

Anchors aweigh

Breaking free of the
barriers to ambitious
charity-company
partnerships

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Remarkable
Partnerships

ROGARE
THE FUNDRAISING THINK TANK

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Executive summary

This research begins with the observation that the vast majority of partnerships are not very ambitious. They are either philanthropic or transactional in nature.

It highlights a really useful partnership framework called The Collaboration Continuum which describes four levels of partnership: philanthropic, transactional, strategic and transformational. The further along you go on the continuum the more ambitious the partnership and the greater social value.

And so as we have conceived it for this project, an ambitious charity-company partnership is one that aims to create more value, for society and for both partners, than is currently being created through existing partnership models.

The report then identifies seven barriers that act as an 'anchor' holding charities and companies back from creating more ambitious partnerships. These barriers are:

- **Mismatch on why companies and charities partner**
- **Lack of knowledge about partnerships**
- **Organisational support for ambitious partnerships**
- **Metrics and measurement**
- **Role of corporate fundraisers**
- **Purpose driven companies - threat or opportunity?**
- **The impact of the coronavirus pandemic?**

We then provide recommendations to help charities and companies overcome these barriers so they can create more ambitious partnerships. These recommendations are:

- **Identify your organisational purpose for partnering**
- **Focus on shared purpose**
- **Identify your partnership North Star**
- **Be value raisers, not fundraisers**
- **Have greater focus on professional development**
- **Improve impact reporting**
- **Seize opportunities in the coronavirus crisis.**

Ultimately the report concludes that, we need to increase the knowledge and understanding about how to create ambitious partnerships, for both partnerships professionals and leaders. If we can do that, then companies and charities are much more likely to create more ambitious partnerships that will help create a better world.



Introduction

Every year, HSBC receives 10,000 unsolicited sponsorship proposals from charities.ⁱ That's an average of 38 per working day, or 5.5 an hour. Or one every 11 minutes. Yet no more than four of these will be successful.ⁱⁱ

What do you find shocking about these facts? Is it that sheer number of proposals HSBC receives? Is it the vanishingly small success rate or those proposals (0.0004 per cent)? Is it to wonder why people even bother with these chances of success?

Or is it, maybe that these unsolicited proposals are for 'sponsorships'? That fundraisers at charities looked at a multinational company such as HSBC and thought, you know what, we should ask them to sponsor our project in return for letting them put their logo on our marketing material.

Is that all they thought a company such as HSBC was worth pitching, when companies the size of HSBC have the potential to help charities change the world. But rather than thinking big, they asked for sponsorship instead.

It's not very ambitious, is it?

This research asks why this is happening. More specifically we identify seven barriers that hold charities and companies back from forming more ambitious partnerships. This includes looking at the reasons why they partner. We also examine

the knowledge of partnership professionals and whether they have their organisations' support to partner. Other barriers revealed relate to the challenges of measurement and language. We finish by looking at the barriers presented by the coronavirus crisis.

We then provide seven recommendations for overcoming these barriers and creating more ambitious partnerships.

This research started in August 2019 and was completed in June 2020. It was undertaken by Remarkable Partnerships, a consultancy helping charities and companies create major partnerships, and Rogare – The Fundraising Think Tank. It consisted of three stages:

- **The Literature Review - researched papers and reports on charity-company partnerships from across the world.**
- **Qualitative Research - in depth interviews with 16 partnerships professionals and leaders from charities and companies.**
- **Quantitative Research - an online questionnaire gathering responses from 86 responses from partnership professionals and leaders in the charity sector.**



The Collaboration Continuum

– how ambitious is the partnership?

The literature review stage of this research discovered an extremely useful partnership framework called The Collaboration Continuum. Created by Harvard University professor James E. Austin in 2000, who later adapted it with the help of Kent University's May Seitanidi, the Collaboration Continuum shows a range of charity-company partnerships, from Philanthropic to Transactional to Strategic to Transformational (see the diagram below).^v

Philanthropic and Transactional partnerships focus more on money, whereas Strategic and Transformational partnerships focus more on value beyond just income. The level of ambition increases the further you travel along the continuum.

This is such a useful framework, we will refer to it throughout this report.

The Collaboration Continuum



Source: Adapted from Austin and Seitanidi, 2012



Barriers to ambitious partnerships

4.1 Mismatch on why charities and companies partner

4.1.1 Why charities partner with companies

By far and away the main reason given by charity sector participants was for financial resource – in other words, money.

“My feeling is I think a lot of charities do go into this kind of, with the sort of the finance hats on first and foremost.”

Charity Interviewee

“So I think in terms of outcomes, most organizations go to corporates because they think they’re going to get a financial outcome. And lots do that often from employee fundraising, rather than from a business donation.”

Charity Interviewee

“Well, what they always want of course, is [the company’s] income. I don’t think we should, but I’d still say that’s top of the list most cases.”

Charity Interviewee

“And I think traditionally, charities would have engaged simply because it was a new avenue for funding.”

Charity Interviewee

By and large, charity sector participants spoke about the reasons for engaging in partnerships using unambitious language. They described the type of resource and value that mostly comprises Philanthropic and Transactional partnerships, whereas most societal value starts to be created through strategic partnerships..

All the benefits and reasons provided by charity sector interviewees were about benefits to the charity. None spoke about providing direct benefits to the company as a reason for entering into the partnership, even though they said it was essential to be able to understand how companies and industry sectors worked. Which brings us to the reasons corporate sector interviewees gave.



4.1.2 Why companies partner with charities

"The first outcome companies are looking at is societal outcomes... that there is a certain impact on society that we're trying to make. So we would want to achieve that through some of our charity partnerships."

Company interviewee

"Companies will partner with charities in order to be a responsible business in order to actually genuinely do good. And to invest some of their money that they get...in actually being able to make a difference."

Company interviewee

This means that companies are talking about social change on an external macro level, and this is most likely to be achieved through Strategic and Transformational partnerships charities.

"I think generally speaking, companies realize that they can't achieve everything they want to achieve. As an organisation, you don't work in silos, you work as part of an ecosystem, you know, your local community, etc. And you may have ambitions, or you may have, as part of your purpose, you might have societal ambitions you're trying to achieve. And it's actually very often a lot more efficient and fruitful to do that in partnership with another organisation."

Company interviewee

Moreover, company interviewees stressed that it was not just about doing good, but 'genuinely' doing good and to be seen as authentic. This is because being perceived as inauthentic and not genuine could undermine the good reputation and public image they gain from partnering with charities.

Summary – a clear mismatch in the reason for entering a partnership

There is a clear mismatch in how charity and company interviewees described the reasons for embarking on partnerships with each other.

Charity sector interviewees described very specific benefits that could all be delivered through Philanthropic and Transactional partnerships, but did not mention at all delivering benefits to their partner organisations.

Companies were of course aware of the benefits they could gain by partnering with charities. But they also spoke of providing benefits to society at large and to be seen to be 'genuinely' doing this. To achieve this, they would need to partner at more strategic and transformatal levels.



4.2 Lack of knowledge about partnerships – navigating without a map

4.2.1 Charity partnership professional's knowledge

The consensus among the charity sector interviewees is that creating and delivering corporate partnerships requires knowledge and skill. They also said that this knowledge can be and should be learned and acquired, but that it is too often lacking, which presents a barrier to putting in place more ambitious partnerships. The specifics of this lack of knowledge can be broken down into four areas.

