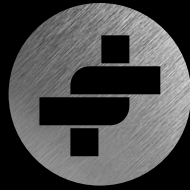


SILVER



SILVER



ADFX
AWARDS
2018

Long Term Effectiveness

Public Service, Social Welfare & Education

**Breaking the cycle - How we helped change St Vincent
de Paul's fortunes when the charity sector was facing
hard times (Annual Appeal 2015-2017)**

In the Company of Huskies & MediaCom

Company Profile

In The Company Of Huskies

Founded in 1999, In the Company of Huskies is a full-service creative agency with deep digital DNA bred to transform brands and business. The company's core business is the provision of advertising creative and production services.

Our pioneering spirit has been with us ever since. Today, we help brands by immersing ourselves in the contemporary consumer journey, mapping out creative omni-channel campaign strategies & experiences that resonate with people and deliver brand fame and performance.

We do this by assembling a potent mix of the very best strategic, creative and digital specialists into lean, autonomous, agile teams to deliver innovative solutions for our clients.

In the Company of Huskies is a member of the Institute of Advertising Practitioners in Ireland (IAPI) and the Society of Digital Agencies (SoDA).



Company Profile

MediaCom Ireland is one of the country's largest and fastest growing media and communications agencies.

We work with some of Ireland's most famous and ambitious brands including Sky, Coca-Cola, Dulux, Mars, Ryanair, St. Vincent de Paul and Allianz.

Our focus is on delivering solutions that help our clients grow their businesses through the most creative, innovative and effective work.

The Mediacom logo is displayed in a white rectangular box. The word "MEDIACOM" is written in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font. The letters are a vibrant pink color, with the "M" and "C" being slightly larger than the other letters. The background of the box is plain white, making the pink text stand out prominently.

MEDIACOM

Introduction and Background

This paper shows how against the odds a charity managed to win the hearts and pockets of the Irish public when donations and trust were at an all-time low.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVP) is the largest charity in Ireland.

Donations and volunteers are its lifeline.

By 2015, it was assumed that people were experiencing some sort of economic recovery. But despite small increases in incomes, **17% of the population were at risk of poverty and living in very difficult circumstances.**¹ It was clear that a rising tide did not lift all boats and calls to SVP for assistance had doubled since 2008.

SVP's challenge was to persuade the public that donations were still needed in an improving economy.

But the situation got worse...

Scandals rocked the charity sector. Trust was collapsing across all institutions; when companies go to the dark side, people grumble. But when charities dedicated to improving the world are embroiled in scandals, it triggers strong emotions of outrage and even betrayal.

Introduction and Background

Toxic headlines such as **'How disgraced suicide charity paid for trips to sunspots'** or **'Console scandal - elaborate webs of deceit'** were the norm as the sector lurched from one crisis to the next. Civic-minded volunteers had to defend their charities to friends and family.

After the first scandal broke in December 2013, **55% of people were less willing to donate to charity**. The research estimated that 45% had reduced their donations with 24% saying they did NOT give to charity up from 11% in 2005 (2).

By 2015, SVP found themselves with more people to help, less funds as donations were -3% and battling against a negative media storm. Yet still, they had to put food on the table in 130,000 Irish houses.

1 CSO data 2016.

Charity sector in crisis. SVP had more people to help, fewer funds and were battling against a negative media storm.



