

# Campaigns that strengthen relationships with donors

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## Project 11a. Mass media

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### Project Introduction

The Commission on the Donor Experience set out to consider how mass media fundraising can engage donors to give them a great experience. The focus of the commission is to ensure fundraising flourishes long term and is focused on long term results. We are also considering how we can work better as a sector to deliver best practice guidance to the charity sector can adopt the principles laid out to deliver effective donor recruitment and a satisfied donor.

To do this we have drawn on a range experiences of practicing and putting in place best practice mass media fundraising campaigns from industry professionals. We have also spoken to donors and reflected their views where appropriate.

We need to consider that mass market media does not lend itself to a one size fits all best practice guide. The brand position, budget, fundraising product and area of work will greatly determine the approach you take.

### Summary guidance

The summary breaks down the area of mass market fundraising down into six elements which are listed below with some key bullet points. There then follows more detail in the report. These steps should be followed with the four below principles in mind to guide the overall project.

- Honesty of presentation of the problem
- Honesty of the ask
- Respect for the beneficiaries
- Fulfil a supporter promise

## Six steps for delivering mass market appeals with a good supporter experience

### *1. Insight*

- Researching both internally and externally into your charity and the work you do.
- Audience research, what are the groups you are trying to reach motivated by.
- Is your cause right for mass market or would below the line for other fundraising methods work better?

### *2. Proposition, products and promise*

- Establish and test a fundraising proposition
- Create a donor promise that shows the work the donation is doing. For example, adopt a tiger for £3 per month and we'll send you updates on our conservation efforts. Please note, donor promise is used here in a different way to a donor charter i.e. we promise not to share your details with third parties.
- Proposition identification and product creation

### *3. Materials and media*

- An advert that grabs the attention and is compelling
- Creative checklist
  - Eye contact
  - Tell a story
  - Show need and solution
  - Set up the donor promise
  - Disrupting the audience
- Media
  - Target the right audience in the test
  - Refine and repeat to deliver value

### *4. Planning the donor journey*

- Plan of communications to the donor
- Starts with the first contact
- Thank people regularly
- Focus on retention more than upgrades

### *5. Use of emotion and imagery*

- Avoid being exploitative but show reality
- Carefully consider the tone of voice and visual approach for your appeal and the balance of positivity and negativity.

### *6. Measuring donor experience*

- Value the retention of supporters
- Focus on donor satisfaction, measuring positive responses, lack of complaints, engagement with the charity.

## The approach

Mass market fundraising covers many media channels, direct response television (DRTV), press, out of home (for example, billboards) and many others. In the context of fundraising, above the line channels are used primarily for donor recruitment. Additionally, charities recruit events participants, raffle players, legacy pledgers and undertake other forms of engagement through mass media campaigns.

In line with the overall objectives of the Commission on the Donor Experience this report will consider the overall experience that we are looking to create for donors. This positive experience will start at the first point of contact between the charity and the supporter, which will be the advert and the following engagement. All good fundraising is about fulfilling a supporter need and making good on our promise to them about how we use their money.

The Commission for the Donor Experience seeks to look at fundraising, in this instance mass market fundraising, from the point of view of the donor.

The approach is therefore to set up an honest and mutually beneficial relationship of donor satisfaction from the moment they see an initial communication message. This is the creation of a promise and the fulfilment of that promise.

## The promise

Established in the advertising communication, the promise is an honest representation of the problem. How the charity can turn your (the donors') support into helping the beneficiary who is more important to the donor than the charity. In return for your support we, the charity, will provide you with feedback on how you are helping.

## The fulfilment of the promise

Deliver what we said we would to the donor, be that in the form of updates, thank you actions and other elements. We put the focus on retention as opposed to rapid upgrades and reactivations.

This might sound simple. However, there is a lot of work to cost effectively execute mass market fundraising and making sure all the elements are in place to keep donors happy. Great retention programs increase long term donor value and create engaged supporters. We also should consider that not everyone is the same, and for those people that want minimal communication we should consider how we identify and communicate with them as well.