4.2.1a Understanding how companies work

Some of the most important knowledge that charity partnership managers need to have is an understanding of how companies and industry sectors operate; that you need to understand business to work with business.

"Most charities don't understand the market that their corporates are operating in. They don't understand or take the time to understand the key business pressures. What are the challenges that companies trying to solve? In order to be able to develop real partnerships, we need to understand the pinch points and the key conversations that our corporates are having."

Charity interviewee

"[There] is perhaps a lack of understanding of their own value as organisations and what they can offer; a lack of understanding about how businesses work and how they want to engage with charities and how they can engage."

Charity interviewee

4.2.1b Understanding how to build corporate relationships

However, partnership professionals in charities suffer from a failure of donor-centred, relationship fundraising just as many other types of fundraisers do, preferring to talk about partnerships in the language of what the company can do for the charity rather than the other way around.

"It's very much we are a great charity. We are a great brand. We are a great fit, because hey, we're both big names in our respective worlds and consumers know who we are. Yes, but that doesn't help the company do what it needs to do. We don't take the time to understand what our partners problems are. We go straight in and show our leg on the first date and hope that we were going to get it get a leg over in the first couple of meetings."

Charity interviewee

"And I've often seen charities come up to corporate fundraising from the perspective of what the business can do for them, rather than any idea of mutual benefit and also a lack of understanding about what they can offer the business."

Charity interviewee

Part of this is having knowledge of industry sectors and companies' CSR objectives. Another part is relationship building skills. But what of the knowledge needed to be able to build more ambitious partnerships? Do fundraisers possess a really detailed knowledge of their own professional practice and research and models that would allow them to re-envision more ambitious partnerships?



The consensus among charity sector interviewees was that they did not, and some admitted to not having this knowledge themselves.

"I would be very surprised if they did [have knowledge of models]. What I find surprising is that so many fundraisers don't engage in fundraising research knowledge and developing their own careers, in personal development opportunities. I see it routinely that fundraisers just go to it. They do the job and they go home. They're passionate, don't get me wrong, they're passionate and they believe in what they do and they love what they do, but they don't often take the time to invest in [professional] development outside of work."

Charity interviewee

"I think that often it could be they don't have the knowledge in terms of internally, what those transformational projects or pieces of work or relationships might look like, and how that might, you know, internally how they might project manage them."

Charity interviewee

4.2.1c Lack of understanding of strategic partnerships

Now we get to a more serious problem with the knowledge that underpins partnerships at charities, that there is a lack of understanding about what strategic partnership actually are. The follow charity Interviewee is quoted at length:

"I think it comes back to a misunderstanding about what corporate fundraising actually is. On the whole people assume that corporate partnerships and corporate fundraising are one and the same. And we've just stuck the word strategic in it, because it sounds better. Yeah, we don't actually see much strategic corporate partnership work across the sector."

"And most charities are approaching their strategic

corporate partnerships around, we will give you our brand you will give us your money; that's not a strategic partnership. That's still transactional. It's just you've took the word strategic in front of it.

"And there's all too much of that. The use of the word strategy is being used like confetti. It's being applied to everything because that means that everything we do is strategic. It's not. Most of things that we're doing as charities is plans, its activities. It's action work; it's not strategy. I'm yet to find an outstanding example of a charity applying strategy at the right level, and then implementing it across the board."

"Corporate fundraising strategies don't exist. Corporate partnership strategies don't exist, except in a handful of organizations who do get it, who do understand it, and do know what they're doing."

Everybody else is just saying we need to raise money this year, we'll have a strategy on how we're going to do it.

This charity interviewee is talking about a fundamental misunderstanding at the heart of partnerships teams at charities, that what are essentially transactional partnerships are being described as 'strategic', because of factors such as brand alignment – for example, a partnership that is considered 'strategic' could be one between a heart charity and a health food company, because they are working in the same area to the same end, even though this might only be something like a cause-related marketing arrangement.

But it is not 'strategy' at the level of an strategic partnership, where the two partner organisations are coming together to create new value for society that neither could have achieved on their own.

"However, when I really drill down into the detail of what they do, they still go about that, they still go about working with companies in that traditional sort of way in the sense of the charity of the year type model."

Charity interviewee



"Yes, there are lots of models, but you also need the desire and, and the willingness to, to look at those issues in the first place, you know, and I think a lot of organizations, a lot of charities might still be thinking of corporate partners in that old way as transactional, as employee fundraising and so on, and missing out on some of those deeper opportunities."

Charity interviewee

4.2.1d The short-term transactional anchor

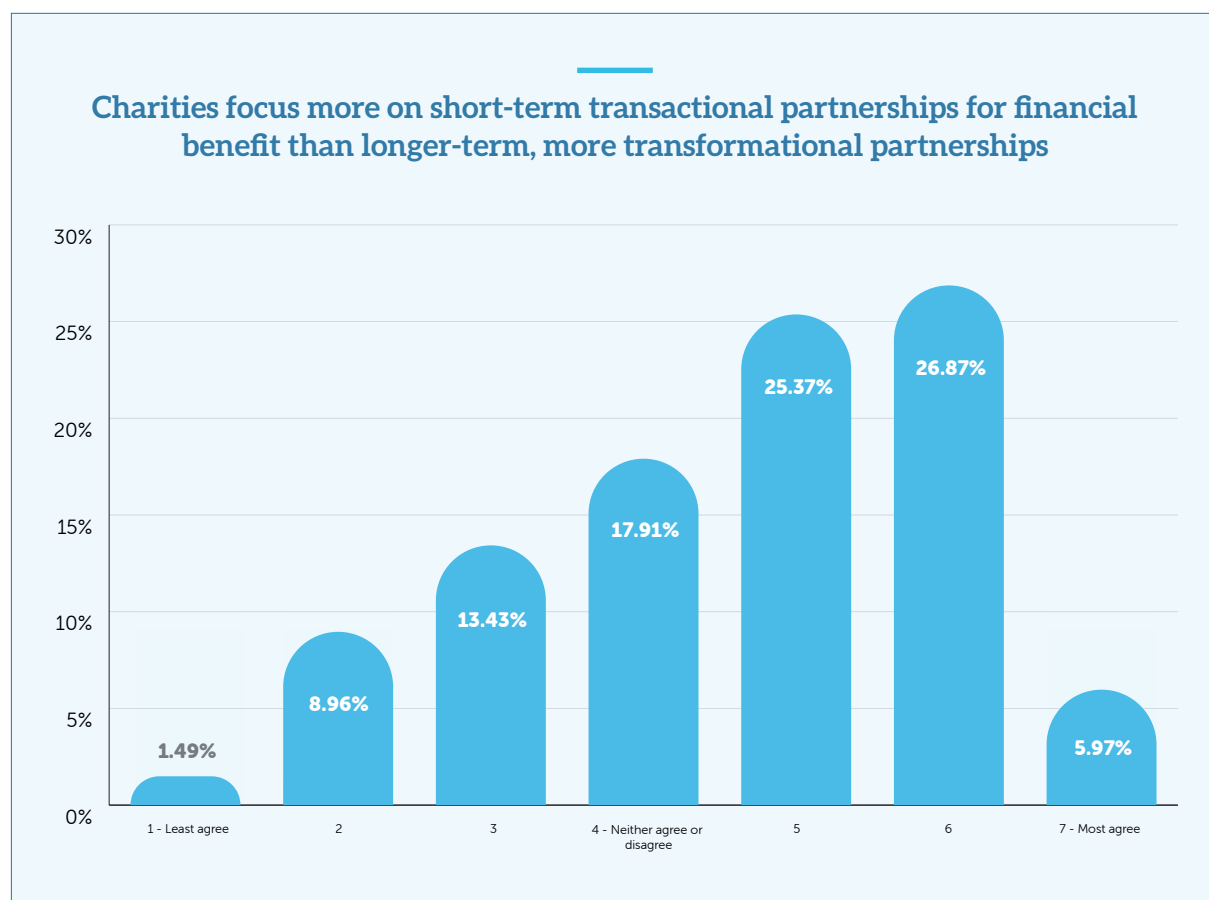
This is what appears to be going on.

