

Navigating the Future of

Loyalty

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The Paradigm Shift Methodology

This report combines primary research through qualitative interviews with sector leaders and secondary data from the extensive Good Futures archive, comprising thousands of news articles, blogs, podcasts, trend reports, and websites.

Our aim is that, by combining deep client sector insight, a wealth of signals and sources, and imaginative thinking, we can unpack the macro trend in detail, and develop a series of potential, plausible future scenarios. We then outline what these might mean for charities.



Evidence-based

Built on primary qualitative research, evidence-based secondary research and available case studies.



Multiple lenses

Using a range of lenses to consider each piece of research and understand the potential implications, including STEEPLED (Societal, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Political, Legal, Ethical and Demographic).



Imaginative but level-headed

Drawing on trend and foresight expertise to develop a series of hypotheses around future societal shifts and scenarios. We're imaginative but also pragmatic.



Bespoke for the sector

Developed for the sector and with the sector – uniting an expert view on the world outside, and a firm grasp of the challenges faced within. Our team combines foresight and trends experts with charity sector specialists.



Gets to the 'so what'

Considers the implications and opportunities from each shift for the sector, articulating a clear 'so what' to get your thinking started.

Thank You!

We would like to thank everyone who gave up their time to contribute to this report, through interviews, chats, coffees and emails. In particular we would like to thank:

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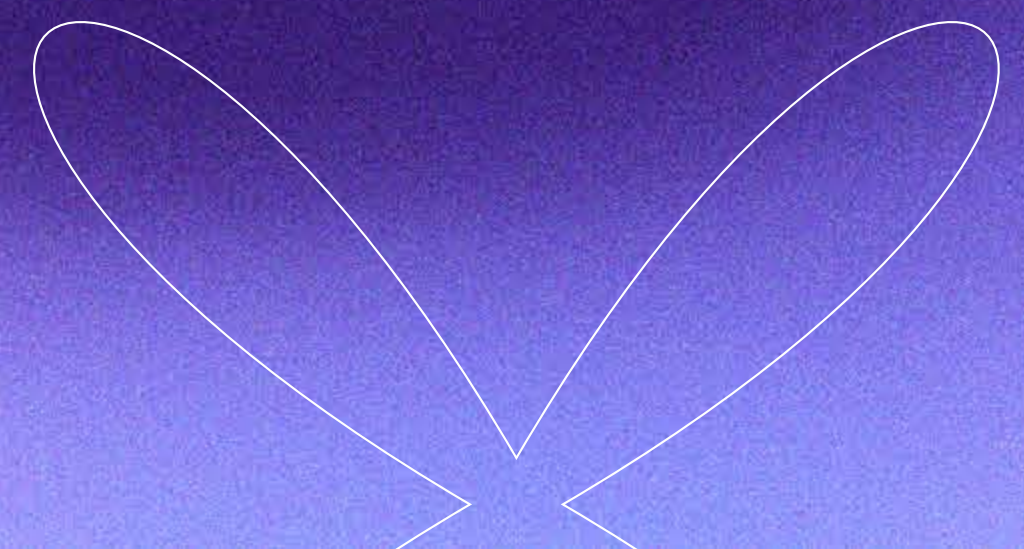
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*Royal Marsden Cancer
Charity*



Foreword

*Navigating the Future of
Loyalty in Challenging Times*



Foreword

When asked to define loyalty, **Sharon Pickford** from the *National Trust* didn't hesitate:

"There's no such thing as loyalty. It's all about core values."

And she's right. **Loyalty is dead. Long live loyalty.**

Loyalty, as we've known it, is evolving. Loyalty isn't passive. Today's audiences want connection, impact, and a role in something bigger. It's not about routine transactions or brand allegiance. People are drawn to relationships built on purpose and impact. They want to know that their contributions are part of a bigger picture, one that aligns with what matters to them.

Which is why, throughout this report, we've chosen to use the term **collaborator** rather than 'donor' or 'supporter'. This term reflects the active engagement people want to have with your mission and purpose and incorporates a broad church of audiences. For us, loyalty is as much about the individual donor as it is about your corporate relationships, grantees, volunteers, service users and teams. Loyalty isn't defined by a financial transaction. To these collaborators, loyalty is about relevance, purpose, and alignment with their beliefs.

In writing this report, we wanted to explore how loyalty is changing and how charities can nurture it as a dynamic, evolving relationship with collaborators at the heart of your mission.

As **Sharon** said,

"If your core values align with a particular passion or purpose, then you'll connect. Then they'll take action."

The Loyalty Loop: From Funnels to Fluidity

Loyalty is no longer a straight line from first engagement to long-term commitment. True loyalty has always been a loop, with collaborators moving in and out, driven by shifting priorities, attention spans, and evolving needs. Younger audiences are redefining loyalty on their terms. They can feel a deep connection to a cause without ever purchasing or donating, engaging instead through advocacy, shared values, or online communities.

As **Catherine Hart** from *Target Ovarian Cancer* explains,

"Loyalty won't look the same in five years. The younger generation's relationship with loyalty is disposable and immediate—they can be loyal one moment and detached the next."

The 'loyalty funnel' is outdated. We need to foster a continuous loop of engagement where people can re-engage easily, feel valued even if they're not actively giving, and find genuine meaning in their connection with the cause.

Shifting Power: From Supporters to Collaborators

Loyalty isn't built top-down. Today, brands and charities alike can no longer rely on one-way messaging or top-down communication to build a loyal base of supporters. As cultural strategist **Matt Klein** puts it, *"Brands are co-written in the comments. Fandoms are the new executive board."* Loyalty now means inviting collaborators in, creating space for them to participate, share feedback, and even shape your direction. People want to feel like their voice matters, that they're part of the mission – not just passive backers. And, yes, that means giving up some control and being open to letting their perspectives change the conversation.

And here's the catch: listening has to be layered and continuous. You can't rely on market research as a one-off exercise or only pay attention when launching a campaign. It's about listening in real time, reading the comments, and spotting the patterns in what your community is saying.

But be warned – not everything they say will be easy to hear. Embrace it. The honest feedback, even the challenging stuff, makes the difference. True loyalty doesn't come from applause alone; it's about taking in the full spectrum of feedback, understanding what matters, and daring to let those voices shape your next move.

Data with Purpose: Turning Information into Action

In a world drowning in data, the real challenge isn't just collecting information—it's turning it into something tangible, something that drives insight and purpose. But data alone isn't the answer. *Data without understanding is just noise.* Effective loyalty relies on data with purpose, with systems in place that not only collect but also translate insights into meaningful action, and comms journeys that exchange the *"vomit comet"* for meaningful touchpoints. Sometimes, it's better to do less, do it better and do it slower.

