



How to build a charity campaign

In the last couple of years there has been an increased number of influential charity campaigns which have dominated both public consciousness and the news agenda. From Cancer Research's 'No Make-up Selfie' viral campaign to WWF's #EndangeredEmoji, to the infamous Ice Bucket Challenge in support of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Association, charities are continuing to raise the bar in terms of the creativity, skill and relevance utilised in their campaigns.

With so much 'noise' to cut through, when planning a charity campaign it can be difficult to know the best way to get your message out there.

Things to consider

- How can you ensure your message reaches your target consumers?
- How can you grow awareness of the Charity and the specific campaign?
- How can you drive donations?

There are however a number of key best practices which can be used as the foundation upon which to build a successful campaign:



Clearly State Your Cause

It's important to state the cause or 'purpose' of the campaign from the very beginning, making sure that this message is clear and consistent across all channels.

Ask yourself: 'what are we trying to achieve'? Is it awareness, fundraising, or both?

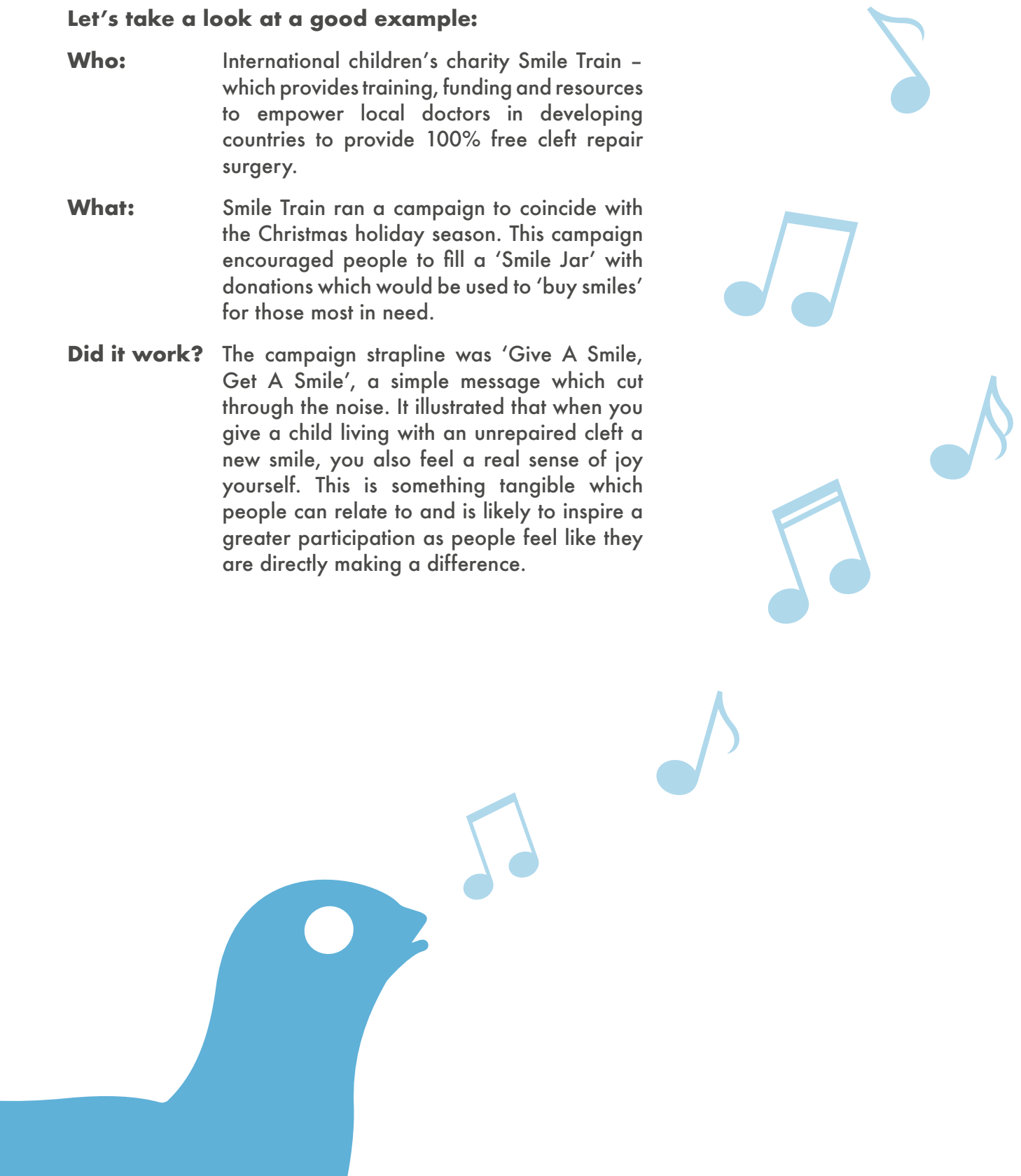
Where possible, try and quantify the cause and effect into a 'transaction' which is easy for your audience to understand how their donation will make a difference.