This approach will be based in the principles of:

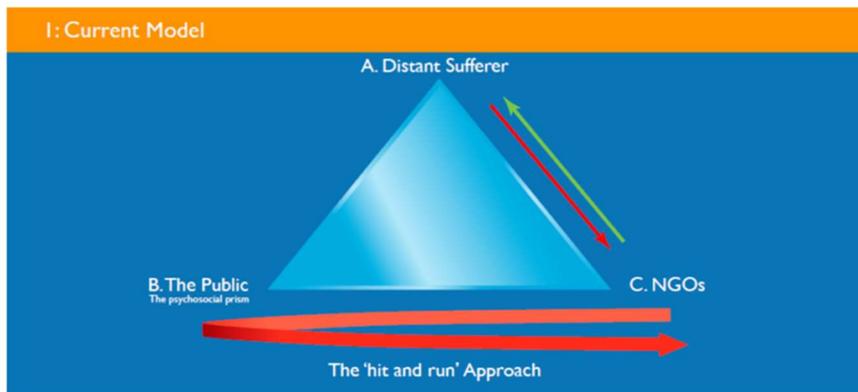
- Honesty of presentation of the problem
- Honesty of the ask
- Respect for the beneficiaries
- Fulfilling a supporter promise

## Putting the principles and actions into practise

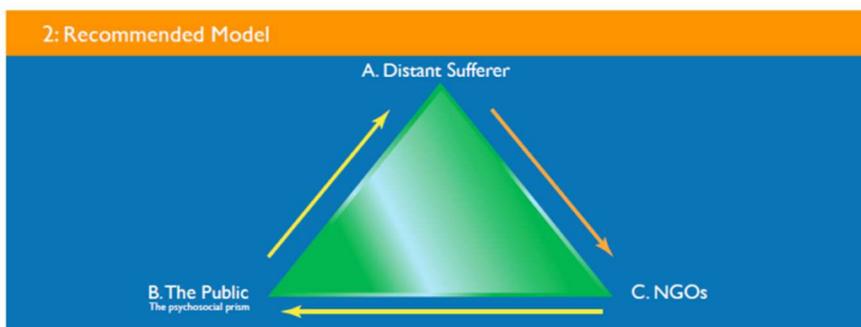
Before considering the guidance on what we need to be doing to improve the experience for our donors, we should take some time to consider some of the key issues facing the sector.

### Concerns with Mass Market Fundraising

A recent report (Caring in Crisis) produced by the LSE and Birkbeck held some serious warnings for the NGO sector. It builds on concerns that a “quick buck” approach is eroding the trust between donors and charities. This report shows that there is evidence of a growing disconnect between donors and charities. The report said that charities need to be less like:



And a bit more of this:



The report asks charities to...

- Rethink our view of the public — from sales targets to complex and sophisticated individuals who want a conversation about the issues;
- Reduce our reliance on emergencies as the staple “hook” for new donors; and
- Rethink our role from collectors of funds and dispensers of good, to a more facilitative role.

It also raises the issue that donors need to feel more connected to the work that is being done, and the benefit to the beneficiary. In short it highlights the fact that a charity is a trusted conduit for donors to support others. So, to maintain support we need to maintain trust.

Another question is the use of imagery and messaging. The reality is people are more likely to respond to an emotional advert that focuses on need. However, if we are going to take that approach we need to be careful not to create a disconnect by either over doing the need, or breaking the trust.

### *Low value asks lead generation advertising – eroding donor trust?*

One question that we should consider is whether a constant exposure to a £3 one-off premium SMS ask is in part adding to these problems for long term income. It also raises the question whether we are conditioning the public that £3 every now and again is all that is needed to solve some very complex problems. An individual that has just completed the decision making cycle and made a donation can then feel cheated or let down when they receive a phone call almost immediately asking for a larger regular donation. This feedback has come from both the donors and sector professionals.

As we look to improve the donors overall experience we should consider if these methods are something we should continue to use for regular giving recruitment. Long term is it turning people off who might have donated over a long period had they been asked for a regular donation in the first instance?

