

Introduction

In-Memory Insight is an ongoing programme to map, measure and research In-Memory giving and fundraising. The programme aims to collect objective evidence and insight on In-Memory giving, in order to build the case for investment, inform fundraising strategies and help manage relationships with supporters.

This report summarises some key conclusions emerging from the first three years of donor research. We would like to thank our Consortium members for agreeing to share these findings.

An important motivation for engagement

Our research confirms that In-Memory is a significant motivation for engaging with charities – whether by giving money, participating in events, volunteering or leaving a legacy. Many In-Memory donors develop an enduring personal connection with the chosen charity, as it represents a link to someone they have loved and lost.

The act of giving in honour of a loved one can be helpful to the bereaved as well as the charity; providing focus or diversion, giving something positive to think about, and encouraging mutual support between family and friends. This is particularly important when a life has been ‘cut short’, due to illness, accident or violence, where the need to ‘make good out of bad’ is often compelling.

The motivation to give is intimately connected to the deceased – although people give to a charity, most are primarily doing it *for* the deceased, in effect acting as a channel on their behalf. It is important to always remember and respect this when communicating with In-Memory donors.

The good stewardship of In-Memory donors is vital, not only because they represent potential, but also because it is easy to disappoint or even alienate them. Donors do not want to feel that their emotional goodwill is being abused by inappropriate ‘selling techniques’. Rather they want to think that the charity is grateful for their donation(s), which is somehow as special to the charity as it is to them. The experience of the first interaction is crucial, and donors expect a swift acknowledgement and a warm thank-you.

Catalyst donors are vital

While many In-Memory donors give just once, some travel along a ‘journey’, engaging with a charity over many years, in a variety of ways, and giving/raising considerable sums in the process. We call these highly-involved supporters the ‘catalyst donors’.

Most of the catalyst donors we interviewed had suffered the early or untimely death of a loved one. These donors were highly motivated to keep alive their loved-one’s memory and/or to make a difference in their name.

In reality, the edges between one-off and longer-term donors are very blurred, and many of the one-off donors we interviewed had the potential to become longer-term supporters. Indeed, some of these ‘one-off’ donors talked of their ongoing (but unrecorded) support, e.g. through street collections and raffles. The more engaged donors were actively open to ideas for raising or collecting more money, especially when ideas seemed particularly fitting for the deceased.

Age of deceased is key

Our research suggests that those affected by a life ‘cut short’ may feel and act differently to those whose loved one has reached a ‘ripe old age’. While the grief may be just as strong, there is perhaps a greater sense of inevitability when faced with an elderly person’s death – so the desire to honour their life comes to the fore. Those trying to come to terms with a life cut short experience a thorny range of emotions – from guilt to anger to activism – and their motivations for giving in memory are likewise more complex.

In-Memory giving is worth a great deal!

To date, we have measured levels of In-Memory giving in two ways: first, the value of identifiable In-Memory income *received* by charities, and second, the value of In-Memory donations *reported* by the general public. We estimate total sector In-Memory income to be around £430m – that’s around 8% of total voluntary income. This estimate probably still excludes a large number of invisible In-Memory donations – both one-off and regular – which would boost the figures still further.

We also measured the levels of In-Memory giving reported by the general public, using two consecutive omnibus surveys. According to this quantitative research, 38% of all adults have given in memory in the past year.

The link between In-Memory and legacies

We were particularly keen to assess the link between In-Memory and legacy giving. To date, the evidence has been limited and largely anecdotal. Our own analysis of the In-Memory journey (based on data from 13 large charities) suggests that 'warm' In-Memory¹ donors are twice as likely to be legacy pledgers or prospects than other regular donors. Furthermore, those legators who were known to be In-Memory donors leave 38% higher pecuniaries and 24% higher residuals than other legators.

Health charities dominate

Health charities are the obvious and instinctive choice for many In-Memory donors – especially immediately after the death. Where a charity has helped to care for the deceased, there is enormous gratitude and donors are motivated to give something back in order to say thank-you. With charities related to the cause of death, the motivations are to help other people suffering from the same illness and to help find solutions or a cure. These decisions are often more rational and less emotionally charged, particularly where the charities concerned are large. But if the disease area is under-researched or less well known, donors tend to think they can make more of a difference.

According to our 2013 Omnibus survey, 38% of all In-Memory donations went to hospices or hospitals, while another 33% were given to other health charities. The remaining 29% of donations were made to a wide variety of 'loved-in-life' causes, not least children, armed services, animals and churches.

Loved-in-life charities also have a place

Our research suggests that In-Memory can also be highly relevant to 'loved-in-life' causes, providing they can develop sensitive, imaginative products and messages that are tailored to their audience's needs. With loved-in-life charities, the motivation is to do something that fits the interests and values of the deceased and these decisions are generally personal and heart-warming.

Funeral donations are the most common

In volume terms, funeral gifts are the biggest category, accounting for 38% of all In-Memory donations.

