



The New Lexicon of Fundraising

2014 and Beyond

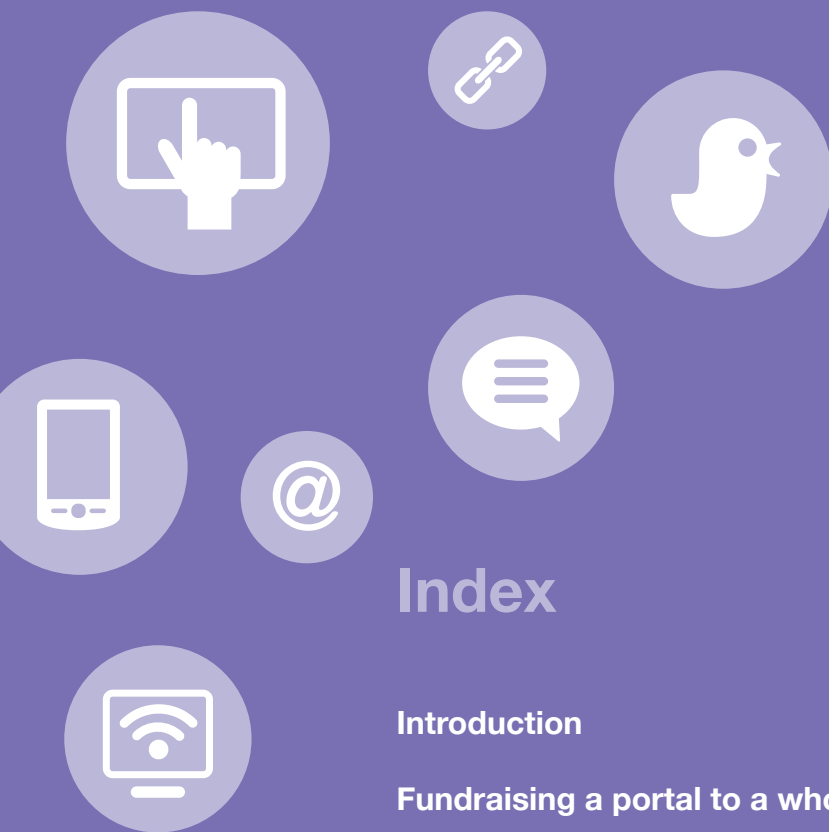
Fresh thinking from Tony Elischer, Managing Director, THINK Consulting Solutions.

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Introduction

The most powerful computer on earth is the human mind; and we all know that the most developed, original and supercharged versions of this computer are what makes some charities stand out from others in their performance, style and popularity.

We are a people business and our success or failure is pretty much wholly driven by the people we have and how they think and act. The New Lexicon of Fundraising is a challenging thought piece that seeks to ‘reprogramme’ how fundraisers think and to encourage them to take a fresh look at what they know, what they think they know, what they accept and the filters through which they drive their programmes and actions.

This paper won’t change the words we use in our everyday work, but it will hopefully start a debate and make people stop to reflect. After fifty years of professional fundraising in North America and Europe we need a new vocabulary; the language we use controls our mind-set and our mind-set controls our goals and ambitions.

The power of words has been the most powerful weapon in history.....let’s play.

Your Reprogramming Guide

OLD THINKING	2014 & BEYOND
Fundraising	Not a single word; a doorway to more accurate descriptors; philanthropy; Impact Philanthropy; Social Innovation; Venture Philanthropy; Social Investment.
Donor	Adopt a 360°view; move more of our supporters to being viewed as Investors.
Recruitment	Inspiration; Emotional Connections.
Needs/Case	Stories; Emotions
Upgrading	Graduating.
Donor Service	Stewardship and Donor Guides; Executive Travel Assistants
Major Donors	High Net Worth Individuals (HNWI); Investors.
HNWI + Corporate + Foundations	Leadership Giving
Giving Strategy	Supporter Journeys; Rapid Test Cycles.
Relationships	Belonging; Movements; Tribalism.
Branding	Branding

“ *Whether you think you can, or think you can’t. You’re right.* ”

Henry Ford

“ *Ring out the old, ring in the new.* ”

Alfred Tennyson



Fundraising a portal to a whole new world?

