

A Charity Marketing Guide to Pandemic Recovery

Many small-to-medium-sized charities and good causes are facing serious income falls and even potential closure following the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic.

This may be due to a drop in some types of donations, interruption of charity shop trading or supporter withdrawal. Some income shortages have been compounded by fixed and variable costs that can't easily be reduced. At the Worshipful Company of Marketors, our focus is on promoting marketing as a force for social and economic good and through our Outreach programme we provide charitable and good cause organisations across the UK with "pro bono" marketing consultancy delivered by our volunteers. While Outreach cannot assist all those in need at this difficult time, we offer this guide to help charities make the most of their marketing opportunities.



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If you're a charity trustee, you're probably liable for the losses of your organisation and if you're thinking of serious consequences such as redundancy or closure, you'll be examining your options with your accountants and advisors.

These should include merger and consolidation with other compatible charities or good causes. Moving from two or more premises into one and reducing paid staff numbers are an obvious consideration for cutting costs. To start assessing your charity's situation, you may wish to view [UK Government advice on charity finances and insolvency](#).

1. Marketing Strategy

Before directly addressing fundraising income streams, have you reviewed your overall marketing strategy in the light of the pandemic? For example, are there any market segments outside your usual or potential supporters that you may have missed? Medical charities, for example, might find that some of the people accessing their services would also be willing to become financial supporters.

2. Corporate Supporters and Sponsors

- **Secure Existing Support:** Hopefully you'll have been in touch with your major corporate supporters and sponsors during lockdown to discuss continued support. If not, do it now!
- **Recruit:** Consider recruiting further sponsors. These may be national or local – look for organisations and corporates with links to your charity's activity. Has the pandemic made your charity more attractive to certain sponsors or companies who might previously have not been interested in working with you? You might for example be in the care sector, supporting healthcare workers. From a Corporate Social Responsibility perspective, many additional companies might now find your charity very attractive!

3. Individual Trustees, Patrons and Supporters

- **Contact Existing Supporters:** Your best chance of instantly raising cash will probably be from those who have supported you before. So ensure you have an up-to-date supporters' list which is GDPR-cleared for immediate contact. Send an email with an appeal for funds – but explain why you need the cash and what your target is. "Help us to feed 1,000s of deprived people in London – we need £100,000 now to feed people way below the poverty line until August." (see "Donations" on next page)
- **Save Your Charity:** If in dire need and facing closure, ask supporters to help save your charity, making it clear what would happen in terms of the effect on your clients if you were to close
- **Recruit:** To quickly attract new trustees, patrons and supporters, start with those you already have. Ask them to recommend a friend – someone who shares their interest and commitment. This includes any volunteers providing your service
- **Community Fundraising:** This is currently difficult if people are following social distancing rules. Tea parties and quiz nights for example are not possible, but some on-line/virtual activities can work. Ask your supporters to start viable fundraising activities – give them some ideas. [UK Fundraising has 20 if you're stuck in lockdown](#). [Eventbrite suggests 100](#), mostly for regular times. You'll need to have a Charity Campaign page on a giving site for supporters to send you cash (see "Donations" below for some financial service suppliers)
- **Emergency Appeal:** Try an emergency appeal, a raffle or one of those on-line fundraising events, with the emphasis on having fun and having virtual contact with others. Stress that its purpose is to help those in need and save the long term future of the charity – all of which are appealing messages currently

- **Direct Marketing:** To source new supporters via email or post, make out a profile of your existing supporters and talk to a mailing list supplier about creating new list of similar people. [The Data and Marketing Association has a selection of members supplying profiling and list data.](#) Then start a campaign seeking supporters who'll donate. Please bear in mind this is one of the more expensive types of fundraising, as response rates to direct mail have declined considerably in the last 20 years. But, if your message really cuts through, then go for it, perhaps first running tests of different creative ideas to see which work best
- **Social Media:** Don't forget to attract supporters through social media – suitable networks would be Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and even LinkedIn. Maintain your presence by regularly issuing news and blogs. If you need someone to help manage your social media, just type "social media agencies for charities" into your search engine

4. Donations

- **Donate Button:** If you rely on donations, you probably already have an account with a Financial Services Provider. If not, open one today! You'll need a "Donate" button on your website and a campaign page with donation and Gift Aid facility on the provider's site. There's lots of paperwork to get up and running, but it's worth it! We've found an analysis of various providers via the [Charity Digital website](#)
- **Make it Obvious:** Once you have an account you can put lots of "Donate" buttons on your website and links on your social media pages, posts and emails

5. Retail

- **Reopen Shops:** If you have charity shops, now's the time to plan for reopening and get the cash flow moving! [The Charity Retail Association has issued some guidelines to help you](#)

6. Trusts, Foundations and Grant-Making Charities

- **Apply for Funds:** Even before the pandemic, this form of fundraising had proved highly lucrative for fundraisers, often returning the highest return on investment and, crucially at the current time, can be done from home with few resources other than good research and writing skills. Access to a computer and the internet, plus a [subscription to Funds Online](#) are the main tools needed
- **Government Support:** Financial support is available for certain voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations. If you work with vulnerable, homeless, abused or lonely people, offer legal or citizens' advice or are an Armed Forces charity, [apply now](#).

7. Fundraisers and fundraising

- **Fundraisers:** Consider appointing a professional fundraiser. They have access to lists of major corporates, philanthropic and altruistic organisations and should be able to recommend and run a fundraising campaign. They tend to work on results-based commission but may require an up-front fee, so keep an eye on resources
- **Fundraising Institute:** To find a good-fit fundraiser, the Fundraising Regulator recommends contacting members of the Institute of Fundraising – [find out how to approach potential suppliers](#)
- **Regulator's Advice:** [Charity organisations' fundraising advice from the Fundraising Regulator is here](#)

Further Information

The Worshipful Company of Marketors hopes that this guide will help your charity or good cause to successfully overcome the disruptive effects of the pandemic. If you need further information or would like to ask for pro-bono marketing help, please email outreach@marketors.org or contact us at:

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