Corporate partnerships managers have aspirations for longer-term, more strategic and ambitious partnerships, but that those aspirations have a short-term transactional anchor slung

around them that keep dragging them back to hitting financial targets. This keeps partnerships anchored at the Philanthropic/Transactional end of the Collaboration Continuum, rather than providing the freedom and investment to strive for a more ambitious partnership that will create greater value, most likely through a Strategic Partnership.

"And because so much of the emphasis is about money. And I understand that in the fundraising environment you have to be looking at generating income, obviously, but because it's so focused on short-term income, the risk is that you don't get involved in relationship development, which could lead to a better and more innovative, more creative partnership in due course, because actually, you've got to focus on generating that income now, so the relationship is likely to be much less in-depth."

Charity interviewee



4.2.2 Corporate partnership professionals' knowledge

A similar picture emerges about the knowledge of partnership managers in companies. Their knowledge is variable, with many considered not to have knowledge of the formal models that would help them meet their objectives.

"In the 20 years I've dealt with commercial companies wearing the hat of a charity trustee, I've not really seen effective models produced in conversations with them."

Company interviewee

"I think it's more instinctive. I didn't realize there were well, I've never really researched it, that there were academic models about how to do it. That's really interesting. Actually, I must look that up. I have never heard anyone that does my role and a different business talking about that sort of process."

Company interviewee

"I think some companies just haven't got the time and inclination to invest a little bit of their own resourcing into finding experts to help them. So they do the obvious thing, which is support charity of the year rather than looking at something that might make a bigger difference if they hadn't sustainable partnership over a number of years."

Company interviewee

So is it the lack of knowledge of partnership managers that causes charity-company partnerships to be insignificant for business, or are inexperienced practitioners hired because these partnerships are insignificant?

"I don't want to generalize but often when I see that is because they've hired people in those roles that have zero experience in that field...especially, I would say outside of London, where companies are probably less mature or it may be the first time that it's at the CSR team or whatever they want to call it."

And they often hire someone internal who had no experience whatsoever in this area."

Company interviewee

"Sometimes it's an individual that is doing the job as a transition as a stepping stone from one job into another, and they happen to have an interest in it so aren't particularly skilled, but they do have lots of positive values about working with charities."

Company interviewee

4.2.3 Knowledge of management and leadership

The knowledge of senior management is key to the implementation and subsequent success of ambitious charity-company partnerships. The consensus on both sides was that this knowledge and understanding was lacking, and this represented a major barrier in securing internal buy-in for more ambitious partnerships

"I think I'd like to say most big businesses recognize the importance of working with charities. That tension comes from the fact that companies think that working with a charity means small investment, small financial investments with big outcomes, and that's potentially so not so much a reticence or you're not willing to engage with charities but actually just a lack of understanding of how you could get the best out of that relationship."

Company interviewee

"Well, I think there are plenty of outcomes that they [companies] should hope that charities deliver for them. But I'm not necessarily convinced that the leadership team of organisations that have charity partnerships has never necessarily given them a lot of thought. I think maybe the people who arrange the charity partnerships have, but the further up the leadership stack, I'm not convinced they necessarily reach that level, yet."

Company interviewee



Charity sector leadership and management shows a similar lack of knowledge and understanding of partnerships.

"I think generally boards and senior management often don't have an understanding of benefits outside of financial return. So there's this drive that I'm sure everybody from the charity sector will tell you: Short-term targets that bring us the money now. Never mind about long term. We want money in this year and we want to be guaranteed of money in coming years, so I think a fundraiser would have to act very hard to convince the board or senior management, what those other measurables are. And because they can sometimes be harder to measure, I would imagine that they would be sidelined in favour of a financial benefits."

Charity interviewee

"I think a lack of understanding from, as we said before board members or senior leaders within the charity, and a lack of understanding of how we work as fundraisers, and that could go both ways actually, that could be restricting to the type of partnerships that we want to create."

Charity interviewee

There is even a lack of understanding of corporate fundraising within fundraising departments.

"I think most fundraising directors don't understand corporate fundraising. So in their mind, there is one thing and in the corporate fundraiser's mind, there's something else. And quite often the two are so dissimilar that there is there is a disconnect, even within fundraising teams. Most fundraising director's don't have a major donor background and there's very few that have a corporate fundraising background. So if there is that genuine lack of understanding and genuine appreciation of the nuance within corporate fundraising, it's very difficult to explain or advocate particularly in the larger charities."

Charity interviewee

Summary – lack of knowledge and understanding restricts partnership ambition

The main insight from this barrier is that partnership professionals and leaders in both charities and companies have a lack of knowledge about how to create and deliver partnerships. The models they are likely to know are charity of the year, sponsorship and cause-related marketing, but they are highly unlikely to know how to create strategic and transformational partnerships.

This lack of knowledge and understanding keep their partnerships 'anchored' at the philanthropic and transactional end of the Collaboration Continuum.



4.3 Organisational support for ambitious partnerships

The third barrier to ambitious charity-company partnerships that emerges from this research is the lack of support and buy-in from an organisation's (company or charity) leadership and management, which can often be the "default" position.

Company interviewees also highlighted some other risks and negative attitudes. This included poor communication by charities:

"I think there are some barriers that hold corporates against working with charities and that is that they feel that in giving amounts of money, they don't own the feedback on impact that they can just share with their board."

Company interviewee

"And I think one of the key takes out from that was we weren't good at the feedback loop, neither us nor the charity. And we felt sometimes a charity didn't put enough effort into getting us the publicity we wanted, and there that was not getting the people that they were supporting, to get it get to come to our events to engage in the PR."

Company interviewee

Company interviewees also highlighted reputation as a serious potential barrier. The bad public image and behaviour of a charity was a serious barrier to partnering with them, fuelled by issues relating to fundraising methods or safeguarding.

"Given some of the major International stories about how some charities have been less good at looking after the clients that they focus on. There is no doubt that corporates need to take care in their decision making on who they partner with. And so they'll need assurances that for example, if a charity is dealing with children, that people engaging with those children have gone through the correct procedures."

Company interviewee

"We would look at charities that have been involved in controversies...around management of funds of how they fundraise, which has been quite profound."

Company interviewee

Charity interviewees also highlighted a lack of organisational support as a barrier to ambitious partnerships.

"It definitely needs to be top down. I mean, there's really no point and a junior fundraiser, going out and trying to develop a corporate partnership programme without having that buy-in across the organization in terms of actually seeing what the need is in the organization."

