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TRENDS, STATISTICS
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ARTS & HERITAGE
FUNDRAISERS

#05 SPRING
2020

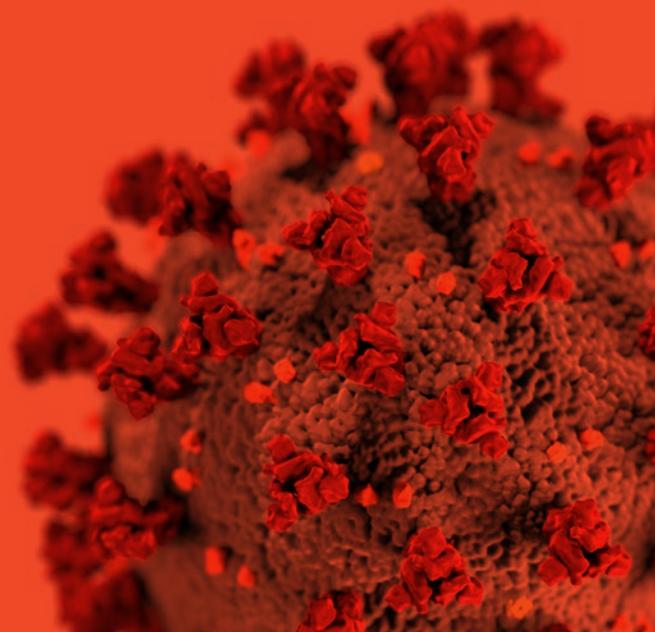
**FUNDRAISING
AT TIMES OF
CRISIS**



Produced by
arts
fundraising &
philanthropy

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FOCUS ON FUNDRAISING AT TIMES OF CRISIS

Since the beginning of 2020 there has been global concern about a new virus Covid-19. The alarm which started in China, has spread throughout the world, being declared a global pandemic by the World Health Authority.

Many individuals and organisations have therefore faced an urgent and immediate curtailing of their lifestyles and choices. Social distancing, community lockdown, travel bans and the closing down of universities, schools and non-essential businesses including theatres, libraries and performing arts institutions have been implemented quickly via unprecedented instructions from central Governments. This has had a devastating impact on many arts organisations, as well as creative practitioners, musicians, artists and the like.

This edition of Now, New and Next therefore focuses on supporting arts, culture and heritage organisations to consider their responses to fundraising

at a time of global crisis. It thinks through the next decade of impact, as well as how to effectively communicate with donors. It also suggests ideas as to how organisations might build crisis campaigns and to consider how organisations might undertake different sorts of activities including virtual fundraising events.

We hope you'll find this issue helpful in supporting your organisation through the impact of this global pandemic and we'd love to hear your feedback.

I'm grateful to all the contributors to this issue. If you would be interested in contributing an article to a future issue, please send us an email to artsfundraising@cause4.co.uk and we'll be in touch.

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Looking ahead to 2030

MICHELLE WRIGHT, PROGRAMME
DIRECTOR FOR ARTS FUNDRAISING
& PHILANTHROPY



Like it or not, this is likely to be the decade where ‘how we do everything’ changes. Radical shifts in how we work and organise, climate catastrophe, political upheaval, instability of markets and volatile regions are all on the cards and that was before we faced a global pandemic with a devastating affect on people’s jobs, livelihoods and freedoms. With all this in mind, how can arts charities best evolve to meet the challenges of the next decade?



Make way for community activism

Future Agenda's 'The Future of Doing Good' paper outlines that 'the social sector, like the state, remains too focused on needs and deficits, and not enough on empowering people to create positive change in their own lives'. It puts forward the idea that the 20th-century charity model has reached its limit because the agenda is shaped by Government and the wealthy. The report suggests that the models of the future will be more collaborative, more empowering, more activist: they will seek to develop skills and resources in individuals, seek to promote community life, build social capital and build democratic engagement through community organising. Covid-19 has fast-tracked some of this thinking - we have to be collaborative and to find positive and helpful ways through - arts organisations will need to create space for community activism and not impose 'top-down' hierarchies on its staff, audiences and donors.



Photo: da.mas on VisualHunt.com

Rage based' philanthropy

People are getting angry - and getting involved. After President Trump's 2016 election, many progressive organisations experienced an influx of rapid-fire online donations in so called 'rage based' philanthropy. We also saw this more recently in the UK with the surge in donations to homeless charities and food banks after the recent general election. The rise of 'rage giving' creates quandaries for the charity sector. It's effective in the moment but there is a real risk of rage-exhaustion, especially when we are bombarded with bad news. For the arts, this form of philanthropy is usually more challenging to harness, but it can be a way to forge relationships with donors that can continue above and beyond any initial funding emergency or threat. Covid-19 has seen rage channelled at companies that have not made good choices in supporting their staff, people or public health - it's likely these actions will be remembered and organisations that behaved ethically at the lowest ebb will shine through when the world starts to turn again.

Photo: Amplify Project



Collaboration, collaboration, collaboration

Partnerships, cross-sector collaboration and creating shared narratives should be at the heart of any funding agreement, particularly from statutory funders with a responsibility to drive change. A great example of the collaborative model is [Amplify](#), a project run by [The Young Foundation](#) which aimed to bring local people together to create positive social change. Working in towns in Northern Ireland and Wales, it used a range of ethnographic techniques such as art and storytelling workshops to develop a shared narrative about how these communities would like to look in the future. Actions included a community café as an affordable space for people to meet and a town festival to bring people together from different backgrounds. We are likely to need to rely on such techniques as we recover from Covid-19 and collaboration between organisations operating in communities will be key.



Embrace data philanthropy

Data philanthropy describes a new form of partnership in which private sector companies share data for public benefit and/or social purposes, such as improving healthcare or our ability to respond to disasters. We are already seeing it appearing in our sector via corporate philanthropy: anonymised store card data, for example, may give early predictions of certain diseases to UN and NGO initiatives. By 2030, we are likely to see arts charities looking to fund business strategies that require them to compete for the services of world-class data analysts. Hopefully, by then, we'll have the privacy/human rights side of data protection sorted out, as well as the predictive software.

*The future will be
more collaborative,
more empowering,
more activist*



Charities will still need to be adept billionaire whisperers

The 21st century has seen an unprecedented rise in the numbers of the ultra-wealthy, with the highest concentration of billionaires per capita, unsurprisingly, in San Francisco - the heart of the tech industry. Many of these tech billionaires are getting actively involved, applying their solutions-based, sometimes disruptive, business models to their philanthropy. Research firm Wealth-X concluded in its 2019 Trends in Ultra-High Net Worth Giving report that young billionaires, i.e. those under 45 with net worth above \$30bn, want to know exactly how their money will be used and what impact it will have. With much philanthropy being focused quickly into solving Covid-19, arts organisations are going to need to emerge with projects of real social impact that can really get wealthy people interested in being at the heart of solving complex challenges.



Photo: Wired UK

New banking models = new giving behaviours

Opportunities to engage with potential donors at their financial 'source' will only increase over the next ten years. Online, disruptive tech 'challenger banks' from Monzo to Revolut all boast a majority of customers under 30. With better access to data/analytics than traditional banks, these new banks on the virtual block offer their customers a range of ways to contribute to their favoured causes. Monzo, for example, has 13 categories for budget setting, including a 'give to charity' code. It will be interesting to see how behavioural nudges, such as being encouraged to set a budget for how much you give to charity a month, will encourage charitable giving amongst younger people. Arts organisations will need to be heavily attuned to models of communications that help galvanize small, regular donations from members of the public.



Environment is everything

The climate emergency and how charities engage with the issue will increasingly come to dominate the discourse of the 2020s. Undoubtedly, this widespread shift in public opinion is already emerging, as can be seen in the successful protests against fossil fuel companies funding public art spaces, like the BP 'die ins' at the [British Museum](#). Consumers, beneficiaries and audiences will increasingly view the sustainability and eco-credentials of a charity as key factors in their decision to support a cause. This will have a knock-on effect on the way in which we fundraise and how we relate to charitable giving.



