



In-Memory Insight | April 2015

Fundraising in-memory through events



LegacyForesight

In-Memory Insight is an ongoing programme to map, measure and research in-memory giving and fundraising. We work closely with a learning circle of leading charities who agree to pool their budgets, experiences and data to help build evidence and insight.

The theme of the 2014/15 research programme was fundraising in-memory through events. This report summarises key conclusions of the consumer research, based on both survey research and focus groups. We are grateful to our learning circle members for agreeing to share these insights more widely.

About the research

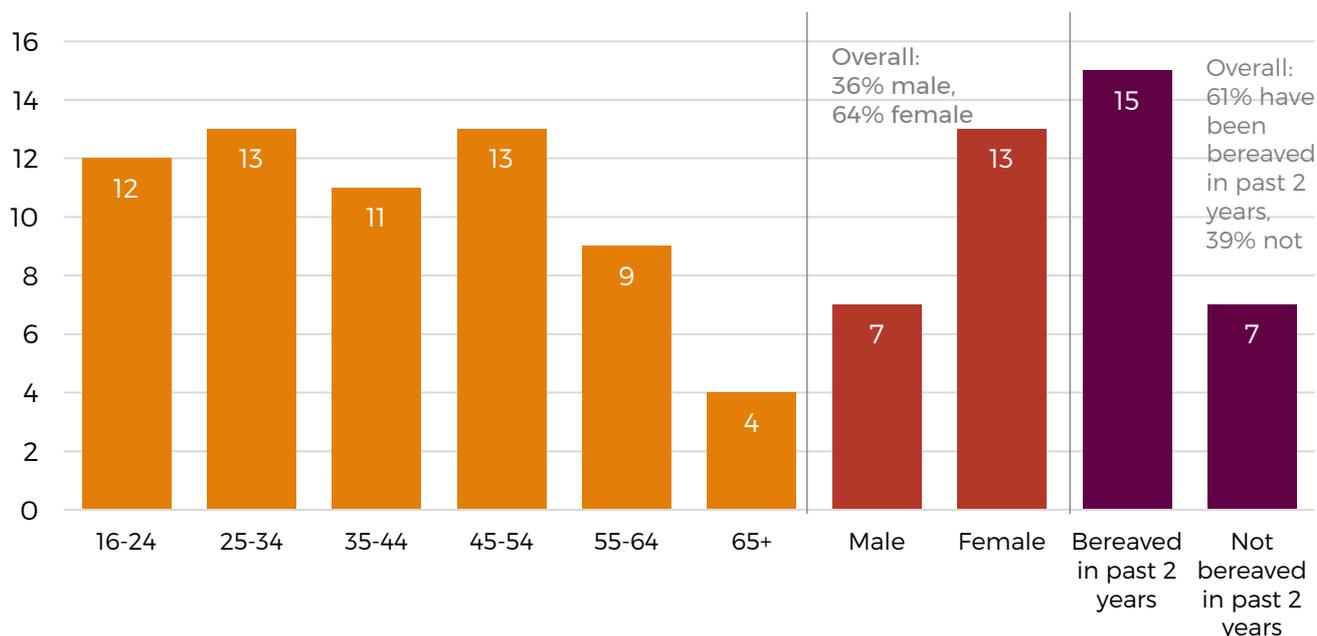
Our investigations focused on people participating in fundraising events in memory of a close friend or family member. The research kicked off in July 2014 with six focus groups split by both age and gender. This was followed in September 2014 with an in-home omnibus survey by GfK with a sample of 2,865 adults. Both survey and focus groups covered the full range of fundraising events – from sporting (e.g. marathons, fun runs) to social (e.g. coffee mornings) to challenge events; including both events organised by charities and those organised by family and friends.

What we learned

Events participation by age and gender

In all, 10% of those questioned by GfK had taken part in a fundraising event in memory of a loved one over the past year. As the chart below shows, events participation diminished with age, dropping from 13% for 45-54 year olds to 9% of 55-64s and just 4% of 65+s. Women were almost twice as likely to participate in memory as men (13% vs 7%) – this means that overall, two thirds of in-memory events participants are women.

% of population participating in memory by age and gender



Not surprisingly, recently bereaved people were more likely to participate in memory; that said, 39% of in-memory events participants had not been bereaved in the past two years – this suggests that they were honouring someone who died more than two years ago and/or someone they were not so close to.

