

About this report

In-Memory Insight is an ongoing programme to map, measure and research in-memory giving and fundraising. Set up in 2011, the programme is funded by a Learning Circle of leading British charities. Over the past six years over sixty charities have been involved in the programme – see the back page 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 wide variety of in-memory activities are covered, 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.

In-Memory Insight 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. To do this we use a variety of research techniques including focus groups and in-depth interviews, consumer surveys, best practice case studies, the analysis of performance data from Learning Circle members and group discussions at project workshops.

Our latest research focused on how donors and fundraisers use social and digital media in memory of those who have died. This report highlights some key insights from the in-depth consumer research conducted for the project. As always, we are grateful to our Learning Circle members for agreeing to share these findings more widely.

The use of social and digital media in-memory

Our 2016/17 research focussed on **how donors and fundraisers use social and digital media in memory of those who have died**. We defined the social & digital media (or S&DM as it became known) landscape broadly, including not only popular social media channels (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat), but also **discussion forums** (like Mumsnet, MoneySavingExpert.com and Petforum.com), **online giving platforms** (e.g. JustGiving, Virgin Money Giving and GoFundMe), **Tribute Funds** (whether run by MuchLoved or charities directly) and **charity websites**.

Our research aimed to explore some important issues, such as:

- How are social media and digital marketing being used in-memory? By the public? By charities and other bodies?
- What is the role of third party influencers and intermediaries?
- How does social media link with other media, on and off-line?
- How do in-memory donors engage with digital fundraising and charity sites? How well do the sites meet their needs?

Throughout, we were looking to help our Learning Circle members address three vital strategic questions:

- How do we best use social media and digital marketing as part of an in-memory fundraising strategy?
- How should we assess the effectiveness of our online in-memory ‘offerings’?
- How can we measure and track online in-memory performance?

There were six elements to this year’s research:

- The **context**: listening to the online conversations taking place around in-mem and remembrance
- **Consumer insight**: in-depth qualitative research, mixing depth interviews and focus groups
- **Consumer potential**: quantitative research to measure the take-up of social media and charity websites in-mem
- **Current practice**: what social media and digital resources charities have, and how well they can respond to trends
- **Best practice**: case study research drawing on good practice and great ideas from member charities
- **Implementation**: practical suggestions on assessing your current in-memory social and digital media offer, and developing an effective future strategy

Consumer insights: the in-memory donors' experience

Our approach

This year's qualitative research comprised four focus groups with people currently using social or digital media in memory and fourteen depth interviews with people who are at the forefront of S&DM in-memory of a loved one, or could influence others in future. These 'cutting edge' respondents included highly motivated in-memory campaigners/donors using a variety of social and digital tools in memory; people responsible for making decisions about Facebook pages or other digital media after a loved-one's death and people who had considered or facilitated the production of a 'digital will'.

What we learned

Social media is changing death and remembrance

Social media is changing the way people talk about death and remember their loved ones. Indeed, for those under 45 it was the main way in which they expected to hear about a death (unless very close family). But there was a general feeling among all ages that through social media, deaths – whether of intimates or celebrities – are more widely publicised and discussed, whether people approved of that or not.

At a time when people were in great distress, social media made it easier for them to let a wide circle of family and friends (however far-flung) know they had lost someone dear to them. The medium also made it easier for people to talk about the person lost – to say more, to craft messages and to feel less upset (than talking face-to-face) in the process.

Most of the people in this research did not want to forget their loved one and social media helped them to remember. It was a *place* where they could go, for some the main place of remembrance, particularly if they did not have a grave or other special place to go. Some actively talked to their loved one through social media as though they were still alive.

Some generational differences persist

There are undoubtedly generational differences in people's attitudes and usage of social media. Those over 45 tended to value tangible media (such as letters and printed photos) and personal interaction. They were somewhat less comfortable about sharing personal information and promoting fundraising on social media, in part because they trusted the technology less. On the other hand, those under 45 appeared to have fewer qualms, perhaps because they live their lives in a social media 'window'.

Social media allows people to create a rich collective memory

If grieving is helped by the quality of people's memories, social media undoubtedly enabled more and better memories to be collected from a wide range of friends and relatives. Social media was being used to store and share memories, anecdotes, photos, messages of condolence and offers of help. This was of enormous value and had the added benefit of bonding family and friends together.

Facebook is *the* social medium for remembrance

Facebook appears to be the social medium that is most relevant to remembering people who were loved and lost. This is because it is relatively private (open to just friends and family) and because people can post both messages and pictures to pay an appropriate tribute to a loved one. In that context, Twitter is too public and abrupt and Instagram does not enable enough to be said.

When it came to charities, people used Facebook to communicate information and galvanise action around their loved-ones' cause. For example, they might share information about the symptoms or treatment of a particular disease, or urge their contacts to sign up to lobbying campaigns. Facebook was also the key social medium for publicising fundraising events and asking for sponsorship. While for some the sheer ubiquity of Facebook threatened fundraising overload, most people felt that it was hard to match the versatility, personalisation and reach of Facebook through any other medium.

There is comfort in connection

Bereaved people derived great comfort from talking to family and friends who knew their loved one well. They also appreciated hearing from other people who had been through a similar experience. They were often touched by small gestures and kindnesses, even (and sometimes especially) from strangers. They sought to make connections with their loved one through the people, places and organisations they had cared about.