We train, we read, we study, we connect, we exchange, but is this enough? Are we truly seeking ways to transform our fundraising and to reengineer the DNA of fundraising as we know it today? With all the tools available to us I believe the most powerful is the one we focus on least, our mind-set. We've heard that once the mind is set, programmed or made up it is very hard to change; but I guess that is my challenge, to change your mind-set and the whole way you think about and view fundraising.

So where do we begin? Probably the simplest place is to challenge the language we use. We are conditioned by our training and as the sector adopts the key descriptors of our work it naturally becomes the norm and we are forced to conform. But if you think of the real meaning of the words we use and above all how other sectors use them, I believe we would want rapidly to liberate ourselves from them and invent a new language that is more suited to contemporary fundraising and practice.

To be controversial, let's start with 'fundraising' itself, crazy to think we would or could ever change it, but frankly it is such an inadequate word in reflecting what we do. In fact it works against us at every level as 'fund' is the first element of the work, which can only be linked to money and the raising of finances. Anyone new to what we do, especially board members, will focus on money as it is the first thing they see in our title/descriptor. We have other words like giving, philanthropy, development and resource mobilisation but as we explore each of these I wonder if we can really get closer to an all-encompassing term for the work that we do.

We constantly see new 'schools of fundraising' emerging: such as, Impact Philanthropy, Social Innovation, Venture Philanthropy - all definitions of a supposedly different approach that recognises more the people or brain investment, the expectations of giving and perhaps a unique methodology or approach. Perhaps this is the solution, a range of descriptors that can be used by different programmes and approaches, moving away from a single word that really doesn't reflect what we do in the complex modern world in which we operate.

As fundraising continues to get tougher, do we set out to ask for funds or do we set out to 'interchange' with people? Providing opportunities for them to express their values, to connect and genuinely to take action on something they believe in? Remember the strongest donor foundations are those built on shared values between a person and the mission/vision of an organisation. We all know that the more valuable supporters are always in control and it is our job to go with the flow and provide opportunities, insights, options, stories, reports and conversations that build and enrich their interest,

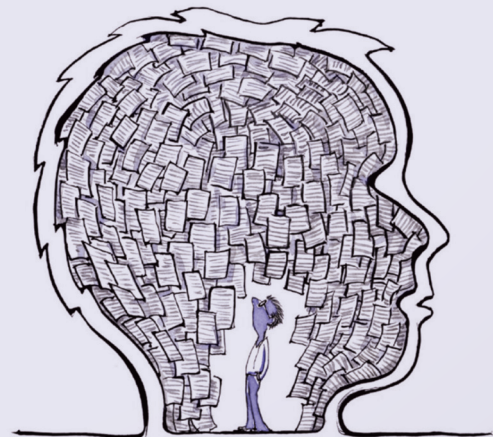
knowledge and spirit. It takes a brave fundraiser (there goes another variation on that word!) to step back from the financial focus and to believe that other actions will ultimately build a stronger link with the donor and perhaps a longer-term view of their connection and investment with the charity and its mission.

Fundraising as a single word doesn't reflect our role in sharing, translating, bridging, motivating and facilitating giving in all its manifestations. We need to be careful about this word in future; it will always be at the heart of my thinking and activities, but it needs a much wider frame of names and words to help other people truly understand what we do.

So 'fundraising' is just the portal to the vocabulary that we absorb and carry around, the one that I believe slows us down and forms barriers to how we think about things professionally.

“ ***Man cannot discover new oceans unless he has the courage to lose sight of the shore*** ”

André Gide



What Does a Donor REALLY Mean To You?

A Change your words, change your mind, change your outlook, change your actions and change the world. We need to focus on the true 'centre piece' of our attentions and action, what we currently call 'the donor'.

The logic is that as people 'give or donate' they must therefore be donors. The trouble is that surely we do not want people to 'just give' or for us to see them as 'living cash points (ATMs)' to be accessed or cracked. Smart fundraising has moved away from focusing on the money as the core of an individual's support to appreciating the true need to draw people into a relationship that can grow gradually and with time grow to be stronger and more committed; get a series of actions and interactions right and the money will follow.

Remember if you are a professional fundraiser we are trained on the word donor and accept it has far and wide meanings, but outside our profession the dictionary will guide people along these lines: "a person who donates something, especially money to charity" or "a person who gives something (such as blood or a body organ) so that it can be given to somebody who needs it."

