

# CAUSE RELATED MARKETING Back with a bang!



If you're seeking more awareness for your cause or to effect behaviour-change, more untied funds and new donors, there's a very lucrative technique that will deliver them all. Corporate-cause matchmaker [Hailey Cavill-Jaspers](#) explains the evolution of Cause Related Marketing and why it's back with a bang



Back in 1983, when perms, legwarmers and mixed tapes were all the rage, a new marketing technique was born that gave brands a heart and unlocked more income for charities. The term Cause Related Marketing (CRM) was first uttered by the head of marketing at Amex, the iconic credit card company, that supported a fundraising drive by the Statue of Liberty Restoration Fund. Amex contributed one cent every time their card was used, and within three months \$2.4 million was raised. It was a huge success for Amex too — usage of the card increased by 27%.

Thus, CRM was born. A new kind of sales promotion for brands and a spectacularly fast way for charities to secure untied funds, reach new donors and become a household name.

As well as pioneering a new marketing technique, the Amex campaign is a perfect example of a best practice CRM. It is a win, win, win. Amex wins — gaining a values-driven point of difference and a significant revenue increase. The charity wins — a fast way to raise millions. And the consumer wins — being able to contribute to something they care about by simply using their credit card. There is also excellent brand alignment. Both parties are iconic symbols of freedom and opportunity. If the alignment doesn't make sense, it won't work and may even be seen as tokenistic or inauthentic.

#### WHAT IS CRM?

Cause Related Marketing is a marketing initiative involving a product, service or brand that aligns itself with a charity. It is mutually beneficial and is about achieving both marketing and societal goals. It's not Customer Relationship Management (the other CRM), not Cause Marketing and it's definitely not Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

For nonprofits, CRM is far more than just 'fundraising'. It can reach millions of potential donors, provide significant untied funding and disseminate important behaviour-changing messaging.

CRM really took off in the 1990s, with an explosion of 'pink' products benefiting various breast cancer charities. Avon's Breast Cancer Crusade, which included a percentage of sales of lipstick and nail varnish going to breast cancer charities, is one of the most enduring. Not only did it raise awareness of regular breast checking amongst the millions of Avon customers through its #BoobWatch campaign, but it ran in 58 countries, generating \$1.2 billion for vital breast cancer research projects. The advertising campaign was humorous and had incredible reach and cut through.

I too caught the CRM bug in the '90s. After 12 years as a corporate marketer in London, I was inspired by the work of The Body Shop Founder, Anita Roddick. After a backpacking adventure through Africa, India and Nepal, I returned to London, keen to apply my marketing skills to something that would make a difference. I joined the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children), and it was there that I cut my teeth on CRM, working with Tesco, Unigate and Pizzaland. I moved to Australia in the mid-'90s and was excited to see a few CRM campaigns in the supermarket. It was clear that this was what I wanted to dedicate my life to, so I founded a company that acted as a matchmaker between companies and charities.

One of my first clients was Kellogg's, which was seeking a new charity partner for their Corn Flakes brand. They wanted something positive which would resonate with their primary customer — mums. After researching several charities, we chose Kids Helpline, Australia's only free helpline for kids aged 5-18. Kids Helpline had a brilliant fundraiser who understood marketing and the mechanics of CRM, and she led the partnership to an award-winning, best practice CRM campaign. That fundraiser was Meredith Dwyer, FFIA, CFRE, who later founded her own agency, HomeMade Digital.

Knowing that Kids Helpline wanted to reach more kids and encourage

help-seeking behaviour, Kellogg's devoted valuable real estate, the back of seven million cereal packs, to promoting the helpline, as well as developing high-profile TV advertisements.

It worked. Kellogg's enjoyed improved reputation, and an uplift in sales. Kids Helpline received \$3.2 million in untied funds and research revealed that 12% of new callers to the helpline heard about the service from the cereal box, while 40% said it was from the TV ad.

Around this time, the pink explosion reached Australia with the National Breast Cancer Foundation and Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) leading the way. One of the most successful partnerships, and still running today, is the Bakers Delight Pink Bun campaign. The annual campaign has raised a lot of dough through 100% of sales from Pink Fun Buns going to BCNA — over \$23M to date.

ME bank, a challenger brand, partnered with the Breast Cancer Foundation on their vision — zero deaths from breast cancer. The 'Buck it forward' CRM campaign contributes one cent every time the ME card is used and to date has raised nearly \$1.6 million.

#### THE NOUGHTIES

As we welcomed the new millennium, I brokered a CRM partnership between Kleenex and Guide Dogs Australia. The partnership ran for 12 years, generating over \$2.6 million in untied funds. One year, they also ran a special offer — customers could collect adorable toy Labradors at different stages of training. This added a further 30,000 new names to the Guide Dogs database. The campaign was a powerful way for Kleenex to leverage its brand icon — the Labrador puppy.