Levelling up working conditions

By 2030, we will have experienced an increase in automated jobs, a transformed labour market increasingly focused on services, a skills crisis and (hopefully) new legal protections for the gig economy. Covid-19 will also have made a huge impact in enforcing employers to think differently and to be more flexible in supporting home working etc. The charity sector has been very slow to adapt to even the most benign changes in how work is organised. While the private sector has rapidly adopted new modes of operating, from co-working spaces to flexible working, many charities still operate in large, uneconomic buildings with poor infrastructure and technology. This has to change.

Consumers, beneficiaries and audiences will increasingly view the sustainability and eco-credentials of a charity as key factors in their decision to support a cause.



Change the rules on measuring success

We need to stop measuring CEOs on financial outputs or growth for its own sake and think about relevance. As they mature, arts charities are becoming organisational dinosaurs with models not fit for purpose – we need flexible, agile, fluid structures that embrace and adopt more flexibility in working areas and funding models that support them. We need space for CEOs to consider how disruptive technologies will affect them and to back the winners in ways of giving, while responding to a competitive climate through better partnership and collaboration.

The desire to help and make change in the world will endure into 2030 but the model for arts organisations needs urgent adaptation to be fit for purpose. It seems highly likely that creative outlets, community network building and something to take our minds off global emergency will all be needed in 2030. We'll most likely all be activists of some sort by then. Times are changing. Best we get ourselves shipshape sooner rather than later.

We need flexible, agile, fluid structures that embrace and adopt more flexibility in working areas and funding models that support them.

(A version of this article was first published in [Arts Professional Magazine](#) in January 2020).

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

Share your thoughts at
[linkedin.com/groups/5172823](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/5172823)





Communicating with donors at a time of crisis

MICHELLE WRIGHT, PROGRAMME DIRECTOR FOR
ARTS FUNDRAISING & PHILANTHROPY





Covid-19 has impacted on the international community at a speed and scale that very few people could have foreseen. Whilst well run arts organisations will all have appropriate risk and contingency plans in place, a global pandemic was not something that would have been part of most risk registers.

For fundraisers and the arts community, the impact has been immediate, shocking and devastating. Overnight, as the UK Government enforced social distancing, theatres, museums, venues and events stopped immediately, with many thousands of artists, employees and freelancers facing uncertain futures, with no assurance at all of when the lights might go back on.

Unlike other health crises or natural disasters that have hit globally in recent years, the Coronavirus is unusual because it has the potential to affect everyone. Of course, fundraisers want to mobilize, they want to maximise what income they can and quickly. But what is front of mind with this particular pandemic is that our often-loyal audiences and donors, those with means and time, often in retirement – are also exactly those most risk of

becoming seriously ill if they contract the virus. This means that our donors are not only facing the same systemic shock as the rest of us, but they are also facing unprecedented uncertainty and fear.

So, fundraising right now needs to grapple with two things. Firstly, that attention is rightly focussed on overcoming the virus. And, secondly, that our most loyal supporters are going to be experiencing high levels of uncertainty and anxiety, and, whilst they might love what our organisation does, their hearts and minds will inevitably be focussed on their own families and communities.

So, what do we need to be mindful of in our fundraising communications right now?

Sending donors regular, relevant communications that draw on the current context are the best approach to keep relationships going.





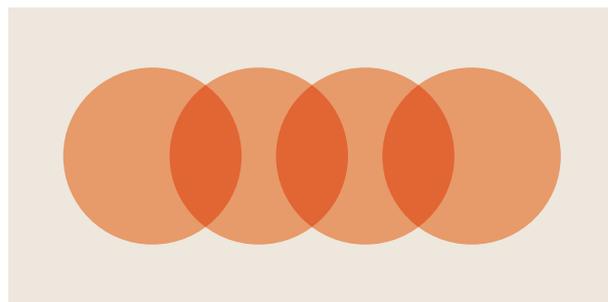
Is it appropriate to communicate with donors at all?

All fundraising is relational, so it is even more important that you continue contact by phone or email with donors and let them know how you are changing your operating models and fundraising strategies at this time. Your donors need to hear from you on bad days, as well as good. Short video statements can also be very helpful.

At this time of anxiety, many donors will be glad to hear from a friendly face and will be happy if you check in on them. It may be that your organisation has issued a company statement about its actions in relation to Coronavirus and you can forward this on to them. During these uncertain times, your donor communications should focus on being useful and informative. Remember that your donors have been immersed, whether they have wanted to be or not, in disaster coverage, so you don't need to add to the noise or anxiety.

Of course, making sure that you thank them and continue to be grateful for their support is vital. For very loyal donors, it could be that you informally ask for their advice on how you think your campaigns and fundraising should take shape at this point and brainstorm creative ways to move through it. Some donors might be happy to be media spokespeople, or to help the organisation in shaping its plans and strategies.

It can be tempting in times of crisis to let donor communications drop but it is important to resist that temptation. When this crisis passes, donors will remember which organisations were helpful, useful and positive and you will need them to be part of your solutions going forward.



Empathy is all

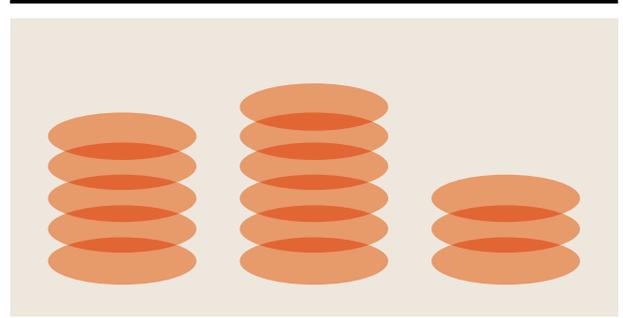
Of course, communications with donors need to be appropriate and empathetic. We need to be hyper-vigilant as to how donors might be feeling and how they might act. Empathy is all. It is hard to imagine that anyone isn't feeling anxious and overwhelmed right now.

Therefore, whilst we may be panicking as we see our short-term fundraising potential fall off a cliff - giving is unlikely to be a top priority for donors. Aggressive appeals that ask for their help to solve your problems are not going to cut it. At the same time, giving donors passive updates that completely ignore the context of what is going on are also likely to grate. Sending donors regular, relevant communications that draw on the current context are the best approach to keep relationships going. It is also important to consider the individual situation of the donor. Many will be at home for long periods of time, and some will be isolated. It could be useful to see if there is anything that your organisation does that could be useful to

them. For example, could your education team send resources for people that are educating their kids at home or similar? Or do you have digital archives that will be interesting for donors that are finding themselves in front of the TV more than ever before?

In your own fundraising appeals, some donors may be motivated by a spur to action. In this context, it is likely that donors will respond as they do with other disaster appeals. They will be more likely to react in support of their own towns and cities or where giving can have a direct impact on a community. Organisations should also be wary of trying to link Coronavirus to their mission unless there is a genuine connection. It will feel inauthentic and false. Most likely it won't be appropriate to ask for money at all but keeping donor relationships going is still important. For example, if donors had purchased tickets to now cancelled shows, it is fine to ask them to consider turning these gifts into a donation, subject to relevant tax and data protection rules. However, the ask needs to be careful and appropriate and to recognise that not everyone will want to, or can, give at this time. Ticket buyers must be offered refunds and should not feel pressurised into making a donation.

Some donors will want to suspend gift conversations, and it's vital that this is respected, but organisations shouldn't be vague about when they want to make contact again. One of the key concerns about Coronavirus is that we have no idea how long social distancing is likely to last. Fundraisers should feel empowered to make concrete plans and to ask donors when they might be in touch again.



Which appeals can work?

If you do decide to launch an appeal, then make sure you follow good practice. Often donors need easy ways to help, so make your organisation's response simple and distinctive.

Campaign messages should make it clear why your organisation is well-equipped to help, or for exactly what purpose you are raising money. Be as specific as possible. For example, some organisations may want to launch an artists' support fund. Sharing a specific project will reassure donors and may encourage some first-time contributors to give generously for urgent and immediate needs.

