



In-Memory Insight | February 2016

Lifting the lid on in-memory products



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 2015/16 research programme was in-memory products. This report summarises the scope and conclusions of the desk research that underpinned the subsequent consumer research and charity case studies. We are grateful to our learning circle members for agreeing to share these insights more widely.

Lifting the lid on in-memory products

Since 2011 the work of In-Memory Insight has turned the spotlight on remembrance as a giving motivation of major significance for many charities. Sector-wide, there has been a refocusing of energy in this area, with benefits already being felt by donors and charities alike.

But what do we know about the role that products play? Which charities are actively using products to promote in-memory giving? What types of products are out there and how are these being deployed? How is the donor experience affected, and what does this suggest about charities' commitment to the in-memory donor journey?

For this research we defined an in-memory product as “anything a charity can offer someone – as part of a transaction – to satisfy their desire, or need, to remember a loved one”. This “anything” could be a physical item (e.g. a commemorative bench or plaque); a real or virtual experience (e.g. participating in a remembrance event or lighting an online candle); or a service offered by the charity (such as the provision of pew envelopes to help the smooth running of a funeral collection). A product is offered to the donor as an acknowledgment that they have given – or done – something to help the charity in their loved one's name.

Our research sample

Our sample for this research was a core of sixty key British charities, representing a comprehensive spread of size and sector. Included were forty in-memory Insight consortium members, plus an extra twenty non-members. These, we handpicked either on an assumption of the importance of in-memory income to their organisation (e.g. Cancer Research UK, Macmillan); or because their activity in this area had put them on our radar (e.g. National Trust, The Donkey Sanctuary).

20% of the charities examined were from the hospital/hospice sector. A further quarter were from health-based charities including five cancer, ten other medical and one mental health charity. Animals, development and children were the next largest segments. Nineteen of the sixty charities had total income under £10m - this group included ten hospices. A further 22 charities had income between £11m and £50m; while the remaining 19 charities received total income of over £50m a year.

An audit of these 60 charities was carried out, looking at every in-memory product offered by each organisation. Our own Learning Circle members provided information on their in-

memory activities via a questionnaire, followed up by telephone as need be. For the other charities, we relied on the information available to potential donors via their websites, supplemented by anecdotal evidence from the third party experts.

As a side study, we also looked for lessons from across the Atlantic. We audited Forbes' Top 20 US charities by voluntary income, seeking out similarities and differences in the way British and American charities use products in their in-memory fundraising.

In-memory fundraising US-style

Two key factors were found to be influencing American charities' use of in-memory products:

- Remembrance and mourning are embedded in national culture in the States, framed around two annual milestones: Memorial Day, a federal holiday to remember everyone who has died in the US armed forces; and Patriot Day, a national day of prayer and remembrance for victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. For many US charities, remembrance products are dominated by the donating and volunteering opportunities based around these two dates, co-ordinated by the Corporation for National and Community Service
- As with legacies, the language and tone used to promote remembrance products in the States is notably more dispassionate and business-like than that used by UK charities. The emphasis is primarily on the tax benefits to the donor rather than on the person being remembered.

Categorising the products on offer

The desk research uncovered a diverse range of products. So how best to categorise these? A number of broad territories emerged, based on what we assumed were the charities' fundraising objectives behind each product offer. Within these, four separate categories became apparent:

1. Products to **encourage** an initial in-memory gift – i.e. “would you consider giving in-memory?”
2. Products to **recognise** an initial in-memory gift – i.e. “thank- you for giving”
3. Products to encourage people to **give more or give again**
4. Products to encourage people to **keep giving**, building a long-term relationship with the charity

We further unpicked the final repeat giving/long-term relationship category after finding that many of the products identified were specifically linked to Tribute Funds. Within Tribute Funds we identified a further 3 sub-types:

- Products **encouraging** someone to set up a Tribute Fund (e.g. “anyone who sets up a Tribute Fund will receive xx”)
- **Recognition** products (“as a thank you for doing this we would like to give you xx”)
- **Threshold** products encouraging people to reach a particular target with their Fund (“raise xx and we will send you xx”)

The table below lists the different types of in-memory products identified, grouped into these four categories:

