

Give us the ... money (pocket science not rocket science)

Mid 1980s. Live Aid. Bob Geldof. 'Give us the ... money'.
He didn't even say please. I remember it well.

Late 1990s. Long Island. It was a jetlagged day one of a visit and I was sitting in on a board meeting of a youth mentoring agency not-for-profit. 'Well Walter how much are you pledging this year? Mavis? Chris? Then: "Come on, you can you do better than that."

2011. Board meeting. London. Would trustees consider making a monthly donation to the organisation? Much embarrassed silence and looking the other way. And the moment was well remembered two years later when the subject of board fundraising came up again.

What is it with the British and money? It's actually rather simple. Trustees want their charities to succeed. One ingredient is fuel in the tank, money. There are all sorts of ways in which trustees can do just that without adopting the US 'give or get' model.

Find a professional fundraiser to become a trustee. (Yes I know they're not two-a-penny but they're there.) They'll help you see that fundraising isn't rocket science and can work brilliantly if you think creatively about what you love to do and who you know.

Of course tapping our rich friends, if we have any, is a good idea. And there's plenty more to have in your pocket. Or purse.

If you're not especially sporty and can't be persuaded to run swim, jump or do something crazy for money, you can at least turn up and cheer. Imagine that every 'come on you can do it' directed at someone exerting themselves for your charity will help them across the line and will also raise cash. 10p a shout. Good money.

How about 'party fundraising' – just talk about the charity at dinner parties and social gatherings – your passion will attract interest, attention and, sooner or later, donations. With each breath you're sowing seeds and some will grow, sometime, somewhere.



"Isn't hypnosis an unethical way of raising money?"

Do you run a business or offer a paid service? Tell your friends and customers that for each new client they recommend you will donate 50 per cent or more of the fee. New clients for you, money raised and a warm glow all round.

Before a fundraising event refer to it in your personal and, if allowed, also in your professional email signature. Easy in Outlook: Tools>Options>Mail format>Signatures.

Too much stuff lying around at home? Sell it on e-bay saying you'll give 100 per cent to your charity. Or get some friends round and do a 'promise auction' (who'll bid me £200 for Chris to cook dinner for ten?)

Last but not least – if you're coming up to a special birthday ask for donations, not for yourself but your charity. It's easily done.

With these ideas in your pocket ask a friendly fundraiser (or even better, Bob Geldof) to speak with each trustee to help them be creative and invite pledges. Then, at the next board meeting, tell everyone who's pledged what. And then, just ... do it. ●

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