



Overcoming barriers to donate using a new fundraising model: The Engagement Framework

In partnership with

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**THE
KITE
FACTORY**



The five barriers to donation

Our survey in partnership with YouGov was commissioned in March 2020 via YouGov RealTime, supplemented by Profiles and CharityIndex data, to show how attitudes have changed over time (you can find more information on [YouGov's solutions here](#)).

We designed the research around five hypotheses to help explain why individuals might be discouraged from supporting a charitable organisation. The research proved all five barriers exist to varying degrees and allowed us to see if they are true for all, or just some segments of society.

Introduction

Over the past 15 years, The Kite Factory has witnessed the changing landscape of charity fundraising first-hand. Many fundraising programmes, especially for individual giving had become increasingly formulaic; direct marketing tactics coupled with emotional asks formed the foundations of a successful fundraising programme.

Building a base of committed givers has been crucial to ensuring profitable, sustainable growth and charities relied heavily on people signing up to a direct debit after a fleeting moment of emotion in the hope that they'd forget about the payment or feel guilty for cancelling.

Over the years, individual giving programmes grew largely by reaching more people and reducing the barriers to donate through technologies like SMS donations and online payments. This saw a shift from channels such as face-to-face and direct mail into TV and online advertising, but for most, the same emotional ask and communication principles applied. This change in tactics has been accelerated in recent years by data privacy regulations and media consumption behaviours.

However, it is now that charities are finding it harder to recruit new committed givers than ever before. With more charities than ever using the same tactics, channels and asks, consumers have grown weary of charities and attitudes have changed. To compound this, the British media has chosen to promote attention-grabbing articles, highlighting the minority of incidents of bad practice within the sector, rather than its amazing long-term achievements.

In the UK there are now 12% fewer individuals donating directly to charities than in 2014 (TGI: 2014 Q2 – 2019 Q2) and recruiting new donors has become increasingly expensive for many charity organisations.

To help address this issue, we have commissioned proprietary research in partnership with YouGov to understand the changing behaviours of consumers, the barriers to financially supporting charitable organisations and the actions you can take to motivate support from potential donors. We then go on to describe the implications for charity fundraising and introduce the 'Engagement Framework'; an effective new approach that puts the consumer first and requires a new set of skills and principles.

Our Hypotheses:

- 1 "Charity fundraising is persistent and intrusive"**
Consumers feel bombarded by consistent asks in the same channels.
- 2 "I don't feel close to the cause"**
Creating greater proximity to a cause is hard to do in one piece of communication, especially in causes that have an empathy gap in matters of equality.
- 3 "I see no hope or progress"**
With consistent asks and little coverage of progress consumers are reluctant to continue giving due to lack of trust and transparency.
- 4 "I don't get anything back when I give"**
Relationships with charities have typically been one way, creating value for consumers would encourage support.
- 5 "The act of giving is difficult"**
People would give if we made it easier, like banking with Monzo or ordering takeaway with Deliveroo.

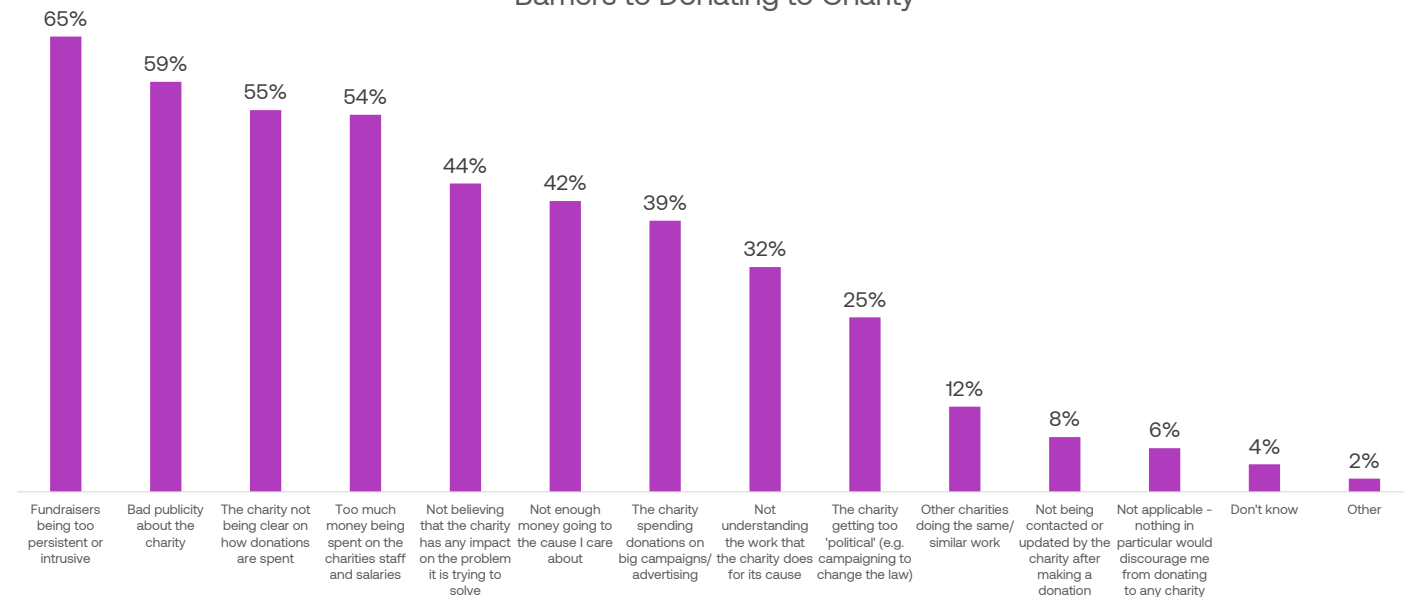
In addition to barriers we asked consumers what charities could do better to motivate them to donate. The following is a summary of our findings.

