

Charities lose vital donations through social class marketing failures

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Marketing failures are costing charities large amounts in vital donations, according to DaHee Han, Assistant Professor of Marketing at Desautels Faculty of Management (<https://www.mcgill.ca/desautels/desautels-faculty-management>), McGill University, because they do not tailor their campaigns to individual social classes.

Fund-raising ads fail to consider the motivations of potential donors, and so are unable to appeal to them.

Alongside colleagues Ashok K. Lalwani and Adam Duhachek, Han examined how people's perception of their place in the social hierarchy and the degree to which they accept the hierarchy or inequality in the society affect their charitable giving.

Han says: "Although logic would suggest that those who perceive themselves as higher in the social hierarchy would be more likely to donate to charity, our research suggested the opposite. In fact, we found that people who consider themselves to be on lower societal levels are more inclined to give charitably in order to endorse societal equality. This is because those who find themselves lower down in the pyramid are more concerned about others and thus are more motivated to help the less fortunate. Those at the top of the pyramid are less likely to help others because they already have the freedom and abilities to pursue the goals they value. These factors make them believe that those who find themselves lower down in the pyramid do not take advantages of the opportunities to improve their lot, leading people with high power to value their personal benefits."

In order to increase donations, fund-raising advertising campaigns must be targeted properly at these demographics.

Han says: "For those who perceive themselves to be lower in the social hierarchy, endorse equality in the society, and are more inclined towards empathy for those around them, fund-raising adverts that ask the reader to 'help make the community a better place' will resonate well. These calls to action emphasise the mutual gains charity can accomplish, and will attract a potential donor."

"Yet for those who perceive themselves to have power, endorse equality in the society, and are more concerned about personal interests, emphasising the benefits to their own self will be most effective. Campaigns that suggest how you will 'feel good for giving' or similar messages are likely to resonate well. In this way, advertising must be targeted in order to maximise results from donors with differing motivations."

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