



CASE STUDY NO 6

WATTS GALLERY – sponsorship fundraising

19th December 2014



SUMMARY

- 67% donations that were received were given via the DONATE website
- 87% donations had Gift Aid added
- 91% of donations were above £5, made via the web channel
- Average single donation: £76.70
- Considered marketing is crucial to a successful fundraising campaign

DONATE



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THE ORGANISATION

Watts Gallery was founded in 1905 to promote the understanding and appreciation of George Frederic Watts OM RA & Mary Seton Watts in the context of the 19th-century and to protect and promote the Watts Gallery Estate and its collection for future generations. Watts Gallery's regular activities include exhibitions promoting different aspects of Watts and his ideas; regular reinterpretations of the permanent collection; our outreach and learning programme – inspired by the collection and founders' ethos of 'Art for All' - which is reaching excluded groups; a training programme for 300 volunteers in heritage interpretation management and apprenticeships. Watts Gallery is working to restore and open to the public the studios of GF & MS Watts, which will create a centre of heritage skills and learning and complete an Artists' Village in Compton. The new Watts Studios museum will be open in 2015. Watts Gallery also manages the care, maintenance and visitor access to Watts Chapel.

THE CAUSE

Watts Gallery has been fundraising to Save the Watts Studios, the only remaining house and studio designed by Sir Ernest George, the great Arts & Crafts architect, and the only remaining 19th-century artists' studio with its collection still intact. The Gallery is now in the final throes and needs to raise £680,000 by the end of the year to complete the first phase and unlock monies pledged by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

To contribute to this, Director of Watts Gallery, Perdita Hunt, decided to swim the Solent, one of the busiest stretches of water in the world, on Saturday 27 September aiming to raise £10,000 in sponsorship. Geographically, the swim brings together the story of G F Watts 1817-1904, one of the greatest Victorian artists, who used to have a home on the Isle of Wight, as well as in London and Compton.

STRUCTURE OF THE CAMPAIGN

12 September	DONATE website goes live	
12 September	Posters produced and places around Watts Gallery estate in time for Heritage Open Weekend (anticipated busiest weekend of the year)	£57 raised
15 September – 9 October	Press Coverage including: Guildford Dragon, Get Surrey, The Guide2Surrey, The Surrey Advertiser and Surrey TV	

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17 September – Ongoing	Social Media Update. Shared by staff members through personal accounts as well as via Official Watts Gallery. This included: Facebook, Linked In and Twitter.	
17 September	News article produced for website including a link to DONATE which is placed on the home page. (http://www.wattsgallery.org.uk/news/2014/09/17/support-solent-swim-save-watts-studios)	£112 raised
18 September	Email sent out to Membership Schemes	£762 raised
24 September	Email sent out to General email list and those who have previously donated to sponsorship activities.	£4582 raised
27 September	Solent Swim	£6770.75 raised
29 September	News article updating on the swim published to website (http://www.wattsgallery.org.uk/news/2014/09/29/perdita-hunt-completes-solent-swim-challenge) and formal thank you letters sent to donors.	£7160.75 raised
29 September – 4 October	Swim is given an ongoing presence around Watts Gallery site, via website and social media channels	£7430.75 raised

Building on the initial success of this campaign it has now been expanded to a Triathlon series of events being completed by Watts Gallery staff members between October and December. It is hoped that by the time of the last Challenge in December the target of £10,000 will have been reached.

THE ORGANISATION'S PERSPECTIVE

Interview with Sarah Mitchell, Development Assistant, Watts Gallery

How have you marketed DONATE across your cause so far?

The DONATE logo has been used on the Watts Gallery website, as the main link for all social media posts and included on posters placed around the site. As we have our own style guidelines we have not used templates produced for free by NFS. However, one template that would be of use would be a footer to include below email signatures.

How does DONATE fit with the Watts Gallery's wider fundraising strategy?

DONATE will most likely be used by Watts Gallery for specific short-term campaigns. We are currently in the process of updating our own website and so are considering

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ways in which DONATE will be able to fit within this. The Gallery also participates in other online campaigns such as The Big Give Christmas Challenge.

Looking forward, do you think DONATE could be successful for other campaigns?

DONATE is being used for the Watts Team Triathlon – an extension of the initial Swim the Solent Campaign. The target will be to reach the £10,000 mark set up by the Solent Swim, this means there is only a further £3,000 left to raise. Marketing for this has already begun and some donations are beginning to trickle in. The challenge will be not to flood donors who have already given with an overwhelming amount of communication.

Do you think the DONATE digital giving platform has reinforced physical donations?

During this campaign 67% donations that were received were given via the DONATE website. It is a fast, simple and attractive giving format that appeals to donors, this was reflected in the numbers of donations that Watts Gallery received. The strength of being able to give in multiple formats (card, paypal and text) is something that works particularly well and appeals to our supporters.

What risks did you perceive in asking individuals for donations?

Donor fatigue is always a worry. We had recently completed a successful campaign for our acquisition fund and were a little worried that donors may not respond. The personal dedication from Perdita participating in the swim was a good unique selling point for this campaign.

What were the key lessons learnt from running this campaign?

The importance of our marketing practice, both on site and off. Many people have commented on the posters – particularly those on the back of toilet doors!

The highest rise in donations were seen after the second email went out in the week before the event – the email highlighted the urgency of the campaign as the event was the weekend after and also targeted people who has previously given to similar campaigns. In addition, donations were received from eighteen people who had not previously given to the Gallery.

DONATE is unique in a competitive market of giving websites in that it is a free service for cultural organizations, and that it takes a smaller percentage of donations than commercial websites. Ends.

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