Investing for the Long Haul: Building Loyalty Beyond Transactions

But in a time of economic uncertainty, it's tempting to focus on short-term wins – quick cash flow, tried-and-true acquisition techniques, and a push for immediate results. But real loyalty isn't built on quick gains. It's like dating: you don't propose on the first date. Yet, the pressure for in-year cash is causing some charities to revert to old acquisition tactics, sometimes at the expense of long-term loyalty.

As **Katy Baird** from *WWT* points out,

"We know we need to invest in supporter journey development and our data infrastructure, but the reality is, we also need to focus on short-term cash while planning for long-term loyalty."

Building loyalty today means laying down foundations that won't just support collaborators in the immediate term but will evolve with them. In many organisations, this shift requires challenging deeply ingrained KPIs, moving beyond transactional mindsets, and rethinking what success looks like.

Building real loyalty takes courage—the courage to disrupt conventional approaches, push back on short-term pressures, and invest in relationships that will grow and sustain over time.

The Dual Nature of Charity: Balancing Authenticity with Impact

Charities today face a unique, and sometimes contradictory, set of expectations. Collaborators want the authenticity that feels “charity-like” – the comfort in the slightly disorganised, volunteer-driven spirit that feels far from corporate slickness. They want organisations that are relatable, community-driven, and human. But simultaneously, they expect massive impact and real, tangible change. They want charities to take on complex, global challenges with the efficiency and agility of a top-tier organisation but without the accompanying compensation, risk or incentives.

We’ve covered this ground before in [The Future of Charity report](#). Still, it bears repeating: We, as a sector, need to challenge outdated views of what it means to be a charity, breaking away from the Victorian image of charity as simply a handout. Instead, it’s about becoming agile, impact-driven movements that can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with more commercial organisations in terms of efficiency without sacrificing authenticity.

This tension goes to the heart of loyalty.

As **Joe Jenkins** from *The Children’s Society* points out,

“The existential challenge for the sector is around relevance... younger audiences are more cause loyal than brand loyal.”

Loyalty, ultimately, hinges on a clear, unwavering purpose. Collaborators want to know exactly why you exist and how you’re making a difference. In leaner times, this clarity becomes even more critical. How are you measuring impact beyond financial KPIs? How can you bring trustees along this journey of redefining what ‘value’ means in the impact sector? By openly tackling these questions, charities can push past old-fashioned expectations and build a loyalty strategy based on trust, transparency, and the bold pursuit of change.



So, how do you navigate this new landscape?

1

How future-proofed is your loyalty?

Is your loyalty strategy built to last, or will it need an overhaul in five years? Where does loyalty sit in your organisation and how is it viewed as a value and metric by your Board and trustees? Are they bought into the long-term investment or focused on in-year cash? Do you have the right metrics in place to weather the highs and lows of fundraising? A lot of questions to ponder. If you'd like some help with this, please jump to the final pages of this report about [future-proofing loyalty](#).

2

Adaptation through creativity and innovation

Loyalty isn't a fixed program; it's an evolving journey. The most resilient organisations are the ones that keep pushing the boundaries, testing new approaches, and finding fresh ways to engage collaborators. Whether through gamification, personalisation, or AI-driven insights, continuous creativity keeps loyalty alive and relevant.

3

Start with your teams

Your teams and people are the foundation of your loyalty strategy. Empowered, engaged employees and volunteers bring your mission to life and create the authentic connections that build lasting loyalty. Investing in your team's well-being, motivation, and alignment with your purpose isn't just an internal priority – it's a loyalty strategy in itself.

4

The power of the collective

Part of the challenge with loyalty for impact organisations is about ... impact. How we articulate, measure and communicate our impact as individual actors, as collectives and towards shared outcomes. We believe solving this needs a collective effort: a collaboration. Want to know more? Skip ahead to [future-proofing loyalty](#).