### *Lead Generation – value exchange*

When this is done well it can provide a great donor experience. Friends of the Earth's *Bee Cause* is a great example of this: <http://sofi.org/case-study/friends-of-the-earth-the-bee-cause>

However, this methodology came under scrutiny after complaints about a pedometer campaign run by Diabetes UK in 2015. This campaign invited people to send an SMS to receive a pedometer and to raise awareness of diabetes. People receiving the pedometer were then followed up with a request for a regular donation of £10 a month.

The FRSB held up the complaint against the campaign.

*....[the] campaign had a clear ulterior motive to solicit contact details for a subsequent fundraising approach and was not solely designed to assist the public by raising awareness of [the issue] and offering free [item] as indicated by the campaign's marketing materials.*

<https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/frsb-rules-that-diabetes-uk-campaign--mised-the-public-.html>

The ruling has very clear implications on how consent needs to be gathered and the need to separate a value item given for free and then contacting someone to start a new donor relationship. The General Data Protection Regulation (due to be implemented in May 2018) is also going to make these campaigns more difficult to run.

With it becoming increasingly competitive and difficult to deliver new donors, we need to ensure we are recruiting the right people for the long term. Hopefully the following methodology will help you do that.

## The six steps

### Step one: insight

#### *Internal research*

One of the first things to do is to research and brainstorm internally to define a set of fundraising themes and what your charity does to address the key issues.

Part of this process should be to decide if your fundraising proposition for the appeal, as opposed to your cause, is right for mass market. Consider that a viewer of an out of home advert may only consider the creative for a few seconds. With a DRTV advert every second counts so you need to be clear it is an appeal and the need for support. If you cannot make a powerful message quickly then you need to think creatively regarding mass market fundraising. This will define what you are going to ask people to do, promote the cause and create a donor promise.

#### *External research – proposition research*

Once we have developed some potential fundraising offers and propositions we should research how people respond to them. *Just because we feel something internally is a strong appeal does not mean the public, or the segment of them we are targeting, feel the same way.* Ultimately, we need to be engaging with the target audience on their terms and not ours. Research through focus groups and online survey groups is a good way to get a guide on how people will respond.

“At the RSPCA in 2012 we wanted to target a very specific group. We developed three propositions and put them into testing with the research company FastMap. Based on the outcomes we took forward one proposition and concept. This delivered our targets as we had evidence of which approach the target group would be responsive to. At Whizz-Kidz in 2010 we tested propositions on different supporter groups. Once we established the most effective proposition we weaved it into individual giving channels and increased results by four hundred percent.” **James Allport, Oxfam International**

#### *External Research – Market research and competitor research*

Talking to other charities and exchanging information confidentially is a good way of understanding which channels are working. Alternatively, commissioning research is another good method of gaining market insight into what is working and what is not.

### Step two: proposition, products and promise

We recommend you develop a simple and clear proposition. To use animal sponsorship as an example, ‘Tigers are ruthlessly hunted for medicine, your £5 can help us keep a tiger safe. In return you will receive an information pack, updates and a cuddly toy’.

Your proposition will form a key part of your creative brief which your production companies and agencies will use to build your adverts. Having a tangible link between the amount asked for and the issue and solution we are communicating is also useful.

“In 2005 at VSO we set an ask at £10.50 a day as it would cover the costs of a volunteer working for two days a week.” **James Allport, Oxfam International**

*Creating a proposition*

There are several techniques that can be used to develop and evaluate a proposition. This is covered in project 12 and other project 11 reports. Here is a table you can complete to help develop a proposition:

Area of work	What is the need?	How do we solve it	What is the cost	Urgency	Relevance	What happens if we do nothing

Other techniques that you can use to build on this is to look at the donor and the beneficiary and build profiles of them. This exercise can help you get into the mind-set and motivations of your supporters and the people we are helping.

## Step three: materials and media

A key part of any mass market and above the line fundraising is the creative, or visual presentation of both the problem and solution. While there is not a one size fits all approach, there are some key considerations that should be considered in signing off a creative approach.

