



CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2019 GOLD WINNER

Category: Low Budget Campaign

Company: Foundation of Light

Entry title: Give a Quid to Tackle Mental Health

Brief and objectives:

Foundation of Light (FoL) is the registered charity of Sunderland AFC (SAFC) which delivers over 40 sport, education, employability and health programmes across the north east.

Community fundraising is a growth area for the charity with SAFC fans seen as a target audience.

Brief:

Create a highly visible fundraising campaign with measurable success which resonates with fans.

Objectives:

- Fundraise £30,000 for Foundation of Light programmes
- Increase fan engagement with Foundation of Light.

The idea, research and planning:

We undertook qualitative research with several key organisations, including other football community foundations, as well as hosting focus groups with supporters.

Key feedback was that the campaign had to have a simple message and be easy for SAFC supporters and businesses to engage with.

Research also showed that a renewed sense of community spirit was prevalent amongst fans in Sunderland, as a result of the change of ownership in 2018 and a focus on a “one club” mentality – fans, owners, staff, players and Foundation all working together for the benefit of the club and the community.

Given the demographics of Sunderland, and low average income and levels of disposable income, it was important that the campaign was inclusive for all.

A fundraising target was to raise £30,000 from the launch of the campaign to the end of the season. Annually, SAFC gift the FoL a themed match day, with a range of branding and

promotional opportunities available to the Foundation to raise awareness of our work which historically raises £12-18,000.

Average attendances at the Stadium of Light has been c.30,000 in 18/19 season, so if each fan attending the match on 19th April donated just £1, we would achieve our £30,000 target.

Further consultation with the primary supporters' group, the Red and White Army, suggested that the mental health aspect of our work would be a topic that really resonated with supporters.

Strategy, tactics, creativity and innovation:

Budget for the campaign was limited, so our strategy was to really leverage the assets of the club and use the fans' passion for football to promote our work and key messages.

A suite of Give a Quid collateral was produced, including printed materials (packs for business, bucket stickers, stickers and message boards) and digital collateral (social media banners, case study videos and photography).

To drive fan engagement, players, team staff and former players were integral to the campaign, as was the backing of key supporter groups. We targeted messaging and tactics at channels specific to supporters including SAFC digital channels, supporters' groups, A Love Supreme (SAFC Fanzine) and Roker Report (SAFC blog site).

We also produced two video case studies (long-form for YouTube and shortform for Facebook and Twitter), using footage from existing collateral to keep costs down. These case studies told the stories of two season ticket holders who have benefitted from our programmes.

Branding was bold, simple and highly visible and worked within the brand architecture of FoL and SAFC. It was adaptable across several formats from online collateral to physical assets such as player t-shirts and bucket branding.

An information pack was created for businesses in both PDF and printed format and sent out to partners.

We created a JustGiving page featuring photos and videos, along with a text to donate number and donation points within the Beacon of Light. Details of how to donate was used across all collateral.

Delivery:

Given the wide demographic of SAFC supporters, the campaign was delivered across a large mix of media.

We issued releases announcing the campaign itself, support from players and Black Cats' Manager Jack Ross, former players, and other fundraising opportunities.

The campaign was supported by several regional key influencers including – Jack Ross; SAFC players and staff; SAFC Executive Director Charlie Methven; Durham Football

Association; former players Niall Quinn, Jimmy Montgomery, Kevin Ball, Marco Gabbiadini and Gary Bennett; BBC Radio Newcastle Sunderland commentator Nick Barnes; BBC commentator Steve Cram; Olympic marathon runner Aly Dixon; and North East Chamber of Commerce chief executive James Ramsbotham.

Sunderland supporter groups gave their official backing to the campaign allowing us to communicate effectively with a new group of fans, outside of our normal communication channels.

The club also sent an email to their 100,000 strong database on our behalf, allowing us to reach a wider but more engaged audience, as well as collect data for future campaigns.

Local businesses were involved through visits by SAFC mascots Samson and Delilah, city centre bucket collections supported by Sunderland BID, collections at supporter talk-ins, events and on matchday buses.

On the dedicated matchday a range of activity took including players wearing campaign t-shirts during warm-up; match shirts carrying the FoL logo; Foundation staff interviewed in the SAFC Fan Zone and live on BBC Radio Newcastle; the Beacon of Light hosted a special Family Fan Zone; bucket collections; matchday lottery tickets; envelope draws in hospitality areas and half time demonstrations to highlight the range of activities we do in the community.

The signed match-worn shirts were auctioned off in batches, with shirts released tactically based on results and the upcoming Wembley play-off fixtures raising over £4,000.

Measurement and evaluation:

The fundraising target of £30,000 was reached three days before the last game of the season.

We received a large amount of coverage across a mixture of platforms and media including radio, printed press, online, podcasts and social media.

We also saw extended coverage on the SAFC website and social, Roker Report podcast, A Love Supreme fanzine, two club programmes and the programme at the Checktrade Trophy Final at Wembley in April 2019.

Media analysis showed that we received 42 pieces of regional coverage across six weeks (all target market), with a total reach of 221,920 people.

The campaign received 397 tweets with total impressions reaching 3.55m and a reach of 1.54m, making it the most successful campaign we have run for digital reach and engagement.

We saw an uplift in digital media statistics throughout the campaign - 6.12% increase in Twitter followers, 7.48% increase in Facebook likes, 8.4% in LinkedIn follows and an additional 1,400 marketing opt-ins to our database.

Budget and campaign impact:

Total budget was £1500 and actual cost was £1400 (not including in-house staff time). Total raised £30,037 - a 2145% return on investment.

Give a Quid achieved its objective of strengthening our links with key supporter groups as well as key stakeholders in the city including Sunderland BID and Sunderland City Council.

Give a Quid allowed us to add value to our partners as mascot visits were popular and well received.

It is a flexible campaign which has longevity, with the future aim that it becomes our annual dedicated supporter campaign, with themes chosen by supporters.