

Telephone Campaigns for a Capital Campaign

2017-18 Case Studies



Introducing the Case Studies

Colston Hall, Bristol

Colston Hall has been at the heart of cultural life in Bristol since 1867 and has hosted some of the world's finest artists. In 2015 Colston Hall launched a major new capital campaign to transform the venue into one of the best concert halls in Europe. Two years later, Buffalo and Colston Hall started working together. The redevelopment required £48.8 million to be raised and since building work was

due to start in May 2018, the timetable to raise these funds was tight.

“The biggest impact of a telethon is the ability to gain hundreds of donors in a short space of time. We now have over 230 seats named in the new auditorium.”

*Rosa Corbishley
Head of Development, Colston Hall*

As 250,000 people attend events at Colston Hall each year, they were keen to conduct a telephone campaign to engage support from their most loyal attendees.

Citizens Theatre, Glasgow

Citizens Theatre's extensive capital redevelopment project is their first in its 139-year history. The major structural renovation will add new learning spaces and a fresh, welcoming frontage, foyer, cafe and bar area. The Victorian auditorium will also undergo refurbishment and original stage machinery and backstage equipment will be restored. £19.5 million needed to be raised to fund this redevelopment.

The 'Citizens Theatre' is a theatre of and for the people and so as part of this major redevelopment project the team at Citizens were ideologically

motivated to reach out to the public and engage them, through a telephone campaign, in giving towards the capital campaign. Citizens Theatre began working with Buffalo in September 2016.

“The thing I've enjoyed most about working with Buffalo was the easiness of it all. Buffalo made it really clear what was needed from us and it was set out in a logical manner. The guidance on putting together a case for support and creating thank-you letters was really clear and it was great to see other examples of previous campaigns.”

*Hazel McIlwraith
Head of Development, Citizens Theatre*

£500,000 was raised from these two case studies.

How were the projects funded?

Colston Hall

This was a large-scale project and required funding from several sources, there are no doubt some familiar names here: Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund and Bristol City Council. Funding also came from Trusts and Foundations, Corporate Sponsorship and Individual Giving.

The target for the Individual Giving portion was to raise £2.2 million of the overall required amount, the majority of this came from major donors. However, Colston Hall also wanted to gain hundreds of

“Trusts and Foundations want to see community support before committing, since it will be the community that uses the venue once the project is finished. By having hundreds of people supporting the project, they will also feel more connected to the venue and have a closer relationship with us going forward.”

*Rosa Corbishley
Head of Development, Colston Hall*

new donors and knew that a telephone campaign aimed at contacting their regular ticket-buyers was the best way to achieve this goal.

Citizens Theatre

Compared to other similar projects the public giving target for the campaign was quite high at £3 million out of the total £19.4 million for the capital project. Of this £3 million, income came from trusts, corporate giving, events and major donors leaving an individual giving target of £700,000. This target was set higher than average as Citizens Theatre did not have an established major donor pipeline to rely on and ideologically they wanted to engage with the theatre-going *citizens* who are so vital to the success of the Citizens Theatre as a whole.

“From our research telephone campaigns give better returns than direct mail and email campaigns. We knew we would have to go to our audiences to meet this target [of £700,000]. We chose to outsource the telephone campaign as it was an added resource. We’re a team of four and we just do not have the time to administer a campaign of this size without additional help.”

*Hazel McIlwraith
Head of Development, Citizens Theatre*

Why did Colston Hall and Citizens Theatre choose to work with Buffalo?

Buffalo works extensively within the Arts sector, assisting a wide range of institutions with their individual giving programmes. Historically, telephone fundraising within the Arts has consisted of quick calls that lead to small, sporadic gifts with little, if any, relationship building with constituents, e.g. ticket-buyers.

“During the campaign we had a few major events on at the same time and other revenue campaigns so having Buffalo take on most of the admin and processing work meant that I was available to help out with other fundraising initiatives and the process felt really stress free. The amount raised was nice as well!”

*Hazel McIlwraith
Head of Development, Citizens Theatre*

retains an enthusiastic and professional team of callers, who are each paid a flat-rate and do not depend on commission, ensuring they have the correct motivation for making each call.

Our callers aim to have a 10-15 minute conversation with each prospect, Colston Hall and Citizens Theatre each agreed and approved the script that would be used. The script was aimed to enhance the ongoing relationship between each venue and their supporters, obtain the maximum immediate gift with which the donor is comfortable and to identify potential major donors.

Colston Hall and Citizens Theatre each wanted to build a strong supporter base. The benefit of a one-one conversation between a caller and a prospect is unparalleled in terms of fundraising impact. Direct

“Telethons are essential to gain this groundswell of support from the people who use the venue, and cannot be done to their full effectiveness in-house, due to the scale and the fact that calling is carried out on evenings and weekends. The qualitative data gained through the callers’ notes is also invaluable, indicating previously unknown potential major donors.”

*Rosa Corbishley
Head of Development, Colston Hall*

Colston Hall and Citizens Theatre wanted something different. They chose Buffalo as we believe in the long-term benefit of enhancing the ticket-buyer/venue relationship in every call. Our methodology is that longer calls equate to bigger gifts, but regardless of the outcome of the call, maintains a high level of engagement with constituents. This in turn ensures that a sustainable stream of income is generated year after year.

Colston Hall and Citizens Theatre knew that Buffalo’s model has been successful within the Arts sector. Buffalo trains and

“Individual giving is already thriving in the UK, with 31% of the population giving to charity on a monthly basis.”

Mail, emails and crowdfunding, while useful tools within any fundraising programme, cannot compete with how powerful it is to discuss and share a prospect’s opinions and experiences when building up a relationship and soliciting a gift.

Telephone Campaign Results

Colston Hall

Target Area	Results
Number of ticket buyers spoken to	6,082
Number of new donors	1,313
Number of single gifts	513
Average single gift	£69
Number of Direct Debits	395
Average four-year Direct Debit	£401
Total Amount Pledged over four years	£193,901

Citizens Theatre

Target Area	Results
Number of ticket buyers spoken to	7,321
Number of new donors	1,221
Number of single gifts	709
Average single gift	£58
Number of Direct Debits	523
Average four-year Direct Debit	£507
Total Amount Pledged over four years	£307,017

Next Steps

If you have any questions, comments, or would like to find out more, please email info@buffalofc.co.uk or contact us on 01179 335580.

BUFFALO

A DIVISION OF RUFFALO NOEL LEVITZ

