



In-Memory Insight – What’s next for in-memory products?

Public Briefing

02 July 2024



Introduction

In-Memory Insight explores the size, shape and scope of in-memory giving in the UK. We collect hard evidence to inform in-memory fundraising strategies and convince senior management of the value of in-memory giving.

We know that the act of giving in memory is often comforting for the bereaved; providing focus or diversion, giving something positive to think about, and encouraging mutual support between family and friends. The motivation to give is intimately connected to the person being remembered, and charities must always respect this when communicating with in-memory donors.

For the 2023/4 programme the focus of our research was a deep dive into in-memory products, taking a fresh look at the market, understanding how it is evolving, and exploring what's next. In-memory products were defined as anything that a charity can offer people to satisfy their desire or need to remember a loved one, in exchange for a donation.

The programme comprised of a number of different stages, looking at the in-memory market from different perspectives. A comprehensive audit of the in-memory product landscape was carried out, mapping out the various product types and identifying patterns and changes over time. Qualitative research was carried out to dig deeper and understand more about the supporter experience of engaging with different in-memory products. And there was learning through a consortium members survey, case studies and group discussion to understand more about what charities are currently offering and to spotlight on best practice.

As with previous In-Memory Insight programmes, we also carried out our annual performance benchmarking to help consortium charities set targets, direct their strategies and campaigns, chart changes over time and make the case for investment. The benchmarking covered in-memory resource and income data to September 2023.

This report shares the topline findings and key headlines from the research. We are grateful to our learning circle members for agreeing to share the information in this briefing more widely.

Overall, key findings

Bereaved supporters are constantly seeking out different ways to remember and celebrate their loved ones. We uncovered a wide range of products already being offered by charities to answer this need.

However, our research also showed that there is clear headroom for charities to offer an even greater range of in-memory products to cater for an increasingly diverse audience.

A motivation prevalent at all points of entry

- We found that supporters with in-memory motivations are connecting at every possible interface with the charity.
- This makes it particularly important for the In-Memory Team to engage widely with other teams across the organisation. Teams must work together to make sure the motivation can be acknowledged and communications to this audience can be tailored, to give them the best possible experience and encourage them to engage further.

Using products to meet supporters' needs

- Our research pointed to a clear gap between the sorts of things that our respondents would have *liked* to have been doing in memory of their loved one, and the opportunities actually on offer from charities.
- There is great potential for charities to look further afield, e.g. at the commercial sector, as inspiration for new and creative in-memory products and offers to add to their range, as well as potential partnerships and collaborations.

Offering, and acting on choice

- In-memory giving is deeply personal, making it critical to offer people choice wherever possible. Some supporters have a need to talk, while others prefer not to. Some are very open and public about their in-memory motivation, while others like to keep this on a more private footing.
- Despite their differing experiences of grief and remembrance, we've found that *all* supporters appreciate being offered choices.
- However, once offered, choices must be honoured and followed through by the charity. For example, if they opt out of communications from the charity, they must be removed from the relevant lists. If they disclose their in-memory motivation, this must be appropriately acknowledged.

Five important opportunities for charities

Grief support

Storytelling

Regular giving

Volunteering

Charity shops

Grief support

- Our research uncovered a real and acute need for grief support. However, in-memory supporters who want to talk to someone can feel anxious and unsure of where to turn.
- If offering support of this nature as part of your charity's in-memory offer doesn't feel like a natural fit for your organisation, make sure that you are signposting to (or better still, partnering with), other charities and agencies who can offer it.

Storytelling

- We heard what a powerful tool stories can be, and how they can be used in many different ways to promote in-memory giving, through products of all kinds.
- The number of in-memory products charities are offering that facilitate story telling is on the rise. And when supporters share their own stories and experiences of the products and activities they've engaged with, this in turn can inspire others.
- Every charity can ensure that it includes at least one opportunity for story-sharing amongst its offers.

