Case Studies

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The Royal Marsden Hospital: 2005 IDM Business Performance Awards Diamond Award winner — Campaign: ‘An ordinary day in an extraordinary place’

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Introduction

The Royal Marsden Hospital is the UK's largest hospital specialising in the treatment of cancer. When it competes for donations from active cancer donors, and aims to expand donations from new donors, it operates alongside cancer charity giants such as Cancer Research UK and Macmillan.

The budget for this campaign was less than £500,000. This was insufficient to fund a national campaign. Moreover, the charity and its agency knew that they could not compete on a national level against the might of Cancer Research UK. The Royal Marsden could not outspend such charities, so it needed to outthink them.

Background

The Royal Marsden asked its agency to launch its first major appeal for over ten years. It had not advertised or run any coordinated fundraising campaigns since 1992. The absence of recent marketing activity resulted in a challenging background for the new campaign.

- There was little national awareness or even widespread local awareness of the Marsden. Research indicated that people knew the name but not necessarily that it was a specialist cancer hospital (unless there was a cancer link with friend or family).
- The hospital had only a very small database of existing donors.

Worse still, the Marsden was competing for donations against Cancer Research UK and Macmillan. In 2004 Cancer Research UK spent £16m on marketing and Macmillan spent £4m. In comparison, the Royal Marsden's budget was insignificant.

Objectives

The overall campaign objective was to raise £30m over two years. As an important secondary objective, the campaign needed to test lists and targeting strategies and build a database of donors to underpin fundraising efforts in the future. A crucial final objective was the maintenance of the

Long time since last appeal

Short and long term objectives

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Royal Marsden's charitable status. To protect this it needed to prove it had a solid base of supporters, in addition to its core of large corporate donors.

Strategy

Differentiation using positioning

Unlike other cancer charities, the Royal Marsden is a *working* hospital specialising in cancer care. It is actively combating cancer on a daily basis. The positioning chosen for the campaign, 'The Royal Marsden Hospital — the front line in the fight against cancer', put full emphasis on the hands-on aspect of the Royal Marsden's day-to-day battle against cancer. This innovative positioning of the hospital succeeded in differentiating the charity from much bigger competition.

The choice of stringently controlled conventional media (local press, inserts and radio) stretched the budget a long way. The use of free, ambient in-hospital media brought in over £500,000 in extra donations.

Innovative campaign creative cut through compassion fatigue with insights into life in 'the front line in the fight against cancer', with excellent results.

Research strategy

Qualitative research

Research confirmed that a local campaign would be more effective and efficient than a national one. The research revealed that the Royal Marsden is a source of pride for people who live close to the hospital. Fundraisers realised that here was an opportunity to tap into this local affinity.

The key issue arising from the research was the vital (fundraising) link between personal experience and proximity to cancer (the friends-and-family effect). The analysis of the existing donor base (done by the Domain Group) clearly indicated that the active donor base was located locally. Qualitative research from 2002 established the positioning of the campaign and hospital.

The research findings identified that the Marsden was both a place and somewhere where both research and active treatment of patients took place, 'bench to bedside', differentiating it from charities that had no real tangible treatment place (eg Cancer Research UK) and general hospitals where only treatment was done.

Previous experience and research had revealed that many potential charity donors have a major reservation about giving; they object to funding large administrative bureaucracies. Donors want to know that their money is going to those who need it most.

Targeting strategy

Local pride

With a budget of less than £500,000 a nationwide campaign was out of the question and, fortunately, was not required. It was known that the Royal Marsden commands a great deal of respect from those who live in close proximity to the Sutton branch of the hospital. It is a source of pride for those people. So most of the media targeting factored in the 'local knowledge or pride' element. Research had also revealed the importance

of the ‘friends-and-family effect’. Targeting therefore focused on patients and the friends and relatives of patients inside the hospital.

Creative strategy

Donor and prospect research had led to the development of the positioning statement:

‘In the front line...’

‘The Royal Marsden is a world-class medical centre actively combining leading-edge research with dedicated patient care — it is constantly seeking and introducing the most effective cancer treatments to patients right across the country.’

Figure 1: Direct mail

Vignettes bring the message to life

Hence the proposition: ‘In the front line in the fight against cancer.’ As with any battle, there are human dramas of tragedy and triumph, hope and despair — and even banality — taking place everywhere. The creative approach focused on the moments in this daily fight by describing ‘an ordinary day in an extraordinary place’, dramatising it in a multimedia campaign. Vignettes were used to describe ‘an ordinary day in an extraordinary place’ from the patient’s point of view, bringing the experiences to life. Each vignette gave an insight into a broader human drama that was unfolding — leaving it to the reader’s or listener’s imagination to play the story out to its happy or tragic conclusion.

Please give whatever you can afford towards our goal of £2 million. It sounds a lot, but believe me, every donation will count towards having the new PET/CT scanner up and running by XXXX.