### *Honesty of communication*

We have a responsibility to present the facts of a situation as they are, not to make things appear worse or exploit the beneficiaries. This means there do have to be judgement calls, but ultimately that will fit within a charities brand.

### *Reality works*

The public gets “spin” (stories spun to suit the agenda of the teller) from many areas of public life. However, it is not something which delivers results in public fundraising. Generally, the most effective DRTV and out of home adverts are ones which show the real situation and an honest and tangible ask and solution. This has also been true for out of home fundraising. This is where we are asking people to make a regular gift or a one-off donation.

*“By far the most successful adverts we have made over the years come from using genuine case studies and hearing genuine voices of those involved. Conversely, the ones that haven’t worked so well have been over reliant on produced situations. Coming from a documentary background I was surprised at how many charities adverts relied on actors and scripts. We were asked to make an advert for Children with Cancer UK as their current offering wasn’t working. We took a case study of a boy who had leukaemia and the amazing work CWCUK were doing. They only had three minutes of footage to make a 60 second advert but it really worked. It was real. What more did you need than a child who was surviving cancer thanks to the charity involved. No amount of lighting, camera work or scripting could make that any more powerful.”* **David Sumnall, Director Middlechild Productions.**

### *The creative execution*

There is a short window in which to engage the potential supporter. You need to grab their attention, explain a problem, make the ask, show the solution and make it personal in a short period of time. On a billboard it could be seconds. For an insert, you might have a glimpse of a headline before someone decides to read further. DRTV makes it case in a maximum of 90 seconds usually. With such a short amount of time it is quite a skill to make an effective appeal.

There are some simple rules laid out at the bottom of this section. Keep it real, honest, simple, clear and tell a touching story if you can.

### *DRTV good examples*

To find good examples of Mass Market fundraising we need to look beyond just the appeal. It needs to be about setting up a journey for the donor and then fulfilling it. In short this is looking beyond just the initial transaction.

### WWF: Animal Sponsorship

This is a strong advert with good eye contact from the beneficiary into the camera, and therefore to the viewer. The need and urgency are clearly explained in the advert in the footage of animal skins. The voice over is strong and clear and it grabs your attention. The benefits of membership are clearly shown and described. The price point is attainable at £3 a month and once made there is no instant phone call asking for more (as per the premium SMS example above). The product is something which provides some fun and education for a child.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZFD\\_C7-RfY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZFD_C7-RfY)

WWF have obviously been very successful with this product and these campaigns. But they are marketing a clear need, a solution and a reward for the viewer. The product is also very good, with the quarterly magazine being well worth reading. WWF is ticking a lot of the boxes and steps we have been covering in this paper.

From the context of keeping a supporter happy this example does the following:

- Presents the problem in an honest manner
- Engages the viewer visually and aurally
- Asks you to help
- Gives you something in return that can benefit your family
- Uses a low cost of entry
- Tells a story

But beyond that the journey works. The promise that is set up is delivered, not just through the ongoing work of the charity but through the sponsorship product.

### RSPCA – Home for Life

Home for life is an example of a legacy DRTV advert. The pay back for legacy DRTV is over a longer period. This advert offers a simple premise of looking after your pets after you have gone.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJCD3ZJfmrk>

- Simple message with clear call to action
- Resonance with the audience through the cause and product being offered
- Good eye contact to camera and voice over

The follow up is then the legacy information and thoughtfully planned out journey.

“Legacy adverts are tricky. They fall in the space between brand and DRTV and the creative ask is key. Luckily a strong proposition in a “Home for Life” had been developed which meant all we had to do was execute the storyboard – which is actually easier said than done when you have a very temperamental cat!” **David Sumrall, Director Middlechild Productions.**

### RSPCA – 24/7

This was a successful advert for the RSPCA. It portrays the problem clearly and honestly and has a clear and simple call to action. The urgency is laid out at the start. There is strong eye contact from the animals, and the solution is clearly shown. None of the footage is contrived. This is a good example of a DRTV advert which presents the need and solution in an honest manner.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RtDF8ybvwsSQ&t=21s>