Daisy O'Reilly-Weinstock
Senior Director of Big Bets

Background & Context

Why Loyalty is Critical
for Charities Today

Background & Context

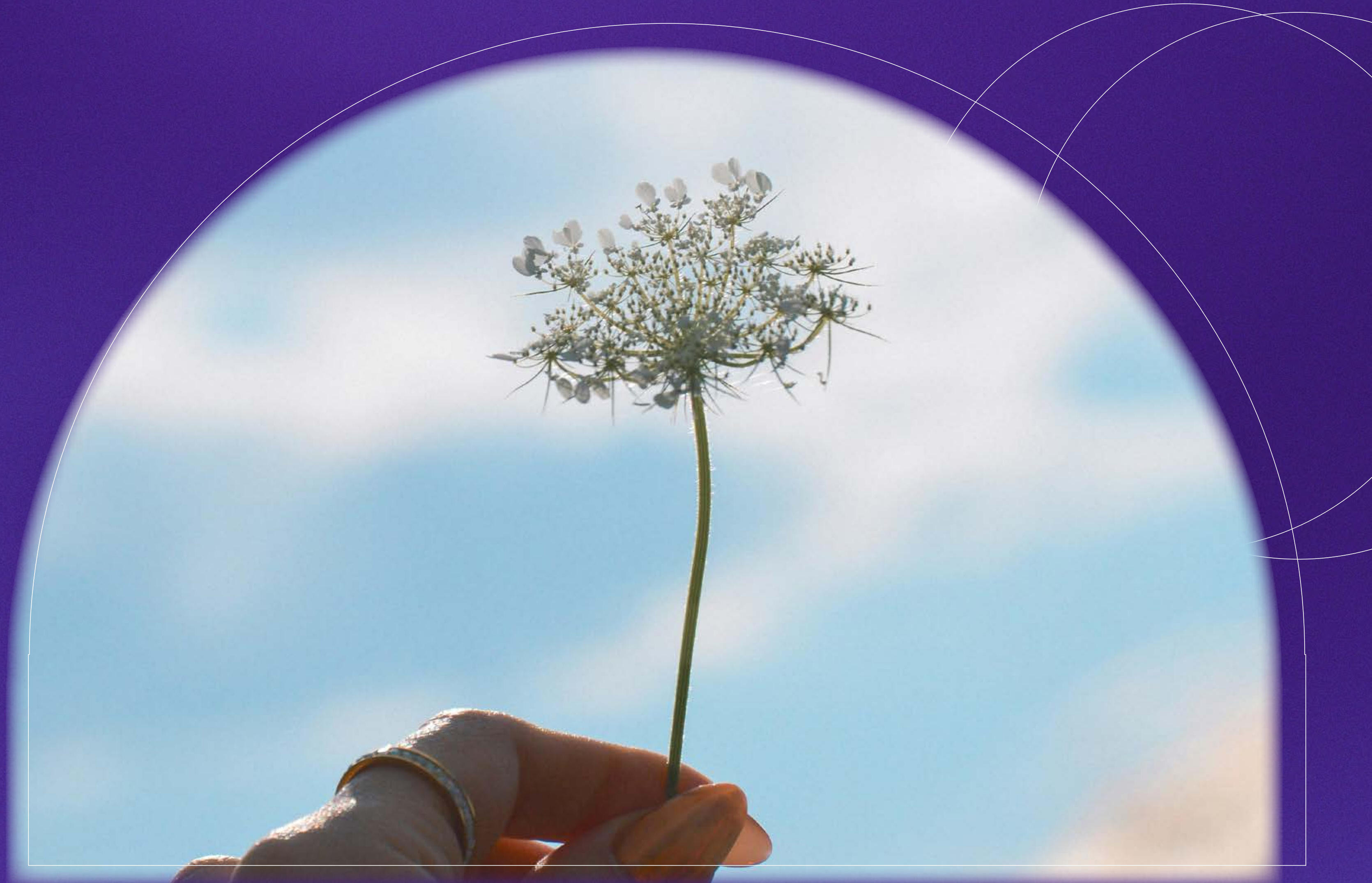
The Charity Sector's Unique Challenge

Unlike most for-profit businesses, UK charities operate within a unique environment of societal constraints and expectations, economic pressures and legislation that make navigating the loyalty landscape even more challenging. We've explored this in much greater detail in the **Future of Charity report**: from the Victorian paradigm of modern charities, to the impact of risk appetite, trustee diversity and governance on operations and organisational design. We won't retread this ground for loyalty, but do want to pull out a few of the most relevant challenges that are impacting the development of loyalty strategies in the current climate.

The Legacy Cliff

"The big question for me about the next ten years is what's happening with legacy giving. We're talking about the great transfer of wealth and whether the window on that is changing. I think we might see an increase in people wanting to give gifts in their lifetime rather than leave it after they've gone."

Joanne Dunsford, *Animals Asia*



In the UK we expect £5.5 trillion of assets will be passed down between now and 2050, with over £1 trillion expected to change hands in the 2020s alone. This intergenerational wealth transfer brings with it four major pivots for the charity sector:

1

Women hold the power

By 2025 women are expected to hold 60% of the UK's financial wealth. This shift has been acquired partly through inheritance, partly through divorce and, partly through building their own independent wealth.

2

Give now, not later

What we know about these female Boomer legators is that they are a) prioritising their grandchildren over their children in their inheritance plans (sorry Millennials), and b) when it comes to charities, they want to see the impact of their gifts now, not when they're dead.

3

The rise of the childless

From the 1950s onwards we start to see an **increasing percentage of women** who remain childless.

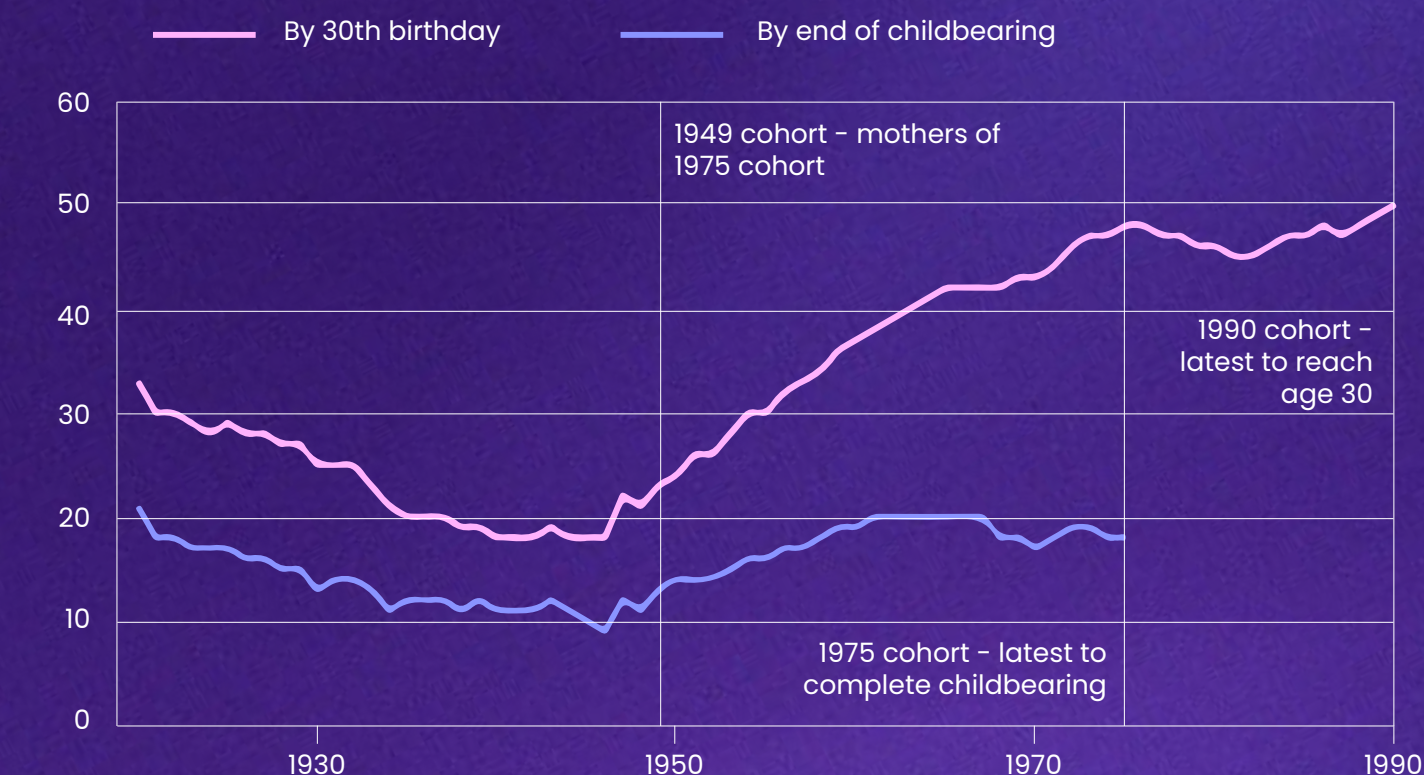
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The legacy cliff

But, are Boomers potentially the last generation of traditional legators? By **2050 Gen X will account for 40% of UK deaths**, but they are also **less likely to have made a will** than Boomers at the same age. Legacy income has shored up the finances of many UK charities, and some may be banking on it continuing to be a cash cow for the coming decades, but are we potentially in for a rude awakening if we don't start to engage younger generations as prospects now? (And by younger, I mean Millennials and Gen Z, not just Gen X!).

