

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

Introduction

Vodafone deals in mobile phone supply and services. It is the third largest UK company by value. Corporate Responsibility (CR) has a number of facets.

It is when a business

- * runs itself well
- * behaves ethically
- * has a role in making society better.

This case study looks at how Vodafone and the National Autistic Society (NAS) have joined forces. The NAS is a charity working with people who have autism. Autism can lead to all sorts of problems. It is true to say that all autism sufferers have trouble making sense of the world.

Marketing

Marketing is a two part process. Market research finds out what customers want. Marketing then works to provide this. Market research can also find out how customers expect a company to behave. Cause marketing is part of CR. It is marketing that helps both the business and a good cause. Helping a good cause also helps society.

Cause marketing

All stakeholders gain from cause marketing. Customers, employees and the government support it. Investors see the benefit of it. Causes gain from it. Vodafone has a vision and goals for the future. Part of this is to 'delight' customers. Part is being a 'responsible business'. Cause marketing fits with these. Vodafone helps the NAS improve the lives of people with autism. It makes the public more aware of the issues. It helps the NAS to grow.

Why NAS?

Vodafone involved its stakeholder groups in the process to decide which group to partner. It looked at current good cause marketing programmes. It looked at 60 charities and narrowed this down to three before deciding on the NAS. The research showed that the NAS was the best fit. The core of Vodafone's business is communication. It therefore made sense to partner with a cause where communication issues were at the heart of the problem.

Aims of the programme

The partnership was set up with clear aims. Vodafone had a vision to 'break down barriers' and make 'more things possible for people affected by autism'.

The programme has three main parts:

- * Helping parents and carers with children with autism.
- * Setting up a database of services for carers and people with autism. This can be accessed in a number of ways, including via mobile phone and online.
- * Sponsoring a media campaign to raise awareness about autism.

Conclusion

Both partners gain from Cause Marketing. Vodafone shows that it is responsible. The NAS gains money from recycled handsets.

For instance:

- * the programme won an Award for Excellence
- * research shows that 55% of Vodafone's customers now regard it as responsible (up from 45%)
- * the NAS gained almost £800,000 from Vodafone's handset recycling scheme
- * there is greater understanding of the work of the NAS.