

Taking New Donors on a Journey

Anne Wareing, Senior Development Manager, Battersea Arts Centre

Anne's talk was based around how the fundraising efforts after the Battersea Arts Centre (BAC) fire changed the way she thought about the whole fundraising process. During the aftermath of the fire, the BAC could only be reactive and as the weeks following the fire passed by and the donations went from £100,000 from 7,000 donors, the organisation's CEO wrote on their blog frequently to thank donors and keep them updated on any news.

Eventually, as the crisis became less urgent, the donations tapered off and the BAC ran out of news to tell their donors. But they still felt a responsibility to talk directly to their donors, they just needed to know more about them.

Of the 7,000 donors, 2,500 agreed to share their data and 700 of them were first time donors. They began with the donors with the highest likelihood of re-engaging with the criteria of:

- Donated £100 or more
- Lived within a few miles
- Frequently clicked on emails

They invited these donors to a talk at BAC, where they took them to the fire site and asked what prompted them to donate. They began a communications timeline (slide 11) in order to keep in regular contact with them.

As the year anniversary of the fire approached, the team wanted to do something special, big and personal. As they had addresses and names of the donors, they decided to send handwritten thank you postcards. When donors started receiving them, they started tweeting and writing to the BAC about how great it was to get a handwritten card. The outcomes were extremely successful (slide 16).

Although the fire was a unique situation, the principles are universal. Nurture your donors - ask them why they care and cultivate their passion for your organisation.