Hypothesis 1: “Charity fundraising is persistent and intrusive”



Our survey proved that the number one reason that would discourage consumers from financially supporting a charity was ‘fundraisers being too persistent or intrusive’ (65%). Unsurprisingly this is particularly accentuated for females aged over 55 (73%), a core target audience for many individual giving programmes.

Barriers to Donating to Charity



Base: All GB Adults. Source: YouGov Realtime, March 2020: Thinking about all types of charities... Which, if any, of the following factors would discourage you from donating money to a charity? (Please select all that apply. If nothing in particular would discourage you from donating to any charity, please select the 'Not applicable' option)

When it came to frequency, we found that over two out of five (42%) said they felt they are asked to donate through aggressive or inappropriate methods at least once a month with 16% saying they felt like this occurred at least once a week.

We also asked which channels they believe are appropriate to ask for a donation and the majority agreed that mass reach, broadcast channels like TV (53%), radio/ newspapers/ poster advertising (52%) and social media (42%) were appropriate places to ask. In contrast, just a third perceived mail to be an appropriate place to ask (33%) and 1-in-5 accepted face-to-face fundraising on the street (21%). However, we again see a difference in age with 20% of over 55's claiming it is not acceptable to ask in any channel at all.

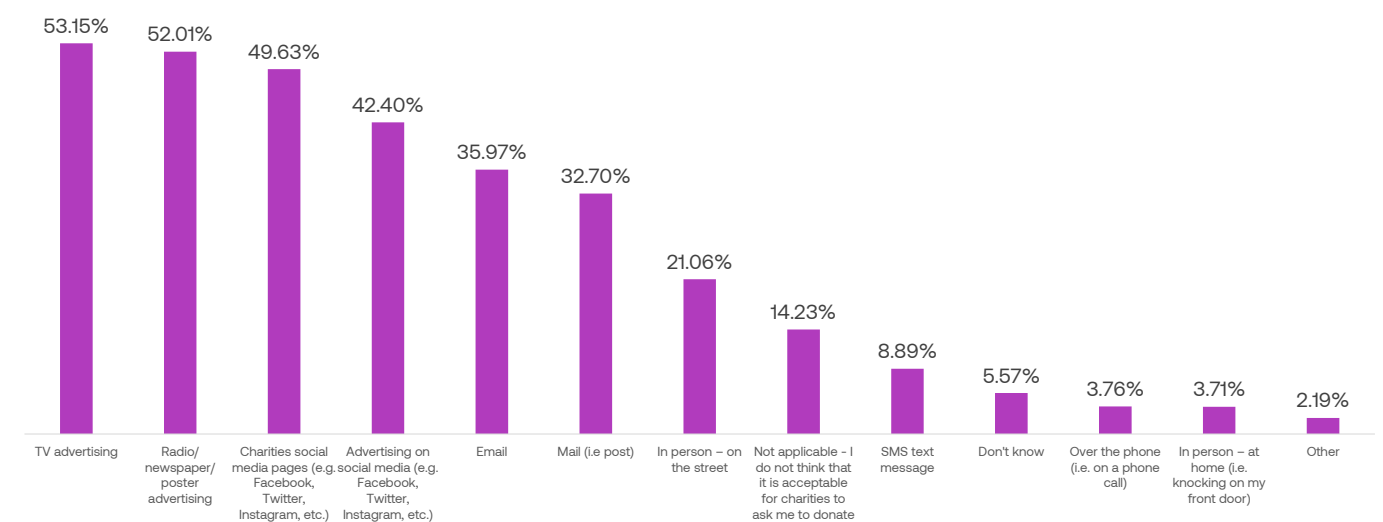
This would indicate that those most exposed to consistent fundraising asks in the same channels are weary, rendering the channels less effective - we call this ‘channel burnout’. So, whilst the majority currently consider TV an acceptable place to ask for donations, it’s possible that abusing this medium with the same tactics without employing others will have a similar effect in the long-term.