The reasons for in-memory participation

Participating in events in memory can be an important focus for grieving, healing and discussion. This is particularly true in the early days following the death. The people we interviewed in our focus groups talked of how the event gave them comfort, an opportunity to remember and in some cases, a sense of closure. Many talked of how taking part in an event gave them the chance to do something positive and constructive. They had felt helpless when their loved one was ill and recognised that they could do nothing now to help them. But event fundraising meant that they could go on to help others, give back to the charity or enable the research that would change the course of a disease in the future.

In-memory versus 'regular' fundraising

We asked people whether or not it was different if they were participating in an event in someone's memory. Most said that it was. Participating in memory meant that the event was more personal and more emotional. Even if people were attracted by the event first, doing it in someone's name made it more worthwhile and more purposeful. Donors said that they were more motivated when doing an event in memory, which meant that they put more effort into the fundraising and were less likely to back out.

In-memory events were also more likely to be repeated, particularly if they were a way of keeping the memory alive. This was particularly true if the deceased was relatively young. But some in-memory events turned into regular or annual events by chance or osmosis. After one or two successes which were not too onerous for the organisers/participants, people often found that friends and family assumed the event would be repeated.

Big differences between men and women!

There were significant differences between men and women, not only in terms of the nature of the events that they found attractive but also the extent to which they wanted to openly acknowledge the deceased or personalise the event.

Men were often more attracted to physical events than women and in particular to events that they felt were challenging. Men were also more likely to talk about the importance of training and how this could be as enjoyable as the event itself. Very often they trained with friends for solidarity and competition.

Competition was another theme that seemed more male than female. Men appeared to relish competition, either in terms of their performance within an event, or the amount of money raised by it. Competition could spur them on to do bigger and better things and to generate more money. Perhaps because they enjoyed challenge, men were more likely than women to start with an event that they fancied and then decide how or in whose name they wanted to participate.

Women, conversely, were more likely to start with the person and find or build an event that was fitting. They were less attracted by physical challenge and competition and more by social reward. Women looked to friends and family for support and empathy as opposed to competition. The Omnibus data showed that while 64% of female event occasions were

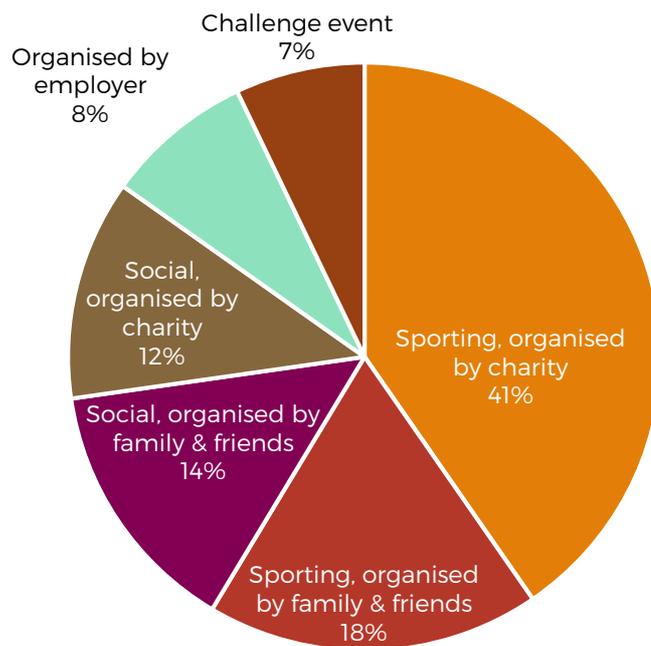
'sporting', they were more likely to be walks or fun runs. 32% of female event occasions were 'social' (compared to just 23% for males).

The other big difference between men and women was the extent to which they wanted to be overt about the in-memory connection. Men were much more likely to be covert about this. They knew what they were doing and why, but they didn't always feel the need to tell other people this, or the charity. Women on the other hand were more open about the connection. They were more likely to want to personalise events and openly name the deceased. They were also more likely to tell the charity about the deceased and to appreciate acknowledgement of what they had done and in whose name.

Charity vs self-organised events

The Omnibus data showed that almost two thirds of in-memory events (63%) were 'sporting', with a further 7% described as 'challenge' events. The remaining 30% of events were 'social'. Around half of the events done in memory were charity organised and half were self-organised. In the focus groups we found considerable crossover between the two.