To make a donation, all you have to do is complete and return the form below or give online by visiting www.royalmarsden.org/campaign

We're with cancer patients every step of the way. Can we count on you to be there with us?

Yours sincerely,

Bernadette Cronin
Superintendent Radiographer

Please complete the donation form below clearly in block capitals, or donate online at: www.royalmarsden.org/campaign

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone number: _____ Email: _____

Whatever you can afford to give is very much appreciated.

I would like to give: £10 ☐ £25 ☐ £50 ☐

Or by: ☐ I enclose a cheque/credit order made payable to: 'Royal Marsden Cancer Campaign'

☐ Please tick if you do not require a receipt

☐ Please debit my MasterCard (VISA/Amex/Discover/Club/CAI CARD/ Switch card as appropriate)

Card Number: _____

Expiry: _____ Issue No: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please detach and return to:

The Royal Marsden Hospital Fundraising Department, Downs Road, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5PT. Tel: 020 8770 0279

☐ Please tick if you would like more details about doing something out of the ordinary to raise funds in your community or at work.

☐ Please tick if you would like to know more about making regular donations towards the extraordinary work of the Royal Marsden.

GIFT AID Declaration

Please help us add 25% to every pound that you give, at no extra cost to you, by ticking the following declaration: From this one-off donation and all donations I make from this date as Gift Aid Donations. I am a UK taxpayer and will notify you if I no longer pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax equal to the tax reclaimed on my donation ☐

Date: / /

If you do not want to be contacted again by the Royal Marsden, tick this box ☐

Figure 1: Continued

Campaign execution

The campaign used local radio and local newspapers for press and inserts. Press releases throughout the campaign achieved good levels of local awareness. The local radio station, Radio Jackie, gave the Royal Marsden campaign great coverage.

Tight targeting

Geographical proximity to the hospital informed the list choices for cold direct mail, and four main groups were addressed.

Now you've seen what an ordinary day is like, please do something extraordinary today.

The Royal Marsden cares some 800 cancer patients everyday.

Early detection is the key to prolonging their lives and, in many cases, providing them with a cure. For this we need specialist diagnostic tools. A combined PET/CT scanner is one such tool.

There is currently only one available for NHS patients. Please do something extraordinary today: help us raise the £2 million needed to provide another.

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone number _____

E-mail _____

Whatever you can afford to give is very much appreciated.

I would like to give: £10 ☐ £25 ☐ £50 ☐

Other: £ _____

☐ I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to
The Royal Marsden Cancer Campaign

☐ Please tick if you do not require a receipt.

☐ Please debit my MasterCard/VISA/Amex/Discover Card/
CARTASG/Debit (insert as appropriate).

Card Number

Expiry

Signature

Date

Please detach and return to:

The Royal Marsden Cancer Campaign, The Royal Marsden Hospital, Fulham Road, London SW3 6JJ.

☐ Please tick if you would like more details about doing something out of the ordinary to raise funds in your community or at work.

☐ Please tick if you would like to know more about raising regular donations towards the extraordinary work of The Royal Marsden.

Please make your gift worth even more

There is to Gift Aid arrangements for tax payers, we will then be able to claim back from the Inland Revenue the extra tax you have already paid on every donation. However small. This will add 25% to every pound that you give to us. All you need to do is fill in the Declaration below.

Gift Aid Declaration

I want to make the enclosed donation and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise as Gift Aid Donations. I am a UK tax payer.

Signature

Date

Please tick if you are entitled to receive a 10% discount on the price of your donation if you are a member of the Royal Marsden Cancer Campaign. If you are a member of the Royal Marsden Cancer Campaign, please tick the appropriate box.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please tick if you are entitled to receive a 10% discount on the price of your donation if you are a member of the Royal Marsden Cancer Campaign. If you are a member of the Royal Marsden Cancer Campaign, please tick the appropriate box.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Welcome to an
ordinary day
in an extraordinary
place.

Figure 2: Inserts

Figure 3: Inserts

- Those who had given to the World Cancer Research Fund charity within the past two to 12 months and who live within a 15-mile radius of the hospital.
- People from the FTSE database of wealthy shareholders who live within a 15-mile radius of the hospital.
- Large corporate prospects within a 15-mile radius of the hospital.
- People who were patients or relatives and friends of patients. Those

Figure 4: T-shirts

Figure 5: T-shirts

Variety of executions

who had attended the hospital as either a patient or a friend/relative of a patient were highly likely to respond to the appeal. This informed another media choice, hospital radio and ambient media, both inside and outside the hospital.

Direct mail described ‘an ordinary day in an extraordinary place’ from the staff’s perspective and explained how donations would be used (Figure 1).