If the basics are that 'fundraising is so much more than just money', we must all now recognise the 360° view of the donor; in taking this view we need constantly to seek to recognise, build, measure and integrate:

- 60°: money, preferably on a steady regular basis, building in value year on year and hopefully building towards a possible ultimate gift, that of a legacy.
- +
- 120°: time, historically given more generously than money and now a precious commodity that is increasingly in short supply.
- +
- 180°: goods, the essential gifts-in-kind that people can give to be used, traded or sold.
- +
- 240°: voice, to build a relationship people need to be heard and have the opportunity to share their views, passions and thoughts. As campaigning and advocacy are essential parts of what we do, voice is a precious gift to target and acknowledge. Many charities are now embracing and refreshing the idea of being a 'movement' for some form of change; movements are made up of many voices combined to highlight the need for change in a specific area.
- +
- 300°: influence, central to growth of any organisation is the need to get people to share their passion, values and belief in your charity. Word of mouth is back as THE number one form of marketing and influence is the driving force as people connect, share and communicate.
- +
- 360°: life change, direct actions people can take in the way they lead their everyday lives; buying fair trade,

seeking ethical companies with which to interact, avoiding companies that have dubious human rights track records, etc.

The word 'donor' seems too passive and faceless with all these factors not only at work but critical to true integrated fundraising. We should also consider that in most developed fundraising markets less than ten percent of the population is the true supporter and giver to charity. These are the people who see the need and value to 'put back', help us and take a wider responsibility for the world we live in. With such a small pool of people we need to change our view and see everyone in the ten percent as an investor, a term that to date we have reserved for HNWIs (High Net-Worth Individuals). Let's be honest, most medium and larger sized charities now have to adopt fully business practices and accountabilities to operate efficiently and to implement their programmes, so the people who share our values and fund us ARE investors and key stakeholders; but the nice thing for them and us is that they are investors in a better world.

Consider how the word investor forces us to think, prepare and act differently; investors are more likely to consider: shared values, past track record, brand reputation, who is in charge, credibility of programmes and solutions, potential impact for their gift and above all they will take more interest in their gift, potentially leading to other 'investments' if they are happy and feel there has been a 'good return' on their investments in your mission and work. In return you need to respond to investors with smarter communications, tailored communications, better service, a stronger sense of accountability and as partners in your work not just 'donors'.

Like other elements in the new Lexicon of Fundraising I am taking the realistic view that we may not actually change the words we use day to day, but if we can find space in any review, planning creativity sessions to talk and think differently we may take a different approach and create something more original and better aligned to the ever changing lives of the people we want to connect to in a long term meaningful way.

“Be a lover of the world, it is the only way to survive in it.”

Janosch



Quality not Quantity is the Key to Future Growth

So having looked at the very core of our profession, fundraising, and the centre of our world, the donor, we now move down the slippery slope of the words we use to describe the different stages of a journey or a relationship.

In the 2013 AFP Fundraising Effectiveness study the big story was the fact that in North America we only manage to retain 23% of new donors and 61% of our existing donors, possibly two of the most shameful statistics of our profession, but why? Is it our approach to care, stewardship and engagement once someone is with us or does the problem start earlier in the way we attract people in the first place? I know that there has been a lot of thinking shared around this challenge, but I believe it all starts with the way we think about gaining supporters in the first place.

The standard 'industry' starting point for attracting support is through 'recruitment', a pretty inadequate and dated word that, in its self is always referred to as a 'process'; in other words something mechanical with little feeling or human touch. If you shorten the word to 'recruit' it is even worse as the first definition that you will find is "a recently enlisted member of a military or paramilitary corps, still in training" nice!

Today we have all the tools available to us for targeting, profiling and analytics plus an endless stream of channels to consider, but this is where we put our energy rather than into the actual proposition and the way we reach out to seek support. Modern marketing thinks that in 'recruitment' the balance is 40% targeting, 40% proposition and 20% creative. Not sure I agree with this, but even if we go with it that means 60% is focused on what we present to people and how we present it. For sometime now I have been saying that we have to stop recruiting donors and start 'inspiring' them. What is the difference? Recruiting sounds like a sales process, pushing the donor to make a decision and a donation, whereas inspiration is about concentrating on creating stories, opportunities and emotional propositions that draw people towards a charity brand and its cause; 'pulling power, not pushing power'. This is so much more difficult and demanding and will probably produce fewer donors in the first instance, as it will be designed to target people who really have a connection or shared value with a cause and what it is doing to change the world.