Half of women are now childless by their 30th birthday

Percentage of women remaining childless by age 30 years and by end of childbearing years, 1920 to 1990, England and Wales



Source: Office for National Statistics - Births registrations

Staff Burnout

“Keeping talent has been tough. We’re trying to build a culture that people want to be a part of, but it’s challenging in a sector where resources are stretched.”

Andy Harris, *Shelter*

Our talent is at a tipping point. To tackle the issues we face we need the best and brightest. But that talent is **underpaid**, **abused**, and **burnt out**. A 2023 report from Pro Bono Economics found that 30% of charities reported increased rates of staff burnout over the past 12 months, while a quarter reported increased absence due to sickness. Our organisations are stretched, resources are being cut or stripped back, and our people are desperately trying to keep the lights on and hit ever increasing financial targets. No, these challenges are not unique to the charity sector, but the new Labour government’s focus is increasingly looking to charities as partners to rebuild the UK. Loyalty doesn’t just mean your financial contributors, volunteers or corporate partners. Loyalty is critical for your most important people – your teams.

The Tech Infrastructure Gap

“In the future, we need data to not only track transactions but also to understand our supporters’ journeys fully. This is where our investment in CRM comes in.”

Nick Georgiadis, *Christian Aid*

James Beeby from *Diabetes UK* told us,

“Properly delivering loyalty is almost impossible without the right systems in place.”

Transformation strategies, tech roadmaps, CRM rollouts, data architecture and AI integrations. Personalisation and data-driven insights were brought up in every single interview as the holy grails for modern loyalty strategies, and to deliver this future almost every organisation we spoke to is investing in tech in one way, shape or form. Deploying effective and flexible CRM systems will be key for charities as they look to meet rising supporter expectations for tailored and transparent engagement, but that doesn’t mean you should wait until roll-out is complete before innovating on your loyalty plans.

“If you’ve got the right data and the right technology platform, you’ll only be constrained by your own imagination.”

Sharon Pickford, *National Trust*

Keeping the Personal Touch

“Scaling personalised engagement is a real challenge. The one-to-one, hands-on approach works for local community engagement, but we struggle to replicate that model at a national level.”

Vicky Johnson, *Royal Marsden Cancer Charity*

One of the greatest hurdles charities face as they grow is keeping relationships personal.

“As we grow, it’s becoming harder to maintain that level of deep understanding and personalisation we had when we were a smaller organisation.”

Julie Roberts, *Pancreatic Cancer UK*

One of my favourite anecdotes from our interviews was the story told by one fundraising director about being invited to a supporter’s wedding. This level of personal, one-to-one connection to both the individual and the mission is magical, but almost impossible to maintain as you grow unless you are in the privileged bracket of high-value. So as our organisations grow, how can loyalty strategies keep that personal touch during scale-up?

Shifting Focus from Acquisition to Retention, and Beyond

Many of the charities we spoke to for this report are navigating the tightrope of the urgent need for in-year cash, against longer-term ambitions to stabilise and grow.

“We need to balance the short-term need for in-year cash with building long-term loyalty... This is a delicate balance, especially in a tough financial climate.”

Julie Roberts, Pancreatic Cancer UK

With shrinking budgets and rising costs, some are battling internally against a desire for short-term acquisition tactics in a market where acquisition is becoming harder. Yes, there are tried and tested methods of reaching known audiences, but getting cut through and brand recognition in an increasingly crowded market means that these short-term strategies may not deliver the same results they previously ensured. Higher costs, combined with rising expectations from audiences, mean that investing in loyalty is not just a wise financial decision but a necessity.

“There’s still the tension of ensuring that we’re getting enough funds through the door right now, but as an organisation, if we only look short term, we’ll never really deliver the level of growth that we’re really trying to achieve, because we’ll just be making ends meet every time.”

Terence Lovell, Breakthrough T1D

Making the case for longer-term loyalty goals can be made even more difficult when the focus is on in-year KPIs. These can make it difficult to justify investments in loyalty-building initiatives that don’t offer immediate returns. Meeting this challenge means rethinking success metrics to value supporter lifetime, advocacy, and engagement, not just direct donations. (Something we’ll go into in more detail later in the report).

So the focus shifts from acquisition to retention. But the future of loyalty isn’t just about keeping those stakeholders ‘active’. The future of loyalty is about moving those relationships from donors to collaborators.

“Loyalty isn’t just about retention—it’s about emotional engagement.”

Charlotte Murphy, National Trust

In short, loyalty is no longer just about the financial commitment. It’s about fostering a sense of belonging and alignment with values. Investing in the foundations of loyalty that can deliver long term returns for your organisation and making the most of your relationships.

“Loyalty is about how an organisation meets, delivers on, and exceeds the needs of its supporters so that they feel an ongoing commitment. It’s about aligning with their values, not just what we want as an organisation.”

Terence Lovell, Breakthrough T1D

Drivers of Change

Drivers of Change

Cost of Living Crisis & In-Year Cash Pressures

Whilst inflation is falling (down from the 41 year high of 11.1% in August, 2022, to 1.7% in September, 2024), the financial squeeze on households continues. As does the increased cost of service delivery for business and charities alike. Although the British public donated a record **£13.9bn to charity in 2023**, the number of people donating is still decreasing. Meanwhile, **9 in 10 charities are facing increased demand** at a time when a third of voluntary organisations have had to cut their workforce in order to survive.

In times like these, it can be difficult to look past the mounting in-year cash pressures to focus on long-term investments. As one of our interviewees pointed out:

"If we could see a direct return it would be easier to make the business case for investing. But when you've got a limited amount of money, and other areas can deliver a quicker, measurable return, even if you know it's an important thing to do, the urgent trumps the important."

Nick Georgiadis, Christian Aid

Yet, it's cheaper to retain than acquire, and investing in loyalty remains essential. But that requires meaningful, lasting engagement, and, yes, long-term spending and strategies. Hence,

"The pressure to balance short-term cash with loyalty investments is constant. We have financial struggles now, but building a foundation for the future audience remains essential."

Johnty Gray, Oxfam



Data, Data, Data

“Our biggest challenges lie in foundational work – data, skills, and systems. [...] We need the right tools to analyse data and make supporter journeys feel more integrated. AI and analytics will play a big role, especially as we try to tailor communications at scale.”

Liz Tait, GOSH

Although Google has gone back on their promise to **ban third-party cookies** entirely, the coming years will see increasing limitations being imposed on this type of data collection. So in this new privacy-focused landscape, how do you get the data you need for creating true connections? We’ll see a shift towards **zero-party data** strategies – all about building trust-based relationships where collaborators willingly share their data. This type of data is a goldmine of insight, without the privacy pitfalls. And because it’s given with intent, it’s more accurate and powerful. But it means you have to do the hard work of earning the data and build direct, meaningful relationships with your collaborators.

