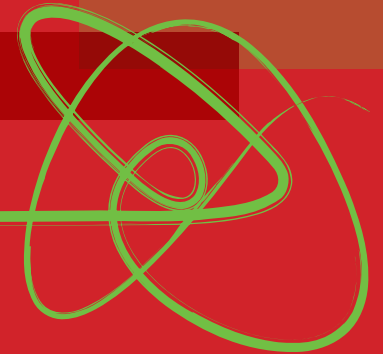


# The Amazon guide to **the role of PR in fundraising**

**Amazon**

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# PR and fundraising working together

**It's an often held misconception that PR and fundraising are intrinsically linked - that if your organisation gets media coverage your income will go up.**

In reality, there are a number of stages between someone reading about your work and making a financial commitment. But PR can bridge the gap between the call to action and the money in the bank.

The fundraisers in your organisation work hard to engage and encourage supporters to raise money. PR should reiterate and build on the key messages fundraisers are using as part of a coordinated strategy to increase the charity's income.

Both PR and fundraising teams (or individuals, depending on the size of your organisation) should be pulling in the same direction, so it's important to work together and share information on a regular basis.

**Talk to your in-house fundraiser or fundraising team early on in your planning. Put regular meetings into the diary and share information as you go to make for more effective campaigns and a better relationship.**



Photo credit: The Rainforest Foundation UK

## Donors vs. supporters

**It's useful for PRs to think about the difference between people who give donations (donors) and those who give their time to raise funds for you (supporters).**

Donating to a charity can be a one-off action that doesn't require a great deal of emotional involvement. Donations could be motivated by the cause, by personal experience or, more likely, by a friend or colleague. How many times have you been asked to make a donation to a friend or family member who's doing a 5k run, a skydive, or the London marathon?

Supporters like those friends and relations, however, invest a great deal more effort and commitment. They can spend considerable time and energy convincing their donors to give money to the cause. That effort needs to be recognised and responded to.

**Think about the last time you were personally motivated to raise money for a charity. What prompted you to support that charity over another? Based on that experience would you support them again?**



*Photo credit: Martin Neeves Photography Ltd*

## Making the case for support

**There may be a number of charities related to any one cause or issue and this is where PR can make the difference. Potential supporters need to know why funds are needed and the difference they will make.**

As well as giving them a clear cause to respond to, PR also needs to demonstrate to supporters that the money would be spent appropriately and would have real impact. Building and maintaining a positive image for your organisation will add incentive for fundraisers to choose you over other charities in the same sector.

Case studies are a key tool to link supporters' fundraising with the cause. Done well, they illustrate not just the service or the equipment funding has paid for but the effect of this on real people's lives on a very personal level.

**Case studies should show how the money that's been raised has changed their lives. We can help you to develop a strong and effective case study library that will help to motivate fundraisers and donors alike.**

**“Working with disabled children demands sensitivity and understanding – something which Amazon recognise and deliver.”**

Kate Gare, Former Director of Business Development, MOVE

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Think about Oxfam's 'Unwrapped' campaign. We all know that £25 will buy a family a goat. But a case study can demonstrate the difference having that goat has made to their lives. It shows the positive changes in income, nutrition and general welfare – all elements that supporters can relate to and recognise the value of. By illustrating the clear benefits to a named family, PR also reinforces the reputation of your organisation and the good use of the money a supporter has worked hard to collect.

Both of these elements together allow supporters to feel they are powerful and can help deliver real change. And that's a feeling they'll probably want to repeat, encouraging them to raise money again and again.



Photo credit: The Rainforest Foundation UK

# Social media and fundraising

## **Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter can be useful PR tools in supporting volunteer fundraisers.**

There are an average 27 million 'tweets' a day on Twitter and people are spending 500 billion minutes every month on Facebook. It's important to think about how to use these channels as part of your organisation's PR strategy, and, in particular, how they can be used to generate income.

Social media can be a way of drip-feeding key messages or statistics in an unobtrusive way. They force you to keep the message focused and to the point, delivering the greatest impact possible in 140 characters or a couple of sentences.

Think about what response you want supporters to have to a message or an image, and the route they would take if you inspire them to make that commitment and raise money for your organisation - where do you need to link them through to, for example?

