

## Let's Get Digital

Buck Rogers launched on the last of NASA's deep space probes in 1987; the Space Odyssey took place some 11 years ago and Marty McFly went back to a future that is only 3 years round the corner. Though flying cars, hover boards and personal space exploration are still the stuff of dreams, it is becoming ever clearer that the fundraising community must ensure it stays at the cutting edge of 21st Century methodology.

Fundraising, by necessity, must utilise all the tools it has available and the most successful charities and fundraisers will maximise the potential that new technology affords them.

In an age of social media, where we may find ourselves faced with tweets, blogs, memes or hash tags at any turn, we talk to Paul Mathews, the Head of Individual Giving at VSO UK, as well as Francesca Cross, Fundraising Officer at Beat Bullying, to get their thoughts about the impact on recruitment in the future... today.



### Paul Mathews,

Head of Individual Giving,  
VSO UK

#### **It seems that digital fundraising is on the increase in the charity sector. In light of this, how do you envisage this might affect the fundraising landscape?**

Digital has been on the march for a few years – at first people were thinking digital would be huge for all charities. There is a growing realisation that digital will work differently for different charities and causes just like any other media. Specifically with Individual Giving, some charities will thrive, being able to recruit new supporters direct from digital. For others, it will be a strong support for retaining donors or a retention media. What we do know is that we can't afford to ignore digital channels now – our websites have to be incredibly strong and email is becoming more and more important as a retention tool, for example. At the very least, we have to be able to integrate offline and online communication properly.

#### **Do you think this will lead to the development of new positions or even new departments that don't currently exist?**

A tricky question. The ideal is that all fundraisers would have digital skills. The challenge here is that highly trained

offline people don't necessarily become good digital people. There is also a degree to which you don't know what you don't know and, while you can train people up, nothing beats good experience. There will probably be a trend over the next couple of years of new roles and possibly departments with experienced digital specialists in them. Thereafter, you might very possibly see these falling away towards digital being clearly part of everyone's role. Having said that, digital is so fast moving that you will probably always have a digital lead who can clearly keep on top of this incredibly fast moving area. I also worry that there will be skills shortages in relation to having enough skilled practitioners who really understand both offline and online.

#### **What will be the impact on recruitment, do you feel?**

People who can work across offline and online will be highly sought after. Key requirements will be for people with excellent integration skills.

#### **What impact might it have on existing Direct Marketing teams and traditional methods?**

More and more integration – warm appeals all now need a clear online donation support area and retention on regular giving needs a strong email programme. Existing, more traditional fundraisers need to get to grips with being able to integrate media and learn the skills quickly.

#### **Have you and how have you recruited digital fundraisers to date and do you see this changing?**

Yes, we have. We are very happy with her. She brings excellent knowledge and skills that fill a very real gap in our charity. We'll wait to see how this works out to see whether we'd continue – we are still really getting to grips with where we can take digital and recruitment decisions and how we structure our teams in the future.

#### **What kind of skills and training do you think will make people more recruitable in this field?**

(Unfortunately!) experience is key, I think. If you are an offline fundraiser in Individual Giving then make sure you are integrating, at the very least, with digital. Charities will look for people who have worked on integrated campaigns. They will also look for people who have experience of recruiting supporters in a digital environment.

Continued on page 2

## Beat Bullying

**Francesca Cross,**  
Fundraising Officer,  
Beat Bullying

**It seems that digital fundraising is on the increase in the charity sector. In light of this, how do you envisage this might affect the fundraising landscape?**

It will hopefully enable charities to engage with groups who traditionally aren't large charity donors, such as young adults and teens. It should enable more people to see and hear about a charity and in some cases (Kony 2012/ Samaritans London Marathon Runner, Claire Squires) go viral and massively increase a charity's income and awareness. It offers the chance for personal connections to be made with the charity using media which people are increasingly using over others (e.g. letters, phone calls or, perhaps, even email). This could be really useful in fundraising for a particular campaign - where an individual can feel that they have personally been contacted to contribute to an obvious goal. However, it will take careful planning to ensure that relationships with donors are maintained.

**Do you think this will lead to the development of new positions or even new departments that don't currently exist?**

I do - there are already some charities with 'Digital Fundraising Officers' and I feel that this will be a specialism which will likely grow with the use of technology across generations.

**What will be the impact on recruitment within fundraising, do you feel?**

Digital fundraising experience may start to appear on job requirements and new roles may appear.

**What impact might it have on existing Direct Marketing teams and traditional methods?**

I think the focus on these methods may shift in some cases to digital campaigns, which often are more cost effective. However, there is still a place for traditional methods, particularly with certain target audiences and with certain

charities which don't have a strong digital focus or presence. I feel that integrated campaigns will be a strong method - combining new opportunities with proven techniques.

**Have you and how have you recruited digital fundraisers to date and do you see this changing?**

We haven't recruited specific digital fundraisers and I don't think this specific role will be created in the near future. However, digital campaigns will increasingly be part of the way we work.

**What kind of skills and training do you think will make people more recruitable in this field?**

Deep understanding of social media, particularly in terms of tracking and monitoring usage and engagement. Perhaps some level of technical skill or knowledge in terms of the technology underpinning digital campaigns.

## 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 14 years.

We conduct our business with integrity and courtesy, providing a tailored and effective service to all of our job seeking and recruiting clients.

We would also like to welcome Tim Iredale to our team. Tim joins us with over 4 years' experience of charity sector and local authority recruitment, plus an impressive catalogue of acting performances and an encyclopaedic knowledge of all things cinema.

**If you would like to discuss any aspect of recruitment please do not hesitate to contact us:**

**020 7928 3434 [info@kagep.com](mailto:info@kagep.com)**