Regular giving

- Regular giving is an under-recognised in-memory opportunity for most charities, despite the common supporter impulse to link their loved with a regular donation.
- Plenty of supporters set up a regular gift after their loved one has died or take over a direct debit in somebody else's name. Often this is linked to a date of special significance, marking a happy occasion like a birthday or anniversary.
- Many people wanting to set up a direct debit in memory are funnelled through to the charity's generic regular giving page, which risks losing the in-memory motivation and amounts to a lack-lustre experience.
- Some are saddened that they are not asked by the charity about their motivation or invited to share their loved one as part of their giving.
- It is important to check that your charity is offering people an experience of in-memory regular giving that is both genuine and inspiring.

Volunteering

- We heard that some people are already volunteering for a charity as a way of remembering their loved one and of keeping that sense of connection with them.
- However, it seems there are usually few opportunities available for volunteers to share their motivation, and for charities to acknowledge and celebrate this. The exception is where the loved one (or their family) were already known to the charity, as supporters, volunteers or service users.
- Volunteers, in every capacity, should be asked about their reasons for engaging, and have these reflected back appropriately through volunteer care and stewardship.

Charity shops

- Our research told us that charity shops are already hubs for in-memory acts, including purchasing and donating items. However, people's in-memory motivation is rarely recognised during their experience of using a shop, as there is no opportunity to disclose this, or for it to be meaningfully recognised by the charity.
- Shops deserve greater consideration for their important function in facilitating and supporting in-memory giving among the people that pass through them.

Importance of religious motivation and cultural traditions

This research really underscored the importance of **religion and cultural traditions** as a driver of in-memory giving, with numerous respondents referring to their own, or their loved one's faith. Charities that were sensitive to this seemed to benefit from in-memory donations that might otherwise have been directed elsewhere.

This finding has informed our choice of topic for In-Memory Insight in 2024 – *In-Memory Giving in Multicultural Britain*.

Benchmarking

A core element of the In-Memory Insight programme is the collection of benchmark data, which is used by our members to guide their in-memory investment and strategy.

- In-memory giving now represents 2.2% of fundraised income and 1.5% of total income.
- In-memory income for 2022/23 has increased by 2.9% compared to 2021/22.
- Non-health charities saw the fastest income growth continuing the momentum seen last year.
- Investment remains low for in-memory, accounting for only 0.1% of fundraised income. But in-memory shows strong returns: in 2022/23 our Benchmarking Group received £1m for each in-memory fundraiser employed and £26 for every £1 spent on in-memory fundraising.

More about In-Memory Insight

In-Memory Insight explores the size, shape and scope of in-memory giving in the UK. The programme aims to collect objective evidence and insight on in-memory giving, in order to build the case for investment, inform fundraising strategies and help manage relationships with supporters.

The In-Memory Insight programme is funded by a Learning Circle of leading British charities who agree to pool their budgets, experiences and data to help build our collective knowledge. We operate a rolling research programme, with each year building on the one before.

We define in-memory as “any type of charitable giving or fundraising commemorating the life of someone special”. A range of in-memory motivated activities are covered in our research, including gifts at funerals, direct in-memory donations both one-off and regular, the setting up of tribute funds, the purchase of commemorative objects such as benches and trees, participation in fundraising events such as marathons and bike rides, and legacies made in honour of a loved one.

The programme sets out to explore all aspects of in-memory giving, focusing on a different theme every year. Examples of questions explored include:

- What motivates in-memory donors to give to charity – and how does it make them feel?
- What do in-memory donors need, expect – and experience – from the charities they support?
- How many/much in-memory gifts are being given? Through which channels?
- What is the current status of in-memory fundraising in the UK?
- What can we learn from good practice examples – both here and overseas?

Topics are thoroughly investigated using a variety of research techniques including focus groups and depth interviews, omnibus surveys, good practice case studies, the analysis of performance data from Learning Circle members and interactive member workshops.

In-Memory Insight 2024/5 will explore the important area of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic in-memory giving. This project is an opportunity to better understand the nuances and differences between in-memory supporters from different faiths and cultural groups and how they engage with in-memory giving, enabling charities to accommodate and tailor their in-memory communications and offerings to be more inclusive and gain new supporters.

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