In a world where people are bombarded with messages, brands and propositions, too much of our communication is simply blending in and getting lost. We know only too well that many 'recruitment channels' are no longer viable and the options we do have are so often hit and miss. When I started fundraising this really wasn't a problem as you simply just kept pushing out and we often knew little

better than what we called 'churn and burn', just keep going and hope that every 'push out' would compensate for the people lost from the last push. Now we know that we must seek as large a share as possible of the 5% of the population who are the true givers, the ones who want to engage fully in charities and feel that they are making a difference in their lifetime and beyond. The future is and will be about quality not quantity, so the way we attract supporters has to change. The digital world now means we have so many options to try different things in small-targeted pockets, approaches that are quite simply inspirational.

For me the most important 'school of marketing' for our sector in the future will be emotional marketing; marketing that touches people's hearts, heads and spirits in unique combinations. We need to focus on our key audiences, understand their needs and lives and create a true relevance for why they should come along side us, support us and believe that things can change.

I realise this is a fine line and that we have to be realistic with the task in hand but the whole point of this series is to ask you to stop and at least try to think about some of our key regular activities in a different way. You may not change the whole process but you may just begin to approach some aspects of it differently.

“ We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts we make the world. ”

Buddha



Do We Know What We Need?

When you first become a fundraiser the focus is on techniques, channels and strategies, learning the art and craft of fundraising. It takes time to realise that all of these elements are actually hygiene factors and that the real 'substance' of fundraising is understanding the need and immersing yourself in all the dimensions of the charity's work. Established fundraisers know that all great fundraising is 'needs led' and this runs as a core through great fundraising programmes; connecting the donors thoughts, values and emotions.

But is the word 'needs' the right description of the core of our activities? We talk about our programmes and our services, but again these are technical internal terms that have little resonance with donors. Donors surely need to hear about problems, challenges, opportunities, missions, journeys, adventures and actions that are making the world a better place; remembering that 'world' can apply to a local community as much as it can to the planet. People will respond to meet a 'need' but will they truly connect and perhaps offer a relationship with that need?

Beyond need the next most common term that we use is 'case', the 'case for support'. At the moment a term that has had a major renaissance in line with the growing focus on leadership giving; but have you ever stopped to think where this term comes from? Simple really, the legal profession; in the early days of developing professional fundraising people felt that to appeal to major donors they needed to think differently and rather than fall back on a business plan they decided that there were many similarities with the legal profession where you had to develop comprehensive, water-tight cases for either the defense or the prosecution. As a lawyer your job was to argue and evidence your corner to win the case. Perhaps in the 1950s this was cutting edge thinking, but now?

So the emerging word for the twenty first century fundraiser is, ironically the oldest word of them all, 'stories'. Ira Glass once said "great stories happen to those that can tell them" and as fundraisers we want great stories of delighting donors and connecting them to something far more meaningful than money. Like the commercial sector we are now fully awake to the understanding that using facts leads to conclusions, but using emotions leads to action ; look at advertising today from the world's biggest brands, they no longer balance between features and benefits they now create stories that connect to emotions. The busier people's lives become the more they look for simplicity and connection, hence the power of stories. Stories provide the human touch and create warmth, connection, interest, surprise and delight.

Have you ever thought that the words we use to describe our work in mailings, publications and on the web actually have no meaning?!? For charities words are 'triggers'

that set off images, memories and emotions in our mind. So the more factual and bland the words we use are the more unlikely we are to get the right reaction to our work. Before stories became the central theme of our thinking, I liked the analogy of the charity and the oyster, our job as fundraisers is to be the grain of sand that is inserted into the oyster to irritate it in the hope of creating a pearl. No fundraiser should ever simply take what a charity says about its work and then promote that onto the donor. Our job is to question what the charity does, using the most powerful tool of all: asking why? And keep asking why until you go deeper and deeper. Fundraisers are the donors' champions in charities, representing their interests as investors and constantly seeking new stories to inspire the donor and bring them joy from their giving.

