

# How Sightsavers Grew Through Direct Marketing

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Sightsavers International

# The Key Elements

- Luck
- Focus
- Structure
- Expert Staff
- Good Donor Care
- Investment

# Context of Competition

- Sightsavers generates more voluntary income in Ireland than big international charity brands such as
- Red Cross
- Action Aid
- World Vision

# League Table

	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Year end</b>	<b>Voluntary Income</b>	<b>Fundraising and Admin Expenditure</b>	<b>FR/Admin Ratio</b>	<b>Profit</b>
1	Concern	31/12/2006	€ 64,346,000	€14,677,000	22.81%	€49,669,000
2	Trocaire	28/02/2006	€ 26,480,885	€5,242,363	19.80%	€21,238,522
3	Goal	31/12/2006	€ 15,151,452	€1,348,225	8.90%	€13,803,227
4	Bothar	30/06/2006	€ 12,686,076	€0	0.00%	€12,686,076
5	Oxfam	30/04/2006	€ 11,587,203	€6,631,877	57.23%	€4,955,326
6	Gorta	31/12/2005	€ 7,669,311	€4,110,614	53.60%	€3,558,697
7	Unicef	31/12/2006	€ 4,917,558	€1,698,881	34.55%	€3,218,677
8	Sightsavers	31/12/2006	€ 4,745,363	€1,723,585	36.32%	€3,021,778
9	World Vision	31/12/2006	€ 3,545,078	€828,307	23.36%	€2,716,771
10	Self Help	31/12/2006	€ 2,824,097	€776,210	27.49%	€2,047,887

# Sightsavers Ireland Timeline

1998

Sightsavers notices that there are calls being made to their office from the Republic of Ireland. Media buyers report that media in ROI is cheap and recommend buying airtime on television.

1999

Responses to TV ads very strong.

Investment in producing newspaper inserts made which also produced a strong response.

2001

Dublin Direct Marketing agency Dialogue engaged to develop marketing materials for the Irish market.

2002

John Fleming appointed to set up the company and charity in Ireland and find new sources of income.

2003

Sightsavers International (Ireland) established as a company and recognised as a charity. November

2004

Office opens January

2006

Responsibility for Direct Marketing moves to Ireland with the appointment of Direct Marketing Manager. January

2008

Supporter Care Supervisor appointed.

# Structure

- Initially there was
  - no legal entity
  - no overheads
  - no Board of Directors to keep happy
  - freedom to make investment decisions quickly

# Structure

- Now with a legal structure the executive is still allowed to make investment decisions once broad approval is given to spending plans
- Co-operation and co-working between Ireland, UK and now Italy is actively encouraged and facilitated.

# Face to Face – First Mover Advantage

- Sightsavers introduced this method of raising money to Ireland
- Took 3 years before it was challenged
- Response from the public was very positive
- Allowed the donor base to be built up very quickly

# Television - DRTV

- Media costs were very competitive compared to the UK
- Allowed investment in key stations – RTE in particular
- Media buying agency were particularly effective

# Inserts

- Similar to TV – a medium not widely used by the sector in the late nineties
- Creative work already available from UK and could easily be adapted
- Were able to print in the UK on the back of much bigger print runs making production cheaper and the costs per response better.

# Door Drops

- Later into this method then ideal
- Much more complex then inserts as it requires an understanding of An Post systems
- Still working as a recruitment mechanism but response rates falling and costs rising

# Suppliers

- Call Centre – Appointed a call and mail handling centre in Cork. Local voice important. Worked well as both partners were small but ambitious
- DM Agency – Appointed in 2001 to produce creative specific to the Irish Market.

# Donor Relationship Management

- All new donor information was entered on the UK based database – this is unique in Ireland and something that will expand globally.
- Why is this important
  - Body of expertise available
  - Investment in software and support wasn't necessary

# Staff

- Very lucky that Sightsavers had a skilled DM professional who saw the opportunity in Ireland
- Unlucky that Concern head-hunted him and drove their DM growth
- Lucky that he was replaced with another skilled DM professional who drove growth in a managed way
- Lucky that the Account Director from our DM Agency became our DM Manager for Ireland

# Investment

- There was a commitment to invest once certain cost/income ratios were met
- Responsibility put onto the DM Manager
  - forecast investments and income
  - manage investment
  - report on income

# Future Challenges

- Recruiting trained personnel
- Media continues to get more expensive
- Crowded market place
- Increased government oversight through legislation
- Increased public awareness of how charities spend money on fundraising