Charity interviewee

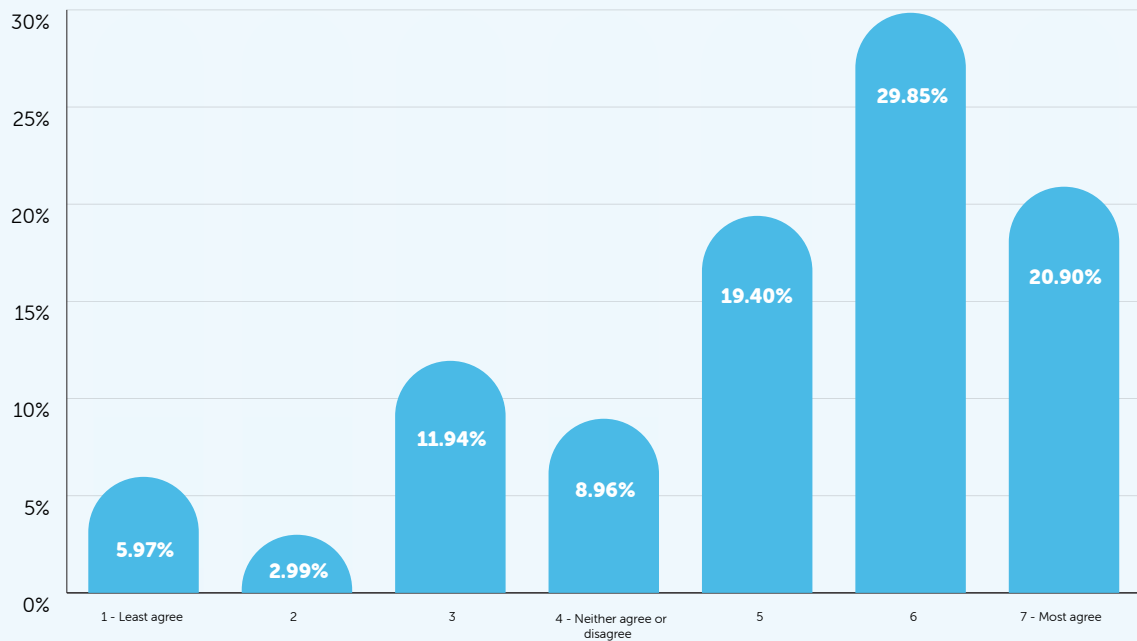
"The lack of ambition does come from the top. And I think there is this sense with fundraising directors particularly of 'I'll get what I can get'."

Charity interviewee

This barrier relating to the lack of organisation support is also shown in our quantitative research, see the graph below.



Charities feel constrained when it comes to focusing on longer term partnerships



4.4 Measuring and reporting impact

Partnerships at the strategic and transformational end of the Collaboration Continuum have more ambitious objectives. But the type of value (beyond just money) and outcomes they aim to create are much harder to measure than those at the philanthropic and transactional end. The importance in measuring social outcomes was discussed by our company interviewees.

“A fundamental barrier to more ambitious partnerships is working out how you measure the impact that an ambitious partnership has on the organisation.”

Company interviewee

“The biggest thing that we companies want to be able to report and feedback is impact. And by this I mean impact figures. The kind of thing that

companies really want to report on is the specific impact and being able to personalise that impact and bring it down to either one person or into communities.”

Company interviewee

But there were problems. First, they said charities were often not very good at reporting to companies, or that the reporting they did get was often about the use to which money had been put, but not necessarily the outcomes this had achieved.

This creates a significant barrier to ambitious partnerships, because charities often struggle with measuring and reporting impact, whereas companies see it as essential.



4.5 Role of corporate 'fundraisers'

One of charity interviewees argued that the term 'fundraiser' was itself limiting ambition in partnerships because it suggests that the role is purely about securing money, which is most easily obtained through short term philanthropic and transactional partnerships. The term itself is an anchor that restricts the imagination of what can be achieved through partnerships to things such as employee fundraising and charity of the year. This charity interviewee is quoted at length below:

"We don't mean corporate partnerships, what we mean is corporate fundraising. I'm here to ask you for money, you're here to give me money. We're just going to do it using these mechanisms [such as employee fundraising and charity of the year]. Very few corporate partnerships and employees within charities are looking at partnerships."

"But while corporate partnerships are still seen within a fundraising lens, they will never achieve what they need to. Many strategic corporate partnerships should sit outside fundraising and should be led by normally the chief executive's office, or a strategic engagement team, who should be looking at these opportunities and fundraising should play a role in that."

"I think it comes back to a misunderstanding about what corporate fundraising actually is. On the whole people assume that corporate partnerships and corporate fundraising are one and the same. And we've just stuck the word strategic in it, because it sounds better. Yet we don't actually see much strategic corporate partnership work across the sector."

"And the reality is the corporate partnerships employees that charities have got do not have the skills capability or dare I say ambition to do so."

4.6 Purpose-driven companies – threat or opportunity?

The past 10-15 years have seen the rise of purpose-driven companies – companies that don't just aim to do social good themselves, but that will make that a core purpose of their existence. Unlike corporate social responsibility partnerships being peripheral to core business for many companies, for purpose-driven companies, it is totally their core business. There are new vehicles of incorporation for these social enterprises. One such model is the B-Corp, aims to create a "new sector of the economy that uses the power of business to solve social and environmental problems."ⁱⁱⁱ

The key factor with such purpose-driven brands is that they are aiming to solve social problems directly, and so do not necessarily need to partner with charities to achieve this. This could be a barrier to more ambitious charity-company partnerships. Is the rise of purpose-driven companies a threat or an opportunity for charities?



4.6.1 Threat

Some of our interviewees definitely saw it as a threat.

"Yeah, I think it's a real threat. We've already identified that as a big threat. And so take Unilever for example. You could think they're a charity. Sometimes we actually put Unilever on a PowerPoint slide and ask 'Is this a charity or company?'. And Triodos is a bank that you could argue almost looks like a charity...So do those B Corps need a charity to give them that stamp of approval? Maybe not. So it's a real risk for us."

Charity interviewee

"Yes, we're seeing more and more of this happening. And yeah, I feel concerned about that. I think, traditionally, or, you know, historically, charities have always been seen as the experts, and they have the knowledge they have the experience. But then I think the other side to that is that perhaps corporates see us having a lack of resources and maybe take a little bit longer than maybe think that they can cut us out and go straight to it themselves. So I think there is a concern there."

Charity interviewee

This need for ownership and control over what projects are undertaken is recognised by many company interviewees, who even suggest that companies might perceive that they can achieve better social outcomes on their own.

"So it's your people and your employees and you're driving that strategy, you can sort of dictate how it's delivered, what was delivered, but also making sure that, you know, the mitigating factors are managed, and you can go keep a close eye on what's going on minimizes the risks, I suppose, because it's all on your watch, rather than rely on a third party to make sure they sort of met the compliance criteria for things."

Company interviewee

4.6.2 Opportunity

While there is consensus that purpose driven brands could, and do, present a serious threat to charity-company partnerships, some charity interviewees see opportunities and possibilities.