Some people actively sought connections with the charities involved in their loved one's life. This was most often the case for charities giving end of life care, but could also apply to 'loved-in-life' charities who reflected the deceased's interests.

Bereaved family and friends wanted to feel close to their loved one through the connection, so they were interested in what the charity did, and how they could help.

Where in-memory supporters connected with charity Facebook pages it enabled them to see what the charity was up to and in some cases to connect to other supporters who shared a common experience. These supporter connections tended to happen unexpectedly, as an evolution of an initial charity connection. Some people, most commonly the highly engaged 'catalyst donors', gained comfort from talking to those in the same position as themselves, and reward from offering help or advice.

Bereaved people need to evolve and move on

Perhaps inevitably, there was a pattern to how people remembered loved ones in social media. The most activity was in the first one or two years following death – thereafter it settled down to a lower level, focused around anniversaries and special dates. Although no one we spoke to wanted to close down memory pages, there was also a recognition that in-memory had its own, natural, life.

This was particularly true of fundraising in-memory, where several catalyst donors talked of how they had evolved their activity and messages to keep their fundraising fresh. This could mean moving on from the story of their loved one to other stories, awareness-raising and campaigning.

Charities can provide a more spiritual space than other sites and organisations

Facebook is widely used to collect memories and photos and its modus operandi helps to keep memories alive. Yet it is not seen as a truly private space and has its own issues about security, lack of control, and an unwelcome sense of being always 'on'.

In contrast, charity memory pages enabled supporters to talk about their loved one online, sharing memories and information with invited family and friends in a more intimate way than more 'public' social media spaces. It also enabled them to connect with the charity, its staff and other supporters if they so wished. A charity memory page has the potential to be a more personal space for remembrance and where there was a strong connection between the deceased and the charity, a more spiritual one.

Joining the programme

As it moves into its seventh year, In-Memory Insight will be focusing on **the role of funeral directors** in in-memory giving. Funeral donations are generally the first step in the in-memory giving journey, and the donor's first interaction with the charity supported. Their initial experience – often via a funeral director – can make a huge difference to whether they continue to give or fundraise in memory. We know that Funeral Directors are generally thought to be helpful and sensitive advisors to the bereaved. Our research to date suggests that while they have a limited impact on the choice of charity, they clearly influence the methods and levels of giving, as well as the donors' dialogue with the charity itself.

This research will focus on Funeral Directors' role within the process of remembrance, their relationships with the deceased's family and with charities, and their impact in maximising funeral (and any other) donations. It will aim to understand the pressures and priorities today's Funeral Directors face, and how charitable donations fit within their overall 'offer'. The aim would be for charities to gain a far better understanding of this sector and how best to engage with it.

The project will include:

- Desk research into the size, shape and drivers of the funeral industry
- Depth interviews with a cross-section of funeral directors and key industry bodies/commentators/suppliers
- An online consumer survey to quantify the issues emerging
- Charity case studies of best practice relationship building
- Two project workshops in November '17 and April '18
- Ongoing charity benchmarking, as in previous years

If you would like more information about the new programme, please contact Meg Abdy: m.abdy@legacyforesight.co.uk or talk to one of the Steering Group members listed below.

The In-Memory Learning Circle 2016 – core charities

Age UK	Cystic Fibrosis Trust	PDSA
Alzheimer's Society	Guide Dogs	Prostate Cancer UK
Arthritis Research UK	Help for Heroes	Royal British Legion
Barnardo's	Leonard Cheshire	RNLI
Blue Cross	Macmillan Cancer Support	RSPCA
Breast Cancer Now	Marie Curie Cancer Care	Salvation Army
British Heart Foundation	Mencap	Save the Children UK
British Lung Foundation	Mind	Scope
British Red Cross	NSPCC	Shelter
The Brooke	National Trust	Sue Ryder Care
Cats Protection	Oxfam	UNICEF UK
Christian Aid	Parkinson's UK	Woodland Trust

The Hospice UK Module 2016

Ayrshire Hospice	Princess Alice Hospice	St Josephs's Hospice
Birmingham Hospice	Rowans Hospice	St Luke's Hospice
Douglas Macmillan Hospice	St Catherine's Hospice	St Raphael's Hospice
Hospice of St Francis	St Elizabeth's Hospice	Wakefield Hospice
Northern Ireland Hospice	St Francis Hospice	

The programme Steering Group

Michael Clark, Cystic Fibrosis Trust

Tish Ley, Guide Dogs

Rosalind Parry, NSPCC

Nigel Seymour, Princess Alice Hospice

Jo Curtis, RSPCA

Helen Knowles, Wakefield Hospice

Helping your in-memory and tribute fundraising to soar

Business planning ... constructing a case for support... strategic planning...
donor research... new product development... stewardship and donor journey planning...
awareness raising and coaching

Whatever stage you are at with your in-memory and tribute fundraising, if you are seeking specialist support, why not talk to us? Our consultancy service aims to help charities get the most from their in-memory fundraising. Working with Legacy Foresight will give you access to an expert team and the most comprehensive research on in-memory trends and best practice available.

To talk to us informally about your charity's needs, please contact

Kate Jenkinson, Head of In-Memory Consultancy

k.jenkinson@legacyforesight.co.uk