And once you’ve got the data, how are you unlocking it? Have you got the foundational systems in place to make the most of your data? Simply put,

“Building the infrastructure for better data and CRM systems is foundational. Without it, we can’t execute on personalised engagement or track loyalty in a meaningful way.”

Richard Lee, Marie Curie

Your data has to become tangible, insightful, and actionable to drive deeper engagement with your collaborators. And that takes investment in your systems, technology, and talent.

Foregoing data entirely isn’t an option either. Your collaborators are expecting more meaningful interactions, as technological developments drive up consumer expectations of personalisation and customisation. The charities that can collect and harness their data effectively are the ones that will be able to create highly customised journeys to drive deeper loyalty.

Who Owns Impact?

“Historically, a lot of our loyalty came from people we helped directly—people who rehomed a pet or were beneficiaries of our services. That’s changing as our audience becomes broader and more disconnected from those direct interactions. [...] One of our biggest challenges is how to maintain loyalty in an incredibly competitive market, not just against other charities but also against commercial brands.”

Rohan Putter, Woodgreen

Charities no longer own impact and with this the competition for impact-driven loyalty is heating up. **Rising consumer expectations** and **increasingly high ESG standards**, corporates are now stepping firmly into the social impact space, crowding a market once dominated by the third sector. As of 2023, consumers still **trust charities more than corporates** to deliver meaningful impact and innovation, but this trust may change as corporate impact initiatives become increasingly refined. In this landscape, charities face a new challenge: standing out as authentic leaders in impact amidst a sea of brand-driven social efforts. In a world where every brand seems to have a purpose, maintaining trust and demonstrating unique value is more critical than ever.

Generational Shifts

“Changing demographics are changing the dynamics of how people interact with brands, including charity brands. There’s a shift in behaviour and expectations. [...] We’re seeing that with younger audiences, they’re more cause-loyal than brand-loyal. [...] The key to future engagement is how we position ourselves as a channel for impact, especially for younger generations who expect us to actively prove our relevance and difference.”

Joe Jenkins, *The Children’s Society*

Gen Z and Gen Alpha’s early years awareness and engagement with global issues and debates, **enabled by technology**, continues to shape their values. Raised with unprecedented access to global news and social media, young audiences are deeply aware of big issues (from climate change, to social justice and inequality) and they’re eager to get behind causes that reflect their beliefs.

“Gen Z... may not see traditional charity missions as serving the issues they feel most strongly about. The challenge is, how are we, the big charity brands going to ensure that we are the right vehicles tackling their concerns?”

Andrew Cook, *RSPB*

For these generations, loyalty is about mission and value alignment above all – and they’re not afraid to switch to a different brand if they feel they’re delivering more impact.

“Our young audience [is] cause-driven and willing to support whatever organisation delivers the best impact, which means we’re in a constant battle to retain them.”

Nick Georgiadis, *Christian Aid*

These generations demand value transparency, expecting clear data, measurable outcomes, and a visible theory of change. They’re drawn to organisations willing to take bold stands and communicate values that align with their own. But amidst charities **self-censoring over fear of public backlash**, they risk losing traction with this audience, who prize authenticity and outspokenness.

“There’s a shift happening. Younger generations are more fickle in their loyalty, switching between brands. But if you can impress them, they’re also more likely to stay.”

Rohan Putter, *Woodgreen*

The Fragmented Internet

The internet is fragmenting. Audiences are moving away from **legacy social media platforms**, AI is **flooding search engines** and feeds with misinformation and AI slop, and people are increasingly retreating into echo chambers as the world becomes more polarised. Enter: the splinternet. Online audiences are gravitating towards niche networks that offer a stronger sense of belonging.

Between AI content taking over our news and social feeds, the breakdown of **fact-checking systems**, and often incorrect **AI-generated summaries of search results** – telling fact from fiction online is harder than ever. There's an opportunity for charities to become a trusted source of information and guide their audiences through the sea of misinformation:

"With AI and misinformation growing, people still need trusted, human authority figures. That's where charities have a role beyond just information provision"

James Beeby, Diabetes UK

Meanwhile, how do you find your audiences when they're retreating into niche spaces? On one hand, charities now have the opportunity to connect with passionate collaborators in closed communities – platforms that typically foster deeper engagement and loyalty than mainstream channels. But tracking and engaging these groups requires understanding their values and cultures, and developing tailored strategies to mobilise these smaller networks.

"People are increasingly retreating into echo chambers as the world becomes more polarised"