"And I think it's fantastic because at the end of the day, we all want to create real change, we want to make things better. And so I don't think we should see, you know, purpose-driven brands necessarily being a bad thing. I think there's a lot a lot of good in that. And looking to have an opportunity to collaborate, we need to look more into that."

Charity interviewee

"Without a shadow of a doubt, there's been a massive shift now from businesses going from profit-led to more purpose driven. And, of course, charities have been doing that for forever and a day. So we are absolutely uniquely placed to take advantage of that, in terms of aligning ourselves with various industries and businesses and that kind of thing. However, there is still that traditional mindset in amongst the sector of working with charities because of the risks and the lack of knowledge and skills."

Charity interviewee

Findings from our quantitative research showed that many more partnerships professionals and leaders in charities see purpose-driven companies as an opportunity rather than a threat. See the graph opposite.



The rise of purpose-driven brands will help create more ambitious partnerships

It will make no big difference to how companies engage with charities.

9.52%

From charities' perspective, this represents a threat to creating more ambitious partnerships with companies.

14.29%

From charities' perspective, this represents an opportunity to create more ambitious partnerships with companies.

76.19%

4.7 The impact of the coronavirus pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic arrived just as the qualitative interviews were starting so we decided to include a question on the crisis.

4.7.1 Generally pessimistic

Unsurprisingly, there was confusion and uncertainty about the effect. There was some hope for the future, but generally the short-term consensus was quite pessimistic.

"Charity partnerships are going to be affected by declining income at companies. And I know for sure from the current budget, we're not going to be able to cover the funds that are raised by customers and colleagues. We just haven't got the budget to give that money. And then the other thing is obviously, with most charities, my previous experience, people had 'Memorandums of Understanding' (MoUs) rather than contracts. And so we were already told before we went on furlough to look at all of our

relationships, all of our partnerships and all of our contracts and put a stop to kind of any payment."

Company interviewee

*"My initial thinking is I am really worried. We've made some huge steps in terms of the beyond profit piece since the [2008] recession, you know, companies really give a s**t about stuff like social purpose, CSR, all that stuff, diversity and inclusion, all that really, really important stuff, and I am very, very worried that that will get parked as we go into another recession."*

Company interviewee

"And the focus then is so much on trying to get ourselves out of the economic doldrums, that we will be in for a long period, that actually there isn't a space in anybody's mind to think about looking at long-term innovative, creative partnerships."

Charity interviewee



4.7.2 Potential positives for the future

"It might be creating super opportunity for kind of these types of partnerships, but again, this is not going to come from business. This really has to be driven by charities, you've got to take something to community person or CSR person who will they will feel like yes, this is the thing that we want to get into."

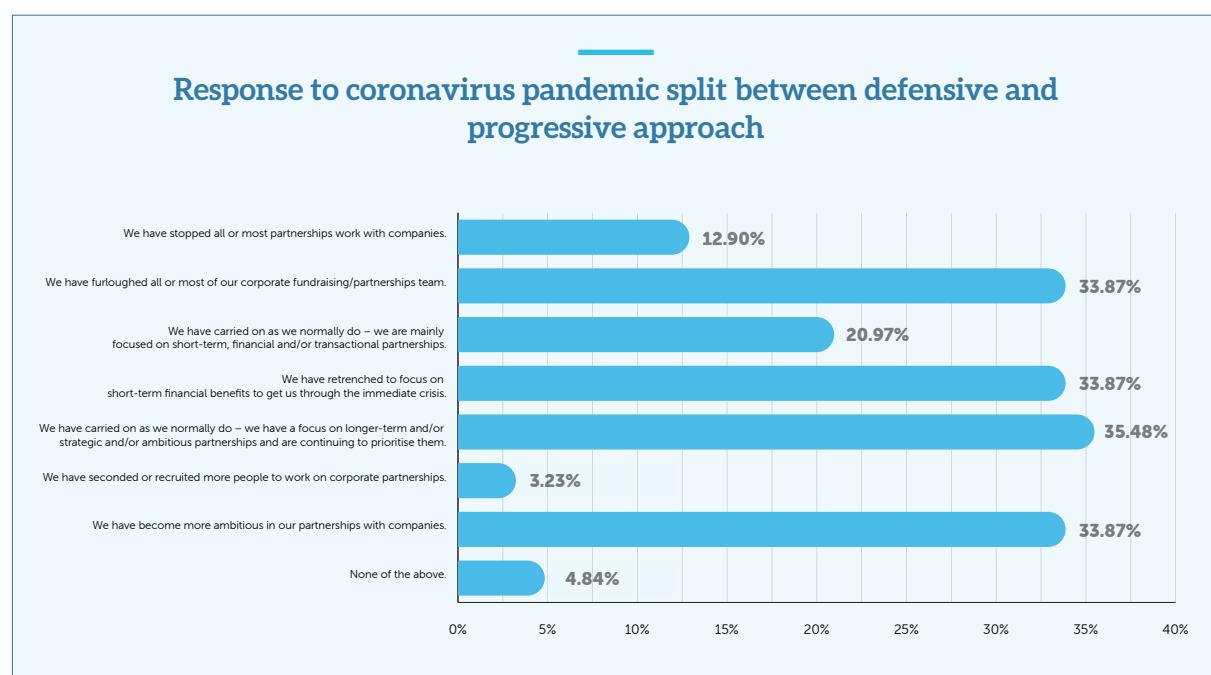
Company interviewee

"It'll be charities that understand the mutual benefit of those partnerships and can think creatively and innovatively about them and not revert to business as usual, they'll be the ones that can respond

quickly. And that doesn't necessarily mean the ones that have got the biggest teams either. I think actually smaller charities, regional charities could steal a bit of a march here in terms of working with the businesses in new and innovative ways, because they tend not to be bound by the same structures and decision-making processes as in larger organizations. But yes, I think you'll be the ones that can respond flexibly and innovatively to the to the future are able to reinvent themselves."

Charity interviewee

As you can see from the graph below, our quantitative research showed a split between a defensive and progressive approach in response to the coronavirus crisis.



Recommendations to create ambitious partnerships

5.1 Identify your organisational purpose for partnering

In seeking to engage an organisation's leadership and management in building ambitious corporate partnerships, we need to create a culture of 'collective ambition' to create more value.

Collective ambition is a concept described in an article in the Harvard Business Review by US organisational management theory scholars Douglas A. Ready and Emily Truelove as, "A shared sense of purpose, how a company will fulfil it and track progress and how leaders and others will behave every day as they achieve and sustain excellence."^{iv}

Partnership professionals in charities and companies need to engage their organisation on this shared sense of purpose to create more value from partnerships. The key point is to move the discussion to talk about your organisation purpose and to use this as a device to move them from focusing on transactional outcomes.

"So I think if you start talking about like cake bakes, and marathon running your board and your senior management switch off. If you start saying this partnership could achieve this business purpose, and these are the benefits as a business, that we would get from partnering with this organisation.

"I think that's when you start to get their attention and turn their head. You know, that's what it was like for me at the CSR group. As soon as I spoke about social purpose rather than charity. That's where they were like, oh, okay, because they just want to see what's in it for them, right."

Company interviewee

"I would encourage the corporate partnerships professional to bring the leadership team of the organization right back to its purpose. I mean, its real purpose, the purpose that its customers and employees care about."