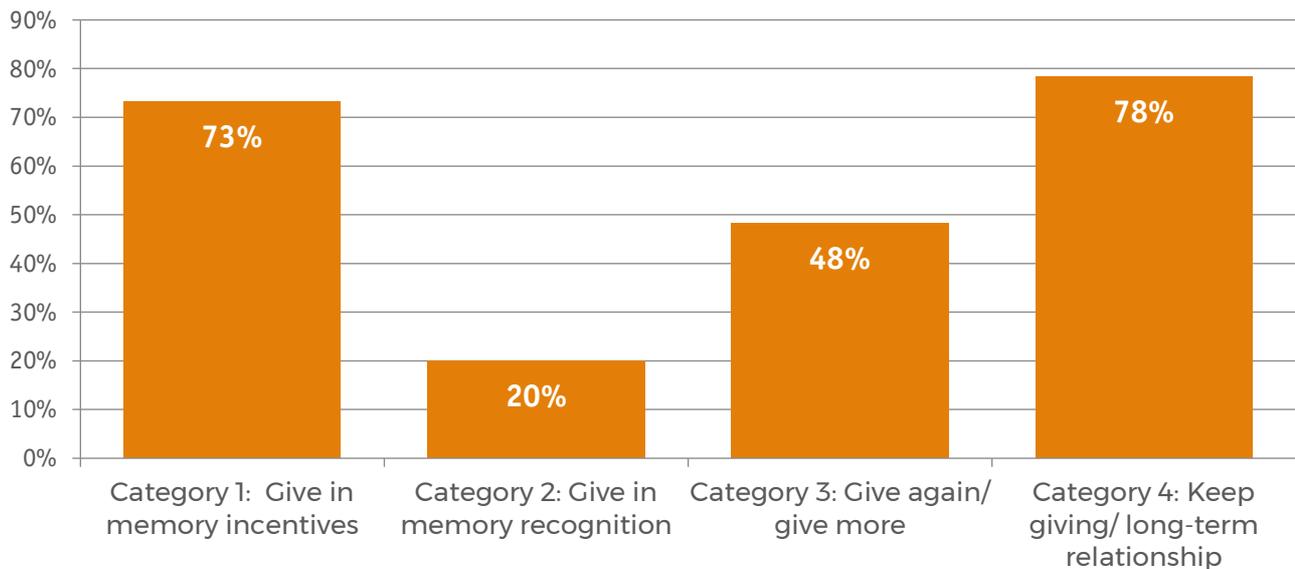
PRODUCT → ↓ CATEGORY	In memory giving encouragements	In memory giving recognition	Give again/ give more	Keep giving/ long-term relationship
PRODUCT TYPES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funeral collection envelopes/ boxes • 'Paid' entry into Book of Remembrance, on or offline • Earmarking/ restriction offers • Low-value dedications (<£250), e.g. dedicate a leaf in memory • Invites to engagement events • Personal commemorations with a giving ask, e.g. Every Man Remembered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other <u>personalised funeral collateral</u>, e.g. bespoke prayers • Bespoke recognition (offers tailored to the individual) • Automatic entry into Book of Remembrance, on or offline • Entry onto a special dedication page or other in <u>mem space</u> • Automatic invites to engagement events e.g. Thanksgiving service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to third-party collection facility, e.g. <u>Justgiving</u> In Memory pages • Online memorials • High-value dedications (>£250) e.g. buy a plaque • In memory appeals, e.g. 'Send in a star' • Sponsorship products, e.g. Sponsor a Puppy in memory • 'One-time' fundraising events, e.g. sponsored walks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tribute Funds • Repeat engagement events, e.g. annual thanksgiving service <div style="background-color: #f4a460; padding: 2px;">Encouragement</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stewardship benefits, e.g. regular newsletter • One-off or repeat activities, e.g. light a candle/ sponsor a light • Regular event invites <div style="background-color: #f4a460; padding: 2px;">Recognition</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembrance wall listing (<u>MuchLoved</u>) • Automatic regular event invites • Gifts, e.g. <u>personalised</u> Xmas tree decorations <div style="background-color: #f4a460; padding: 2px;">Value thresholds</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree dedications • Naming (star/ puppy) • Wall dedication • Plaque dedication • Gifts, e.g. rose

Mapping the spread of products available

The chart below shows the representation of charities' in-memory products spread across these four categories. At first glance, product effort appears to be unevenly distributed at the point of entry and at the point of asking for longer-term engagement. Over 70% of the 60 British charities studied were using products to encourage an initial in-memory gift and a full three quarters offered long-term engagement products, like Tribute Funds. This contrasted sharply with the meagre 20% that offered recognition products to say thank-you for giving, and the 48% that offered any kind of product aimed at securing a further in-memory gift.

Distribution of in-memory products by type

% of charities offering each type of incentive



Three key lessons emerging

Facilitation over inspiration?

Although 70% of the charities surveyed used products to encourage a first in-memory gift, there was strikingly little product variety in this category. 37 of 60 charities simply offered a pew collection envelope service, with only nine offering anything else here. There were just three examples of imaginative earmarking/restriction products that allowed the next-of-kin to choose a gift that genuinely reflected the values or passions of their loved one – surely a great way to connect with previously unengaged family members?