Communicate with clarity and visually (if possible) about how donations will be managed, where they are going and what your organisation's fundraising effort will achieve.

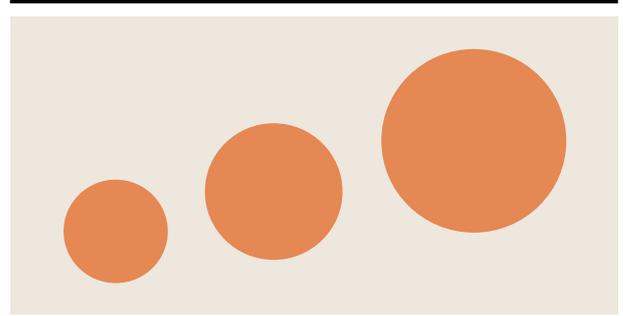
Fundraisers should also seek to understand the likely time lag of any philanthropy. It is too early to say how financial markets will be affected overall by this global pandemic, but, if we follow other trends in philanthropy, it's safe to assume that many donors will honour their commitments in the year of a downturn but not so the following year. If you're just starting a three-year campaign, then have confidence.

You may need to lower your fundraising target for now but could far exceed it in the end when things recover, especially if you manage your relationships well.

All businesses are having to think creatively. Can you run events virtually, or set up conversations with donors via [Zoom](#) or [Skype](#)? Could you run a donor event via Skype where they get to talk to your CEO or artists? We all need to find useful and positive ways where we can help people weather the storm. Who will they want to hear from and with what sort of message?

This is also a great time for collaboration and to reach out to other organisations for ideas and for tips about how to manage the crisis communications and to see if you can share any resources.

If looked after properly, donors will emerge with you on the other side of the crisis



Continue to invest in fundraising

It might feel impossible to hold our nerve now, as vast swathes of artists and musicians are out of work and theatres and venues are shut for the foreseeable future. However, the only way to prevent incoming money from slowing down following a crisis is to further strengthen donor engagement, cultivation and solicitation. If looked after properly, donors will emerge with you on the other side of the crisis, perhaps even stronger supporters than before.

And don't necessarily throw out your current fundraising strategy. It may still be perfectly viable and can be re-established post the crisis. In fact, it's the organisations with the clearest vision, those able to implement their strategies clearly and that take real care of their relationships that will be best placed to reconnect with fundraising activity when the world starts to recover.

A version of this article was first published in [Arts Professional Magazine](#) in March 2020).

Arts fundraising amid the pandemic

ANNA PHAROAH,
DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, CAUSE4



Welfare, health, food and risk to employment are people's biggest concerns now, but the arts have a special role to play in reassuring and inspiring people, and arts organisations need to strive to continue their mission and continue to raise funds. But how to go about this amidst a global pandemic?



Photo: dshack on Visualhunt



Get perspective

You may 'go quiet' for a period as you and your audiences try to adjust and adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. However, this pause in communications with audiences and donors should be temporary as the pandemic will likely roll on. Social distancing and isolating guidance is likely to remain in place for those at risk until the end of 2020 or beyond. Over such a long period, it's unlikely that your organisation would want to bring fundraising to a complete halt.

Work closely with colleagues and revisit business plans

Think over the time-frame with your colleagues and consider all aspects of your business plan and future plans. Consider these questions together:

1. *What does lock-down mean for our organisation in the next three months, what will stop, what will continue, what needs to start?*
2. *What does lock-down mean for us across the next three quarters? Where will we be, what do we hope to have achieved?*

The pandemic will mean a total revisioning of your organisation's business and fundraising plans, and it's helpful to consider these in chunks rather than remodelling for a future time period that nobody is certain of.



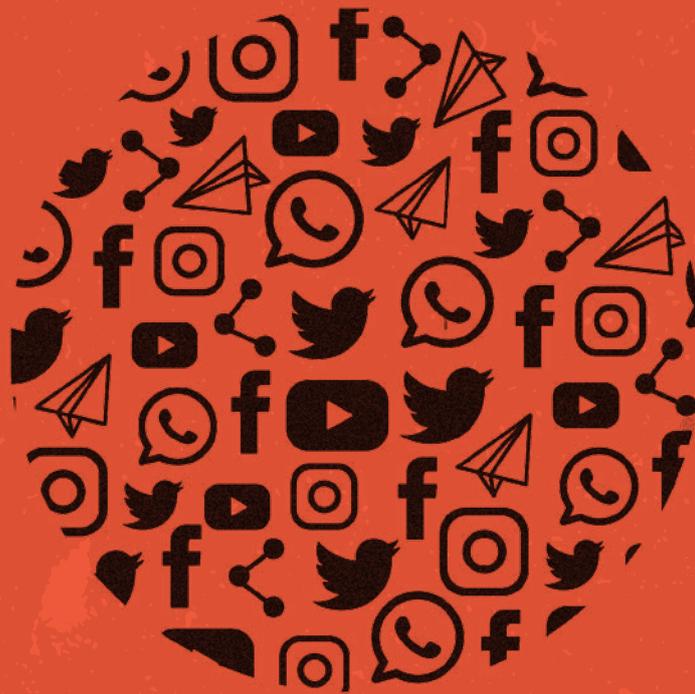
Review immediate fundraising plans

Asses all your upcoming activities – mail communications such as donor letters, updates or appeals may need to be pulled, they are likely to fall on distracted ears. Events are not permitted to continue in person, but before cancelling events think about how they could be reshaped into a virtual format. People in isolation need and want to connect with others and things they enjoy.

Get in contact with sponsors, trust and statutory supporters to establish clear lines of communication and contingency plans as expectations of grants or contracts are unlikely to be fulfilled in the timeframe.

You will likely pause conversations with Major Donors or potential Legators about significant gifts but develop ways of keeping in contact that are sensitive and appropriate.

For your membership schemes, now is not a good time for recruitment drives, so refocus creative efforts on how you'll continue to deliver some benefits virtually and ensure continued support to avoid drop-off.



Your website, PR and social media is where activities can continue and be adapted and upscaled

So where does this leave you? Emails, your website, PR and social media. Here is where activities can continue and be adapted and upscaled. Here are some suggestions.

01. Remap your fundraising messaging to your new organisational needs

Fundraising messaging is built around organisational need and developed over long periods of time.

As your organisation's needs are changing rapidly, consider which of your existing messages are relevant. Questions to ask include: What are the organisation's funding needs? Do we need support to pay our freelancers? What new costs do we have in creating online or virtual experiences?

For a heritage organisation with a garden to maintain, messaging around giving to support wildlife is still relevant as it is orientated to the eternal. This is obviously not so for any messaging based on concerts and exhibitions that are now cancelled. Building work on capital projects will discontinue in the medium term and the promise of a new concert hall or museum space will seem very remote to people's concerns at the moment, who perhaps can't even get to their local park.

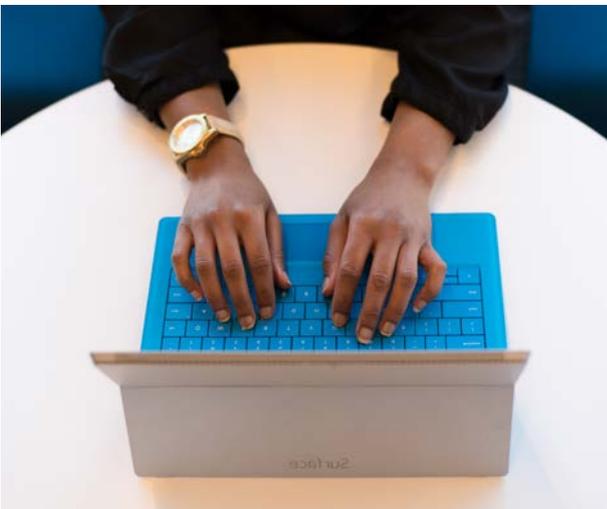
Map your fundraising messages to your ongoing and new business needs - working backwards from your business plans.

