

## DM – short for Danger Mouse, Doc Martens and most importantly, Direct Marketing!

We all know that probably half of the stuff that drops through our letter boxes onto the doormat goes straight into the bin. With the possible exception of the Domino's menu!

So that's where an excellent Direct Marketing person comes into their own – persuading you to stop and look at that leaflet or flyer (or email or text or TV ad or poster!) before it joins the rest in the recycling. It is a skill highly prized by many charities, for whom Direct Giving can form an incredibly important part of their income – CRUK received almost a quarter of their £460m last year this way.

But we have noticed a significant shortage in good DM candidates in recent times (and we're not alone in being unsure as to the reason why). To combat this situation, Rachel Beckett, Head of Direct Marketing at Farm Africa, started up a trainee programme a few years back. The Kage Partnership has successfully recruited several people into the team over time, including, last year, Rosie Marfleet – now a fully-fledged Direct Marketing Officer there.

We spoke to both of them to get their thoughts on DM in general, this particular programme and if they wished to tick a box to receive information from carefully selected partners!

### Rachel Beckett,

Head of Direct Marketing,  
Farm Africa



#### What is your background and how did you get into Direct Marketing?

I studied Economics at university and then, following a year working and travelling in southern Africa, I spent three years working for a city recruitment firm before deciding the charity sector was where I wanted to focus my career. Having undertaken a number of temporary administrative roles in charities to gain experience, I was lucky enough to secure a role with BLISS looking after their fledgling individual giving function. I spent three and a half years at BLISS before gaining sufficient experience to get the job I really wanted, at Farm Africa.

#### What do you enjoy about it?

I love the variety of my role – in addition to leading and mentoring, my role includes everything from complex financial modelling to standing in a field with a farmer, capturing their story to use in appeals and other marketing materials. There is surely no other job quite like it!

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#### What prompted you to develop this training scheme at Farm Africa and when did you instigate it?

There seems to be a real shortage of good Direct Marketing officers with around one year's experience in the job market. It feels a little like, if they are good, they are progressing in their existing roles, not looking around and are being promoted internally. I was struggling to find a suitably strong candidate and decided that Direct Marketing isn't rocket science and, in the long run, that it would be better to hire a bright, articulate, numerate person with drive and passion and train them myself.

#### What does it involve?

It's pretty straightforward really. We have put together a structured plan that sees new recruits moving from assisting with smaller campaigns to managing their own major campaigns over a period of 12-18 months with development milestones linked to small pay increases. The trainees work across a broad range of campaigns across donor recruitment and development, both online and offline, building a broad portfolio of skills. Where possible, as time goes on, we try and facilitate further development in specific interest areas.

#### How successful has it been? Have you had many people go through the scheme?

Overall I think the scheme has been successful. In the six years that I have been at Farm Africa I have trained up five graduates. One is forging a successful career for herself at the British Red Cross, one is now Special Projects Manager at WaterAid and the third an Account Manager at a Digital Marketing agency. The final two are continuing to be great assets to my team!

#### What kind of person do you look for to join the programme?

With so many graduates leaving university wanting to work in the international development sector, the real challenge is identifying the candidates that genuinely want to pursue a career in Direct Marketing and aren't just looking for a stepping stone to try and get into the programmes team. We give candidates a couple of basic tests as part of the recruitment process to assess their Excel skills, proof reading and copy writing ability and rely on a very structured interview system and instinct to find the most suitable candidates. One of the key criteria, on top of a strong academic record and good numeracy skills, is that candidates must have gained some experience (paid or unpaid) working in either a fundraising or marketing team to show that they genuinely want to work in this discipline and have a good idea of what the role might involve.

#### Why do you think there are so few DM candidates around at the moment?

There is almost always a shortage of DM candidates in the marketplace – I think it is because a good DM Officer is like gold dust.....so, where possible, you will develop them and give them opportunities rather than see them go. This does, however, present challenges at smaller organisations, where opportunities for career development are much more limited than at bigger charities.