Polarisation

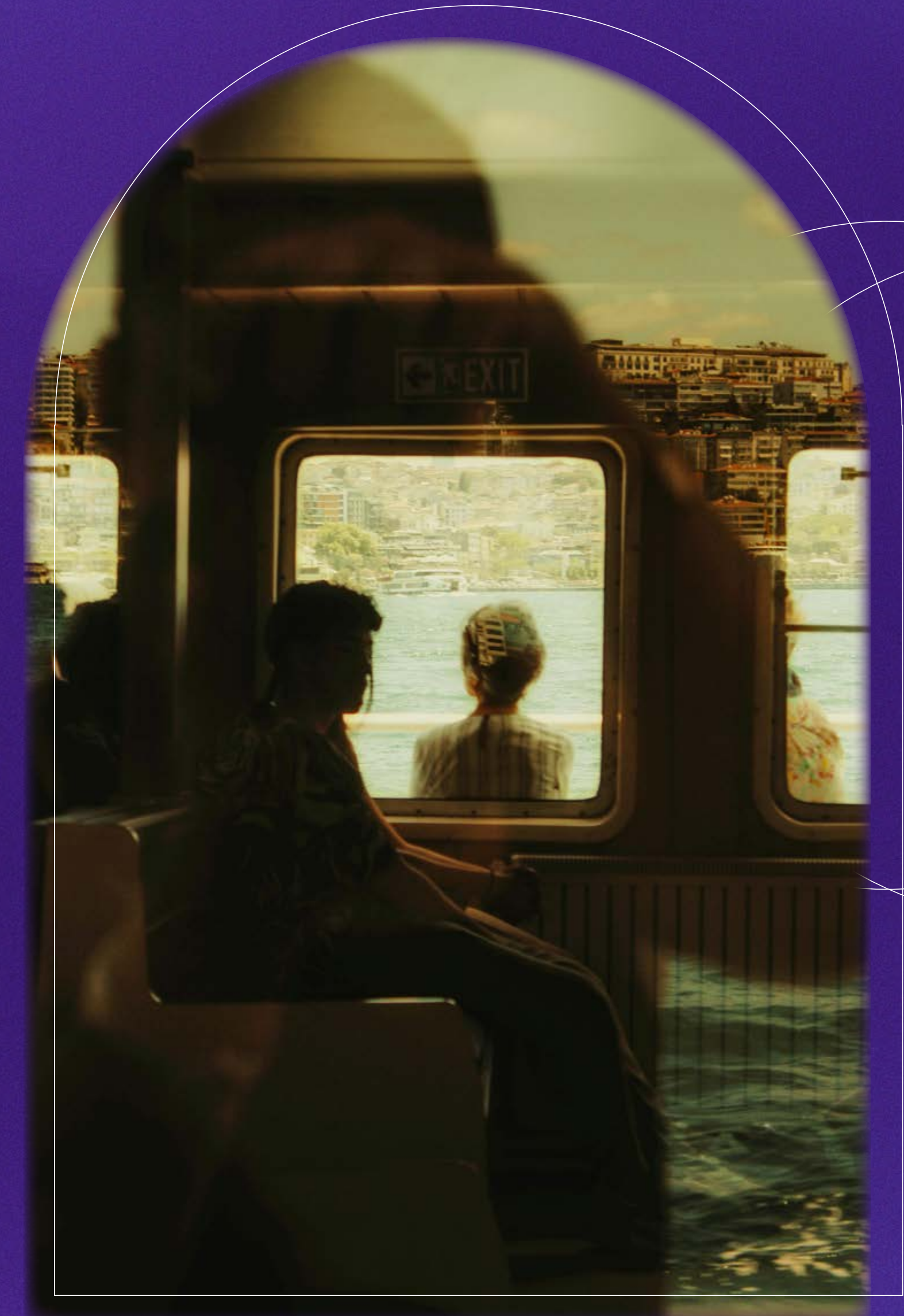
We're living in a time of heightened polarisation, with the ideological gap between right- and left-wing expanding as people on both sides of the spectrum increasingly align themselves with more extreme views. In this polarised environment, politics have seeped into our everyday lives even more than before – it's not just who we vote for, but how we choose to represent ourselves, the media we consume, the products we buy, and even the friendships we form. There's less space for open dialogue and mutual understanding, and in its place, anger and distrust are driving more hostile interactions.

This polarisation is acutely visible in the gap between different genders: the political gap between today's young men and women is growing significantly. Young men are becoming more conservative, while young women are becoming more liberal. In the UK, the gap between the two is a whopping **25 percentage points**. This ideological gap concerns everything from gender identity, to immigration and racial justice. As this societal rift continues to grow, it will bring serious implications for social cohesion, tolerance, and engagement across the divide. As an organisation, how do you balance audiences across this ideological gap? Are you prepared to navigate this division, or risk losing loyalty in a world where alignment and identity matter more than ever?

Polycrisis & Fatigue

From the ongoing cost of living crisis; to the mounting consequences of climate change; and escalating global conflicts – polycrisis continues to press on and shows no signs of letting up. Between the doom and gloom of our news feeds, people are exhausted. Younger generations, like Gen Z, have grown up being told they're the generation that's going to save the world from climate change, yet they're buckling under this immense pressure as rates of climate denial and disengagement are on the rise among this cohort. Meanwhile, there's a sharp decline in the population's appetite for news. To cut through the crisis fatigue and maintain engagement in difficult times, charities will need to focus on offering hope over despair.

“Young men are becoming more conservative, while young women are becoming more liberal. In the UK, the gap between the two is a whopping 25 percentage points”