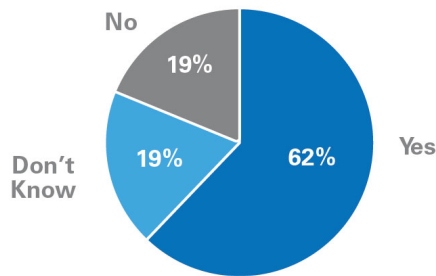
Introduction and Background

Consequences of Charity Scandals

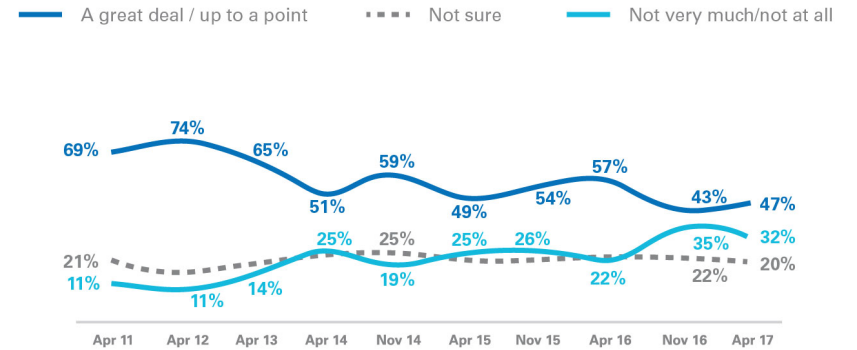
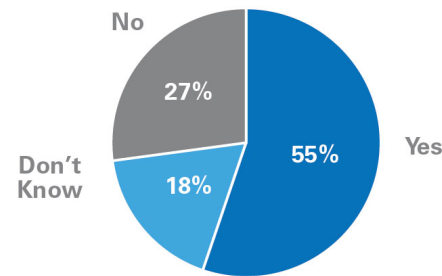
55% of Irish people that previously donated said they were less willing to donate to charity.

Trust in the sector fell from 74% to 43%, due to charity scandals, impacting donations.

Has CRC Scandal etc. Changed Perception of Charities



Has CRC Scandal Reduced your Willingness to Donate to Charities



*To what extent do you trust each of the following institutions?

Marketing Objectives

Founded in Ireland in 1844, SVP's mission is to eliminate the causes of poverty through support, friendship and working for social justice. The core work of SVP is practical assistance, whereby volunteers visit people in need in their homes and provide whatever support required. This includes food, helping with energy bills and education costs. SVP also provides services for the homeless, social housing and social inclusion activities. To achieve this SVP relies heavily on its 11,000 volunteers, who were harder pressed than ever with more people to help, in the face of constant charity scandals. It was crucial to ensure there was no decline in volunteers due to the controversies.

Like many charities, Christmas time is critical for SVP with about 70% of their funds being raised by their annual appeal. Christmas appeals had become very competitive with new entrants trying to stake their claim. From 2009-2014 SVP was 2FM's chosen charity for a 3-week appeal. There's no way to quantify the benefit financially, but in terms of free exposure, this was very significant. Even with this, unfortunately, donations declined to -3% in 2014, which in the context of market sources estimating that donations were down anywhere from 20-40%³, was seen as an inevitable.

SVP was nervous about this decline.

Marketing Objectives

The scene was set for a very difficult period for SVP. A perfect storm - of misguided views that a rising economy was solving the poverty issue AND trust in charities was falling fast.

They appointed In the Company of Huskies in early 2015 to address this problem.

SVP needed to protect its trust, arrest the decline and deliver a growth in donations.

It was critical to get immediate donations, but also encourage long-term support to create a more sustainable donor base for the future.

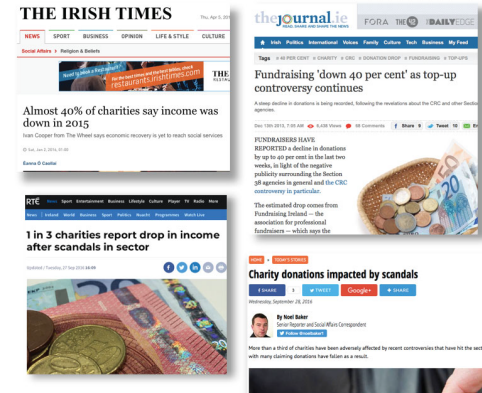
Marketing objectives:

1. Increase immediate donations, by attracting new donors and driving more donations and commitment from existing donors - SVP's warm donor base.
2. Increase a long-term donor base. This means more direct debit donors. These are critical as they offer a charity sustainability.
3. Grow online donations and credit card donations as they are more cost-effective methods of recruiting and easier to retarget for future campaigns.
4. Position SVP as THE most deserving charity by maintaining relevance and trust.

Marketing Objectives

³ Source *The Irish Examiner* - "In 2014 Oxfam Ireland told the *Irish Examiner* that its Christmas campaign was 41% down on last year. Focus Ireland said it was down 30% on Christmas fundraising while aid agency Trocaire has seen drops of 25% in fundraising. The Simon Community's Helen McCormack said it's "too early" for them to see to what extent fundraising was affected since the CRC revelations, but they are "becoming increasingly worried for the future". The ISPCC said its Christmas donations were down 20% and that it had sent letters to donors outlining how the money is spent".

Reports of donations dropping anywhere between 20-40% due to the controversies.



The Task

In 2015, the charity sector was a sector in crisis.