Social media can themselves be fundraising tools. A good example is the Royal National Lifeboat Institute's (RNLI) launch alerts. These are SMS text messages that alert supporters every time a lifeboat is launched from their chosen lifeboat station. They are a great way of illustrating how often crews respond to emergency calls (and therefore how necessary these crews are) and the charity receives a donation from each text. The messages are supported by information online about where 'shouts' are taking place, testimonials from previous rescues and the costs involved in staffing and preparing lifeboats for action.

**Think about the visual elements of Facebook, YouTube or Flickr. Inspiring photos or video footage of a fundraising event reward those who took part and will motivate others. We can advise you on how to choose and brief a photographer.**



Photo credit: Martin Neeves Photography Ltd

## Spending your time wisely

**It is easy to put a great deal of time and effort into sending press releases out to the media about supporters running a marathon, climbing a mountain, or sitting in a bath of baked beans.**

**But when was the last time you sponsored a stranger after reading about them in a newspaper?**

Think about the potential return for the time you spend on PR and consider putting together 'toolkits' for supporters to do their own PR.

**It's tempting to try to secure publicity for every passionate supporter of your cause. Toolkits are a great way of harnessing that passion and letting less newsworthy fundraisers do their own PR. Include key messages and top tips, and make sure you're accessible on the phone if they need your help.**

**"Amazon have been fantastic. Their enthusiasm and expertise really helped make our 'Get Your Grown-ups Growing' campaign a success. In fact, so much so, we underestimated the number of support packs we would be sending out by a factor of two."**

Eoin Redahan, Science and Outreach PR Manager, RHS

Personal challenges and events like these can provide colour and interest in the context of wider news angles and issues so don't disregard them. Think about how you can use them to best effect, how they can add weight and a personal angle to your key messages and help to strengthen your call to action.

Social and online media can be ideal channels for celebrating supporters' fundraising efforts. They can be updated very quickly and supporters can share images and information, and spread awareness about your organisation.



Photo credit: The Rainforest Foundation UK

## Keep them close

### **Recognising an individual's contribution is crucial to retaining their support and encouraging them to continue fundraising.**

If they feel as though they are just a number, just another runner in a race or a total on a spreadsheet, they could turn their passions elsewhere.

Events can be hugely motivational for supporters by giving them the opportunity to meet some of the people they are helping. Events make involvement with a charity a much more personal and engaging experience, strengthening the relationship and making the next 'ask' from your fundraising team a much easier one.

**If you've never raised money for a charity, give it a try. You'll appreciate how much energy people put into it and you'll see how well or how badly the charity responds. At Amazon we regularly support charities close to our hearts so we understand it from both sides.**

But plan events carefully. While they like to feel appreciated, the last thing supporters want is their hard-raised money spent on the party rather than the cause.

Recognition is particularly important when it comes to corporate support. Businesses that invest time or money in your organisation will usually want their contribution to be visible through PR to their industry, their local community and to potential customers.

Be clear about their expectations, and yours, and be sure that your supporters are happy for their stories to be used in the media. Illustrating the benefits to them may also inspire other organisations to contribute and get involved.



Photo credit: Martin Neeves Photography Ltd

## Measuring success

**It's important to measure the success of PR but it's not easy to determine how much it has contributed to the funds raised.**

If supporters are registering for a fundraising pack you can ask them how they heard about you, but that may be one on the scoreboard for the fundraising team.

It would be the role of PR to motivate people who've registered to follow through and actually raise some money. And you can check if spikes in income correspond with media coverage.

PR and fundraising can each be effective individually, but the best chance of success lies in a positive, coordinated relationship. Plan regular catch-up meetings and work together closely to plan your events or campaigns.

And the next time your fundraising colleagues put a collection bucket in your hand, see it as an opportunity to meet your next case study.

**We hope you found this guide useful. If so, you might want to look at our other guides: [📖 The Amazon guide to hiring a PR agency](#), [📖 The Amazon guide to writing a PR brief](#) and [📖 The Amazon guide to working with a PR agency](#).**



Photo credit: The Rainforest Foundation UK

**“Amazon helped us define a strategic plan to raise awareness and extend our support base.”**

Phil Reed, Former Director of Marketing and Development, Elizabeth Finn Care

# Amazon

refreshingly real PR

Amazon is a public relations and communications agency working with clients in the public and voluntary sectors, and social enterprises. We create and deliver communications campaigns that raise awareness, transform the way people think and help to deliver real change.

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