To sustain long term growth, we believe it is important that a mix of channels deliver a range of messages and not just an ask. Considering

the role of channels beyond acquisition is important and using them in different ways to the market norm will create cut-through.

For example, as part of an integrated campaign **The Children’s Society** used face to face experiences to drive understanding and increase empathy. They created **The Store of Modern Childhood** which displayed hard-hitting installations based on findings of their Good Childhood Report to highlight the harsh reality of being a youth in Britain today.

Acceptable channels to ask for a donation



Base: All GB Adults Source: YouGov Realtime, March 2020: In your opinion, which, if any, of the following are acceptable places for a charity to ask you to donate? (Please select all that apply. If you do not think that it is acceptable for charities to ask you to donate, please select the 'Not applicable' option)

Hypothesis 2:

“I don’t feel close to the cause”

Of those that have ever supported a charity, we found that 82% of people agree with the statement “I support charities when I feel close to them”. Proximity to cause is more easily achieved for some organisations than others such as health, medical and hospice charities. 81% would be likely to consider supporting a charity by donating if that charity had supported them or a loved one. Similarly, if a charity created valuable information for them, a family member or friend, such as helpful medical or social information or contributing to research on the cause, 69% said it was likely they would donate.

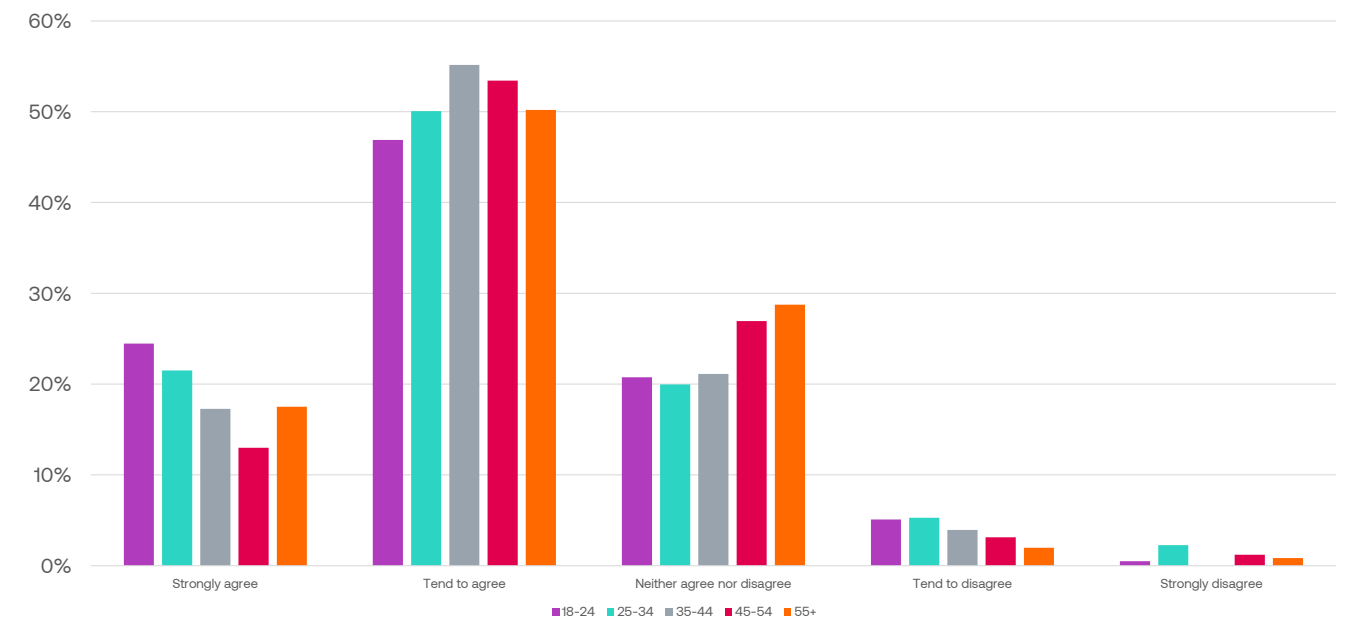
However, almost 1-in-3 people (32%) said that not understanding the work that the charity does for the cause would discourage them from donating. This is especially important for younger donors, 25% of 18-24’s strongly agreed with the statement “I support charities that I know a lot about” compared to just 12% of 45-54’s.