The noughties also saw a new trend emerge: Cause Marketing. This is when a company, product service or brand, aligns itself to a 'cause' but there is no actual charity benefiting, or, in some cases, the charity is not a prominent part of the campaign. This highlights the importance of language, as there



is a distinct and important difference between Cause Related Marketing and Cause Marketing. An example of this is the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty, the 'cause' being body positivity. Sales of Dove doubled in the campaign's first decade, it differentiated the Dove brand as the brand for women, and it started robust conversations about the beauty industry and its exploitation of women.

As consumer scepticism rose in the Noughties, new terms entered our language — woke washing, pink washing and green washing. Bold claims of doing good were met with "prove it". The smartphone revolution enabled consumers to do extensive research on product claims and TV shows such as *The Gruen Transfer*, *Media Watch* and *Checkout* swiftly exposed companies and brands making false claims. This encouraged brands to be more transparent and was a timely reminder for nonprofits to put reputation before dollars.

Social enterprises' primary purpose is to address a societal issue rather than creating profit for owners or shareholders. Products sold benefit a charity, but it's not a CRM, because supporting a cause is part of their core purpose, rather than a short-term promotion to raise funds for a charity. Many consumers would not know the difference, however. Two familiar and successful Australian success stories are Thankyou and Who Gives a Crap.

## THE 2020s

Cause Related Marketing is prolific in this current decade, and it's not just the big brands employing the tactic. Small to medium enterprises (SMEs) have also jumped on board and that's good news for smaller and regional charities.

A few fantastic examples of SMEs utilising CRM include Vege Chips, an Aussie snack brand that's chipping in to support Currumbin Wildlife Hospital. Nothing goes better with chips than a good bottle of vino, especially a swig of Sit Stay Society Wines, which has raised over \$150,000 for PetRescue as well as highlighting some very adorable pets for adoption.

A stunning example of a regional CRM is Prickly Moses craft beer, which sells a specially made Spotted Ale to benefit the Conservation Ecology Centre in Victoria's Otways. The funds help conservation of the endangered tiger quoll, at one point thought to be extinct in the region. Lizzie Corke, OAM, Chief Executive of the Conservation Ecology Centre, says of the partnership: "One day I was chatting with Andrew and Janine, owners of the local brewery, and they said they'd like to do something to ensure the quolls stay around in the Otways. I knew a simple donation wouldn't cut it, so I suggested they make a beer which would build awareness and provide ongoing financial support. And they did! That was a decade ago. Since then, the Spotted Ale has generated critical funds, invaluable awareness of our work and a community understanding of the plight of the quolls."

Another outstanding new partnership, forged during lockdown,

is that of Rebel and Lifeline. Rebel believe in the transformative power of sport, which goes beyond just fitness, it encompasses both physical and mental wellbeing. Like many partnerships, it was put out to tender and Lifeline won the pitch. The synergy is strong — they are both focused on wellbeing and a helpline sits perfectly next to Rebel's new brand platform 'Sport is Calling'. Lisa Cheng, Executive Director, Marketing and Fundraising, at Lifeline Australia says: "In addition to committing dollars, Rebel created YouTube videos featuring athletes like Mary Fowler, the popular Matildas player. They also wanted to show real people, so many of the Rebel staff members feature too. In just two years it's generated \$1 million, with most of this coming from an instore CRM campaign, where \$1 from every product sold went to Lifeline. I'm so excited to see what we create together in 2023, and in the process reach Australians who may need our service or want to donate."

## WHY CRM IS BACK WITH A BANG

At the heart of CRM is the conscious consumer — Australians who want to make a difference through their everyday purchases. The Conscious Consumer movement is at its highest peak for decades, partly fuelled by the pandemic. Australia-wide lockdowns afforded people the opportunity to reflect on what's important in life, and they've emerged with a deeper concern for the environment and societal issues, ready to act. One action they're taking is to shun those products that are doing harm and support those doing good. My analysis of seven trend reports\*, reflecting the views of hundreds of thousands of consumers, confirms this is a global phenomenon. Consumers want companies and brands to not only address their impact on society and the environment, but also be active agents of change.

In Australia, according to the *Conscious Consumer Report 2021*, two-thirds of Australians believe the old model of corporates operating purely for profit is dead; companies should take responsibility for their impact and act. Just under two thirds believe corporates, of all the institutions, have the greatest potential to solve social problems, given their resources. Just how do consumers expect companies to do that? By partnering with charities. Over three quarters of Australians believe corporates should partner with charities to solve social problems.