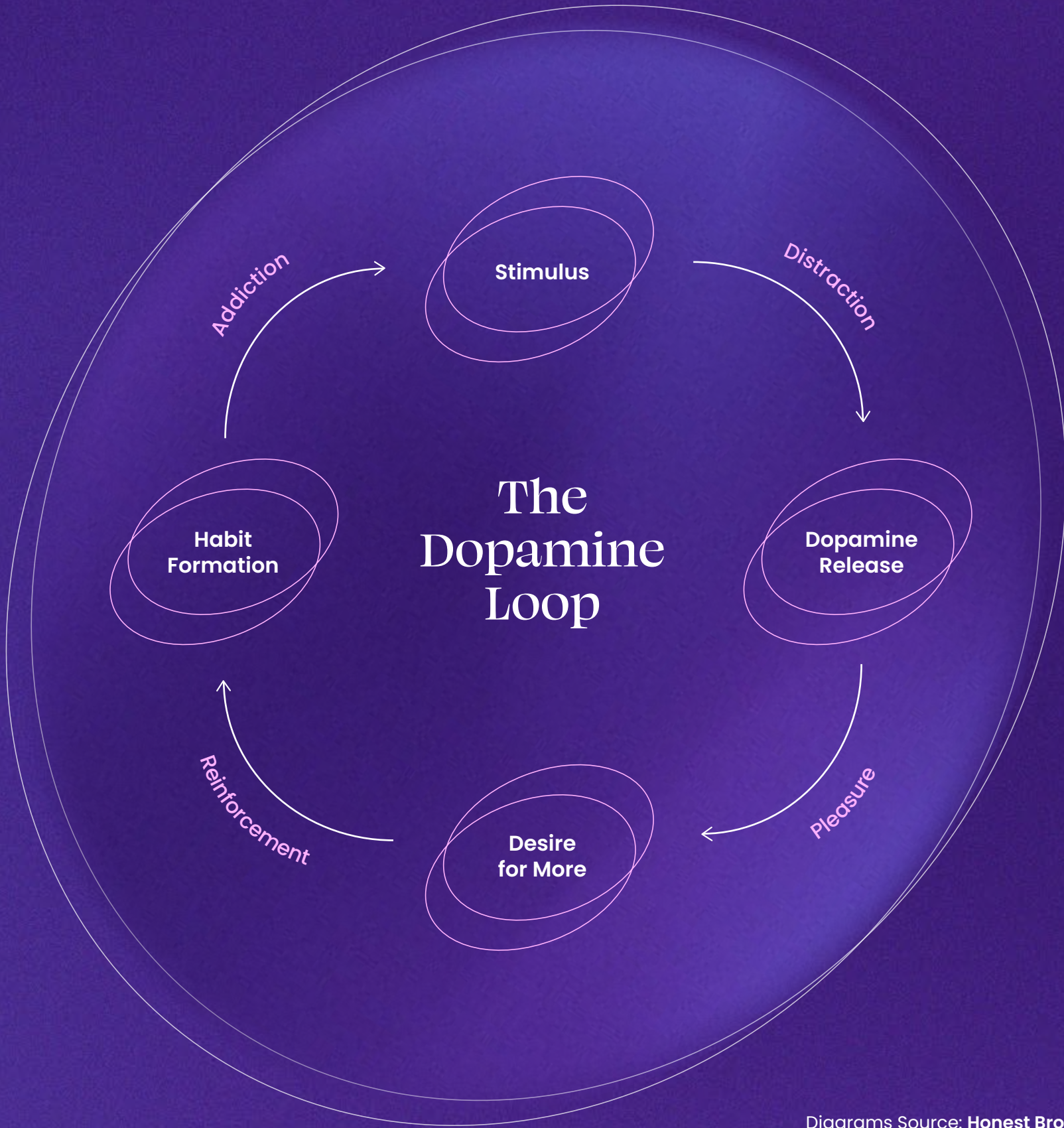


The Dopamine Loop

Introducing the dopamine loop: the cycle where our brains reward brief bursts of distraction with dopamine and make us feel good – driving us to want to repeat the stimulus (see the first diagram on the right for a visualisation). It’s a familiar model for addiction, only now applied to culture. The tech platforms that dominate our cultural experience today are **engineered to lock users** into this loop through scrolling and reeling interfaces that optimise for short, snappy bursts of content. And this dopamine-driven design has seeped into all aspects of culture (see the second diagram on the right) – anything can be gamified, and everything is scrollable. Unfortunately, the more we rely on these stimuli, the **less pleasure we derive from our dopamine hits**. At some point, the constant churn of quick stimuli will lead to the complete absence of enjoyment in an experience that’s supposed to be fun, also known as anhedonia.

In 2024, we’re approaching the peak of the dopamine loop. Just look at the rise of cultural betting, with new betting sites, like **Polymarket**, letting users bet on everything from the American presidential election, to what the highest grossing movie of the year will be, to whether or not Taylor Swift will get engaged this year. At the time of writing, these were all trending bets on the site’s homepage. The bets on the presidential election were worth \$2.8bn in total. Taylor Swift’s possible engagement garnered \$367.1k (measly in comparison, significant when considered in isolation).

This gamified culture is creating a world where even our interactions with pop culture are subject to instant highs and risk-taking. Cutting through this “dopamine loop” is a challenge – do you engage with it or combat it to build a more meaningful connection?



	Slow traditional culture	Fast modern culture	Dopamine culture
Athletics	Play a Sport	Watch a Sport	Gamble on a Sport
Journalism	Newspapers	Multimedia	Clickbait
Video	Film & TV	Video	Reels of Short Videos
Music	Albums	Tracks	TikToks
Images	View on Gallery Wall	View on Phone	Scroll on a Phone
Communication	Handwritten Letters	Voice/Email/Memo	Short Texts
Relationships	Courtship/Marriage	Sexual Freedom	Swipe on an App

Diagrams Source: **Honest Broker, The State of the Culture 2024**



The New Rules of Loyalty

Moving Beyond Transactions

The New Rules of Loyalty

Introduction

Gone are the days when loyalty could be bought with discounts or perks. In a time where hyper-fragmentation makes broad, one-size-fits-all messaging ineffective, loyalty is undergoing a radical transformation. As one interviewee put it, many charities are still relying on outdated approaches—“the vomit comet” of overwhelming, generic communications. But today’s collaborators are smarter, more selective, and craving something deeper.

In this new landscape, loyalty isn’t about chasing numbers; it’s about forging meaningful, reciprocal relationships rooted in shared values. To stand out, organisations need to go beyond the transactional and invest in real, purpose-driven engagement. People are looking for more than just a cause to donate to—they want a brand that inspires them, reflects their community, and connects with their unique worldview.

This shift is ushering in a new set of ‘hygiene factors’ for loyalty. People expect charities to offer connections that resonate, to personalise interactions, and to create value beyond the ask. In this chapter, we explore these dynamics: from the shift toward a loyalty loop that thrives on ongoing engagement, to the power of hyper-personalisation, and why the future of loyalty is less about ‘more’ and all about ‘better.’

**“Today’s collaborators are smarter,
more selective, and craving
something deeper”**



Loyalty is a Loop, Not a Funnel



"We see loyalty as part of an engagement framework. It's not a linear journey but a series of touchpoints from awareness to loyalty and advocacy."

Joe Jenkins, *The Children's Society*

Our lives are not linear, so why would we ever expect our engagement with businesses, charities or services providers to follow a simple funnel? People don't move through a neat, linear path from awareness to consideration, conversion and then action, and then stay static at the bottom of trust. Let's face it: the loyalty funnel is finished.

Instead, think of loyalty as a continuous loop, where

"Reinforcement, engagement, feedback, action"

Catherine Hart, *Target Ovarian Cancer*

happen cyclically, and where every interaction counts. This loop is omnidirectional, with activity flowing backwards, forwards and across as sentiments shift, passions ebb and values focus.

A consequence of this is that audience engagement happens across a wide variety of channels, in ways that range from passive to active, moving seamlessly between platforms. These conversations can be happening all at once, from multiple start points. We call these, 'polymedic conversations'. Of course,

"Someone might be 'activated' by a campaign and then learn about us later. We have to backfill with alignment content to build their connection"

Johnty Gray, *Oxfam*

Hence: paths to deeper relationships are a loop of **inspiration, exploration, community, and loyalty**. The brands that are winning are the ones creating content and activations that touch each one.

In an era where entertainment, social interaction, and advocacy coexist simultaneously in the same spaces, it's not enough to simply engage. In a space where you no longer own doing good, it's even more imperative for charities to create a lasting sense of belonging that keeps collaborators returning and deepening their commitment through each loop of discovery and action. It's about entertainment, participation, and most importantly, connection.

Loyalty Without Purchase

"I could jump straight to loyalty equals cash, but I don't believe that's true anymore. We also have very, very loyal crew members, fundraising volunteers, trustees, medical teams. People that support us at the moment, with developing programs to support our crews who are dealing with more and more suicide attempts. It just goes so far. And when I step back and think about loyalty, I consider anybody that carries on doing something that is relatively hard to keep doing, ie, they have to make personal sacrifice and commitment to it. Then, for me, that's loyalty to our mission."