Closeness and relevancy are more difficult to achieve for organisations whose beneficiaries are further away from the donor, geographically, socially or both. It is even more important for these organisations to tell the story from the perspective of the beneficiary and create an understanding that will close the empathy gap. Creating communications that build understanding of the cause and the role of the organisation is crucial to broadening the pool of individuals who would consider donating.

WaterAid successfully demonstrated the ability to increase proximity to the cause with their **#Untapped campaign** by bringing the people of the village of Tombohuaun to life through storytelling using interactive digital tools such as 360 imagery, interactive video, online surveys and social media sharing.



“I support charities that I know a lot about”



Base: All GB Adults. Source: YouGov Realtime, March 2020. In general, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statement: “I support charities that I know a lot about”

Hypothesis 3: “I see no hope of progress”

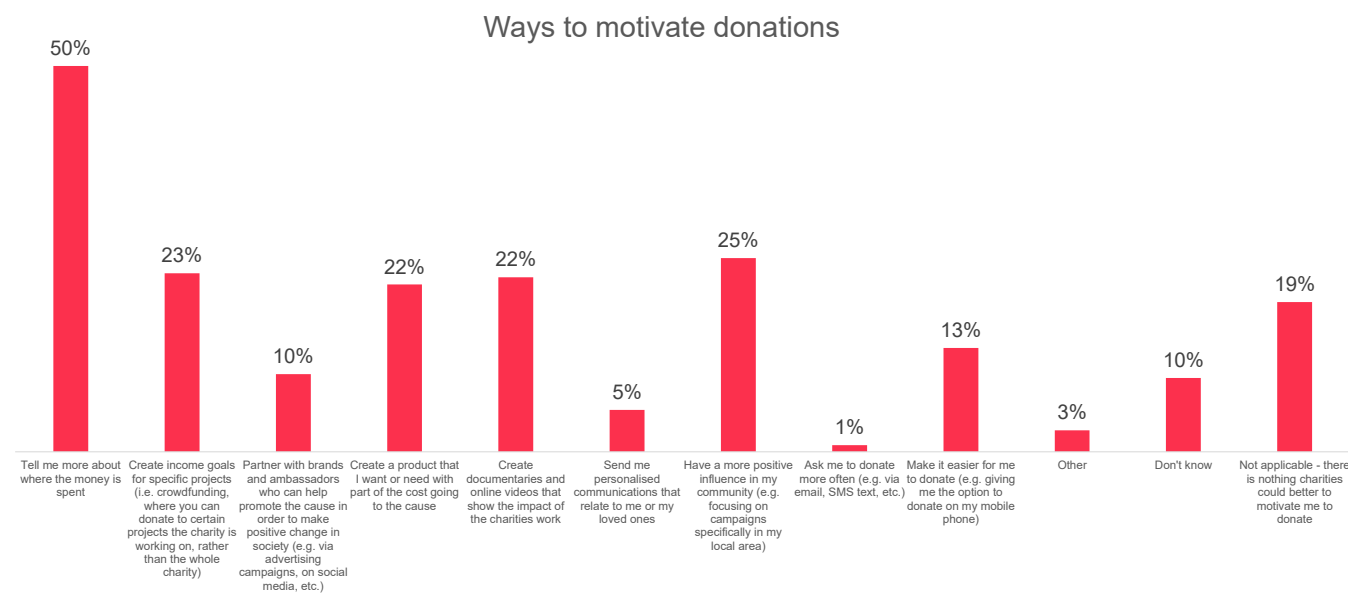
Within YouGov CharityIndex we found that there is a strong positive correlation between charity brands that consumers perceived to have a positive impact on their cause and the ones they had donated to.

To support this, we found that 44% of consumers claim that a charity not having an impact on the cause would be a major barrier to support. This output-based mindset was particularly pronounced for males aged 18–34 (50%).

Linked to impact are matters of trust and transparency. It was these factors that rang true for most audiences with concerns about where donations were spent. We found by far

the most motivating tactic that would encourage financial support is telling the consumer more about where the money is spent.

It would indicate then, that there is value in communicating progress as part of a fundraising programme. Celebrating success and sharing good news in the customer journey should create a consistent feedback loop to encourage continued support. However, we also believe sharing this broader than existing supporters will encourage future support from more people too. Some organisations are changing from recruiting on risk to recruiting on progress such as the recent **‘Research is working right now campaign’** by **Cancer Research UK**.