Stories need characters, plots, themes, imagination and channels for them to be communicated. They need a beginning, middle and an end. Stories feed the donor's heart, spirit and head. Always remember that people don't really give to causes, they give to ideas, values and people.

Some readers will feel that they have heard much of this before, but the reality is that this is not a passing trend, it is here to stay and it is not something you can simply 'dip into' when it suits, it is a whole marketing philosophy that needs to be consistent and built over time. Human beings have always related to stories but now they need them more than ever to make sense of the world and to feel that their actions really can make a difference.

“ ***Emotions are the lubricants of reason.*** ”

F.Yakob



So we have some ‘investors’, now what?

We are all familiar with the normal division used in a direct marketing or individual giving teams: acquisition, development and high value; a simple way of dividing out the task of ensuring maximum value from each donor. The recent difficult economic times have placed a far greater emphasis on development, with charities at last realising the value of concentrating on their existing supporters and stopping them from moving on or lapsing. The commercial sector has known for years the value of existing customers and the need to keep them happy. There are so many statistics that show the cost of acquiring a new customer or donor versus the cost of retaining existing ones. Globally I would estimate that we fail to retain over 45% of our donors every year. So what are we doing wrong? What haven't we thought about that could make a difference?

Back to our lexicon and the words we ‘fall into using’; once we have a donor we do two things in direct marketing: we service them (communicate with them) and we work towards upgrading them. We are driven by data and numbers, isn't it truly insane to think we think that it is OK to schedule a call twelve months after a donor has given to us expecting that they will want to increase their gift as a ‘celebration’ of it being a year since they first gave! Sometimes we live in our own little world not even questioning where such ideas came from and their relevance to our donors today.

Servicing donors usually means dropping them into an existing communications cycle and sending them newsletters, updates, more appeals and usually something extra at Christmas, thus assuming they are a Christian donor! Our limited resources usually mean that we have to define a communications cycle for donors where generally ‘one size has to fit all’. I realise that data mining, smarter segmentation and other data tools do change this to some degree, but we are still fundamentally ‘servicing’ donors and working to a time when we can ‘upgrade’ them.

Building on the idea that our job is to inspire people to gain their support, as opposed to just ‘recruiting’ them, maybe we should think about ‘guiding donors’ rather than servicing them? It is more proactive and there is logic to the idea that we should be offering them opportunities to explore new communication channels, formats and content, not to mention other propositions they may want to consider investing in. Once a donor is on board our job is to champion their interests within our organisation and to act as their ‘guide’ in the world of philanthropy, meeting their needs as much as our own. Most of us agree that the idea of a donor journey is a useful conceptual framework that forces to think through how we can grow the engagement of the donor, perhaps towards a relationship or a sense of belonging from the donor. In reality there is no journey and the donor will choose to do whatever they like, but with a proactive ‘guide’ they may just take another

step forward in the way they think about and relate to the charity.

Upgrading is our equivalent of the commercial ‘upsell’. The process whereby you buy the larger size, the extra benefits, the package, etc.; in sales this term has been around since the beginning of time, but are we really in the business of mechanically moving people to just give more, more often or in different ways? By thinking of upgrading we are not thinking about building the donors interest, insight, joy and knowledge to the next level where, if they are able to, they will want to repeat, increase or reformat their giving; upgrading is something we plan and budget for, but it is driven by us and not the donor.

With some donor groups we need to be braver and work on a basis of allowing the donor to ‘graduate’ to higher levels of giving and support. This places the emphasis back on us to help the donor graduate by communicating in different ways, reaching out for dialogue not monologue and simply trying different things without always working towards the next ask. This isn't simple, but with the many channels now available it is within our reach for select groups of donors and, who knows, in time we may be able to develop a smarter approach for the whole donor base.

“ ***One loyal friend is worth 10,000 relatives.*** ”

F.Yakob



‘Major Donors’, who are you kidding?

There has never been so much interest, focus or activity around what we have traditionally called ‘major donors’. The Sector has a new found confidence in this area and has realised that it can be approached flexibly and linked simply to the existing work and programmes of the charity without having to create a campaign or have something new for people to invest in. In addition to the mind shift, this area of fundraising is generally agreed as holding up financially and, in many areas, growing despite the continuing economic challenges. We all know that a small number of ‘major donors’ disproportionately shape overall philanthropic giving (investing) and the income of some individual organisations.