Australians are also acting on their beliefs. Over one third have actively boycotted a company or brand in the past year due to its poor responsibility. Over one quarter have actively switched brands to support a charity they care about and over half say they will in the coming year. What causes do they care about? Climate change (23%), mental health (20%) and healthcare and medical research (19%) are in the top three. If your charity sits in any of these cause areas, you have an incredibly compelling pitch to corporates — that partnering with you will influence over half their consumers.

You're welcome to download the 2021 *Conscious Consumer Report* at [bepartnerready.com/research](http://bepartnerready.com/research), and you'll be the first to receive the 2023 report when we revisit consumer sentiment.

## AVOID THE PITFALLS

As with any opportunity there is always risk. Two important lessons I've learned from the many CRMs I've brokered are:

**1 Anticipate scepticism** Australians are the most sceptical consumers in the world. Any kind of incongruence between words and actions will be called out. Through social media, activists have a loud platform. To avoid high profile backlash in the media, do your due diligence about the company and brand, and ensure your communications are transparent. Avoid anything that may smack of tokenism, greenwashing or cause washing. Even if the alignment is sound and wholesome, there will always be a donor who thinks you should not "get into bed with the devil", so don't be surprised if you get a few complaints. Explain the rationale for the partnership and the immense opportunity provided and move on. The good that you can achieve from the funds raised will far exceed one or two complaints.

**2 Anticipate increased demand** Companies and brands have immense resources to promote a CRM campaign — and if they're smart, they will. If your charity offers a service, know that this heightened awareness will almost inevitably increase the demand on your service. Kids Helpline experienced this in their partnership with Kellogg's — but they anticipated it and ensured that the promotion generated more than enough dollars to cover the cost of extra counsellors. Ensure that you enter any kind of CRM with a minimum guarantee of investment, so that you have the funds 'in the bank' to cover this increased demand.

## BUSTING SOME MYTHS

**Myth #1 CRM is only for big, national brands** This simply isn't the case. There

are numerous examples of small, state-based and regional nonprofits enjoying CRM partnerships. One example is Bully Zero, a small charity making a big impact on reducing bullying in schools and workplaces. Bully Zero have successfully built at least three corporate partnerships, including a CRM campaign with botanicals brand Green Nation Life.

**Myth #2 CRM always triggers a 'donation'** The majority of CRM campaigns do — and I believe should — generate money for a charity, but there are occasions when the promotion of a behaviour-changing message is far more important. During 2020, when mental health issues were significantly heightened in lockdown, KitKat partnered with RU OK?, the charity that is all about empowering everyday Australians to start a meaningful

conversation with people they're worried about. The campaign featured on over six million KitKat packs, getting the message directly into homes. KitKat also invested heavily in social media vignettes featuring celebs including Rob Mills. This partnership absolutely advances the mission of RU OK? and creates social change — which is to encourage conversations, rather than fundraising. **F&P**

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*'Brave New World. Creative Trends, Dentsu, 2021; Covid-19 rapidly reshapes consumer behaviour, PWC 2020; Global Consumer Trends, Mintel 2021; Business & Society, Social Trends & Corporate Leadership, Globescan 2020; Growth — it comes down to experience, Accenture 2020; New lives in a Covid world, global consumer trends, Dynata 2021; Trends Report Carat 2021*

## 7 steps for CRM Mastery

Follow these seven steps to help you stay on the right side of the law and develop a CRM campaign that's a win, win, win.

- 1 Win, win, win** Ensure it's a win for all parties, including the consumer. Enter a written agreement to ensure all goals are clear and measurable, including the income generating goal.
- 2 Impact is imperative** The lead message is the difference being made (societal impact) not the dollars generated. So 'end bullying' rather than '10c goes to Bully Zero'.
- 3 Total transparency** Clarify the charity that is being contributed to, how much and for how long (as a secondary message). Avoid misleading language like 'part proceeds'.
- 4 Obey the law** Comply with all laws to avoid bad publicity or fines, this includes Australian Consumer Law and adding the corporate to your License to Fundraise. Also avoid using the wording 'xx donated to' because in a legal sense it's not a 'donation'. Tax law asserts that a company cannot claim money given as a 'donation' if there is a commercial benefit derived — which in any CRM there certainly is! Use words like 'contribution' to be safe.
- 5 Empower the conscious consumer** Consumers will seek out validation and truth — give them a website URL, which details all the nitty gritty, to help them do this.
- 6 Fair payment for your brand** Get your brand valued and set a 'minimum guaranteed fee' before handing over your logo. Ensure there is fair payment for your time and valuable brand, alongside funds for your services.
- 7 Step up and support it** Don't rely entirely on the corporate to promote the campaign. Use your own channels to publicise it and give your supporters a chance to get behind it. Show your corporate partner you're behind it.