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Demand for fundraisers on the rise

Charities have been struggling to plug funding gaps, and that has resulted in a battle being fought to recruit the best at pulling in the cash.

By **Lynda Whitney**

GOVERNMENT funding to UK charities has fallen by £1.3 billion since 2010-11, a drop of nearly nine per cent, according to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

It is no surprise, then, that charities are fighting back by increasing their fundraising efforts – and that means more jobs for fundraisers.

“There was a huge increase in demand for fundraisers following the economic crisis in 2008, and it has remained consistently high, fuelled by a shortage of good quality candidates,” says Hayley Robinson, head of the fundraising recruitment team at TPP Not for Profit in Cannon Street.

Aled Morris, chief executive at recruiter Harris Hill, which specialises in charity vacancies, agrees, saying: “Demand for fundraisers across the charity sector in general is high – everyone is looking for them.”

As a result, salaries for some fundraising roles are rising.

A TPP pay survey shows that while average salaries fell by three per cent over 2013 to 2014, salaries for directors of fundraising rose three per cent to £61,347.

At the other end of the scale, salaries for fundraising assistants, an entry-level role, rose by four per cent to £22,578, perhaps because more basic tasks are being devolved to volunteers and unpaid interns, boosting responsibility and pay for assistants.

The best-paid roles are in legacy and major donor fundraising. Salaries in direct marketing and individual giving have risen, but for events and corporate fundraising they have declined.

A FOOT IN THE DOOR

Despite a shortage of candidates for junior roles, this is a tough sector to get into. Robinson adds: “It is extremely difficult to find an entry-level fundraising job, unless you are willing to accept an unpaid position.”

The problem is that hiring a new fundraiser is expensive, so charities want candidates who come with a proven successful track record of raising funds.

The solution, for those who do not yet have this track record, is an internship or a volunteer stint that gives candidates the skills and experience that charities want.

Even though this is unpaid, candidates should still take this work seriously and, like sales professionals,



Becks' appeal: the Beckhams donated a vast array of clothes and shoes to the British Red Cross

FORGING A CAREER AT THE TOP OF A CHARITY

As director of fundraising at the British Red Cross, Mark Astarita heads a team that must raise £3 million a week, and over his 20-year career he has raised more than £1 billion in charitable donations.



Astarita, from Hackney, says: “This is a growing profession and there is a desperate need for good fundraisers, so you can move up the ladder fast. I was a director of fundraising by the time I was 30.”

He moved from the chemical sector into fundraising with Prisoners Abroad, then the National Deaf Children's Society before joining the Red Cross.

“This is a different way of marketing – we are asking people to give us money for nothing,” he says.

The Red Cross has partnered with celebrities such as the Beckhams, Amanda Holden and Mary Berry.

“It is a treat dealing with the rich and famous,” says Astarita, “But I am still just as touched by the lady that sends me £5, even though she cannot really afford it.”

In her mid-20s, actress Imogen Ward started as an office assistant in a charity. Soon she moved into fundraising with the Environmental Investigation Agency and Medical Emergency Relief International (Merlin), and is now chief executive officer of the Lessons for Life Foundation, which funds education projects in Africa.



“We run events such as cycle rides, an annual ball, and marathons,” says

Ward, who develops relationships with chief executives and partners of big City institutions. Events have included teams from Barclays, Goldman Sachs, Ernst & Young and Virgin Media.

“Our association with international cable company Liberty Global, which provides our core funding, gives us access to blue-chip firms,” she says.

Her advice for those keen to get into the charity sector is this: “Funding methods are changing. Charities can no longer fail to engage with the corporate sector, so demonstrate your corporate network, so on your CV, and show your entrepreneurial side.”

demonstrate their success on their CVs by specifying the amount of money they have raised.

THE CAREER LADDER

Traditionally, fundraisers start as assistants, rise to the role of fundraising officer/practitioner, then to manager and head of department and ultimately to director of fundraising.

“There has always been a clear career ladder,” said Paul Marvell, director of professional development at the

Institute of Fundraising (IOF), which offers training for those already in fundraising roles and an Introductory Certificate in Fundraising course for those looking to find out more.

“Taking a course demonstrates a candidate's commitment,” says Marvell.

The IOF (institute-of-fundraising.org.uk) also runs regional networking groups where candidates who choose to join the IOF can meet useful contacts.

Once in, the route to the top is an unlikely combination of dedication to the charity cause and sales skills.

“The skills used in fundraising are very close to those used in a sales role,” adds Marvell.

As a result, the chances of transferring to the charity sector from a corporate role that involves business development are far greater than they once were.

“Charities have been reluctant to consider corporate candidates as too ‘salesy’ and money-driven,” says Robinson, “but this bias is changing, particularly among smaller charities. They are recognising that a more commercially-minded, target-driven approach could boost their income levels so hiring a corporate candidate seems to be a smart way to get the right experience and skills.”

People from the private wealth or corporate banking sectors, for instance, are likely to have the same kind of research, communication and customer development skills as those

required for private donor and corporate fundraising.

A DIFFERENT CULTURE

There is still a difference of culture, however, as employers want to see genuine depth of commitment and knowledge and proof of fundraising success, according to Morris.

Volunteering as a charity trustee can also help build a bridge to the charity sector, especially for people with professional skills in law or finance.

Candidates must also demonstrate tact and diplomacy. Celebrities, wealthy donors and corporates do not want to be seen as targets but fundraisers must be able to compete with others chasing the same funds.

Those moving across must also expect a drop in salary – average remuneration for charity sector roles is lower than that for equivalent jobs in commerce.

However, fundraising offers rewards money cannot buy – the certainty of making a difference.

AVERAGE SALARIES BY SENIORITY

Role	2014	2013	Difference
Assistant/co-ordinator	22,578	21,660	4%
Officer/executive	26,137	27,141	-4%
Senior officer/exec	32,929	32,644	1%
Manager/lead	35,285	36,054	-2%
Head of	45,560	45,680	0%
Director	61,347	59,476	3%
Total:	38,535	39,627	-3%

SOURCE: TPP NOT FOR PROFIT