- Strong and simple message
- Clear approach for a regular gift
- Strong eye contact from the animals your gift can help
- Honest advert showing need and solution

“One of the key things we request on using is a composer for the music in our adverts (unless commercial music is required). A good composer is worth their weight in gold in this type of advert as the mixture of solution and need is so hard to find in any library. This track was composed specifically for this advert and it ties in all of the imagery perfectly.” **David Sumnall, Director Middlechild Productions.**

### Children with Cancer – Louis

This advert was produced to show the real human story of a child fighting cancer for a medium sized cancer charity. The campaign was integrated with a matching out of home campaign. All of this is real footage of the people involved.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPnZbge3zvw>

This is a strong appeal as it:

- Tells a true story in emotive way
- Has a clear call to action
- Good eye contact to the viewer

“This is one of the adverts we are most proud of. They had very little budget, if I remember rightly we made it for £7,000. They only had three minutes of footage and we had a couple of weeks to turn it around. It goes to show you don’t need a big budget or long turnaround time to create a really powerful and successful advert”. **David Sumnall, Director Middlechild Productions.**

### *Disruption*

The reality is that many people do not donate to charity without being prompted and to do so. That means that people do need to be disrupted from their daily routine to prompt their awareness and to generate a donation or other form of interest.

Therefore, many appeals will begin with an announcement which is designed to jolt someone. Also, the use of shocking imagery is often used to achieve but sometimes a quirky or fun approach can be effective if an organisation is prompted a fundraising event.

### *Cancer Research – Cigarette Packs*

The agency Out of Home International ran a campaign with Cancer Research UK to help push through the plain packing legislation with a campaign on London Underground. This really stands out as the combination of a child's eyes and a pink cigarette pack are unusual and draw the viewers' attention.

### *Women Aid*

Ran a campaign again with Out of Home International which used an innovative eye tracking technology. The more people that looked at the advert the more the injuries of the woman healed.

<http://outofhomeinternational.blogspot.co.uk/2015/03/the-power-of-charity-advertising.html?view=classic>

The article linked below covers a range of very different adverts that have been influential. The British Heart Foundation fat filled cigarette advert and the Barnardo's adverts are disruptive by being shocking. However, the UNICEF Sweden advert refers to money saving lives, not Facebook likes, which is more innovative.

<https://www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/gallery/2015/feb/02/charity-campaigns-influential-oxfam-unicef-adverts-gallery>

Out of Home also disrupts in fundraising asks for regular gifts and event participation. Macmillan Cancer Support run campaigns covering cake baking, going dry for October, and asking for donations. All the appeals are upbeat in their approach.

### *Disruption – Positive and Negative*

The disruption element does not have to be done using a negative or shocking message. That is not to say they do not work, they do get attention, jolt people and drive response. However positive and innovative messaging can also work. A simple comparison would be the RSPCA (outlined above) and Dogs Trust. They both tap into emotions around dogs. However, the approaches are very different.

Dogs Trust is one example of a positive disruption message. Guide Dogs for the Blind take positive approaches to their TV and outdoor adverts for regular giving. Also thinking innovatively about the approach, BookAid's long running Reverse Bookclub insert is a positive piece of mass market marketing for a small charity.

*Deciding which media channels to use, how much to pay and how to use them  
authored by Mike Colling of MC&C*

Your spend on media will almost certainly be the largest line item in any budget your organisation deploys. You should therefore devote at least as much attention to this as you would to any other significant investment.

Five simple steps should help you ensure that you generate the maximum number of new supporters and the greatest net returns from your investment.

**Step one: business planning.**

Don't start with detailed media planning, start as you would with an investment in face to face or telephone fundraising: with the business. What is the risk of your organisation not generating positive net returns from the media investment you make?

Find a media agency partner who is capable of (and willing to) help you understand and model not just the price of media, and the number of your audience that will see your appeal, but also the number of prospects who will respond; the number of donors who will convert to giving; the average amounts they will give; by which channels; how often they will give again; and how long they will remain as donors.

This model will vary by product (cash vs regular giving vs legacy vs events) and by organisation (sector, size, strength of brand), but can be created for all products and all organisations.