“The sector in Ireland has been through 10 tough years since the economic recession and social crisis began in 2008, and the negative impact of stories in the media from 2013 greatly added to the challenges facing charities,” said Deirdre Garvey CEO of Wheel – an organisation of over 1,300 voluntary groups (4).

Ireland’s voluntary sector was subjected to significant funding cuts since 2009, and the cumulative impact of these cuts was being felt in every community.

Yet demand for these essential services was never-ending.

The hard-pressed Irish public was being asked to make voluntary donations, as a result they had a huge sense of ownership about how every penny is spent. They craved confidence and knowledge that their chosen charity was effective with their money.

The Irish charity sector was not successful in regaining public trust after the controversies of 2013 and 2015. This lack of trust had manifested in lower levels of giving overall. The proportion of the public reported giving to charity hit an all-time low at just 64% in 2015 (5).

The Task

This was 83% in 2008 but had continued to decline throughout the economic recovery.

Even among this shrinking pool of donors, regular giving – the most valuable source of donations for charities – was in decline. In 2009, 34% of donors gave via direct debit or standing order. In 2015, this figure was just 16%.

There are other longer-term demographic trends at play. Historically charitable giving has been strongly associated with churchgoers. As attendance continues to wane, we have to assume church gate donations will also decline.

SVP needed to raise money for essential services and raise morale for the volunteers which had been badly hit by the recession and scandals.

Challenges facing SVP

1. Calls for help were increasing at an “alarming” rate according to SVP’s National Secretary. In fact, they had doubled since 2008. Most charities reported a similar increase.
2. Trust was becoming a major issue for charities. When asked what were the main concerns, the public focused on issues such as how the donation was spent as opposed to social issues such as homelessness or the increasing gap between the rich and the poor.

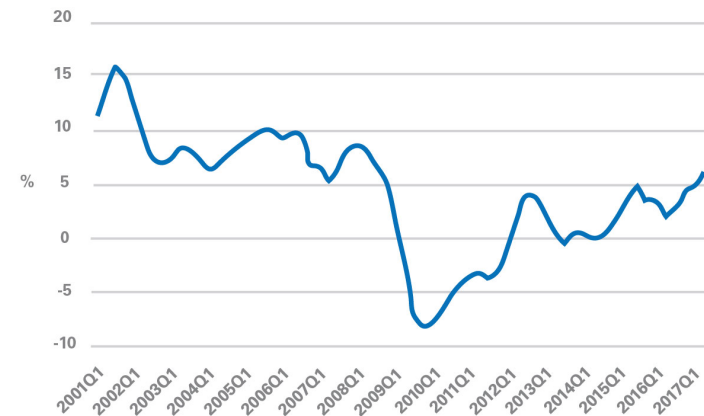
The Task

3. Fatigued volunteers were feeling the pressure of convincing people to care when the media was full of headlines about charity bosses being paid overblown salaries.
4. Disposable income still had not recovered and people's ability and willingness to donate was in steep decline.
5. The charities sector in Ireland is a pretty crowded space with over 18,000 non-profit organisations asking for many worthwhile causes. This makes for intense competition when appealing for donations especially at Christmas.

KEY MARKET METRICS				IMPLICATION
No. of donors	83% in 2008	▼	64% in 2015	Shrinking pool of donors
No. of people who give by direct debits	34% in 2009	▼	16% in 2015	Shrinking no. of people that give by direct debits
Trust in charities	74% in 2012	▼	47% in 2017	Dramatic fall in trust
Disposable income	€20,681 in 2008	▼	€19,772 in 2015	Slow recovery of incomes, still not back to 2008 levels
At risk of poverty rate	14.4% in 2008	▲	17% in 2015	Increased no. of people living in difficult circumstances.
No. of people who don't give to charity	11% in 2005	▲	24% in 2014	Increase in pool that never give to charity

Slow recovery of disposable income from 2008 impacts on people's ability to give to charity.

Real disposable income growth - total, % change (3qma).



The Strategy

Ireland is viewed as having a highly generous population. In the World Giving Index Ireland was consistently in the Top 10 most charitable nations. Recently this has been in decline and Ireland's ranking had dropped. Irish people are naturally charitable, so we needed to identify why their ability and willingness was reduced. We examined some of the barriers to giving:

- Lack of trust - A concern about what the charity will do with the donation and how much of it goes towards the person who needs help.
- A feeling of helplessness in the face of an overwhelming or ongoing problem.
- Inertia or lack of involvement.
- Lack of awareness of what a charity does or of the nature of the problem.