The in-hospital ambient work, ‘Sponsor a Day’, allowed people to sponsor an ‘extraordinary, ordinary day’ at the hospital. Inserts and take-ones were used to fulfil enquiries and handed out at various fundraising events, eg balls, golf days, local retailer promotions, sponsored swims, etc (Figures 2 and 3). ‘Make our day’ t-shirts and local collections extended the ‘ordinary day in an extraordinary place’ positioning and applied it to the work done by the Royal Marsden volunteers (Figures 4 and 5). Advertisements were targeted at runners participating in events such as the London Marathon and the Hydro Active Women’s Challenges (Figure 6), and a ‘waiting room’ advertisement was placed in a selection of local newspapers and magazines (Figure 7).

Every piece of creative was coded and logged on the database so that each element of the communication plan could be evaluated. Costs for each campaign element were assembled so that the ROI measures could be calculated accurately.

Results

- In the first six months the appeal raised £14.7m.
- The response rate from cold direct mail was 7.05 per cent. The cold

Hope, apprehension, endurance,
determination, joy.

That's how we run every day.

You might experience some of these emotions when you run on the day. Many cancer patients at The Royal Marsden Hospital face these feelings, day after day. By putting your best foot forward for them, you'll be helping to raise vital funds to support pioneering medical advances in the diagnosis, treatment and care of people with cancer. At the Royal Marsden, we are committed to ensuring a better future for the one in three people in this country who will develop cancer during their lifetime. For this we need to go the extra mile. How about you?

**I would like to raise
money to support
The Royal Marsden
Cancer Campaign.**

Name: _____
Address: _____
Postcode: _____ Daytime Phone Number: _____
T-shirt size: M ☐ L ☐ XL ☐ Royal Marsden Information Pack: Yes ☐ No ☐
Please return to: Amanda Heaton, Fundraising and Community Development Manager,
The Royal Marsden Hospital, Downs Road, Sutton, SM2 5PT. You can also register by
phone: 020 8770 0279 or email: amanda.heaton@rmh.phh.nthames.nhs.uk
If you do not wish to be asked to fundraise again with The Royal Marsden Cancer Campaign, tick here: ☐
Registered Charity number: 1185461

**THE ROYAL
MARSDEN**

Figure 6: Targeting marathon runners

Mrs Jones arrived for her second course of radiotherapy.

Mrs Powell found out her cancer had gone but she'd have to wait six months for reconstructive surgery.

Mr Watkin's worst fears were confirmed.

Mr Brown hugged the granddaughter he thought he'd never see.

Today Mrs Holland discovered the lump she found in her breast last week was nothing to worry about.

Mrs Hussein's cousin agreed to donate her bone marrow.

Just another ordinary day in an extraordinary place.

THE ROYAL MARSDEN CANCER CAMPAIGN

Your donation will help us in our day-to-day fight against cancer by enabling us to treat more people, more quickly and more successfully. Please send a cheque made payable to: The Royal Marsden Cancer Campaign for: £10 ☐ £25 ☐ £50 ☐ Other ☐ Or donate online at www.royalmarsden.org/campaign

Name _____ Address _____ Postcode _____

Return to: The Royal Marsden Hospital Fundraising Department, Downs Road, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 5PT. Tel: 020 8770 0279

If you do not want us to keep you up-to-date with The Royal Marsden's work and our fundraising or acknowledge that you are a donor, please tick here ☐ Names have been changed to ensure patient confidentiality.

DO NOT PRINT THIS AREA THE MEDIA BELOW THIS LINE IS NOT PART OF THE PRINT WORK

Job Number: 9096 Date: 11/02/03 Client: RTW Publication: Surrey Life Magazine
File Name: 9096.Waiting_Room_300x220 Location: Client Work, RTW, Royal Marsden
Operator: Dez Size: 300x220mm + 3mm bleed Print: 6 Page: 1
Screen: 7278 Font: News Gothic Revision Date: March 2004

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Figure 7: Waiting-room advertisement

list targeting was so good that it actually beat existing donor responses at 6.71 per cent. Response to cold direct mail for charities rarely exceeds 1 per cent.

- One direct mail segment gave an average donation of £315. Another gave a response rate of 10.72 per cent.
- One recipient of the mailing to corporate prospects donated £2m.
- Test mailings were sent to those who lived within an eight-mile and a

Solid base for the future

- 15-mile radius of the hospital. The former outpulled the latter by 55 per cent.
- Targeting patients and their friends and relatives with in-hospital media was also successful; the ‘Make our day’ and ambient ‘Sponsor a Day’ programmes raised £510,000.
 - The press ads accounted for 15 per cent of budget and generated a cost per response of £47.66.
 - The radio generated an average donation of £71 at an average cost of £15.88 per response.
 - Forty-two thousand new addresses were added to the Royal Marsden’s database. This gives the hospital a fantastic basis for future fundraising, focused on consolidating, maintaining and building relationships with these donors.

Conclusion

This Royal Marsden case study illustrates the following key points:

- The importance of targeting for maximising a limited budget
- The value of research for defining campaign positioning and targeting
- The cost-effectiveness of adopting an integrated, locally focused campaign
- The power of high-impact creative to overcome donor fatigue
- The value of using PR and free media to enhance the effectiveness of a campaign.