

Charitable Giving - UK - May 2012

Report Price: £1750 / \$2758 / €2087

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“Even though charities are facing the perfect storm of public funding cuts and poor returns on investments, more aggressive canvassing alienates potential donors. Increased transparency of operations and an open conversation about how the donations are spent would result in more converts.”

– Ina Mitskavets, Consumer and Lifestyles Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- Which demographic is accounting for the biggest increase in regular donations?
- Which donors are most sceptical?
- What factors influence giving?
- What role do finances play in donating?

Charities are facing increasingly hard times amid austerity, with public funding cuts yet to take their effect. The Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (Acevo) estimated that the UK charity sector is facing council spending cuts that could range anywhere from £1-5.5 billion in the current financial year. At the same time, the proposed curtailment of tax relief for large charitable donations is expected to discourage the biggest existing or potential donors. With the double-whammy of public and private spending drying up, charities' investments are not providing enough return to outweigh the after-effects.

Nevertheless, Britons show relentless willingness to give their support to the badly-hit charitable sector, with the youngest adults (aged 16-24) showing the biggest surge in giving since June 2010. Also an encouraging sign, adults aged 16-34 are the most prepared to increase their donations in the near future.

As charities are keen on finding new income streams and new methods of soliciting for monetary donations, many resort to high pressure tactics and shock advertising. However, Mintel data show that while these tactics may be effective amongst certain demographics (namely the younger adults), ultimately there is a risk that donors might be turned off from donating to charity, as the negative sentiment about aggressive canvassing is overwhelming.

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