

## ➤ Cause Marketing - Vodafone's partnership with The National Autistic Society

### Introduction



Successful companies act as role models to other businesses and the wider community. To achieve this role model status they must be committed to Corporate Responsibility (CR). CR involves three aspects:

1. Running a successful business. A business must first make a profit if it is going to be able to make a wider contribution to society.
2. Being committed to ethical behaviour across its operations.
3. Being committed to improving society.

A visible aspect of its CR programme is Cause Marketing. This case shows how Vodafone has formed a Cause Marketing partnership with The National Autistic Society (NAS).

Vodafone is the third largest company in this country by market capitalisation. This is remarkable because Vodafone is a relatively new company. Most of the other companies in the FTSE 100 (largest 100 companies in the UK) have been around considerably longer.

Most people in this country instantly recognise the Vodafone logo and know what the company does. Vodafone supplies customers with mobile telephone facilities including text, games, music, mobile TV, and Internet services. In 2005 Vodafone had around 16 million UK customers, employed over 11,500 people across call centres, offices and retail shops.

The NAS is less well-known. It is a national charity working with children, adults, and families affected by autism, and those professionals who work alongside them. Autism is a complex life long developmental disability affecting an increasing number of children in the UK. The term autism covers a wide range of behavioural and communication difficulties. For example people with autism find everyday social interaction very difficult.

Their ability to develop friendships is generally limited as is their capacity to understand other people's emotional expression. People with autism can often have accompanying learning disabilities but everyone with the condition shares a difficulty in making sense of the world.

The NAS champions the interests of people with autism and provides services appropriate to their needs. Around 535,000 people in the UK have autistic spectrum disorders and 2 million parents, carers and friends are affected. Understanding of the condition remains limited.