Let's take a look at a good example:

Who: International children's charity Smile Train – which provides training, funding and resources to empower local doctors in developing countries to provide 100% free cleft repair surgery.

What: Smile Train ran a campaign to coincide with the Christmas holiday season. This campaign encouraged people to fill a 'Smile Jar' with donations which would be used to 'buy smiles' for those most in need.

Did it work? The campaign strapline was 'Give A Smile, Get A Smile', a simple message which cut through the noise. It illustrated that when you give a child living with an unrepaired cleft a new smile, you also feel a real sense of joy yourself. This is something tangible which people can relate to and is likely to inspire a greater participation as people feel like they are directly making a difference.



Maximise Reach with A Multi-Channel Campaign

When planning a charity campaign, it is essential to keep your target audience in mind. Think about what channels they are likely to be consuming and make sure all bases are covered.

This means harnessing a combination of traditional media (print, TV, radio), as well as online, blogs, website content and social media, to take the message as far and wide as possible.

For each channel it is imperative to make sure that the message and campaign goal are consistent with the campaign to ensure coherence.

Tight Timelines

When planning a campaign, you should think carefully about its duration. You want to allow enough time to build momentum, but not long enough to allow the campaign messaging to be forgotten about. It is a fine line to tread, however the best campaigns ideally last a week or two. A shorter campaign creates a sense of urgency, leading your audience to think 'It is important I make my donation now and not in a month's time'.

Here's an example of this in action:

- Who:** Our client, the Armed Forces charity SSAFA.
- What:** We created a campaign to promote and encourage sign-ups for their Big Brew Up event. The Big Brew Up campaign encourages people across the UK to host a tea party and raise money for SSAFA across one week in June. Our campaign entailed a range of activity all taking place throughout the two weeks leading up to the Big Brew Up fundraising week. We organised a celebrity mug auction on eBay, a tea drinking survey, case study placement and a celebrity photoshoot on set at Coronation Street.
- Did it work?** All this activity took place in the two weeks before and the week of the Big Brew Up, and widespread coverage was achieved in titles such as Daily Mirror, Mail Online, New! Magazine and the Express.co.uk.



Star Power

The endorsement of a celebrity or high profile figure is an extremely powerful tool when it comes to raising awareness of your charity campaign, both amongst the media and with supporters. The high followings and influence those in the public eye tend to command can work to give your campaign a huge uplift.

Where possible it is a great idea to fully utilise any existing relationships with celebrities, and alongside this you can look to build your network of celebrity supporters by approaching a relevant personality.

When looking to establish who would be the right face for the campaign, it is of paramount importance that you make sure that the celebrity can relate to both the charity and the consumer, as the latter will be able to see through the association if there is no obvious link to the charity.

For this reason, when looking to partner with a celebrity, it is advisable to look for someone who has a genuine link to and interest in the charity and who will therefore be viewed by consumers and media outlets as a credible supporter.

Here's an example:

Who: The Armed Forces charity SSAFA.

What: We implemented the 'Left Behind' campaign where we worked with ambassador and Coronation Street star, Antony Cotton. He has a natural affinity to the charity due to friends involved in the military. We launched the 'Left Behind' campaign surrounding the one year anniversary of the withdrawal of British Troops from Afghanistan to raise awareness that, although the war is officially over, for the families left behind after losing a loved one the battle is still ongoing. We utilised Antony and his passion for the charity, to put together an emotive video which we shared across social media and national websites. This video showcased Antony introducing the campaign and the importance of it, intertwined with SSAFA case studies.

Did it work? Through our PR activity and social media consultation for SSAFA's channels, this video received over 131,000 views. We also secured an interview with Antony on Good Morning Britain, discussing the video and the campaign which further raised awareness.



Call on Case Studies

A very powerful way to support a campaign message and to inspire donations is through the use of case studies. Case studies are real people who have a personal reason for supporting the charity campaign. Often they have directly benefitted from the charity, or know someone who the charity has made a difference to and want to help raise awareness by sharing their story. When handled sensitively, sharing a personal experience can bring to life the importance of the charity's work, and the accompanying call to action gives details on how to donate or take part which brings extra support to the campaign.

Let's see this in action:

- Who:** Genetic disorder charity 'Jeans for Genes'
- What:** Case study placement was a key strand to a campaign we led for Jeans for Genes. We worked with thirty different families affected by a genetic disorder to drum up media support ahead of the annual 'Jeans for Genes' day. This involved putting together a release on their individual stories, including key messaging regarding the support they received from Genetic Disorder's UK and the importance of the charity continuing.
- Did it work?** We generated widespread press coverage in national, regional and broadcast titles for all case studies, and secured a credit for Jeans for Genes Day, with a call to action for people to sign up and donate.