Company interviewee

"We didn't want to build a traditional CSR programme built around what we thought the charity sector may need. We wanted to create things that provided real-time practical solutions to very current challenges and create meaningful, long term social impact. We developed a whole range of initiatives that would align with our expertise as employment experts and fully utilise the resources of the business. It was also important that our work gave our clients and candidates an opportunity to get closer to the charity sector, so that they could make a measurable impact and enhance their own personal development. We made a difference to hundreds of charities every year and the SR Group continue to drive this agenda – something I will always be very proud of."

Jo Major, formerly of SR Group



5.2 Focus on shared purpose

Once you have linked charity-company partnerships with your organisational purpose you can take this a stage further. You are now in a position where you can identify your shared purpose with a prospective partner.

We recommend that identifying your shared purpose is the vital first step of creating ambitious partnerships. That is why purpose is at the centre of The Remarkable Way, which is our method for creating ambitious charity-company partnerships (see Appendix D below). When you approach your partnership prospect you want to make it clear that you have chosen them for a reason. Your shared purpose shows why you chose them.

The way to identify your shared purpose is to start by writing down your organisation's

purpose. If you don't have a separate purpose statement then we recommend you use your organisational mission. The next step is to write down your prospect's purpose. Again, if they don't have a separate purpose statement then you use their mission instead.

Now you have both organisation's purposes side by side, you can identify your shared purpose. Start by looking for words and phrases that you have in common. Then build them into a sentence. Typically, shared purpose statements should begin with phrases such as, "We both believe..." or "We both know..." It's important that your shared purpose is concise, inspiring and unique.

See the following example of the shared purpose between Bridge's Estate Agent and Phillis Tuckwell Hospice Care.

Our shared purpose



From the smallest property to the grandest home we focus on what's important to you

To care compassionately for adults living with an advanced or terminal illness, and those closest to them, so that they have the best possible quality of life and the patients' final days are peaceful. Because every day is precious.

We are both passionate about giving our clients the best quality of life



5.3 Identify your partnership North Star

Following this logic through, you started by articulating your organisational purpose as a more inspirational reason for creating charity-company partnerships. Then you identified your shared purpose with your target prospect. Each of these are strong steps towards more ambitious partnerships. The ultimate goal is to meet with your potential partner and ask them to describe the ambition for your partnership. After all, if you can identify a profound ambition then you are much more likely to build an ambitious partnership.

One of the charity interviews describes how their team identifies this big partnership ambition.

"All the team have in their heads that when we go into a conversation with a company what we are looking for is that ambition at the top of our partnership model. Which is an ambition that only us and that company can achieve. And when

we unpack that it might be because of what the company sells, its products, its supply chain. But it might equally be the audience it has."

"If you've got that ambition then all the levers for change will naturally fall out of it because it is so strategic to both sides. Quite often in the final five minutes of a meeting with a company I will reflect on that as a closing kind of thought, to say right we've discussed all of this, but if you were to really come up with this north star in terms of three-years' time what this partnership will be famous for, what would it be? Companies quite often like that because they have heard all this information. There is so much you can do in a partnership, it can get crowded, it can get diluted. If you end the conversation saying well you've heard all of this, in three years' time what would the Sun newspaper headline say it has achieved? Then they say oh good point, yeah. And then they say it would achieve this, you start hinging all the different reasons around it."

An inspirational example of a partnership North Star is the relationship between Tesco and WWF.



Tesco and WWF have partnered together to halve the environmental impact of a shopping basket by 2022



5.4 Be corporate value-raisers not fundraisers

As mentioned above in barrier 4.5, the language we use can be an ‘anchor’ holding back our ability to create ambitious charity-company partnerships. The best example of this is that charity partnerships professionals are typically referred to as “corporate fundraisers.” This label is a major problem because it drives them towards the transactional end of the Collaboration Continuum.

Rather than focusing on fundraising as the goal in corporate partnerships, a number of leading charities have chosen to focus on “value” instead. This shows they are much more open to creating ambitious corporate-charity partnerships. We recommend we use this as a new label, so instead of describing charity partnerships professionals as “corporate fundraisers” we should describe them as “corporate value-raisers” instead.

We cannot underestimate the power of language. This new emphasis will act as a daily, subliminal reminder that their main goal is to create value, not just fundraising income. Crucially, it will also remind colleagues and senior management of this more ambitious goal of engaging companies. Lastly, it will mean that charities are much more likely to engage companies on similar, more ambitious objectives, so avoiding the mismatch on why they partner described in barrier 4.1 above.

“We have always known that going beyond fundraising enables us to build the most ambitious and impactful partnerships. During the pandemic we have put this into practice more than ever, working with businesses to use valuable resources other than funding (from phones to food), to provide solutions to critical challenges the charity and our clients have faced. It’s amazing what has been achieved and has shifted how we now measure the value of partnerships both internally and externally.”

Catherine Townson, Corporate Partnerships Manager, St Mungo’s

5.5 Have greater focus on professional development

As identified in barrier 4.2 above, there is a lack of knowledge about partnership models and processes among partnership professionals and leaders in both companies and charities. This lack of knowledge is one of the greatest barriers to more ambitious partnerships.

The solution, and quite an obvious one, to the lack of knowledge is to provide training and education that focuses specifically on ambitious charity-corporate partnerships – rather than general courses on corporate fundraising or CSR.

In particular this training and education should share the Collaboration Continuum as a model which can be understood and adopted across the corporate and charity sectors. It should also share best practice examples of the four different types of partnership.

Most important of all, the training and education should share step by step processes of how to create ambitious partnerships. If partnership professional and leaders don’t know these models they will revert to better known, more transactional types of partnerships such as charity of the year and sponsorship.

“As a small children’s hospice, it is vital that Helen & Douglas House has the right fundraisers with the right skills to maximise their impact. We want to move away from the short-term transactional corporate partnerships with have had to date. We want to develop truly strategic partnerships to the long-term benefit of both parties. As Head of Fundraising, I need to know that our Corporate Partnerships Manager has the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to approach, lead and deliver such partnerships. By investing in her development, Amy’s knowledge and expertise has transformed and Helen & Douglas House is already starting to benefit from the rewards.”