This is one of the longest-established groups of donors, yet it continues to grow through new wealth among entrepreneurs and younger generations. My experience is that it is getting even more strategic and certainly more demanding as these potential donors truly embrace philanthropy. The simplest way to divide major donors is by their wealth type, old and new, and to relate to the different ways that major philanthropy is developing; which generally is in a much more active, engaged and demanding style. We now have schools of philanthropy for potential ‘investors’ to explore and engage in: Venture Philanthropy, Impact Philanthropy, Social innovation, etc.

My biggest problem with our thinking around this whole donor group and programmes is the fact that we still call it ‘major donors’. When I started in fundraising I think it would be fair to say that ‘big gift fundraising’ was a more popular term, but frankly thinking back this was an even worse title for a programme and the thinking that surrounded it. My point is that we define people as part of a major donor programme before they have given or shown any intention of giving?!? Surely it is time to move to defining our approach as an inspiration and cultivation programme for High Net-Worth Individuals (HNWI) and to embrace the idea of them as ‘investors’ for social good.

Put simply, wealth is growing and the number of people with wealth is growing; in 2012 the wealth of HNWIs globally grew by 10% to a global pool estimated to be worth £42.6 trillion and this group of individuals increased by a million to 12 million individuals so we need much wider flexible programmes with more segments and ways of engaging/growing HNWIs’, the ultimate charity investors. In my view, a strong fundraising programme needs a distinct section of their ‘donor journey’ to appeal to different segments within the category HNWI, recognising the growth in wealth in society; there are more people with potential disposable money today than ever in the history of society.

HNWI is an umbrella term for a programme within a programme, it needs to be defined, segmented and tiered through a series of propositions and programmes that allows people of wealth to grow their interest, engagement

and relationship with a charity and its cause; it is no longer a simple matter of having a very limited ‘major donor’ programme. A good start would be four possible tiers: Middle, High, Major and Transformational. This would enable an approach whereby a charity can test the top 3 or 4% of its donor file with a more personalised, tailored and exclusive direct marketing approach at the lower end of a HNWI programme while still researching and targeting appropriate external contacts (through networks) at the higher end with one-to-one techniques and thinking. Between these two levels there would be a range of techniques and propositions that would be used, including events, giving circles, programme visits and engagement, crowd-funding and other such thinking.

Every charity can, and should, build in a HNWI programme, as individuals in this category are invaluable to the overall growth, reach and influence of the organisation. Ultimately larger charities will evolve their HNWI programme into a ‘leadership giving’ approach, where they will integrate HNWI strategy and resources with corporate and foundation giving, recognising that HNWIs are the key to accessing other sources beyond personal wealth; in fact a large percentage of HNWI giving is through their foundations for obvious reasons.

The future in our new lexicon is HNWI and then Leadership Giving and the beauty of this emerging thinking is that it requires brainpower, determination and creativity as opposed to budget power to grow the area.

“ **Greek word: ‘philanthropos’
= Humanity loving** ”



How Does Your Garden Grow?

One of the most shameful statistics of 2013 came out of the AFP Fundraising Effectiveness report that concluded that overall donor retention was now only 39% in the USA! So allow me to state the obvious and increase the shame, this means that 61% of donors either lapse, don't give again or ignore any on-going communication. We all know that where the US market goes Europe and others tend to follow and to be frank I don't think the UK is far behind this already. So, is philanthropy and giving simply going out of fashion? Or is it that we should accept the low attention spans that people now have when it comes to brands and engagement? Or should we get closer to the truth and take responsibility for this shameful performance and admit our over use of 'interruptive marketing', our over focus on recruitment as opposed to donor development and our general lack of skills at engaging and delighting the donors who do give us a chance and 'try us out'?