Base: All GB Adults. Source: YouGov Realtime, March 2020. Which, if any, of the following could charities do better to motivate you to donate more? (Please select all that apply. If there is nothing charities could do better to motivate you to donate, please select the 'Not applicable' option)



RESEARCH IS
IMPROVING
TREATMENTS
RIGHT NOW



LET'S BEAT CANCER
SOONER
cruk.org



CANCER
RESEARCH
UK



Hypothesis 4: “I don’t get anything back when I give”

The term value-exchange is now firmly fixed in the vocabulary of fundraisers, conscious that a one-way relationship is not appealing to all audiences, especially those who must make alternative choices with disposable income.

YouGov Profiles data shows that the number of people who bought goods from a charity increased by 8% from 2017 to 2020 and those who played a charity raffle or lottery increased by 11%. A fifth of respondents (22%) to the survey also said that creating a product of value with part of the cost going to the cause is an effective way to encourage them to support.

Therefore, creating value for consumers is an important part of fundraising and can take many forms. Moving away from the one-way relationship and including moments of giving back in a programme can increase motivation and sustain support.

Diabetes UK is able to package up its expertise to deliver value to the consumer as part of a longer consumer journey, in the form of a **membership product** for those affected by, and connected to, Diabetes.



Hypothesis 5: “The act of giving is difficult”

The final barrier we explored is the act of giving. When optimising the performance of a modern individual giving programme one of the key levers is making it as easy as possible and providing as many options as possible of ways to donate.

In the survey, we found that making it easier to donate (such as giving the option to donate on mobile) was motivating for 13% of respondents with 30% of ABC1 females aged 18-34 agreeing.

New and innovative ways of donating are becoming increasingly important such as adding a donation to an online purchase. A behaviour that has nearly doubled since 2017 according to YouGov Profiles.

What is crucial then, is increasing the opportunities to donate for as many people as possible. And what is useful for fundraisers is benchmarking; understanding how much more effective an ask could be when using a broader range of channels and messages beyond direct marketing tactics alone. When the foundations are as strong as they can be then it enables the fundraiser to focus on other barriers to donating higher up the funnel.





Introducing a new fundraising model:

The Engagement Framework

In our analysis we established five barriers that fundraisers may face beyond activation. Overcoming these barriers requires a new approach to fundraising that:

1. Reduces the need to ask in a way that aggravates
2. Creates closeness and understanding
3. Demonstrates impact and progress
4. Creates value for the consumer
5. Makes it as easy as possible to donate

It's clear that a model employing a single piece of communication, delivered in fewer channels, needs to change to one that uses multiple messages, with different objectives, in multiple channels. It is also fundamental to measure how the target audience perceive the organisation in relation to others over time, as well as their short-term actions.

Many organisations recognise these barriers and are in the process of adaptation. It is a process that faces many challenges due to existing organisational structures, mindsets and even ethics when shifting away from the safety of short-term response.

To contribute to the solution, The Kite Factory has developed an 'Engagement Framework' that has helped change the way we fundraise. Over the past decade we have partnered with the likes of WaterAid, Diabetes UK, The British Red Cross and The Children's Society to deploy and test this framework and understand effectiveness in both the short and long-term.

We define an Engagement Framework as:

- A centralised communications framework for planning and measuring integrated campaigns
- A tool that allows organisations to benchmark 'barriers' in relation to core competitors
- A process that breaks down departmental silos and enables storytelling from beginning to end
- A measurement for short and long-term effectiveness in building a sustainable supporter-base

Key principles we have learnt about engagement:

- 1 One piece of communication can't meet all needs**
Creating bespoke communications across the engagement framework is more effective.
- 2 People like to talk about themselves (it's not all about the organisation!)**
Inviting participation increases relevance and opens a two-way dialogue.
- 3 Without metrics and KPI's 'engagement' is just an idea**
Having specific metrics tied to each phase of the engagement framework enables consistency in reporting.
- 4 Shared common metrics and KPI's bring teams to work together**
Increasing integration through a shared understanding.

We have also learnt a lot about the major challenges organisations face when implementing an Engagement Framework, from stakeholder buy-in to creating a shared understanding at all levels.

How can we help you?

If you'd like to hear more about employing an Engagement Framework at your organisation, please contact :

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All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. RealTime Omnibus total sample size was 2126 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 17th - 18th March 2020. Profiles Data total sample size was 345293 adults (Nat Rep) Fieldwork was undertaken between July 2017 and April 2020. CharityIndex, April 2020. Total sample size was 329553 adults (Nat Rep). Fieldwork was undertaken between Month Year and Month Year. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+).