According to donors, the most important attributes for a charity are - trustworthy, accountability and caring⁵. It is clear that trust is a key driver of donations. Therefore, we explored what drives trust in charities.

- Showing the **impact** of a donation and that it **supports people** who really need it.
- Showing **how a donation is spent**.
- Awareness of the charity.

The Strategy

SVP had strong awareness, but we needed to maintain trust and relevancy. Research indicated that shock tactics in some ads – of hopeless people in poverty – are not effective. This can create an “us and them” feeling and serves to divorce people from those that need help as well as creating a compassion fatigue ⁶. In short, it can create apathy rather than action.

We wanted to empower the beneficiaries as well as the donor. SVP places an emphasis on restoring people’s self-sufficiency, and so our strategy would reflect that. Research established that people want to see a return for their contribution. Having the power to improve the lives of others is, to many people, a privilege, and appeals directly to Irish people’s innate generosity.

Our strategy was to reconnect the donor and the recipient. To motivate the donor by placing them in a position of empowerment. This would remind the donor that it is them that could make the difference to someone's life. That they can provide that bit of help just when it’s needed, that will break the poverty cycle, to give someone a chance, or send someone on the right path.

⁵ *Irish Charity Engagement Monitor 2015*

⁶ *The Guardian - Psychology of giving - “When we start to think that we are so substantially different from other people, it becomes easier to accept that people are suffering - we believe these images that are shown in advertising and fundraising campaigns create apathy rather than action.”*

The Idea

There's an expression in marketing 'Interrogate the product until it talks'. In order to understand the issues that faced SVP, we conducted a series of interviews with volunteers and donors. During one of the many interviews, one volunteer said: "All it takes is one small thing to tip a person into poverty, but all it takes is one small thing to get them back out of it. That inspires me to keep doing this job".

This was a light bulb moment, unearthing a powerful emotional insight and human truth that would overcome donor inertia. That token of help just when they need it to help get people back on the right path. Just as this insight inspired one volunteer to help SVP, we could use it to help inspire the wider population.

Nichola Mullen, head of SVP fundraising says "SVP's fundraising proposition is about planting a picture in the mind of the prospective donor of how their donation will be used. To remind them that there is a family nearby with no food in the fridge and empty presses. They have nowhere else to turn so they call SVP. SVP arrives and can offer immediate help with a meal or help with utility bills, or get school books, whatever it takes."

The Idea

The brand vision:

Charities exist to make the world a better place, a built-in brand purpose. SVP needed to reassert their purpose and shout about the difference it makes. They needed one public facing message that would unite everyone in SVP and form the foundation for all communications and initiatives.

We know the best insights are based on a truth, so in the words of our volunteer, our vision was that one small thing can have a transformative effect for good.

The Communications platform:

Our purpose was to show the direct effect a donor has to change a story, which would motivate the donor, showing their generosity WAS having an effect. We devised a 'life story' that told the tale of a young person helped by SVP.

For maximum impact, the story was told from two angles. When a donor says NO to donating, we show how the young girl develops when NO dominates her future. And when the donor says YES we show how her future is dominated by YES.

This was summed up in the creative platform '**A YES CAN LAST A LIFETIME**'

The Idea

We identified a problem but demonstrated the positive long-term effect that helping can have, reconnecting the donor and the recipient. We believed if we could re-establish this powerful connection it would enhance trust and rescue falling donations.


Thankfully it did.

The Media Bomb

The media planning focused on two core points to drive mass awareness and directly impact on SVP's revenue:

1. Addressability
2. Accessibility

Mediacom created a unique, first of its kind media experience for SVP called "The Media Bomb". Media owners were invited to an event to hear first-hand testimonials from individual's SVP assisted. SVP then presented their objective of forming a long-term media partnership.



Alex failed his job interview at 3 months.

When he was 3 months old, Alex's father lost his labourer's job. He was a single parent of four and received social welfare. But the family still struggled to pay basic education costs like books and bus fares. Alex left school with literacy difficulties and his education never recovered.


With your help, SVP can stop a cycle of poverty and crisis before it begins. Please give generously to our Annual Appeal.

Your Yes Can Last a Lifetime

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a registered charity - CHY6892. Based on a true story.