We now all work in a world with more available channels than ever in the history of mankind and people are living a more connected and information rich life than before. I always look on the positive side and truly believe that there is good in everyone and start from a point that the vast majority of people want to give and engage with charity, but always on their terms and to match their life-stage and lifestyle. In this series of blogs I have tried to emphasise that giving is about people and their needs, it is not primarily about our needs; we provide the opportunity for people to express their values and feel some significance from their giving in making or leaving the world a better place. So against this background people will 'shop around' seeking the best match to their needs and style. New propositions, new creative and pressure from the actions of others will also constantly tempt people to give to other charities and campaigns. We invest heavily in getting people to make the initial move or response to our propositions but we clearly don't move quickly enough to reinforce and build on this moment of action from a new donor.

Back to the new lexicon and the power of words for some fresh thinking. Charities invest considerable time in donor development strategies and communication cycles, but these are often too theoretical, lack flexibility, lack 'rapid test cycles' and, generally, do not prioritise the power of data integrated with great marketing and communication. All of this is often coupled with an overall lack of dedication, investment and creativity to this vital area of income. So I want to go back fifteen years to a time when we started talking about a 'supporter journey', a simple framework that forced fundraisers to define a range of different programmes that could be offered and introduced to supporters in the spirit of giving them somewhere to 'move to' and increasing their level of engagement with the charity. The key to this was the thinking that as soon as a supporter stepped forward, we saw them as joining the charity on a journey, hopefully for a lifetime.

Many people have become sceptical of such simple straightforward thinking, declaring that supporters don't follow journeys, but that is the point our job is to encourage them and be one step ahead with new opportunities to interest and inspire them. Every action a supporter takes is part of a journey, a journey to a greater relationship with the charity and ultimately, for a small number of supporters, a sense of belonging and loyalty to a charity brand. We live in a time when charities over-engineer things to the point where strategies, processes and reporting slow them down, we need to keep simplicity at the front of our mind and deploy all the sophisticated thinking to develop a 'journey' that keeps donors exploring and responding to our work. We need to integrate our thinking so that we avoid 'dropping' donors into an on-going predefined communications cycle. One size does not fit all, it never did and it never will!

I have always been a great believer in the concept of relationship fundraising, but for most charities and for the majority of the database this is a very challenging piece of thinking, so I tend to take one step back and focus more on helping people to 'belong' to something. Human beings are social animals and very tribal so I think the future is about more 'movements' to which people can align their values, resources and affinity. In the new lexicon it is an interesting filter to think through how we can create a sense of belonging for donors, a feeling where they are in control and it is on their terms. I believe that a sense of belonging nurtured over time will lead to a relationship; once again we move back in time to reinvent and reinvigorate 'movements', a proven historical approach that has literally changed the world.

“ ***As with any journey, who you travel with can be more important than the destination.*** ”



Branding: the next and final frontier

One of the core lessons of leadership and management is that people can only take so much change. So, on the basis that we have come to the last of an eight-part blog series to define a new lexicon for fundraising, I want to end with one final major challenge as we move into 2014, the reinvention, reinvigoration and redefinition of what we call branding.

Every charity I have ever worked with has invested time and resources in branding, rebranding or refocusing the brand, the challenge with all of this is the understanding of branding in the not-for-profit sector and what drives the charity has behind wanting to put energy into the brand. This is a key area where silo structures and internal divisions come to the fore, as fundraising is very rarely the department or discipline that leads on branding. We entrust this to the communications team and have to fall into line with their view of what branding is and how it can work for a charity. However, in my view, fundraising is the central stakeholder in brand development as, to be successful, we have to interface with the public, our supporters and the other groups to which a charity links.

Consider this 'yesterday the most successful charities were those that donors knew best; today the most successful charities are those that know their donors best'. So the future is not about awareness or, heaven forbid, advertising, it is about connections and inspirations. Smart charities know that they have to build relevance and meaning to their missions and visions. If we accept that donors support charities that express their values and beliefs, then we have to think that a charity's brand is the framework that attracts, connects and delights a donor. I have long believed that branding for charities is about share of heart and share of mind, in that order. Strong charity brands allow a person to belong to something that is greater than themselves and feel a level of significance in the support they give.

In commercial branding people relate to companies or products that they feel express themselves, that they are comfortable with, have a connection with or ones that they simply love. People choose brands based on who they are or who they want to be; Kevin Roberts, CEO of Saatchi Saatchi Worldwide began describing branding ten years ago as 'Lovemarks', a wonderful way to bring the ultimate human feeling of love into the business world. He argues passionately that Lovemarks are brands that develop loyalty beyond reason. "The idealism of love is the new realism of business. By building respect and inspiring love, business can move the world." While this is central to the success of Apple, Harley Davidson, Sony and many other companies, surely this is the ultimate goal for charities.