You should be able, with your media agency or consultant, to create a business plan that as a minimum projects a one year net return on the media investment proposed, and ideally a five-year net return. If the media agency you intend to work with either cannot or will not create this business plan with you they may well be the wrong partner for a fundraising appeal investment. That business plan is the output from this stage one

**Step two: media strategy and journey planning**

This is subtly different to your donor journey planning. Think of it as the journey a consumer takes before they become a donor.

Start by understanding your audience and your ask of them.

If you are targeting a frequent and affluent donor, and asking them to give you just £3, once, then they may well give the first time you ask them. It may then follow that an emotional television commercial, with a text donation mechanic, with a media schedule designed to reach as many people as often, just once, is the most appropriate strategy.

If you are asking middle aged, middle class adults who know little about your organisation to consider giving you a legacy the journey you will have to take them on before gaining their promise of a pledge will be longer and more complex. You will have to start with making them

aware of you and the work you do. And then of the value you create in the world. And then create awareness that you receive legacies and put them to good use. And then raise consideration that they might give a legacy. And then let them explore your organisation and the work you do in detail. And then enable them to enquire how they might give a legacy. And then engage with them to reassure them of the process. All this before you gain a pledge, let alone a gift.

These two rather extreme examples highlight two key elements to consider at this stage. Firstly the length of journey from first exposure to your message to actually giving; and secondly the different needs have at each stage in the journey. In the first example the interaction is a purely emotional one. The donor will give instantly, and will probably have forgotten that they have given by the next day. In the second example the journey from first message to pledge could be months or years, and the donor will need emotional, rational, and probably peer reassurance as they move closer to giving.

The output from this second stage is a map of the stages in the journey from first seeing a message to finally giving; the number of stages in that journey; the needs of the potential donor at each stage in the journey; and the length of that journey.

### Step three: detailed media planning

This builds on the knowledge from steps one and two. Which media channels should you use for the appeal, and which specific media events should you choose within those channels?

For the simple cash text gift example above, television is an obvious choice as it reaches many people at a low cost per eyeball, and is hugely effective at conveying emotional messages. Because we are asking donors to give via text we can use peak airtime and high attention programming. If we wanted donors to phone we would select different programmes and different times of day.

At this stage, just as at stage one, any media partner you work with should be capable of giving you a detailed media plan that doesn't just justify why the media channels and programmes/magazines/poster sites/search strategy is correct, but also how many donors each line on the plan will generate.

The output from this stage is a detailed plan, showing each separate television channel or publication, or display partner or social channel that is to be invested in; how much is to be spent with them; in return for how many eyeballs; and how many donors and how much income results from each separate investment.

### Step four: media buying

At this stage your focus should be on two key elements. Firstly the risk of failure, and secondly that you are receiving value for money.

On failure: thirty years of helping charities to recruit donors using media have taught me one thing. No plan survives contact with the enemy. If you are trying media investments for the first time, or if you are testing a new campaign or appeal then don't commit your entire budget at once.

Start with a test budget. Large enough so you can read the results. Small enough that you have more to deploy when your first test fails. Only roll out when you are convinced you have achieved success.

On value: any media partner worth their salt will show you benchmark market pricing to demonstrate the value for money your investment achieved. And they will welcome any audit or price comparison with others. One last word on this topic. Don't confuse value and price. On any day someone will always buy cheaper than you. Check over time, and ensure you are always in the cheapest quartile of pricing. Don't attempt to always be the absolute cheapest.

The output from this stage is a carefully managed delivery of the plan. Buying the media promised in the plan you approved; at a price that is in the cheapest quartile for the media bought; and a carefully managed risk profile as investment is deployed.

### Step five: attribution and analysis

For every fundraising investment you make you will analyse and report on the returns from your investment. For face to face, that's easy. The team report on how many donors they recruited. For telephone, again its easy: calls out, income in. For simple media campaigns: a DRTV commercial that just asks donors to call, again it is easy. Cost of TV time; calls in; donors in; income in.