% in-memory event occasions by type



Base: all event occasions, GfK Omnibus survey 2014

How was the deceased remembered?

Events were undoubtedly a time for remembering the deceased and most fundraisers carried the deceased in their head during the event. Some used the occasion to talk about the deceased with friends and family, and it was often a focus for pulling people together. But for others it was enough simply to recall private memories.

Women were more likely to be overt about the deceased during the event and afterwards with the charity. This might mean naming the deceased in invitations, at the event itself and when handing over money. Several had run in the Race For Life with the name or a picture of a loved one on their back and talked of how this had sparked conversations about them.

Many in-memory events happening under the radar

Many of the self-organised events that people talked about were not visible to the charities benefiting from them. This was either because people did not feel the need to make them visible (especially men) or because people wanted them to remain informal and without conditions. Women running informal coffee mornings for example, wanted to feel that however much or little they raised, this was good enough. They reasoned that it was money the charity would not have otherwise received. Neither men nor women wanted the charity to hijack their event or up the stakes so that there was added pressure. The events worked because they were fun, social and self-determined.

Similarly, much of the money raised in charity-run events would not have been identified as in memory. This was for a number of reasons – people did not think to tell the charity, or they saw no need to do so, or the personal nature of their remembering meant they felt it was inappropriate.

What more can charities do?

Many of the charities benefiting from the events talked about in this research would not have known anything about them and had no way of doing so. In some instances, this was exactly what people wanted. Perhaps all charities can do is **to ask questions about the money they are receiving** to establish where it has come from and quietly acknowledge its roots. It is also important to respect the way that people are fundraising and **try not to intrude too much**. That said, there was a lot of discussion about how **toolkits** could be helpful.

Where people had told charities, they were fundraising in someone's memory, they had appreciated a **personal acknowledgement**, especially women. People also said that they might appreciate **ideas for future events** and recognised that charities may have the facility to put people together to fundraise locally. Some charities provided help **to publicise** events, usually through social media, and this was appreciated. When the charity had access to contacts that individuals did not have, it meant that the event spread more successfully. As ever, people also wanted to believe that the money they generated was being well spent by the charity, and so welcomed any **information that helped show the difference the money might make**.

One of the bigger things that charities could consider is some sort of **segmentation by gender**, since the differences between men and women were so marked. It may mean, for example, that communication and materials are made more personal for women, and more competitive for men. Charities can also **seek to understand where fundraisers are starting from** – i.e. the person, event or charity.

More about In-Memory Insight

In-Memory Insight explores the size, shape and scope of in-memory giving in the UK. The programme aims to collect objective evidence and insight on in-memory giving, in order to build the case for investment, inform fundraising strategies and help manage relationships with supporters.

The In-Memory Insight programme is funded by a Learning Circle of leading British charities who agree to pool their budgets, experiences and data to help build our collective knowledge. We operate a rolling research programme, with each year building on the one before.

We define in-memory as “any type of charitable giving or fundraising commemorating the life of someone special”. A range of in-memory motivated activities are covered in our research, including gifts at funerals, direct in-memory donations both one-off and regular, the setting up of ‘Tribute Funds’, the purchase of commemorative objects such as benches and trees, participation in fundraising events such as marathons and bike rides, and legacies made in honour of a loved one.

The programme sets out to explore:

- What motivates in-memory donors to give to charity – and how does it make them feel?
- What do in-memory donors need, expect – and experience – from the charities they support?
- How many/much In-memory gifts are being given? Through which channels?
- What is the current status of In-memory fundraising in the UK?
- What can we learn from good practice examples – both here and overseas?

To answer these questions, we use a variety of research techniques including focus groups and depth interviews, omnibus surveys, good practice case studies, the analysis of performance data from Learning Circle members and interactive member workshops.

For more information on In-Memory Insight contact Caroline Waters:

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Time to book a Health-Check?

Have you reached a pivotal point with your in-memory fundraising? Are you wondering how to pinpoint exactly where you should be focusing attention and investment?

An In-Memory Health Check from Legacy Foresight could give you the confidence to move onwards and upwards with a sound base of evidence unique to your organisation.

To talk to us informally about your charity’s needs, please contact Kate Jenkinson, Head of In-Memory Consultancy: k.jenkinson@legacyforesight.co.uk