02.

How to communicate need

Once you've worked out your needs and developed key messages, set these out on your core channels in a simple and compelling way that addresses the situation that audiences are in. If done well, this is an opportunity for your organisation to demonstrate strong values artistically and socially.

A statement from your Managing Director on your homepage and sent to your mailing list will give reassurance. This should cover regret over that which is lost (e.g. an upcoming exhibition cancelled), as well as empathy for people worried and affected. It should also make it clear that your organisation still needs support and, drawing on your business plan, should be honest about the decisions you're making and the funds you need. Place emphasis on the right things: a message of hope - your commitment to your mission; sharing enjoyment of art no matter what; and your commitment to vulnerable people, such as your freelance artists.



03.

Making the ask

Once you've set out your key fundraising message and position there is scope to get creative.

To connect with audiences and donors at this time, show your supporters that you are not only committed to your cause, but to helping others and those who are on the front line. Make any fundraising messages hinge on issues that directly address the needs and concerns that people are facing. For example, an appeal centred around education packs for parents now having to do home-schooling, or a message around helping to provide emotional support through the enjoyment of music, images, art or literature.

04.

Go online

Rally your colleagues and make a future plan centred on digital communication and digital fundraising.

One learning from China was that time spent online shot up 20%, with social networking being the favourite activity. Even if your organisation doesn't have a strong digital presence or following, now is the time to change that. Delve into digital archives for Instagram images and videos. Show forgotten treasures or all-time favourites. If your organisation has gardens and grounds, it could be a story about wildlife thriving.

Content could feature an artist or musician who is making work in isolation but sharing it with others, or overcoming adversity through practising their art.

Look for messages that will resonate and use your art to show your support for people and communities. In doing so, you can continue to be a source of inspiration to audiences, stay warm in their hearts, and continue to remind people of your need for support.

Whilst the reality may look very uncertain – a message of hope will be more important in reassuring donors and maintaining their moral support and financial support. Make your online activities support fundraising whilst connecting with the people about the things that are most likely to be front of mind for them. Some ideas include:

- For your ‘VIP’ supporters, set up a round table via Skype to talk about how to continue the organisation’s mission at a time of social distancing and isolation.
- Crowdfund to commission a favourite artist to create a poem, painting or artwork directed towards finding the beauty in a time of fear and isolation, to be shared online.
- Create an appeal around creating resources for people that are educating their kids at home.
- Publish digital archives and make them free as never before – so that being stuck at home can be a form of liberation – and make it clear to online visitors that you need support.

- Create a ticketed event where someone with a story to tell (a curator, writer, historian, academic) could give a live online talk, and donors can ask questions.

Hopefully, your whole organisation can get behind surprising and delighting audiences and donors online, and some special efforts may warrant and require a request for financial support. However, for others, a fundraising ask may be in the background, so that you can prioritise showing community-mindedness and being proactive and helpful at a time of emergency globally.

The arts have long played a role in humankind’s ability to survive in adversity – so aim to use your content to send out that message to connect with your audiences in a meaningful way, whilst you remind them of your need for support.

Last but not least – make it as easy as you can for donors to support you online, even if potential donors have more time on their hands, they will be irritated if they can’t make a donation easily if they wish to do so.

A message of hope will be more important in reassuring donors and maintaining their moral support and financial support

Tumultuous ticketing

DAVID JOHNSON, HEAD OF PROGRAMME,
ARTS FUNDRAISING & PHILANTHROPY



Getting bums on seats has long been the adage of the performing arts, and ticketing for theatres as well as museum exhibitions, library events, and other parts of the sector absorb a great deal of time, effort and resource.



In a recent analysis of data by [TRG Arts](#) and [Purple Seven](#), advance theatre ticket sales in the UK were seen to drop by 92% as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Where organisations sell tickets, this on average accounts for 40% of their turnover, but it is often a much higher figure, with as much as 95% of some business models based solely on box office revenue. With this in mind, the implications of the government's recent lockdown and social distancing policies are potentially profound and far reaching on those parts of the arts sector where ticketing plays a significant role.

Audiences are seeking refunds for their tickets in their droves, whilst an industry tries to maximize its cash flow and to work with audiences and donors to maintain its financial viability. Organisations are responding to this in several ways, including encouraging ticket buyers to donate their ticket value to the charity instead of getting a refund; allowing open ended exchanges through applying credit to accounts to be used at a later date; and offering Friends scheme subscribers credit towards the following year's renewal.

For these charitable organisations, there is also the potential to claim Gift Aid on donations to further contribute to vital core funding. Contractually, a refund on a purchased ticket must always be offered in the first instance, but the language and approach that is used when communicating with ticket holders is imperative in terms of maintaining the relationship with the booker over a longer period of time. Your audiences are already facing the same unprecedented crises that your organisation is; the uncertainty, the risk of unemployment and the stress of illness and self-isolation. This is therefore the time to be understanding, supportive and compassionate.

Several ticketing software providers have stepped up to the mark in offering technology solutions to support

organisations to process mass refund and donations efficiently, including [Spektrix](#) and [Ticketsolve](#). Where organisations sell tickets through third party agents there is also an opportunity to connect with them to discuss their approach during this time. [Stay22](#) in Montreal has offered 100% commission to new partners and has increased commission by 20% for existing partners. Similarly, ticketing platform [Eventbrite](#) has increased its functionality to support ticketed events moving from live to virtual. Where organisations are moving work online this is also providing a new opportunity to reach out for potential financial support. London's [Phoenix Artist Club](#) recently moved its cabaret programme onto a digital platform and launched a 'tip the artist' scheme alongside it.

The UK Ticketing Agency Body – the [Society of Ticket Agents and Retailers](#) (STAR) has urged ticket holders to be patient whilst box offices handle refunds, and there appears to be much goodwill from UK audiences. Arts Professional magazine recently reported that two-thirds of total ticket sales have been turned into donations or credit, and whilst this is highly encouraging, organisations are still advised to assume that there will be at least a 50% drop in traded income over the next 6-12 months.

Venues can also start to think beyond the immediate shock to the bottom line and

consider ways they can build resilience into their earned income and ticketing strategies for the future. Internal policies that directly impact ticket buyers such as exchange and refund processes may need to be reworked, and businesses should continue to review PCI payment compliance standards to ensure that staff working at home can accomplish tasks efficiently and responsibly. Donations policies and stewardship processes will also need to be reviewed so that new donor relationships established through this time can be sustained and cultivated. Organisations might also want to revisit their pricing methodologies, reviewing opportunities to sell to a more price-sensitive consumer, including models like dynamic pricing or ARC in Stockton on Tees' much applauded 'pay what you decide'.

Globally, we just don't yet know how consumer behaviour will be impacted longer-term as a result of the pandemic. Despite forecasts to the contrary, ticketing flourished in the period after the recession with one theory that audiences increased nationally due to more people staying in the country rather than going abroad, therefore having money to spend on entertainment and nights out. Indeed, the UK may be reliant on mass social interaction and a morale boost following enforced home time.

Several ticketing software providers have stepped up to the mark offering technology solutions to support organisations to process mass refund and donations efficiently



Behind the scenes, established financial models of producing may need to be reviewed with existing contracts of box office splits, guarantees or 1st calls being thrown into the air and new ways of financing and balancing the risk for artists and venues arising.

The role of public subsidy to arts organisations here will become paramount, allowing venues to continue to produce challenging work and develop their artistic risk-taking with less reliance on ticketed income. Regardless of what happens next though, the immediate challenge will be weathering the storm and sustaining

relationships with audiences and ticket buyers that organisations have worked long and hard to develop and grow. Empathy and decency will go a long way here to support the sector to recover, maintaining relationships with audiences and encouraging them to engage with the work of your organisation differently.

There is also a whole host of new potential digital audiences on the horizon. Things may look very different in 2021 and maintaining trust and getting people back into venues will be the first priority when we can. Perhaps the future adage will therefore be getting bums in buildings.



Empathy and decency will go a long way here to support the sector to recover, maintaining relationships with audiences and encouraging them to engage with the work of your organisation differently.