But most media campaigns don't just use one channel, and often offer donors multiple ways to give. Consider an appeal that runs on TV, in newspapers, uses online display and search. And allows donors to give by post, phone, text and online. Understanding which media investments were profitable and which were not is no simple task. Ensure your media partner has the correct tools to match donors recruited to the media event most likely to have generated them.

The output from this stage is actionable insight. Practical learning that can be applied to improve the returns you generate from your next investment in media.

### Step four: planning the donor journey

When we are looking to create a great experience for the donor, what is essential is that we give them a great sign up experience and introduction to the charity.

#### The welcome (see project 4 for more detail on welcoming donors)

Often this starts when someone picks up the phone to a donor. The telemarketing team needs to be an extension of your fundraising team. This means keeping the callers motivated, engaged and being passionate about your cause. See project 11e for more information on how to use the telephone to do this.

Ensure the donor gets an e-mail, or mailing pack which will be interesting to them and will satisfy them that their money has been well spent. This is a point where people need to be reminded why they gave. There are many examples of welcome packs and letters which can be found on the SOFII website. Below is a link to an example from ActionAid which was produced with fundraising agency, Bluefrog.

<http://sofii.org/case-study/actionaids-welcome-to-child-sponsorship-package>

Having a genuine welcome and thank you call is also a nice touch and can also improve retention. You can take the time to remind someone their first payment is coming and talk about the charities work.

### The journey and updates

Moving on from the initial welcome we should make a point of reminding people why they have given and showing them the difference that the gift is helping to make for the beneficiaries. This can be done through an ongoing program of updates, even if it is just a newsletter.

- Plan the first two years of communications
- Map out measures to be taken on donor feedback and actions
- Focus on donor interests, how they are helping to solve the problem
- Build in a positive attitude with the donor care team towards all donors, even those lapsing (because the donor may not see it the way the charity does)
- Quality updates and content, the “best foot forward” for the charity

### Step five: imagery, emotion and language (also see projects 1 and 6)

One of the bigger talking points is the use of imagery and language which is exploitative. Firstly, we need to consider that this is a value judgement by the person viewing an advert in most cases. Due to the regulations that are in place we must observe there are already limitations in place. Without naming charities, an approach which one charity might regard as acceptable would be unacceptable to another. Charities have had success in delivering results with footage which is extreme or shocking, but also charities have delivered results as good, or better using more neutral or positive footage, such as Dogs Trust.

There are people that will respond to different types of emotion. American psychologist and emotions scholar, Paul Ekman defined the six primary emotions as happiness, surprise, anger, disgust, sadness, fear. So if we were to compare adverts from Dogs Trust and the RSPCA you would see very different emotions being used. Dogs Trust focus on the happiness that people get from sponsoring a dog with a very narrow focus on negatives. By contrast the RSPCA take a more negative approach focusing on the sadness or anger people feel towards the mistreatment of animals. Dogs Trust is positive in its approach and fun, and people enjoy getting updates from the sponsored dog. Neither approach is wrong per se, but you should consider how the emotions you use in your fundraising impact on the donor experience.

Dogs Trust: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqIh3oeo5j4>

### *Imagery*

There are some basic rules to follow, showing eye contact with a beneficiary or spokesman and showing the need, being two of the more important ones. How we do that is something we should consider very carefully. The use of imagery of children that makes them appear helpless and vulnerable creates a lot of debate. On one hand, it can be seen to objectify the beneficiary and exploit them to deliver maximum response. It can also reinforce stereo-types of

victimhood. On the other if the objective is to raise money, which is then helping solve the problem, does that justify it?

