

'Remember Education'
Bringing Giving Tuesday to the UK

BUFFALO
A DIVISION OF RUFFALO NOEL LEVITZ

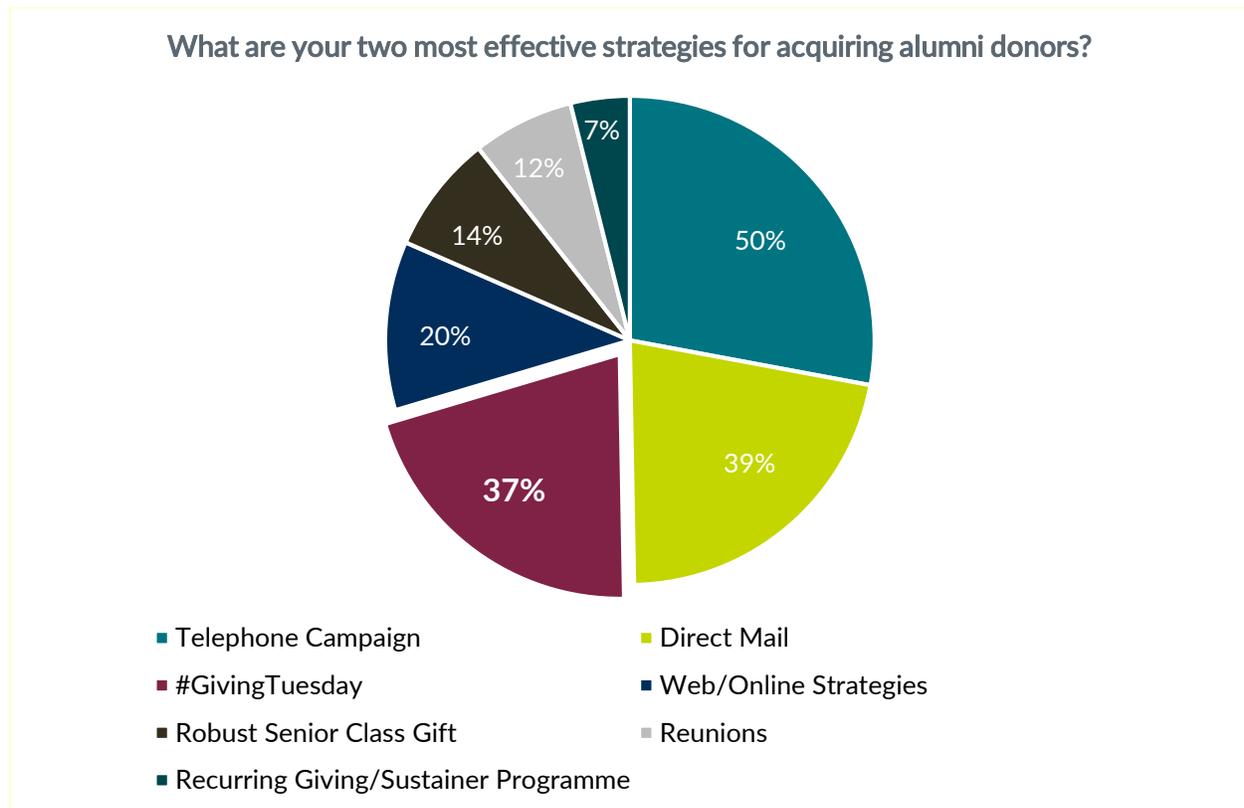
Buffalo's 2015 Oxbridge Giving Tuesday Programme

Introduction

One of the biggest challenges faced by UK development professionals is how to expand your donor pool. In particular, how do you attract more young alumni and non-donors to increase the sustainability of your fundraising efforts?

In the USA, Giving Tuesday has now become the third most successful method for acquiring alumni donors, and UK charities are already beginning to harness its benefits. But with so many causes competing over a single day, what can higher education institutions do to stand out?

This paper outlines the benefits and pitfalls of the US Giving Tuesday model, before providing a successful framework for transferring it to the UK.



What is Giving Tuesday?

The first Giving Tuesday began in 2012 as a counterpoint to the consumer-driven Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales over the Thanksgiving period. The idea was to provide a welcome relief from the pressures of Christmas spending and encourage shoppers to give something back to charitable causes.

Multiple charities and organisations were involved in launching the initiative and in its first year, Giving Tuesday raised over \$10 million (£6.9 million) for various causes, a figure that has seen tremendous growth in the years that followed.¹

The movement originated on Twitter as #GivingTuesday and relies heavily on social media to spread the message. Participants are encouraged to share stories about their contribution online, leveraging social proof to increase support for the campaign. This approach is particularly resonant among younger alumni, an otherwise notoriously difficult group from whom to canvass support. The momentum behind a global giving day is also likely to encourage participation from non-donors, which can bolster your fundraising's sustainability in a time when institutions are becoming ever more dependent on a small group of large donors.²

However, small Development Offices face several obstacles when attempting to capitalise on the potential of Giving Tuesday. These constraints are largely related to available time and audience-share; it can be difficult to justify allocating significant resources to a campaign that runs for a single day, and even removing this limitation, your message will only be conveyed to a small - albeit engaged - group of potential donors. With large charities also making their own fundraising drives on the same day, it is difficult to stand out from the crowd.

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How can higher education institutions stand out?

In designing a solution, Buffalo looked at each of these obstacles in isolation. Firstly, we proposed to lengthen the time spent marketing the campaign, raising awareness for the cause several weeks before Giving Tuesday to ensure that it was firmly in supporters' minds on the day itself. This would be achieved through a multi-channel approach, utilising email blasts, a comprehensive social media strategy, text giving and a dedicated website leading up to fundraising calls made throughout the actual day.