NEED SOME GUIDANCE?

Email us at
artsfundraising@cause4.co.uk



Diversified fundraising organisations must hold their nerve

MICHELLE WRIGHT, PROGRAMME DIRECTOR FOR ARTS FUNDRAISING & PHILANTHROPY



As well as the overall shock of Covid-19, lock down measures and the shutdown of our cultural venues, there is a further leveller that the global pandemic has thrown at arts and heritage organisations and that is that those organisations that have fought so hard to develop their income models are hardest hit when the doors shut.

Venues like Norwich Theatre Royal, which is justly proud of its 95% income from box office, cannot sustain itself without people coming through the door. It feels perhaps even more unjust that the organisations that have made important progress in recent years so as not to be over reliant on statutory or trust fundraising, are now finding themselves particularly hard hit now that their venues are shut.

There are some 30,000 charities in England and Wales that represent the arts, culture, heritage and science category – approximately 15% of the active registered charitable sector in England and Wales. Many of these charities will now not only be cut off from the essential source of revenue or earned income that comes from audiences and visitors but also possible future revenue, as nobody has a fixed idea as to when society might get back to anything approaching normal.



One of the main things that makes arts organisations resilient is the complexity of their income sources. But Covid-19 has ensured that this is no longer a source of strength, at least in the short term. Many arts organisations make money from a wide range of sources from ticket money, to participation in education programmes, to investments and endowments, or renting buildings – but right now, every one of these income streams has been shut off simultaneously.

Of course, some charity trustees are adopting an ‘I told you so’ attitude, saying that reserves needed to be higher. But many trustees had taken both Charity Commission and funder guidance seriously and had kept reserves proportionate to need, instead prioritizing spending on beneficiaries. The sort of rainy day caused by Covid-19, was not on anybody’s horizon.

The sense of uncertainty is crippling. If we look at previous big shocks to the global economy like the terrorist attacks in 2001 or the global recession in 2008, then the arts bounced back relatively quickly. We can expect, as is starting to be the case in China which was at the original epicentre of the Covid-19 outbreak, that the arts organisations that survive the lockdown will see some sort of quick bounce back when the public can return. However, we also have to be mindful that philanthropy to the arts in general has been on a downward trajectory for a number of years.



So what does this mean for how organisations approach their future fundraising strategies?

After such restrictive lock down measures, many people will want to return to doing some of the things that they previously enjoyed doing, and our cultural venues are likely to bounce back relatively quickly.



Private sector income is likely to take a substantial hit for the longer term. Many grant funders including Arts Council England are deploying a range of measures to support the current emergency and to get organisations through the short term. This is essential, but it will of course come with a series of

trade-offs in the future. Investments will be down for Trusts and many will have over-spent on their strategies. The competition for funds once organisations are able to operate fully again, will be even more intensive, especially as the charity sector has been hit hard just like the arts, and those mainstream charitable organisations will arguably be all the more desperate for funds, as they don't have a benign central funder like Arts Council England to support them during tough times.

Funding from individuals is likely to be similarly affected. Donors will start to feel the true impact of falling investments, rising taxes, unexpected illness and redundancy.

And likewise for fundraising from corporates, there will be few winners in the business community after Covid-19. The headspace for charitable donations or sponsorships is likely to be sparse for several years to come.

So this is where, if they can survive the brutal onslaught of the current situation, that those organisations with good earned income strategies need to hold their nerve and to innovate accordingly. This will be the time when with private sector fundraising set to be challenging for several years to come, that those organisations that can bring their marketing and fundraising strategies firmly together, and to treat audiences and donors as one, will see their recovery strengthen.

Of course, it's likely that disposable income will be tight. However, after such restrictive lock down measures, many people will want to return to doing some of the things that they previously enjoyed doing, and as such, our cultural venues are likely to bounce back relatively quickly.

The key areas we will need to consider when building strategies are as follows:

01.

The world will be different – at a time of crisis, going back to basics on purpose and strategy is essential. Arts organisations will need to focus on the core and discard the non-essential – strategies will need to be rebuilt from scratch. Over-stretching business plans, non-core activity and a suite of programmes that have no demonstrable value will have to go. Boards and CEOs will need to be ruthless - the money won't be there, and the public will have no time for style over substance.

02.

Hold your nerve – diversified income streams will return (eventually) – audiences will return but with different expectations. Organisations need to look at business models with a razor-sharp sense of risk and make sure that balance is at the heart of funding streams. We expect (and hope) that this pandemic will be a once in a life-time occurrence and therefore the general premise of spreading risks will see organisations with sensible and diversified income streams prevail, even if they will need to be patient about their general recovery.

03.

Digital will be vital – virtual organisations will now come to the fore – until now there have really only been tentative moves to online engagement, streaming performances and online museum tours. The business case hadn't been proven and income models such as the [Berlin Philharmonic's Digital Conference Hall](#) are embryonic. But Covid-19 has meant that turning to online has given some arts organisations relevance and value at a time of lock-down. The economic models will need time to evolve but whilst bigger organisations with good archives will have first mover advantage, many will need to follow. Attendance at live events has been falling for years. With the Covid-19 inspired move towards online engagement, it could be that audience consumption habits will change for good.

04.

Buildings may prove a cross too much to bear – of course, many arts organisations and museums rely on buildings and the venue is at the heart of their delivery, but where strategies may need to change is in relation to the vanity capital acquisition that makes no real long-term sense. For reasons of appetite, finance and environmental concerns, we will all need to be far more mindful of our buildings' footprint – poorly thought through acquisitions will make lean and flexible business models impossible to implement.

Covid-19 has meant that turning to online has given some arts organisations relevance and value at a time of lock-down.

05.

Marketeers and Fundraising teams need to urgently work together – often marketing teams and fundraising teams have seemed at odds, siloed and fractious, fighting for scarce budgets and with cultures and activities at odds to each other. This is going to need to change immediately. With the fundraising curve likely to be very challenging in the coming months, the two teams are urgently going to need to respond to the bounce back of audiences and their differing needs. Organisations will need to carefully curate engagement programmes and to look after audiences and donors with the utmost urgency, from the first-time online attender to long-term donors.

Charitable status, community relevance and the value of a ticket and subsidy will need to be clear and front of mind. With the social and economic shock of Covid-19 likely to have an impact for the next decade, the arts is going to need to make its case for value harder than ever before, with compelling stories to match.

The aftermath of Covid-19 will be the greatest challenge for generations – it's essential that arts organisations with sound business models hold their nerve, and any point scoring between marketing and fundraising teams must be a thing of the past.



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How Covid-19 is changing the financial risk and resilience of your arts organisation

SARAH THELWALL,
FOUNDER OF MYCAKE LTD



Many grant funders and non-profits are still in the first round of emergency response; trying to work out the immediate effects upon audiences and service users whilst balancing the risks faced to staff. The immediate response planning is for a three-month hiatus followed by slowly returning to pre-Covid-19 patterns of income and expenditure.

It is going to be necessary to plan for a year in which non-grant income drops by over 50% and where costs increase and are not fully covered either by salary furloughing or flexibility from grant funders. It will be extremely difficult for organisations to earn their way out of trouble and cutting their cost base without making redundancies will draw substantially on organisational reserves which need to last beyond any re-opening date.

If an organisation's reserves would be entirely spent in the first three months of this pandemic, or indeed if they won't last that long, then it is likely that the organisation will need not just the measures already offered by grant funders and by government but an additional cash injection. Organisations will need to make a series of plans to reduce their cost base to ensure the reserves that they do have will last long enough to cover the first few months when they re-open.

Vulnerability driven by a rapidly changing (and likely increasing) cost base

Not all scenarios for operation during these three months have similar costs to those that organisations have budgeted for, even taking into account the flexibility of funders. For example, it may be possible to mothball an organisation and instead of spending budget on activities in the real world, spend them on the online delivery of interim services e.g. Nottingham Playhouse and their online singing activities. However, obviously, then the budget for online delivery will increase.