In this category, 'encouragement' appears to mean 'facilitation' rather than 'inspiration'. Is the offer of collection envelopes really likely to motivate an in-memory gift, or would the funeral collection happen anyway?

This opens a debate about just what the role of the charity should be at this point in the relationship: as *facilitator*, maintaining a low profile and minimising the donor's burden at a time of high stress? Or as *inspire*, stepping forward to make the donor feel brilliant about their loved one, perhaps even to remember them in a new light? Should it not be possible for the in-memory experience to provide both benefits?

Neglect of the second gift

Fundraisers often talk about the difficulty of engaging with in-memory supporters over time, and securing their continued support. But less than half of our charities offered any products that encouraged donors to give again, while only 20% offered recognition products thanking donors for their initial gift, which would make a further connection more likely (e.g. Books of Remembrance).

Those that did were far more likely to signpost donors to a third party like JustGiving, than to keep connecting with them via their own in-memory appeals.

Are charities misguidedly going with their gut feel about what in-memory donors really want from recognition? Feedback from our Consortium members suggests that Books of

Remembrance and other private-facing tributes can close doors between donors and charities rather than open them. Should the act of recognition, as well as thanking, acknowledge that a first gift might indicate an appetite for further contact? Sensitive executed, should in-memory recognition be more about making donors aware of other appropriate, ongoing opportunities, e.g. invites to events or inclusion in in-memory appeals that have motivating benefits for the donor?

Tribute Funds ... or bust

Almost three quarters of the charities we examined offered Tribute Funds, while 13% offered participation in repeat engagement events (usually a Christmas service). However, for many bereaved donors, the effort and public-facing commitment of a Tribute Fund can feel too much. For most charities, the *rea*/in-memory donor journey is not linear, (i.e. with donors gradually feeling closer to the charity as their experience of stewardship and engagement from subsequent giving deepens, before being exposed to a longer-term engagement ask).

Most Tribute Fund asks are still contained in the very first thank-you letter, on the premise that most Funds are triggered by the funeral collection. Does this point to an opportunity for charities *immediately after* the first in-memory gift – to develop appropriate offers that better fit the space between one-off gifts in-memory and Tribute Funds? With perhaps a second Tribute giving ask coming after an interim gift/action has been secured and the gap between donor and charity has narrowed? Given the significant investment needed to make a Tribute Fund programme work, are the Funds not otherwise severely under-servicing charities?

Furthermore, what is really happening to that significant cohort of people who aren't ready for long-term engagement with the charity straight after bereavement but are open to other ways of remembering their loved one?

One-off remembrance events appeal to many people and can be a great way of staying engaged before, or without, the longer-term commitment of Tribute fundraising. Yet most of the events we identified were walks or outdoor activities. What's to stop charities offering alternative, non-sporty, bespoke in-memory events that appeal to a broader range of people (including the elderly bereaved)? These could be a re-packaging of community events like coffee mornings or reflect some of the new activities emerging as popular acts of remembrance such as patch-working, scrap-booking or head-shaving.

Also, could charities be misjudging the size and significance of the ask when they signpost recently bereaved people to fundraising/collection pages like JustGiving? The online mechanism may be beautifully simple, but the act itself (publicly collecting/fundraising) is a big deal. Is too much expectation being placed on in-memory donors in those first early stages of bereavement? Wouldn't we all be glad of a little more support at this harrowing time from an organisation with which we've formed at least an initial point of trust? This might be something as simple as a call from the charity with tips and encouragement about using a sponsored fundraising site. Or it could be the offer of a completely different range of products, such as commemorative leaves or plaques.

Afterword

In-memory fundraisers know only too well how needs and reactions to grief can vary enormously from person to person. But this research has highlighted a disappointing lack of diversity in the remembrance products offered by our sector. In contrast, many non-charity remembrance products (whether from commercial organisations or 'home-made') are sought out, self-generated and rarely pushed at people. These products are fulfilling needs in a way that is genuinely customer-led. What if there was no such thing as a Tribute Fund? If collection envelopes were no longer allowed? Wouldn't we need to take a step back to ask supporters how they'd really like us to help them keep a loved one's memory alive?

Charities of all sizes can begin to address these gaps by clarifying the strengths and weaknesses of their current in-memory activity, gaining real first-hand insight into what interests their bereaved donors, and continually updating and monitoring the range of products for this audience. While of course charities need to consider their fundraising objectives, perhaps it's time for a complete rethink of the in-memory products we are offering, and why.

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