¹ USA Today – 'Growth in Online Giving Tuesday Numbers Inspiring', 2013.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/12/10/giving-tuesday-numbers-impressive/3951541/>

² Ruffalo Noel Levitz – 'Four Tips for Engaging Young Donors Through Multichannel Fundraising', 2016.

<http://blogfm.ruffalonl.com/2016/01/four-tips-for-engaging-young-donors-through-multichannel-fundraising/>

The second problem, of available audience-share, could be solved by collaboration between colleges over one shared campaign brand. To do this, we looked to create a separate brand that would fit thematically with Giving Tuesday, while being universal enough to apply to each college. We designed a logo as part of that brand, encouraging potential donors to remember the impact of education charities when deciding who to support for Giving Tuesday.

The colleges could then use it in their appeal to demonstrate that they were part of a larger movement, which would encourage cross-promotion from their supporters and gain greater visibility for their campaigns. The #RememberEducation website would also act as a shared platform, where all colleges would be displayed, highlighting the collaborative aspect of the campaign, while encouraging alumni to compete to gain their college the most donors.

Last year we trialled this approach with three Oxbridge colleges. The aim was to increase participation, particularly among young alumni and non-donors.



Our Colleges:



Is a historic, ex-men's college, and one of the first to admit women, as well as having one of the smallest footprints in the city. It admits both undergraduate and postgraduate students.



Is a relatively new college, founded in the early C20th, but on one of the most ancient sites. It is also an ex-men's college, admitting women in the late 1970s, and has both undergraduate and postgraduate students.



Is a graduate college, and one of the youngest colleges in its current form, albeit on another historic site. It has a smaller student population, but with a greater proportion of students from overseas than the other colleges.

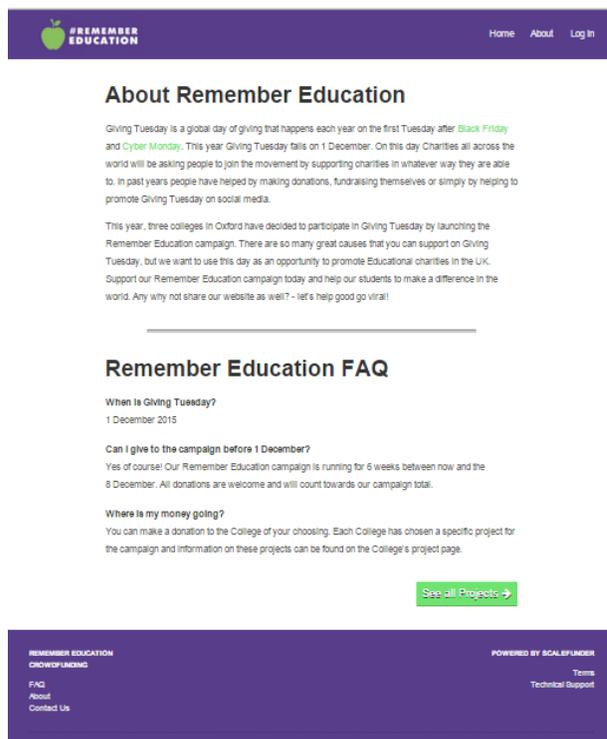
What were our results?

In the weeks leading up to Giving Tuesday, our colleges contacted their alumni via email and social media platforms to raise awareness for their appeal. They channelled alumni through to the dedicated website and used the #RememberEducation brand in their communication to increase engagement. The purpose of this phase of the campaign wasn't to raise money, but to educate alumni on the concept of Giving Tuesday and put forward our colleges as part of that movement.

This produced some interesting results. We found that the email engagement rate started strongly at 30–40% before tailing off in later weeks. However, the open rates spiked for the mailing sent on Giving Tuesday itself, demonstrating that the previous emails were effective in preparing alumni for the giving day.

For social media, College B had the largest following and were most active online, which resulted in the most donations received in the lead up to Giving Tuesday. Few donations were received as a direct result of the online campaign, but it made our Giving Tuesday telephone approach more effective, as many alumni were already aware of the cause when we spoke to them. Calling was crucial in securing gifts on the day, with the most money being raised by College C because they conducted the highest volume of calls. Having multiple giving channels also boosted our fulfilment, as we could encourage any alumni who didn't have time to give over the phone to donate via text or online instead.

By the end of our pilot campaign, more than 100 donors had been gained. Over 30% of donations came from young alumni and/or non-donors, while many current donors were happy to give on top of their existing gifts, as the campaign aim was sufficiently different from a typical Annual Fund appeal. Over £10,000 was raised, and all three Colleges were pleased with the results gained. We now anticipate that engagement will increase each year as people become more familiar with the campaign, and its message reaches the colleges' wider audience. The global Giving Tuesday movement raised \$117 million (£82 million) for causes in 2015 - over ten times the amount it achieved only three years before.³ If this is any indication, Giving Tuesday has enormous growth potential for UK charities that start participating now, and will soon become a staple of every development professional's individual giving programme.



³ Reuters – '#GivingTuesday Raises Nearly \$117 Million for US Groups', 2015. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-charities-givingtuesday-total-idUSKBN0TL2WG20151202#7Lf1MPMIRuw4MiZF.97>

Here's a recap of what we've learned:

- Giving Tuesday is a great way to boost participation among young alumni and non-donors, and gives you a new funding initiative in an otherwise quiet period.
- You need a coordinated strategy to be put into action several weeks before the day itself to increase awareness for your cause.
- With 'the ask' focused around a single day, you need multiple giving channels to maximise the number of donations received.
- Collaborating with similar colleges helps your message stand out amongst the competition, while a campaign brand can communicate your cause effectively and succinctly.