We live in a world of extreme choice and people are now firmly in control of what they want, what they like and to what they relate. You could almost say there is too much choice. There are 163,000 charities in England and Wales

and 1.1 million in the USA and the majority of them all want money, time and loyalty. Our 'cut through' into this busy market place is to invest fresh thinking into our brands, to build brands that help supporters create meaning for themselves in the crazy world that they live in. Branding for charities is not about how we look, what we say or our overall identity, it is the collective of everything we do to help people notice us, embrace us and to love us. I also like the idea that central to love is trust and the promises you make. So, what are you doing to build trust and what promises are you making to build differentiation and make sure you are the preferred partner to bring a particular change to the community or world?

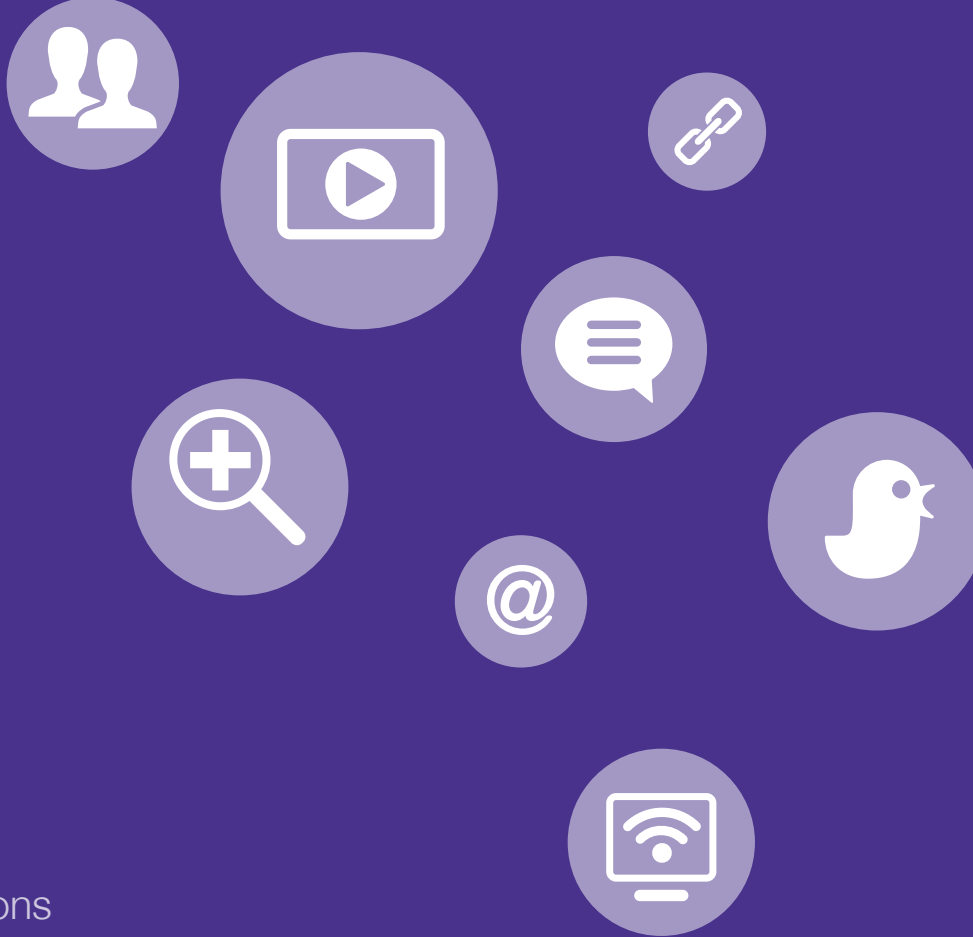
Jeff Bezos famously said "your brand is what people say about you when you are not in the room", a great insight for charities when you consider that word-of-mouth marketing is now central to future growth. In the New Lexicon of Fundraising, 'branding' is the only word that should remain the same; but we need to change the way we view the meaning and significance of this word going forward.

THE END....at least for now!

“ *Love is friendship caught on fire.* ”

Euripides





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