Please give locally or online at svp.ie

Post a donation to PO Box 1234, Dublin 1, or call (01) 884 8200



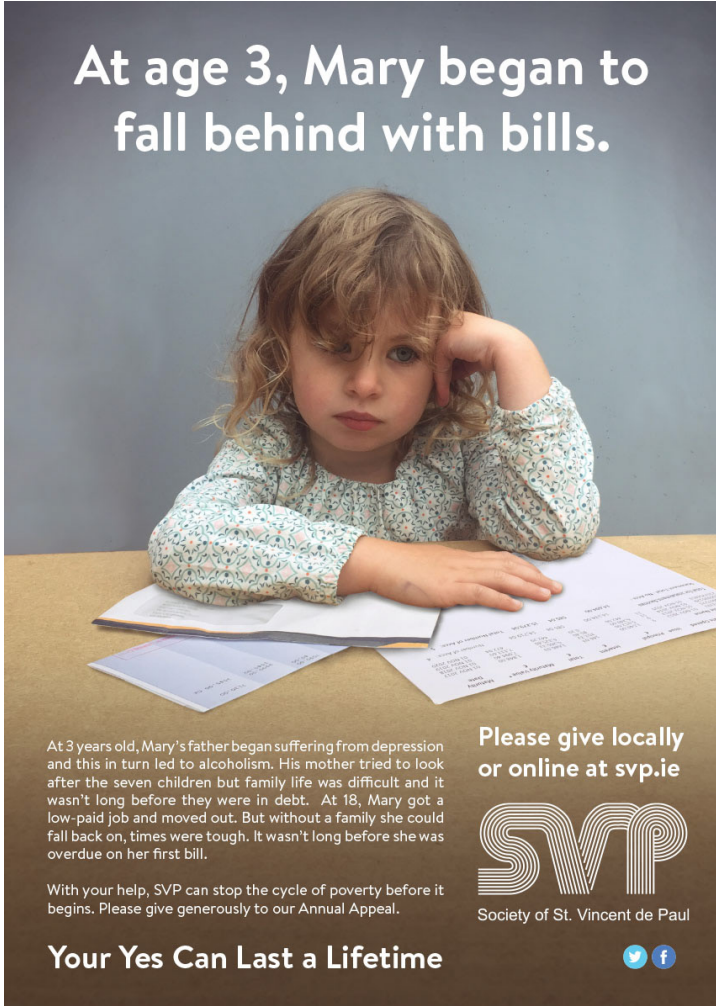
Society of St. Vincent de Paul

The Idea

The partnerships garnered through this event in TV, press and OOH focused on the addressability stage by driving mass reach through awareness.

“The Media Bomb” partnerships allowed SVP to free up the budget to focus on the accessibility stage which drives the end goal donor conversion. Radio, press and digital OOH were tactically used to prompt response. Digital programmatic buying techniques and paid search were used to close the funnel and convert. Data was used to build out lookalike audiences based on users who made donations, allowing SVP to expand their targeting pool. This was a highly effective technique in driving online conversions year on year.

Additionally, key learnings based on media performance are used to inform the media buying decisions going forward. We used Insight driven efficient media buying to increase awareness and conversion and also to maximise free media to help drive the appeal. Online donation trends helped inform our campaign placement and timings.



At age 3, Mary began to fall behind with bills.

At 3 years old, Mary's father began suffering from depression and this in turn led to alcoholism. His mother tried to look after the seven children but family life was difficult and it wasn't long before they were in debt. At 18, Mary got a low-paid job and moved out. But without a family she could fall back on, times were tough. It wasn't long before she was overdue on her first bill.

Please give locally or online at svp.ie

SVP
Society of St. Vincent de Paul

With your help, SVP can stop the cycle of poverty before it begins. Please give generously to our Annual Appeal.

Your Yes Can Last a Lifetime

[Twitter](#) [Facebook](#)

The Idea

Partnering with media owners who understand the overall brand vision has proved highly effective for the past 3 years.

Online Advertising

The collage illustrates various online advertising placements for SVP. At the top left is a website banner for a Q&A with Nathan Carter. Below it are two news snippets: one about Starbucks and another about Star Wars. To the right is a Christmas-themed video ad with the text 'YOUR HELP IS THE BEST GIFT THERE IS' and 'HELP A FAMILY THIS CHRISTMAS'. At the bottom are three Facebook sponsored posts, each featuring a video thumbnail and a 'Donate Now' button. The posts include the SVP logo and the text 'Say yes to the St Vincent de Paul Annual Appeal and help people in your community today.'

