

IS SOCIAL MARKETING THE ANSWER TO BLOOD DONATION?

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Introduction

- Globally, more than 81 million units of whole blood are collected annually.
- Less than 45% of donated blood is collected in developing and transitional countries, which is home to about 80% of the world's population.
- If 1% - 3% of a country's population donate blood, it would be sufficient for the country's needs. But in 73 countries, donation rates are less than 1% of the population. Seventy of these nations are either developing or transitional countries.

Introduction

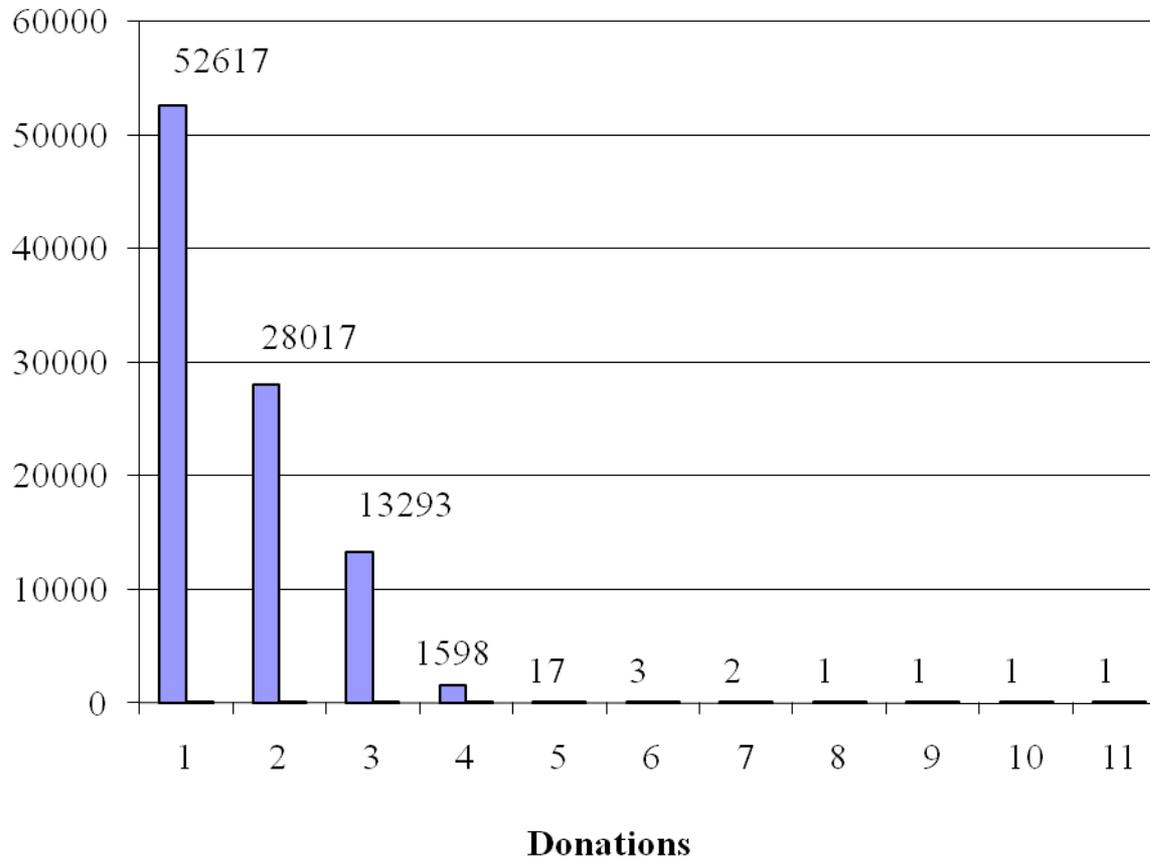
- Blood donation is dependent on the goodwill of people to voluntarily donate blood without financial reward.
- It is estimated that between 13 and 15 million Europeans are whole blood donors.
- In Ireland only 3.6% of the population donate blood (European average is 5%).
- 3,000 donations are required in Ireland every week.

Introduction

- Blood donation can be seen as perhaps the purest example of altruistic behaviour - an anonymous gift of life to an unknown recipient.
- The average number of donors in relation to the general population in Europe is 25 per 1,000 inhabitants. Ireland is slightly above this with 29.7 donors per 1,000 inhabitants.
- One in four individuals will require a blood transfusion at some stage in their lives.

