty simple to organise and claim gift aid tax from the taxman.
- ⇒ Businesses like supporting charities, especially if they get advertising out of it. How can you get them to give you money in exchange for some sort of advertising?
- ⇒ Sponsored activities are great – it is an easy way for your volunteers to do something that helps raise money for you. What events can you find to suggest to your volunteers?
- ⇒ Sign up for a web based giving site as this makes it easy for your volunteers to advertise what they do and for their

friends to sponsor them and for you to get gift aid. 'Just giving', 'Virgin Money giving', 'Charity giving', 'bmygiving' are just a few of the online businesses that can help you.

- ⇒ Whilst you have to be careful not to hassle potential donors with too many requests for money, try sharing all of your news... lots of news, describe the projects and programmes and initiatives you are working on. Share this information on a more frequent basis. This can be done cheaply and efficiently with email, for example. Make it a genuine newsletter, rather than a huge plea for money now. Try to think relationship, rather than cash, as the objective.
- ⇒ Use social media, ie Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Have a corporate page for your charity and try to get all your supporters to 'follow you'. Give information about the various events you run and cross links to the online charity giving website.



- ⇒ Everyone appreciates being thanked, some appreciate it quietly, others like it being made public – so make sure that you have a system in place for saying thank you and giving receipts... but also a tick box so your donors can choose not to have publicity! Try thanking your donors, either with a simple card or letter that goes out to them individually or including a list of 'thank yous' in your regular newsletters or mailshots. But also go further, especially with larger givers. For major donors what else can you do to thank them? Perhaps a personal 'thank you' phone call from the Chief Executive?

⇒ Another way to both involve and thank donors whilst raising funds, is to host events and ask the donors along as guests. Events such as coming to the end of a project or starting a project or being able to hand a presentation cheque over... and don't forget to take photos for your newsletter, marketing stuff and for press releases!

⇒ Use the media more and make the public more aware of you. You may well have tried this before, but try again, harder and more consistently. Make sure that every week you submit something to the media. It could be a press release, a thank-you to a sponsor or donor or a case study with photographs.

⇒ Can you involve donors into the charity's activities? People like to help, but only if you make it convenient for them. So ask them to spend a couple of hours with you, helping out – not for a whole week! Or just ask them to come and join in with a project, or a training course. If they are corporate donors ask if you can come and give a presentation to them and their staff (and include donation slips as part of the information pack you hand out!)



- ⇒ Use your supporters to help generate publicity. However many workers you have in the office there are loads more individuals amongst your supporters! So start a campaign and ask your supporters to help by writing letters to the editor and/or submitting their own good news stories. You can even include suggestions for them to write in about, or even articles or template letters that they can easily copy out!
- ⇒ Every time you mail anything out to a donor include a return addressed envelope with a donation slip. Don't suggested a donation, this is a 'just in case' opportunity.
- ⇒ Look at your current appeals, if they are competitive or aggressive in nature then change them to be less strident and more chatty, more heart-warming than heart-wrenching. Some people are put off by the deeply passionate and in-your-face appeals and prefer the smiling photographs and interesting case-study type appeals.
- ⇒ Can you get donors to host fund-raising parties? Everyone has heard of Tupperware parties or similar – so how about charity parties. The host throws a party and asks everyone to donate something, maybe the cost of their meal.
- ⇒ The taxman still gives a tax break for charitable donations. Individuals who sign up for gift aid immediately make their donation more worthwhile to the charity. So make sure everyone in your organisation is aware of the need for donations to be done in this way. What's more, if the individual is a higher rate taxpayer, then they get a tax deduction as well! Market this point more aggressively if a 40% or 50% taxpayer gives

you a gift then they save lots of tax as well.

- ⇒ Getting someone to make a donation is great ... but getting someone to sign up for a regular monthly donation is better. So focus on asking for £5 or £10 per month rather than £60 or £120 in a lump sum.



Firstly, you are more likely to get a small amount, secondly you only have to sign them up once but the gift keeps on giving!

- ⇒ The ideal sort of fundraising is one that gives you a consistent and long term source of funds. There are several sorts of fundraising that do this... most of them work in conjunction with a business. So what businesses can you partner with that will pay you every time one of your supporters buys from them?

... Finally, it may be more of a challenge to get money out of people this year than it has been previously, but as long as you are prepared and make a greater creative effort in what you say and how you say it then you and your cause should prosper!

If you want more help then please contact us.

CAVEAT

This Beginners Guide is no substitute for proper specific professional advice and no liability can be accepted for any acts or omissions taken as a result of reading it.

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