# Autumn Newsletter

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## Rosie Marfleet,

Direct Marketing Officer,  
Farm Africa



### What is your background prior to Farm Africa?

I first became involved in the charity world through my university's charities committee, enjoying various volunteer roles and helping at various fundraising events. During my summer holidays, I also worked as a Fundraising and Marketing Assistant for a small charity, providing me with a better understanding of the various routes I could take in to the sector.

Upon graduation, I knew that I wanted to work in the charity sector and, with few other ideas and a largely irrelevant (!) degree in Natural Sciences, I started applying for intern roles in fundraising. Over the course of 18 months, I spent 4 months solid writing applications for unpaid roles, gained 10 months of experience, and did 4 months of travelling in between, before being offered my first paid role. In this time, I worked at 5 charities (SeeAbility, WaterAid, Samaritans, NSPCC and Breakthrough Breast Cancer) of varying sizes, in varying fundraising teams, including Corporate, Community and Special Events.

In my various roles, I learnt a lot about what was involved in the different areas of fundraising and, whilst I enjoyed everything I did, I realised I craved a little more structure and opportunity for analysis in my job!

### What made you decide to go into Direct Marketing?

When I returned from travelling in Africa, my thoughts regarding my career had altered slightly; I wanted to work for a charity helping people in Africa more than I wanted to work in a specific area of fundraising. So, when I heard about the Graduate Trainee Direct Marketing Officer role at Farm Africa, I was immediately very interested. Not only did it tick the Africa box, but it also ticked the box for a role that would involve more structure and analysis than other areas of fundraising. This role was also the only role I applied for in all my job hunting experience that required (as opposed to desired) a degree – not so irrelevant after all, then!

### How have you found the training programme?

I have found the training programme to be hugely valuable. Having had absolutely no specific experience of Direct Marketing, I was totally new to everything I was doing, and found the role both a challenge and also very rewarding from the outset. Over the course of the year, I went from having to check what a certain sector-specific term meant every few hours to managing relationships with various suppliers, and, within 18 months, I was even managing my own appeal in its entirety.

The support I have received in the role has been fantastic, perhaps due to the small size of my team, and the great ambition of the charity to

keep improving and trying new things. I have also had the opportunity to work on projects involving a wide range of Direct Marketing channels throughout the year, which has given me a brilliant introduction to this area of fundraising. Farm Africa as a charity has also been working hard to fulfil its current strategy, expanding its programme in various ways, so it's been a great opportunity to see this expansion in progress and to understand the business side of these decisions!

### What parts of the job do you enjoy most?

I particularly enjoy the project management aspects of the role – having to oversee all aspects of a campaign, working with and building relationships with numerous suppliers for each campaign, and ensuring that schedules are pulled together correctly to coincide with one another and that they are actually met.

As I have developed in my role, I have also particularly enjoyed creating and monitoring the budgets and targets set for each campaign, working out how best to track results and evaluate a campaign against these targets. This involves a fair bit of number crunching and data analysis but, once I got the hang of it, I really was able to understand the importance of data to successful Direct Marketing.

I also particularly love the variety in the role – by working on various different campaigns at any one time, in particular using different Direct Marketing channels, one day is very rarely the same as the day before!

### What would you say to other people considering DM in the charity sector?

Don't be put off by people talking about 'junk mail' – if they're not the target audience, they have no clue that junk mail really does work! And don't think that, just because you communicate with thousands of people at a time, you won't get to know any of them personally or receive any feedback directly from the people you're talking to – I've already got a couple of favourite supporters who I love to hear from – for both the right and the wrong reasons!

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## About Us

For those of you not familiar with the Kage Partnership, we have been recruiting Fundraisers, PR and Marketing professionals to positions at all levels within the not-for-profit sector for the last 15 years.

For knowledgeable and friendly advice on any aspect of recruitment, please contact **Liz Grimes**, **Holly Jenkins** or **Tim Iredale**.

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