Any new activity above and beyond that already planned has costs additional to budget, whilst furloughed staff represent fixed costs that can only be reduced by 20% if you ask them to accept either a delay in payment of this amount or a temporary pay cut. Organisations will want to retain furloughed staff in order to re-open with as little pain as possible but whilst furloughed, these staff cannot legally undertake paid work for the organisation or any other. The furloughing of staffing costs of course, only works on staff where their monthly salary is not more than £2,500 and a separate solution will be required to meet the salary bill of management teams.

Some organisations will be looking at a substantially increased cost of delivery in the next three months e.g. any arts organisation whose core programme is in the community may be opting to become a community hub for the duration of the pandemic so that the beneficiaries they serve are provided with support. There may also be increased activity with vulnerable groups whose needs are so substantially increased at this time. Doing so is likely to lead to increased costs. These costs will be driven by both the need to develop measures to protect both staff and service users and by the rise in sickness rates in staff leading to the onboarding of extra staff with associated training costs.

So whether organisations decide to deliver more or less activity in the next three months, their cost base is going to change and, for planning purposes it would be prudent to assume that it will be higher rather than lower. It is also likely to be the case that organisations will not have time

It is going to be necessary to plan for a year in which non-grant income drops and delivery costs increase

**decreased
non-grant
income**



**increased
cost of
delivery**





Sadly, those organisations with the highest levels of donations income may be the most vulnerable in the short term

to find the most cost-effective solution to both immediate needs and a rapidly changing situation and thus there will be times where they either duplicate spending or simply end up paying sums which in normal circumstances would seem excessive but in this climate will be a Hobson's choice. Organisations can of course turn down the thermostat in some buildings (albeit not galleries and museums) and look at other reductions in overheads but it is likely to be the salary bill and artistic commitments that will break a financial model soonest. The average expenditure on the main artistic programme for members of the Arts Council England national portfolio is just over 50% of turnover. Overheads form the second largest area of spend at around 23% of turnover.

Dramatic drops in earned income and donations

How might organisations cover these additional costs? Their income sources may well be changing rapidly as well. Over the past decade, many charities have worked to fuel their growth through trading activities so as to strike a new balance between trading, grants and donations. Sadly, those organisations with the highest levels of trading and donations income may be the most vulnerable in the short term. It will feel a particularly harsh blow that after all the hard work to increase these in recent years that they've just fallen off a cliff and that those who are more dependent on grants are, for the time being, likely to feel more secure.

Government measures to tackle the virus mean that trading is going to be all but negligible in the next three months and uncertainty about both personal and business finance is already hitting donations income hard. How would an organisation's budget look if it assumed that its non-grant income dropped by 50%, 75% or 100% for the forthcoming 12 months? Earned income is a lesser proportion of total turnover for the smaller organisations in the ACE portfolio. For those with a turnover of £100-300k it's worth around 25% of turnover, whereas for those in the £1.5m-15m range it is worth over 50% of turnover. Contributed Income is worth around 15% in the smaller organisations and around 10% to larger ones.

It is too early to tell just how long it will take for trading and donation patterns to return to previous levels and when it comes to re-budgeting for the rest of 2020 it is wise not to be overly optimistic. Cafés and shops may bounce back, but will the population feel a need to put a greater proportion of their salary into their own rainy day fund? Will all this time at home lead to longer term changes in entertainment habits?

The other implication of changes in spending patterns and an increased likelihood of a recession is that if there are things that organisations can do now to raise income whilst most of the population still has a job and a roof above heads, this is the time. Many people will have seen the plethora of new crowd-funding calls that have been established in the last week to raise donations; including the pleas from theatres to audiences to ask them not to request refunds but to convert tickets into donations; there have also been increasing

amounts of sale pricing from high street retailers to shift stock in the short term. These are all measures to improve cashflow at the expense of profit margin because at the moment it's cashflow (or lack thereof) that will save an organisation or be the final nail in a financial coffin.

What are reserves for and how much of them will organisation's risk?

In one sense this is exactly what reserves are for – an unexpected and unforeseeable substantial shock that organisations need to respond to immediately.

This is not however the time to write a blank cheque. Organisations need enough money in the bank to afford both to re-open and to carry through an organisation into an uncertain economic context.

Organisations cannot simply assume that they can pay all salaries and shortfall from furloughing from reserves until they re-open when there is no clear indication of when they may be able to do so, nor a sense of the market into which we will all emerge.

If an organisation spends all its reserves in the next three months it will not be in a position to continue if it takes four to six months before it can undertake any trading or fundraising. The timing of decisions is crucial, as organisations need to have enough funds which are not yet committed to deal with the situation as it unfolds in the coming months. None of this is certain.

Even with the responses from government and grant funders to help organisations shore up their immediate position by enabling them to reduce the delivery

against which funding is allocated and furlough a proportion of their staffing bill, organisations may well need to consider a series of redundancies in the coming weeks and months if further measures to assist the charity sector are not taken by the government. This is of course the very opposite of what organisations would like

to do and is at odds with both grant funder and government pressure to avoid redundancies. So the sooner organisations establish how large their unmet costs are going to be, the sooner they can lobby for additional relief funds.

Conclusion

So, in summary, the organisations with the greatest immediate risk are:

1. Those that have increased their trading income as a percentage of turnover (and thus decreased grant dependence)
2. Those with the highest percentages of total expenditure going on staffing costs
3. Those with the lowest levels of reserves

It is very hard to give any rules of thumb on what highs and lows are across the whole of the charity sector as the norms vary substantially from one type of activity to another.

The data we've referred to is that published by [Arts Council England](#). We'll be working up some data and analysis on this in the coming weeks so that we can offer insight which is more tailored by sector and suited to different sizes of organisation.

The simplest ready reckoner we'd suggest is, that if your organisation's reserves would be entirely spent in the first three months of the pandemic, or if they won't last that long, then you need not just the measures already offered by grant funders and by government, but an added cash injection. This is alongside reducing the cost base of organisations to ensure the reserves that they do have will last long enough to cover the first few months when they re-open.



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Fundraising in lockdown

NAOMI CHAPMAN,
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE, CAUSE4



The Covid-19 Pandemic has led to mass closure of arts venues, and the loss of a significant income source for the sector. Can we use virtual tools or events to create compelling fundraising events for the sector in a time of crisis?

The cultural sector relies on people coming together to make, experience, and fundraise for culture. In 2016/17, across the then Arts Council England National Portfolio (NPOs), an average of 35.6% of income was earned, with the vast majority of this coming from core activity, including ticket sales.

In 2016/17, NPOs had on average 12 weeks' worth of unrestricted, undesignated funds. If the closures that are in place across the cultural industry due to COVID-19 are going to last for at least 12 weeks, we need to get creative about how we can fundraise to ensure the sustainability of individual organisations and the sector.

We've been looking to find examples of the best virtual fundraising events that we've seen, and tips for how you might adapt these for your organisation. Remember if arts organisations can translate the value of their events online and bring benefits to

Photo: romanboed on Visualhunt



people in a new format, then there is no reason that donors won't want to support your organisation through this challenging time.

Heritage & Visual Arts

The nation's museums and galleries are immensely valuable, with extensive collections, expertise and a strong track record of education and outreach programmes. These are all assets that can be used for online fundraising events.

Although the [British Museum's](#) virtual collection has been live since 2015, the week after its physical closing due to Covid-19 saw the website traffic double, reaching close to a million visitors. A similar boost is reported by the [National Gallery](#), which saw a 20% increase in the number of website visitors in the week after it closed.

CLOSED

Eugenius



National Gallery



DanceSyndrome

If you have the assets to be able to launch virtual collections – on any scale – then do. For the release of its online exhibition, the God's House Tower in Southampton promoted the virtual launch for the time the physical launch was planned, announcing the release online. Organisations could extend this sort of experience by inviting supporters to enter a digital 'private view', including an introduction by a curator. To maximise income generation, accompanying these parts of your website with a careful fundraising ask, and inviting site visitors to visit in person once normality is restored are all parts of good process.