Kirsty Ford, Head of Fundraising,
Helen & Douglas House Hospice



5.6 Improve impact reporting

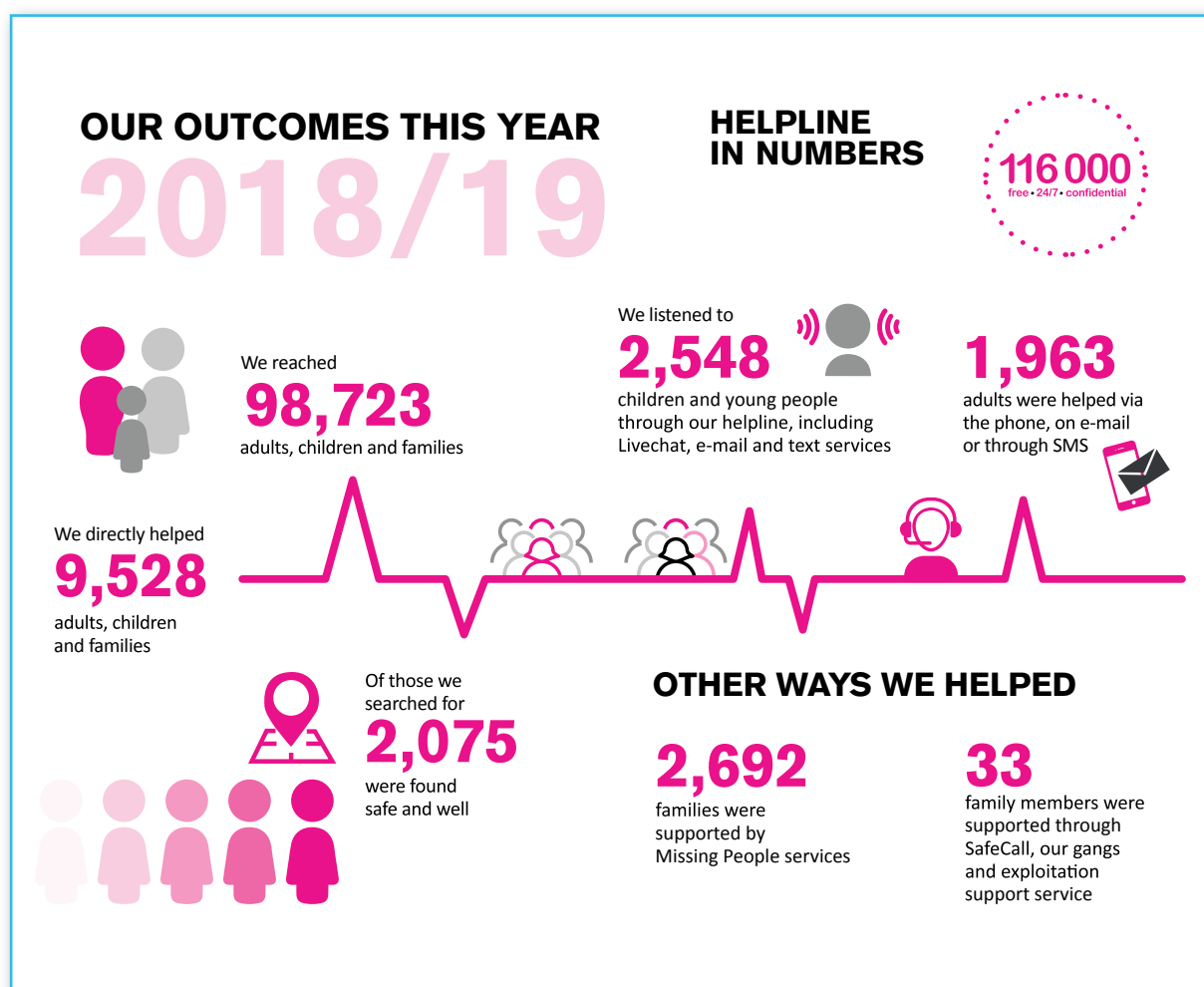
As described above in barrier 4.4, our company interviewees said charities are generally not very good at reporting impact, and even when they do so they usually talk about outputs rather than outcomes.

There is a significant opportunity for charities to improve their impact reporting around partnerships and perhaps even work with companies to co-create the metrics they need to measure. Once developed, these new measurements would be tools that could help overcome an important barrier – that companies have no way of knowing how much good their investment in charity partnerships is achieving.

This will satisfy one of the main reasons company interviewee gave for embarking on charity-company partnerships, which was to achieve societal outcomes.

This recommendation brings us back to the main narrative of this research. Partnerships managers first need the knowledge of why companies seek these objectives, then the knowledge of how to devise appropriate metrics, and the relationship building and communications skills and knowledge to secure organisational buy-in for them.

The charity Missing People consistently produces powerful impact reports. See the extract from their 2018/19 Impact Report below:



5.7 Seize opportunities in the coronavirus crisis

As mentioned above in barrier 3.7, our interviewees had a mixed response to the effect of the coronavirus crisis on ambitious corporate-charity partnerships.

Thinking logically, we would expect it to have a negative effect. After all, due to the lockdown, UK GDP fell by 20% in April 2020. The biggest fall since records began, according to the Office for National Statistics.

However, our experience is quite the opposite. Over the last three months, since lockdown began, Remarkable Partnerships has held over 100 free brainstorm for charities, helping them shift their partnerships approach in response to the crisis. These brainstorm have provided us with incredible insight, which is that major new partnerships are being formed quicker than ever. For example, Changing Faces (the visible difference charity) formed a partnership with a fast-growing make-up brand in just two weeks. Another charity shared with us that April 2020 was their most successful month ever for corporate partnerships. Indeed, this is supported by the findings of our quantitative research where 45% of respondents said they have become more ambitious in the partnerships with companies.

The reality is that people across the UK, and across the world, want to make a difference in response to the coronavirus crisis. And these are the people who run companies. It seems that many companies, no matter how hard they have been hit, want to provide an extraordinary response. This is probably because they feel a deep psychological need to help those people they know who are worse off than them. It is a natural human response to a crisis. They also realise that, in years to come, we will remember how companies responded, and they don't want to be on the wrong side of history.

Therefore, we recommend that companies and charities seize this moment to create more ambitious partnerships. Here are four key ways to seize this partnership opportunity:

- **Link your proposition to the coronavirus crisis.**
- **Focus on shared purpose.**
- **Engage your prospects with a partnership offer – showing how you can help them.**
- **Act now.**





An excellent example of seizing the opportunity in the coronavirus crisis, is the partnership between GymShark and Birmingham Women and Children's Hospital. The two organisations had been discussing a potential partnership for over a year before the coronavirus hit. Lockdown brought the urgent need for the partnership to both organisations, and they launched a joint marketing campaign within a fortnight.

Based on the inspiration that the hospital's frontline colleagues were averaging 20,000 steps a day, the organisations ran this

incredibly successful consumer engagement campaign throughout April. Doing their bit to keep fit, for every person sharing a post-exercise photo with the hashtag #NHSSweatySelfie, GymShark pledged a £5 donation – raising a total of £180,000.

The partnership went well beyond this engagement campaign, with GymShark colleagues supporting the hospital to deliver medication to their outpatients and food for hospital colleagues. These additional elements of the partnership are set to continue for the duration of coronavirus and beyond.

GymShark pledged a
£5 donation – raising a
total of £180,000



Conclusion

There are significant barriers which are holding companies and charities back from creating ambitious partnerships.

These include a mismatch of objectives, lack of knowledge about how to create them and a lack of organisational support.

There are also barriers relating to language and impact measurement.

In order to overcome these barriers we need to increase the knowledge and understanding of how to create ambitious partnerships for both partnerships professionals and leaders. In particular we need to grow the knowledge of partnership models, such as The Collaboration Continuum. We need to share methods for creating more ambitious partnerships, such as focus on shared purpose and identifying your partnership North Star.

If we can do that, then we will enable charities and companies to remove the anchors holding them back and they will create more ambitious partnerships, which will ultimately help build a better world.