Key Role of Repeat Donors

Donations per Donor 2008



■ Number of Donors

Blood Donors by Age in Ireland (2008)

- 18-34 year old - 40,004 donors (42%);
- 35-54 year old - 44,543 donors (47%); and
- 55+ year old - 11,004 donors (11%).
- In Ireland, 15.2% are first time donors.
- Individuals 65 years or older constitute 13% of the USA population but receive 25% of blood units transfused. By 2030, 20 percent of Americans will be aged 65+, it is likely that the demand for blood components will continue to increase.

Research Objectives

- What is the level of awareness of blood and its importance among a university student population in Cork?
- What are the motivations/beliefs/expectancies of donors/non donors?
- What needs to be done to encourage donation?
- Are emotional based advertisements more effective than rational appeal based advertisements?

Methodology

- 7 Focus groups involving university students at CIT, Cork, Ireland.
- Focus groups contained a mix of donors and non-donors.
- Motivations, attitudes towards blood and reactions towards blood recruitment advertisements were gained.
- Interviews with blood recruitment agencies in the island of Ireland.

Results – Low Knowledge Levels

- Knowledge of blood uses and blood donation among the student population (both donors and non-donors) is very low.
- The greater one's knowledge of the blood donation process and the need for donated blood, the more likely a person is to donate blood.
- More awareness needs to be generated of the uses of blood and how many lives a pint of blood can save.

Results – Low Knowledge Levels

- All advertising appeals need to contain facts on the uses of blood that act as educational and persuasive information for viewers.
- Donors and non donors were not aware of all the uses of blood.
- The message “Don’t leave it to someone else” stood out to viewers as it challenged laziness to donate or the assumption that others would donate blood.



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Results – Complacency of Non Donors

- Non donors felt someone else would donate blood so it would be there if they needed it themselves. This level of complacency may equate with laziness or a lack of knowledge of the importance of donation and the process of how to donate.
- Advertisement dealing with excuses made for non donation challenged their sense of complacency and pushed them to think about donating.



Results – Complacency of Non Donors

- The excuses given were realistic ones. This type of message and specifically the way it is framed, where excuses are presented and a coping response is also provided, whereby excuses are reversed, was very effective.
- Use of celebrities and real stories to encourage blood donation also informed non donors of the uses of blood and put a human face to the recipients of blood.



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Altruism is still the Bedrock!

- Donors preferred emotionally-based fear appeals, with an altruism theme.
- Very strong personal emotional attachment to blood donation by some donors.
- The majority of non-donors suggested that emotionally-based fear appeals that focus on donating blood as an altruistic act would have no influence on them to donate in the future.
- Act of donating blood as an altruistic motivation has not yet become intrinsic.



Altruism is still the Bedrock!

- Donors started donating blood because a friend or family member encouraged them. Blood collection services should cultivate close relations with donors and encourage them to bring a new donor along with them on their next visit to a blood drive. This would act as a great marketing tool for donor recruitment, and the donor would be able to reassure the person they bring along of how the process works and what it entails.

Altruism is still the Bedrock!

- Encouraging donors to bring a new donor is also the cheapest form of recruitment and retention that the blood service organisations could utilise.
- Donors would like to know when and where their blood was used.
- Donating for selfish reasons also exists to make sure that there would be enough blood there for oneself.

Importance of Segmentation in the Advertising Appeal to Non donors

- The 'inhibited' which is greatly affected by all the inhibitors to blood donation.
- The 'afraid' which displays a strong aversion to blood and its extraction process.
- The 'uninhibited' which is the segment with the lowest scores in all the factors that inhibit donation behaviour.
- The 'uninformed' which is characterised by its lack of information.

Conclusions

- The number one reason identified for blood donation was pure altruism and for non-donation was fear and laziness.
- The big challenge for blood service organisers is how to attract donors for whom altruism is not the key motivation. These represent the silent majority of potential blood donors.
- Blood collection services need to analyse specific target groups and use different marketing tools to attract these new donors.

Conclusions

- The process and modalities of blood collection, which can be altered at very little cost to improve the process of blood collection should be constantly reviewed (location of mobile visits, awareness generation of mobile visits, length of waiting time, distraction, water loading prior to donation, staff training, etc).
- The key is to recruit, retain and reward blood donors.