As schools close, parents who turn to home-schooling will be grateful for resources that allow exciting educational experiences from home, such as the [Science Museum's](#) extensive archive of digital learning resources, classified by age-group. Encourage your Learning and Outreach team to generate digital versions of school activities that are usually run. These could be released at particular times of day – a history lesson at 11am, for example – and concluded with a short fundraising ask for your organisation.

Theatres

Theatres, production companies and performers across the UK are releasing footage of performances online, encouraging donations to theatres or charities in lieu of a ticket price. An early example of this was the release of footage of [Eugenius!](#) at [The Other Palace](#), in support of [Acting for Others](#), a charity that supports creatives in times of difficulty. [Eugenius!](#) was a strong example of good practice, with the production company counting down to the 'performance' at 7pm on a Friday evening, encouraging virtual viewing parties and live tweeting as donations came in. At the time of writing, the release of [Eugenius!](#) had raised over £13,500, more than three times the original fundraising target.

If you don't have footage available, think about the content that your network of employees or freelancers might be able to create. For example, the [King's Head Theatre](#) is releasing daily #KHTOnline videos sharing expertise and training, such as a 30-minute producing masterclass with leading West End producer James Seabright, who is a trustee of the theatre.

Billboard



King's Head Theatre

**‘Out of adversity
comes opportunity’
Benjamin Franklin**

Music

Musicians have come out in support of charities since the start of the pandemic. [Billboard](#) is livestreaming performances from musicians' homes, with each artist donating proceeds to a charity of their choice. Think through your networks and whether there is anyone who could put on a fundraising performance from home for you.

Without a celebrity ambassador to do this, get creative with a Peer to Peer challenge. Musical theatre composers Lin Manuel Miranda and Andrew Lloyd Webber went viral this week in a charity piano play off, challenging each other whilst fundraising for [Broadway Cares](#). Taking inspiration from this, consider designing a music-based challenge that supporters can complete and accompany with a small donation, whilst challenging their friends to do the same.

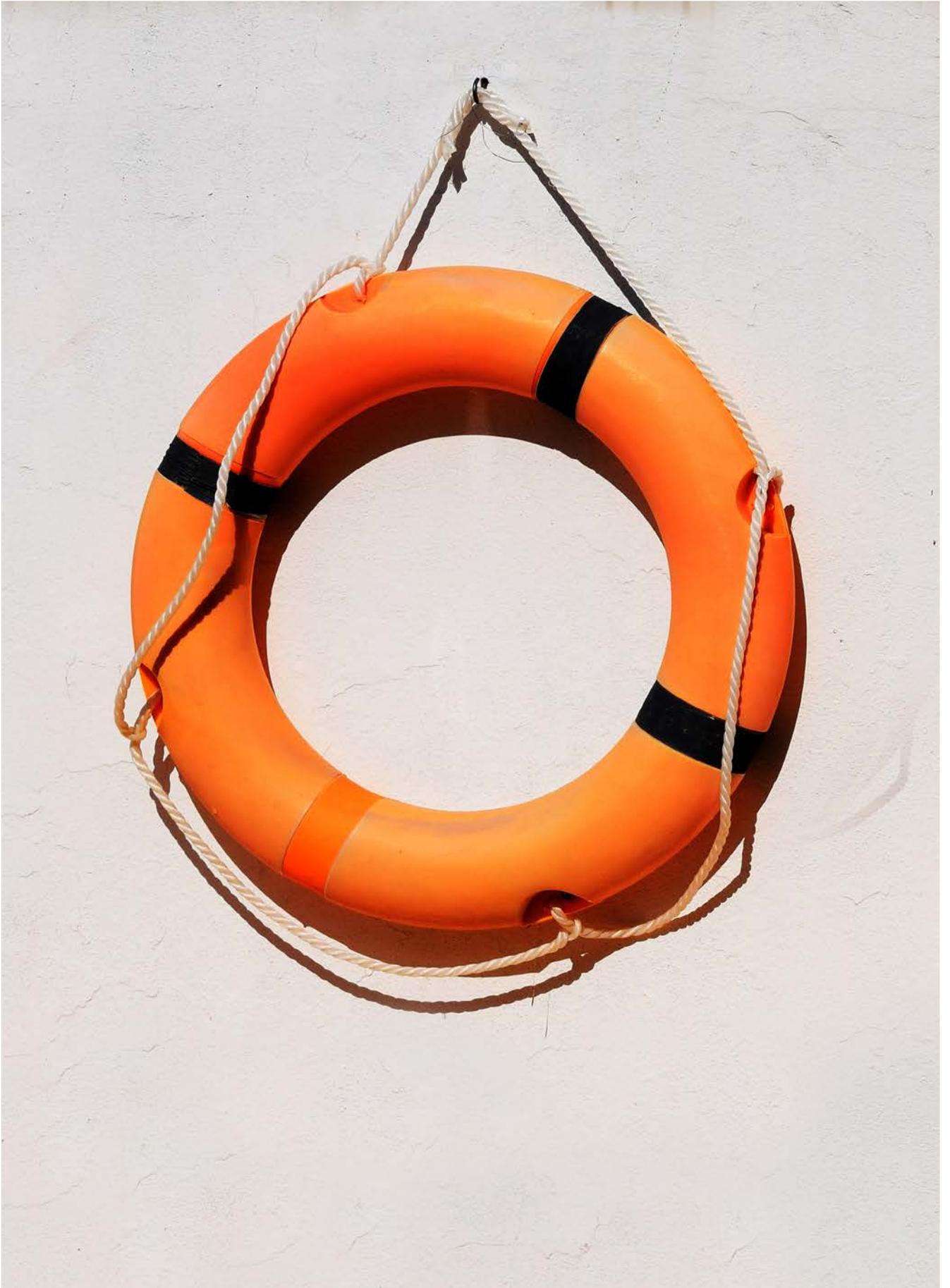
Dance

A joyous example of virtual fundraising events comes from [Dance Syndrome](#), a Lancashire-based dance charity that delivers inclusive dance classes across a range of styles. To combat loneliness and keep people active amid the pandemic, the charity is offering free online dance classes.

Dance Syndrome suggests a donation of £3: the price of admission to an in-person class. As a virtual fundraising event, there is a lot to love about this: it offers something of real value to people, it utilises existing expertise, and it is in line with both its charitable objects and the current context.

Hopefully, this round-up has prompted ideas for how you could use virtual events to fundraise in the coming months. Again, remember to think carefully about what you have that is valuable: is it staff expertise, workshop designs, archive footage, collections, networks, or something else entirely? You should centre fundraising asks around donating something of virtual value now, and to explore the future of this valuable service for the years to come. The impact of the arts will endure long after Covid-19 and this enforced break is a chance to try some things, at low cost and imperfectly, to see what chimes.

Benjamin Franklin said ‘out of adversity comes opportunity’, by trying some things we have a change to engage differently with our audiences and donors to help drive community, collaboration, and connection for when our doors can reopen.



What do arts organisations need from their trustees in times of crisis? (and what they don't)

FRANCES CAMPBELL,
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE, CAUSE4



In the face of a global pandemic, many arts organisations have gone into crisis mode for an emergency that we never thought we would be facing. Right now, trustees are a vital component in guiding arts organisations through this difficult and unprecedented emergency. However, it is essential that trustees are on the same page as the executive team in understanding the best ways to support the organisation, and most importantly, its beneficiaries, during this time.

There are many things to think about right now, but what is the right way to act, and what behaviours should trustees be wary of?

New reality

In this new reality, now it is more important than ever that you advocate for your organisation, conveying to the public why what you do is important. This might be to secure much needed donations, via supporting press and public statements, or in helping to think through the new creative ways that your organisation can reach out to people digitally in the face of public closures.

Trustees and executive need to present a coherent and supportive face at this time of crisis. They need to use the same language and be confident in internal and external communications.

