



Meet the team

Phoebe: So first of all, can you both tell me a little bit about what you do?

Russell: I work in the Community and Events Fundraising Team. Our team is responsible for supporting people who do events that we organise, such as Cake Break or MS Walk and also events that others organise, which could be the London Marathon.

Iestyn: My job as the Fundraising Manager for Wales is to inspire people who support us, whether they're individuals, whether they work for local companies, whether they're charitable trusts. And I help them to raise as much as possible for us.

The four Ps

Phoebe: So Iestyn could you tell me about a successful fundraising project you've been involved in, maybe highlighting any tips that would help people start out with fundraising?

Iestyn: Yeah, I have a really good example actually. A supporter called Kathryn Foot decided to organise a gala dinner. She was going to call it 'The Orange and Black Ball'. She works in the private sector, she's very outgoing, very social, has a really big social network. So borrowing basic marketing terms the four PS, the Product was going to be a like a gala dinner, kind of like a corporate dinner affair.

(Place) She decided the most appropriate venue for her for her friends and family was this really lovely Vale resort, just outside Cardiff.

She deciding for Pricing, and that could relate to what she charged people to attend but also how she planned her fundraising. So I think she charged about £50 per person. She factored the costs, which were appropriate, so that was the dinner and also a profit for us as a donation afterwards. But also how she'd raise money on at the event, which was going to be through raffles, through games, there was a lot of magicians, there was a lot going on, it was really well planned.

So in terms of promotion, she used Facebook and Twitter and her contacts lists.

It was her and her family mainly so it was collective efforts and they all contributed with getting the raffle prizes, and with bookings and with branded balloons and everything ... it looked wonderful. It was a few months' work, I'd say two or three months. You need to book well in advance, make sure everyone gets their date in their diary, and also 150 people that takes some coordinating.

Extending your network

Phoebe: So that's an example of someone using their own network and people that they know to fundraise. How do you get people you don't know to buy into your product?

Iestyn: That's the hard bit because, naturally, in most cases, people support people. And so by tapping into your existing networks you'd assume, and in most cases it's true, that your friends and family will be the first people to support you. And then your colleagues and associates would be next.

So trying to develop a product that appeals to people that you don't know is the difficult bit. So how do you do that? You make something attractive, you provide someone with an opportunity or an experience that they're going to find really appealing, that they're willing to part with cash, to either take part with either because they're going to benefit personally or because they're going to.

My one top tip would be to enjoy whatever you choose because I think other people will enjoy you enjoying and they will support you. If it looks like they're going to have a good time and if they see you having a good time they're more likely to join you on your journey.

Russell's top tip

Phoebe: Russell, what in your experience is the key to success when it comes to fundraising?

Russell: I think as Iestyn alluded to really, the key to successful fundraising is to choose something that is of interest to you as an individual and that's also going to be manageable to not only organise or to plan for, but then also to do the fundraising.

There's such a wide range, we have some of the events that we organise ourselves, so something like Cake Break is a very open event, you can do it at home or at school or at work. We also have our MS Walk event that takes place in September and all the routes that we have for that are accessible.

So if you're planning to do some sort of coffee morning or Cake Break, then do think about starting small. Macmillan's Coffee Morning originally was organised by a small group of volunteers, they probably only raised tens of pounds or a few hundred pounds. Now they raise tens of millions of pounds for that charity.

Support for you

Phoebe: And what support is there out there for volunteers who are planning fundraising activities?

Iestyn: Just contact us. We have a fundraising team who are really happy to help and they're looking forward to hearing from you. They'll help you talk through your plans, what you have in mind, help you make the most of your activity. And hopefully make it as easy as possible so hopefully you enjoy fundraising for us.

Russell: We also have lots of resources that are available for people. So we have our fundraising guide, that has practical tips and advice, as well as resources people can use such as posters and logo that we have.

Iestyn: The MS Society's brand is really well known, people recognise the colour and people recognise the 'MS' if they have a connection with MS. They will come over and speak to you if they see a balloon or if they see a banner stand.

Russell: Tell the personal story you have. Tell your connection to the MS community and why raising money for us is so important to you.

Phoebe: Well that concludes today's interview. Thanks to you both. For further information and support, please check out the rest of our volunteer website.

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