The Results

The campaign changed the fortunes of SVP at a turbulent time, arresting the decline of -3% in donations to deliver an increase of +28% over three years (national office).

Critically increasing direct debits by 31% and online donating by 41%, essential for long-term sustainability.

But more than this, it increased public support and much-needed pride within SVP, while helping provide essential services for 130,000 vulnerable families.

Please note - Actual Donation figures and budgets were supplied to the judging panel but have been removed in the interest of confidentiality.

Some highlights:

- National office donations went from -3% to +28% in three years.
- We achieved an impressive ROMI for online donations.
- We succeeded in gaining greater empathy and understanding of the work SVP do, along with enhanced public support and trust.

Objective 1: Increase immediate donations, by attracting new donors and more donations from SVP's warm donor base.

The Results

- Achieved by reversing the 2014 declines and returned SVP to growth. All while many charities experienced declines of -20% plus. Donations went from -3% in 2014 to a total of +28% in three years. Increased loyalty amongst existing donor base, there was a 60% increase of donors that were provoked by our campaign to give again.

Objective 2: Increase a long-term donor base.

Achieved by increasing direct debits by 31%, the holy grail of any campaign as they offer sustainability. Donors responded in huge numbers to the appeal, organically recruited by our campaign. Normally direct debits are recruited via door to door recruitment which is very expensive.

Objective 3: Grow online and credit card donations as they are cost effective methods of recruiting and easier to retarget for future campaigns

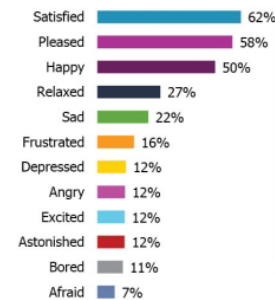
Online donations grew by 41% and credit card donations by +68%.

Objective 4: Position SVP as THE most deserving charity by maintaining relevance and trust. Below are some ways we achieved greater public support and trust.

The Results

1. SVP became the No 1. charity that donors donated to in 2017 (ICEM)
2. Strongest understanding of SVP's work (ICEM)
3. SVP scores well above the charity average for emotional affinity –
 - o 62% say they are satisfied and 58% are pleased with SVP compared with 39% average for Irish charities
4. Strong awareness of annual appeal, beaten only by one other national campaign. (ICEM)
5. SVP increased trustworthiness from 67% in 2016 to 72% in 2017 and became Ireland's second most trusted charity. An achievement when trust in charities had fallen from 74% in 2012 to 47% in 2017.
6. Something we are very proud of – 11,000 volunteers remained loyal during this turbulent time.
7. "The Media Bomb" was effective in emotionally engaging the media in the campaign, which created highly empathic long-term media partnerships.

Emotions towards SVP



"They are a very good charity for the poor here and abroad. Buying second-hand clothes is a fantastic idea, to give clothes and belongings we have for the less well off"

"I am pleased that there is an organisation that actually listens to people in need of help"

"I am very happy with them as they are brilliant, they help those in need so much. I really admire their work"

"I'm sad to think that this charity is needed more than ever in Irish society"

"I have seen this charity donate to people who were in no way deserving of it"

"I'm astonished at the amount of work they do with so little support from those in power"

*Text colour indicates the emotion in the chart that respondents are explaining

"When you think about the Charity The Society of St. Vincent De Paul, what are the emotions that best describe how you feel?"

Source: Irish Charity Engagement Monitor, Apr 17, nfpSynergy | Those aware of each charity 1,000 adults 16+, Ireland



The Impact

3 main factors were affecting donor behaviour:

1. One of the threats to raising donations year after year is donor fatigue. There's a high risk of negative discourse around donations where people feel that donations can be a 'hand out' rather than a 'hand up'. This can be demoralising for donors. This leads to behaviours where people only donate in the case of a crisis. This is not a sustainable way to raise funds as it's a law of diminishing returns. Crisis campaigns get less and less effective.
2. Despite low increases in disposable income, there was a prevailing narrative that austerity was over. The rhetoric of the 'republic of opportunity' and 'supporting those who get up early in the morning' implied everyone has a choice to benefit from the recent economic improvements. This leads to a behaviour where people view poverty as a person's own fault.
3. On top of this, the public had lost confidence and trust in charities.