“At Oxfam International, we have recently produced adverts where we show the problem but avoid imagery that is showing . The results have been successful. We look to show people facing their problems and how the supporter can enable them to become empowered in the situation.” **James Allport, Oxfam International**

CNN article on charity imagery

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/12/24/living/poverty-porn-danger-feat/>

Guardian article

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/dec/08/radiator-award-poverty-porn-vs-empowerment-the-best-and-worst-aid-videos-of-2016>

## Step six: evaluation and measuring donor happiness

This will be a new set of KPIs to measure in fundraising. We are used to tracking attrition and income, average gifts and so on. Oxfam is moving in the right direction with a focus on more regular thanking and updating of supporters. Below is an overview and recommendations from Paul Vanags, Head of Public Fundraising at Oxfam

*“There is a new [My Oxfam’ app](#) which you can download which will give you a monthly update on the work the charity is being done.*

*Oxfam’s framework is built around a strategy entitled “Engagement First” which is a vision to a move to a more supporter-centric future. In an ideal world, we would be able to track and monitor the daily engagement levels of every individual supporter, and how these vary with interactions that supporters have with Oxfam and other relevant stimulus (news reports, contact from other charities etc.). In reality of course this is not possible and so we have to try to get as close to this ideal as we practically can.*

*As such the metrics that Oxfam tracks monthly have moved from those which are purely financial (e.g. net monthly movement of regular givers) to those which can give continuous data on supporter engagement, for example; number of new supporters (financial and non-financial) on the database, and proportion of those opting in to communications (by channel). We also recently completed an in-depth analysis on donor loyalty within our supporter base. Over time our aim is to build a richer picture of supporters and their motivations to be able to segment more precisely, delivering more tailored content and a better supporter experience. Data like this can be built over time by; asking questions about motivation at the point a donor gives, by using supporter questionnaires and by combining with data about supporter interactions captured through digital channels.*

*There are many studies from the commercial sector which show that investing in customer loyalty is a sound strategy – because it costs many times more to recruit a new customer than to retain an existing one. We’ve no reason to think this will be different for charities, and given the way the direction of travel for most the next few years will prove it one way or another!”*

**Paul Vanags, Oxfam GB**

With the advancements in mobile and web technology we can now deliver experiences directly to people via their phone. Digital marketing techniques allow us to have a greater insight into our supporter’s wider interests and we have many channels to engage our audience without an explicit fundraising ask. It is possible to ask people about what they would like to see more and less of from us as a charity. It’s just good marketing.

However, the objective should be to keep people engaged, happy and feeling positive about the charity and that in the end will reward us more. Asking donors when they join about the about of feedback they want, and when and then delivering it is key.

Ten years ago, at VSO we reduced attrition and increased donor value with excellent results by focusing on donor satisfaction over transactional fundraising, this more than doubled return on investment in the first eighteen months after donor sign up. **James Allport, Oxfam International**

## Appendix 1: research sources

- Brainfluence by Roger Dooley
- Dogs Trust - Sponsor a Dog (<http://sofii.org/case-study/dogs-trust-sponsor-a-dog>)
- <https://www.nomensa.com/blog/2012/why-thanking-donors-online-is-powerful>
- <http://www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/library/dont-forget-to/>
- [http://www.queerideas.co.uk/my\\_weblog/2010/10/why-all-charities-should-thank-donors.html](http://www.queerideas.co.uk/my_weblog/2010/10/why-all-charities-should-thank-donors.html)
- <http://sofii.org/article/the-emotional-brain>
- <http://101fundraising.org/2012/11/cry-me-a-river-why-and-how-emotions-can-save-fundraising-and-the-non-profit-world/>
- [https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/uploads/production/document/path/7/7407/Rogare\\_Fundraising\\_Ethics\\_White\\_Paper\\_v1.1.pdf](https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/uploads/production/document/path/7/7407/Rogare_Fundraising_Ethics_White_Paper_v1.1.pdf)
- <http://sofii.org/article/to-ask-or-not-to-ask-that-is-the-question-when-saying-thank-you-to-a-donor>)

## Appendix 2: methodology

This paper has been produced for the Commission by James Allport of One Blue. James has created successful mass market fundraising programs for the RSPCA, Oxfam International, Battersea Dogs & Cats Home and many more. James has experience of creating successful donor care programs and managed many mutely-million-pound recruitment programs.

The guidance in this document is drawn from James' professional experience with charities and experiencing and developing best practice programs. Market research and case studies are from professional experience, research done by members of the Commission for the Donor Experience and from being a donor. Additional contributions from conversations with friends, family and professional colleagues listed below along

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