The role of trustee is still to provide big picture thinking, strategy and advice to your organisation. While charity staff may be in the thick of crisis management, it is important that trustees can continue to provide an objective viewpoint. However, it is also important to think about the crisis in context. The whole industry is struggling right now and uncertainty rules. Trustees need to be aware of the challenging context that the pandemic presents and to understand that there may be limitations to what can be done in this time. Trustees can give a valuable external perspective to planning for change in defined time frames – for example, what do we need to do for the next three months, or if lock-down lasts for six months or beyond?

It will also be important to step into discussions with key funders if needed, for example, Arts Council England and to demonstrate to funders that the organisation is united and is trying to find positive ways through.

Which leads on to another key behaviour, trustees must, more than ever, trust in each-other and the incredible staff working throughout your organisation – now is definitely not the time for shifting blame or adding to an already stressful situation. This is not a situation that many arts organisations will be prepared for, and whilst retrospective analysis can be helpful, it's not the time to tear into the Chief Executive about a shaky reserves position. This is a time when more than ever, trustees can provide a calm and thoughtful presence and support senior staff who will be terrified about the organisation's future, artists, musicians and donors and how to keep the show on the road. Crisis management is exhausting and senior staff will need a supportive trustee body that can act as an effective sounding board, as well as to help them fully consider the ramifications of any future change in direction, redundancies or merger or collaboration that may be inevitable as the pandemic rolls on.

Trustees still shouldn't forget to ask questions, particularly the 'silly' ones and the ones that may seem a bit obvious. Board scrutiny is vital when big decisions may be happening fast due to crisis, when

This is a time when, more than ever, trustees can provide a calm, supportive and thoughtful presence



staff are exhausted and when the future is so uncertain. NCVO has produced some excellent examples of questions that trustees should be asking, such as;

Can we refocus our efforts and activities to respond to Coronavirus? and How could we continue to operate our essential services in the event of isolation or staff absence?

What arts organisations don't need right now is trustees holding back in fear of looking foolish -

- If something doesn't look right, say
- If you need clarification on something, ask
- If you think a decision isn't the right way to go, speak up.

You will only regret not asking later.

Finally, and importantly, never forget the reason you are doing this and ultimately who benefits from the great work of your organisation. There are not only thousands of people who may lose jobs in the sector, but even more people that will miss out on experiencing enriching creative performances and services that are vital for their future and well-being. Now is the time to show your dedication to these people. Make sure you are contactable and prepared for digital meetings.

There was a reason you wanted to be a trustee of your organisation, keep this at the front of your mind and use it to keep your Board, executive team, staff and volunteers motivated.

Visioning a new future

Right now, future planning on the other side of the crisis may feel a long way off but it is important to remember that your organisation will continue to need your expertise and support long after this is over. It is vital that you remember to take the time to think about what you can learn from this experience. Even though a global pandemic is unlikely to occur again during your time on the Board, there are many things that you can take away from the experience that can inform crisis management in the future.

Working closely with your Board and executive team will provide you with many insights into how you work together, manage stress, and make difficult decisions. This is invaluable for strengthening your organisation and building a resilient culture moving forward. What your organisation doesn't need is trustees that are so keen to return to business as usual that they forget to take stock of lessons learned and miss opportunities to improve.

Your business plan and fundraising strategies will need to adapt and alter, trustees that can be supportive of flexible models and can help the organisation take considered risks will be invaluable at this time.

Organisations must also be mindful of skills audits following a crisis. It may have become apparent that your Board or executive team is missing some vital areas of knowledge, expertise and skills. While it may not be worth recruiting an expert in global pandemic management, you may

need to consider whether there are any Board gaps that would be necessary to fill in rebuilding your charity in a tough post-crisis climate.

We are living in unprecedented times. Right now, it is more important than ever that trustees step up and recognise their role in navigating a global crisis. By thinking carefully about your behaviours, skills and what strengths you bring to your Board in difficult times, you can help see your arts organisation through this emergency. Your organisation needs you.



GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

Share your thoughts at
[linkedin.com/groups/5172823](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/5172823)



Why workplace culture is more important than ever when you're virtual

ANNIE JARVIS, SENIOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
AND NEW BUSINESS, CAUSE4



In light of the recent government response to the Covid-19 pandemic, for the majority, working from home has and will become the norm.

For many of us, remote working is not all that uncommon. At [Cause4](#), a proportion of the team will often work from home, on trains, or from different cities (and even countries); host meetings via conferencing facilities such as [WHYPAY](#) and deliver training through video

conferencing facilities such as [Zoom](#) or [Skype](#).

Yet, right now we are experiencing something very different. Like other businesses and charities across the UK, the whole team has been told to stay at home for the foreseeable future - something we are certainly not accustomed to.

Given that company culture is fostered, in large part, by employees coming together, it is vital that we find a way to ensure a positive workplace culture, so that our staff remain positive, productive and passionate about the work they do.

Businesses and charities across the UK have told their teams to stay at home for the foreseeable future



So how do we navigate this new world of remote working?

Here are some ideas to implement:

01 Set-out the Parameters

Structure and consistency are two key elements for successful home-working. When staff walk into an office environment, they often know what is expected of them, the parameters of their working day and how they will communicate with others. Whilst the specifics may differ, this shouldn't change when working remotely. Where possible, employers should outline a home-working policy so that all staff have a clear idea of what is expected of them, and what they can expect from others. These policies may need to be flexible, especially when considering personal barriers such as the need to home-school children, but as long as they are transparent and consistent, they will provide clear guidance and support for staff.

02 Provide the Right Equipment

Working from home can be a challenge. Most members of staff are likely to be working from a laptop, and many might not have an appropriate workstation, making long-term remote working a real pain. A positive working culture also includes physical environment, such as a clutter-free and quiet zone, and comfortable and practical desk space. Ask your staff to fill out a workstation checklist, and then provide them with the necessary equipment to ensure they can do their job effectively. Where appropriate, encourage your staff to designate an area that is specifically for working, so that they separate their work and home environment and have a clear distinction between the two.

03 Stay Connected

Team meetings and connecting with staff on a regular basis should be a key priority for remote working. Staying connected to your team will allow you to maintain positive working relationships and give everyone a voice. At [Cause4](#), we are using [Zoom](#) to host a short catch-up meeting every morning and for weekly one to ones, and are using Microsoft Teams to ensure we continue our water-cooler based conversations and regular check-ins. Other options include hosting coffee morning catchups over [Skype](#) and virtual drinks to celebrate successes, as well as continuing the professional development of staff through online training.





04 Help Staff Navigate Remote Working

In a normal office environment it is easy for staff to encourage each other to take breaks and have lunch as a team. Working remotely can often be more challenging as people feel the need to power through the day. Staff wellbeing during homeworking should be a priority for organisations, and whilst employers cannot control the environment that their staff are working in, they can provide support by offering guidance on best-practice and enabling opportunities for breaks and creativity. Encourage your team to step away from the computer and utilise their time to take a walk, do some exercise, or engage in a creative activity, and share guidance with them such as [Mind's](#) guidance on home working to help them take control of their own work-life balance.

05 Facilitate Feedback

Staff feedback is key to positive office culture no matter where you are based. Allowing your team to regularly share their concerns can help address any challenges quickly and easily. During a time of remote working, it will be even more important to check-in with staff, both in terms of their work and their personal circumstances, making sure they have everything they need to work effectively, and feel supported. At [Cause4](#), we use the performance management software called [15Five](#), which is a great way to hear from our staff on a weekly basis, as they answer questions such as 'how was your week?', 'what is your biggest challenge right now?' and 'what can we do to make you more successful?' This has enabled us to pick up problems before they become harder to solve.

Some of our favourite facilities and apps for remote working include:

WHYPAY: Telephone Conference Facility

Zoom: Video Conference Facility

Skype: Video Conference Facility

Microsoft Teams: Teamwork Hub and Group Chat Software

15Five: Performance Review Software

You can also check out:

Google Hangout: Video Conference Facility

GoToMeeting: Video Conference Facility

Slack: Video Conference Facility

Trello: Project Management Tool

Dropbox: Cloud Storage Software

Box: Cloud Storage Software





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