According to our 2013 omnibus survey, 18% of adults have made a funeral donation in the past 12 months. However, since average donation values are relatively low, funeral gifts account for just 22% of all In-Memory giving in value terms.

Events are the largest segment in value terms

Money raised through events is the largest In-Memory category in value terms (accounting for 45% of total In-Memory giving), due to the significant sums raised by fundraisers. According to our 2013 omnibus survey, 11% of adults have taken part in a fundraising event in memory of a loved one.

The survey data suggests that almost 40 pence out of every £1 raised at events is In-Memory motivated. That's why the messages coming out of this programme are as important to events and community fundraisers as they are to individual giving and legacy teams.

One-off and regular donations are often invisible

Beyond the funeral, regular and one-off donations account for 22% of all In-Memory giving. Such gifts were often mentioned spontaneously in focus groups, especially to mark Christmas, anniversaries or birthdays. On the death of a parent, such a gift may be seen as 'following the family tradition'. As a more considered donation (made after the immediate trauma has passed), 'loved in life' charities might well be chosen here.

Such donations are often invisible to charities – in part because the donor is not asked why they are giving. According to our 2013 survey, 39% of direct debits and 30% of one-off In-Memory donations were not known to the charity itself.

Tribute Fund usage up, donation values falling

We estimate that gifts via Tribute Funds account for 7% of all In-Memory donations. Tribute Fund awareness and usage appears to be rising. In 2012, just 1.5% of adults surveyed claimed to have given in this way in the past year – by 2013, this figure had climbed to 4%. However, at the same time, average donation values appear to have fallen sharply – down from a median of £68 to £10. It would seem that as acceptance of this channel is growing, the amounts given are decreasing. However, the apparent growth in usage over the past year is impressive. As Tribute Funds become better known and accepted as a way of giving, and as social media take-up in general grows, penetration is likely to climb further. A spate of new initiatives by JustGiving, MemoryGiving, NAFD, MuchLoved etc is likely to speed up the process.

¹ Warm In-Memory donors were defined as 'donors with any previous transactional relationship, who make an identifiable In-Memory gift'

NB the previous transactional relationship does not have to be an In-Memory gift

Commemorative objects can capture the imagination

The purchase of commemorative objects such as plaques and benches accounts for around 5% of money raised. Here, the motivation to give appears to be strongly linked to the interests of the deceased – and indeed is often at the deceased’s behest. Although a ‘minority interest’², last year’s focus groups suggested that imaginative ‘living’ commemorative items such as sponsoring a child or a puppy or planting a tree (once known about) can be highly attractive to these donors – the ability to specify/personalise the gift is seen as a real plus.

More about In-Memory Insight

The In-Memory Insight programme is funded by a ‘Learning Circle’ of leading British charities – over the past three years 38 charities have been involved in the programme – see below for a list of current members.

We define In-Memory as “any type of charitable giving or fundraising commemorating the life of someone special”.

A variety of In-Memory activities are covered in our research, including gifts at funerals, direct In-Memory donations both one-off and regular, the setting up of ‘Tribute Funds’, the purchase of commemorative objects such as benches and trees, participation in fundraising events such as marathons and bike rides, and legacies made in honour of a loved one.

The programme sets out to explore:

- What motivates In-Memory donors to give to charity – and how does it make them feel?
- What do In-Memory donors need, expect – and experience – from the charities they support?
- How many/much In-Memory gifts are being given? Through which channels?
- What is the current status of In-Memory fundraising in the UK?
- What can we learn from good practice examples – both here and overseas?

To answer these questions, we use a variety of research techniques including focus groups and depth interviews, omnibus surveys, good practice research, the analysis of performance data from Learning Circle members and group discussions.

As it moves into its fourth year, In-Memory Insight will be focusing on four elements:

- Continuing to collect and analyse performance information from as many Consortium members as possible, focusing on an agreed set of performance benchmarks
- Conducting qualitative research to explore motivations and attitudes around In-Memory events fundraising
- Carrying out further quantitative research into In-Memory giving, building on the 2012 and 2013 omnibus surveys, including a further set of questions on In-Memory events
- Discussing the findings at a full-day workshop session in November 2014, including group discussions and presentations from expert speakers

For more information on In-Memory Insight contact **Meg Abdy: m.abdy@legacyforesight.co.uk**

The In-Memory Learning Circle 2014

Alzheimer’s Society	Christian Aid	Royal British Legion
Arthritis Research UK	Clic Sargent	RNLI
Barnardo’s	Guide Dogs	RSPCA
Blue Cross	IFAW	Salvation Army
Breakthrough Breast Cancer	Marie Curie Cancer Care	Save the Children UK
British Heart Foundation	Mencap	Scope
British Lung Foundation	Mind	Shelter
British Red Cross	NSPCC	Sue Ryder Care
The Brooke	Parkinson’s UK	UNICEF UK
Cats Protection	PDSA	Woodland Trust

² We recognise that commemorative objects are a significant income stream for some charities, especially in the heritage, animal and conservation sectors