The Impact

Charities have taken a beating. This campaign set out to develop more sustainable behaviours around donating to SVP, which it did by increasing direct debits by +31% and online donations by +41%. And it did this by changing its public and media perception.

Instead of shouting ‘trust us’, we replaced negative media stories with a positive story.

We showed that the causes of poverty can happen for reasons outside the control of the individual and the economy. We showed that in most cases people just needed ‘one small thing’ to stop them tipping into poverty. This empowered the donors to action, not apathy.

The simplicity of our brand vision and “The Media Bomb” partnerships changed the behaviour of the media. It helped divert the focus from the scandals and deliver positive stories of impact to educate the public about SVP’s effectiveness.

The empowerment of the recipient made a compassionate story that the media wanted to feature.

The Impact

For example, RTE featured compelling radio interviews with people speaking openly of their financial difficulties and the difference SVP made to their family's lives when they fell on hard times.

We sought to educate people on the vital contribution that SVP makes to society.

The campaign will be used to educate up and coming generations. Our campaign has been included in a Civic, Social and Political education book for Irish Secondary students.

SVP plays an important role by providing a voice for vulnerable people. This platform highlighted other social issues such as the 90,000 households waiting for social housing across Ireland. A pop-up estate agent was set up to show the awful living conditions of families in Ireland. Over 33,000 signed a petition to promote the hidden homeless crisis.

Michelle's Story



Michelle spoke openly about anxiety, financial difficulties, and the help she received from SVP.



St Vincent de Paul

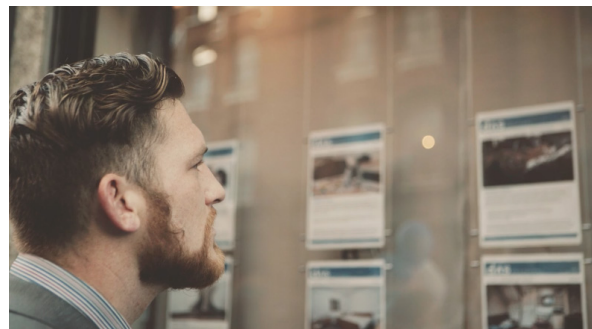
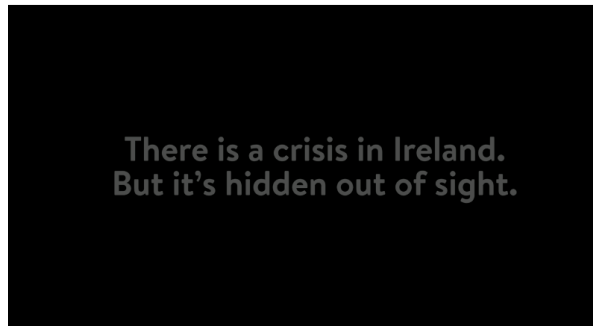
Mary talks of the help she received from St Vincent de Paul and the difference it made to her family's life when they fell on hard times

If anyone needs help or would like to make a donation go to www.svp.ie

Listen

Share:   

The Impact



<https://vimeo.com/210838402>

Through a sustained message over 3 years, we changed how the public and media viewed SVP. This led to a change in behaviour and action and an increase in loyalty and ultimately a 28% increase in donations to help with the long-term fight against poverty in Ireland.

New Learnings

1. **Empower the donor:** Donors shouldn't feel the problem is too big to make a difference. Our one small thing showed them they could help.
2. **The message should resonate with internal audiences and the public:** It was easier for SVP to get behind an idea that was consistent and credible. Volunteers embraced this idea as it reflected their work.
3. **Long-term consistency of message and insight:** In a crisis, it's easy to get distracted by short-term goals. Our campaign focused on building a sustainable future for SVP, giving a long-term platform and media partnerships that'll underpin all future communications.

Summary

The charity sector faced formidable challenges with falling donations and trust. Yet SVP needed to provide vital help to 130,000 families. This campaign energised SVP as it communicated a core truth experienced by its volunteers. It resonated with the public and media resulting in increases in donations and long-term donors delivering a sustainable donor base, helping SVP break the cycle of poverty. Successes include:

- Increased donations from -3% to +28%.
- Recruitment of more valuable donor relationships.
- Greater public support and trust.
- More committed volunteers and unified staff.
- More efficient donor recruitment methods.
- Highly effective media partnerships.