Appendix A

Research interviewees

Charity sector

Damian Chapman, director of strategic marketing and income generation, The Charity for Civil Servants

Ghalib Ullah, head of commercial partnerships, Parkinson's UK

Johnny Smyth, fundraising and communications manager, Action Mental Health

Kerrina Thorogood, head of partnerships, WWF

Lisa Murdoch, head of philanthropy and partnerships, Children 1st

Michael Regan, senior corporate partnerships manager, LandAid

Rachal Minchinton, head of opportunity management, Hafal

Sophie Powell-White, head of partnership management, Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity

Tum Kazunga, chief executive, Habitat for Humanity Great Britain

Corporate sector

Jenni Barkley, communications and corporate responsibility manager, Belfast Harbour

Pauline Giroux, senior manager - social purpose and sustainability, Yorkshire Building Society

Chi Kurangwa, community advisor (foundation and employee engagement), Kingfisher plc

Jo Major, head of external relations, APSCo

Crispin Manners, chairman and ceo, Onva Consulting

Noorzaman Rashid, chief executive, Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors

John White, chief executive, Bacta

Appendix B

Qualitative research interview questions

Charity sector

1. What do you think are the main reasons why charities engage in corporate partnerships?
2. What's your opinion on the level of knowledge and skill of corporate fundraisers and partnerships managers at charities, specifically, are you confident that they would know enough to be able to create more ambitious partnerships?
3. Have you noticed or encountered among charities any negative attitudes towards working with companies that might hold them back from more ambitious partnerships?
4. How do you think SMTs and trustees would react if partnership leads proposed more ambitious partnerships, which might include those that went beyond simply giving money or short-term transactions such as sponsorship or charity of the year?
5. What types and level of risk do you think charities associate with partnering with companies on the more complex types of corporate partnerships?
6. How important do you think charities consider corporate partnerships to be in achieving their mission?
7. Some companies aim to create more social value themselves through purpose-driven brands and vehicles such as B-Corps and social enterprise.
8. How do you think the Coronavirus emergency will affect how charity-corporate partnerships develop, both in the short-term during the emergency and once we get through it?

Corporate sector

1. What do you think are the main reasons why companies engage in corporate partnerships?
2. What's your opinion on the level of knowledge and skill of charity partnerships managers at companies, specifically, are you confident that they would know enough to be able to create more ambitious partnerships?
3. Have you noticed or encountered among companies any negative attitudes towards working with charities that might hold them back from more ambitious partnerships? If so, what are they and why do you think they exist?
4. How do you think SMTs, board members and stockholders would react if partnership professionals proposed more ambitious partnerships, which might include those that went beyond delivering transactional benefits such as through CRM or sponsorship?
5. What types and level of risk do you think companies associate with partnering with charities on the more complex types of corporate partnerships?
6. How important do you think companies consider partnerships with charities to be in achieving their business objectives?
7. If companies want to create more value for society at large, have you noticed them trying to do this on their own initiative without partnering with charities?
8. How do you think the Coronavirus emergency will affect how charity-corporate partnerships develop, both in the short-term during the emergency and once we get through it?

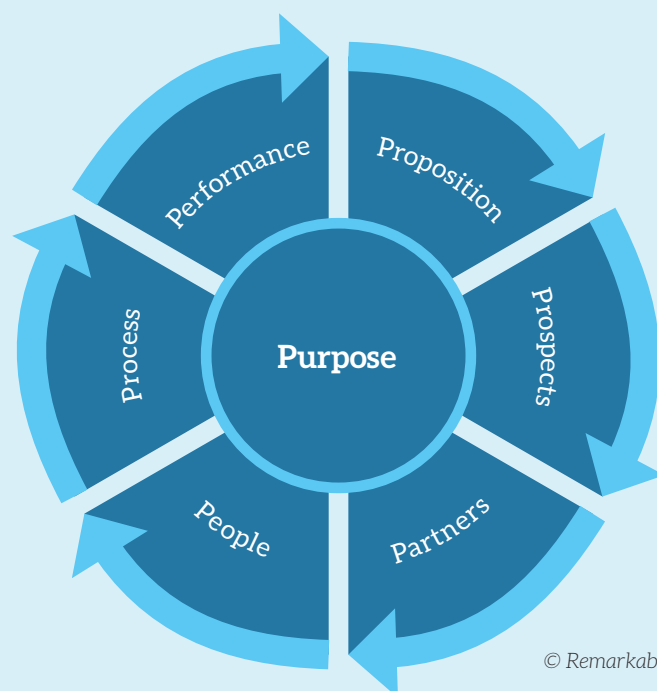
Appendix C

Quantitative research questions

- How do you view partnerships working with companies?
- Knowledge of corporate fundraisers.
- Are charities focused on short-term partnerships?
- Do you have the support of the whole organisation?
- Are you constrained in ambitious partnerships?
- How do you keep your colleagues engaged on corporate partnerships?
- What information about your partnerships do you collect and measure?
- Will purpose driven brands create a threat or opportunity for ambitious partnerships?
- What have you done in response to the coronavirus pandemic?

Appendix D

The Remarkable Way



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Appendix E

Author biographies

Ian MaQuillin

Ian MacQuillin MInstF(Dip) is the director of the international fundraising think tank Rogare, which he founded in 2014. Rogare aims to help fundraisers better use theory and evidence in by translating academic ideas into professional practice and building fundraising's knowledge base. He's recognised as a leading thinker on fundraising ethics, having developed a new theory of fundraising ethics that seeks to balance fundraisers' duties to both their donors and beneficiaries. Ian edits the Critical Fundraising blog and runs and moderates the Critical Fundraising Forum on Facebook, which has more than 1,1000 critically-minded fundraisers from all over the world. He writes a regular column for Third Sector magazine and regularly contributes to the specialist charity media around the world.



Rogare (Latin for 'to ask') is independent think tank for the fundraising profession. It is the bridge that links the academic and practitioner branches of the fundraising profession and the engine that turns academic theory and research into actionable ideas for fundraisers.

Rogare has two main objectives:

1. Create a richer knowledge base for fundraising. This means rethinking both the type of knowledge that underpins fundraising and how fundraisers acquire and value knowledge.
2. Bring about a culture change in knowledge acquisition in fundraising. We need to bring about a paradigm shift in how fundraisers use theory and evidence to tackle the challenges they face

Rogare's work has focused on ethics, donor-centred/relationship fundraising, public engagement, and regulation.

www.rogare.net

Jonathan Andrews

Jonathan is a corporate partnerships specialist with 20 years' experience. He has led successful fundraising teams at Alzheimer's Society, Age Concern and Action for Children. At Alzheimer's Society his team's fundraising income increased from £4m to £16m in four years. He has secured major corporate partnerships including BT, Bupa, Credit Suisse, Intel and Santander. He is the co-founder of Byte Night, which has raised over £10 million for Action for Children. In 2013 he created Remarkable Partnerships to help charities and companies create transformational partnerships. He has published two industry reports and he was the project lead on corporate partnerships for the Commission on the Donor Experience. Jonathan leaves people feeling inspired and motivated to be more ambitious.



There are ordinary partnerships and there are remarkable ones. Ordinary partnerships deliver mediocre results. Remarkable partnerships help you deliver against your purpose with greater certainty and increased speed. We help charities and companies create remarkable partnerships.

Drawing on our 33 years' experience, we have created The Remarkable Way, our unique method for creating and delivering major charity-company partnerships. The Remarkable Way consists of seven key factors: Purpose, Proposition, Prospects, Partners, People, Process and Performance.

We support companies and charities through retained partnerships support, one-off projects and regular training courses. Our aim is to provide partnerships professionals and leaders with the confidence tools and skills so they can create major partnerships.

remarkablepartnerships.com

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