Jayne George, RNLI

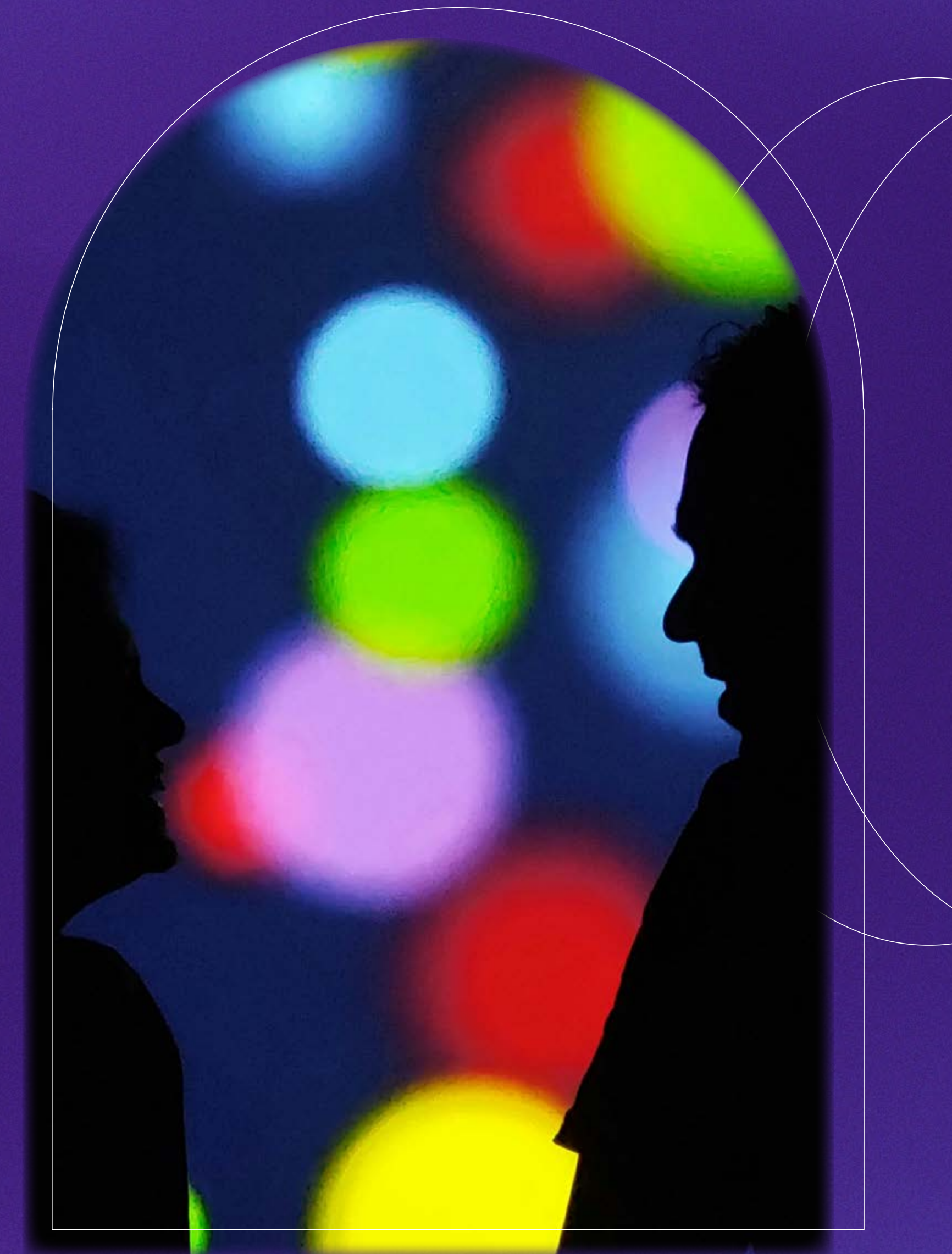
In a charity context it's easy to assume loyalty equals transaction. One interviewee described some charity engagement journeys like the worst version of dating, where your date asks you to marry them on the second date. They make one financial contribution and we immediately ask them to sign up for a direct debit, a legacy or an event. Yes, sometimes that person is going to say yes, but consider all the people who back away at that overly forward approach.

The pinnacle of loyalty is not transaction and some of your most committed collaborators may never make a donation. For younger generations especially, brand loyalty could be as simple as loving a brand, even if they have no intent to purchase it. In fact, **41% of Millennials** say spreading the word counts as brand loyalty. The loudest voices advocating for your cause and brand might never show up in your CRM – but that doesn't mean they're not worth tracking. So how do you serve those who love you but don't donate?

We need to redefine value. Financial and transactional measures don't account for social capital. These collaborators amplify your message, share your content, and rally their communities – potentially contributing more to your cause than a one-off donation could. They're dealing in advocacy instead of currency. Organisations that only account for donations risk overlooking their most passionate champions. It's time to embrace emotional loyalty and nurture those who elevate your mission, even if they never donate.

"Some of our most loyal supporters come from emotional experiences with us. It's not just about giving money – it's about being part of a journey."

Rob Halkyard, Crisis



Hyper-Personalisation & Micro-Segmentation

“Our goal is to create ‘quality, data-driven supporter experiences’—delivering the right content at the right time, through the right channel, in a way that resonates personally. This underpins loyalty for us.”

Terence Lovell, *Breakthrough TID UK*

The era of mass is over. Hyper-fragmentation has sliced attention into ever-thinner pieces, and trying to capture mass appeal with a one-size-fits-all approach is no longer viable (if it ever was). Today’s collaborators want to feel seen, heard, and understood. Moreover, technological advances, as well as the omnipresent algorithm, mean that highly tailored experiences are now a must-have. In fact, a whopping **73% of people** expect better personalisation thanks to technological advances.

Of course, that’s easier said than done.

As **Julie Roberts** from *Pancreatic Cancer UK* said:

“[We] need better tools to maintain that level of intimacy as we grow. When we were smaller, we could do this naturally; now we’re scaling up, and that’s where it gets challenging.”

Luckily, advances in AI mean that charities now have easier access to personalisation, at scale. Imagine creating unique journeys, tailored to individual preferences, that speak directly to each person’s needs and desires. AI allows you to sift through data in real-time, decode preferences, and craft content and experiences that feel personal and meaningful. This isn’t just about boosting engagement, it’s about building loyalty by making every interaction feel **intentional**.

“The next step is hyper-personalisation, where our website experience speaks directly to each donor’s specific interests, like a ‘donor island’ tailored just for them.”

Joanne Dunsford, *Animals Asia*

But there’s a catch: hyper-personalisation relies on data. **Good data.**

“Data quality is essential. If our information isn’t accurate or clean, we can’t provide the kind of personal, high-quality experience that builds long-term loyalty.”

Terence Lovell, *Breakthrough TID UK*

In a post-cookie world, this will rely on zero-party data – the information your collaborators voluntarily share with you. But for them to want to hand over their data, the trade-off has to be worth it. If people are going to share, they need to see real value in return. That means offering tailored experiences that go beyond the generic and making every touchpoint count.

“[Our audience will] voluntarily give us very, very rich data. And I equate that to the fact that there is trust there. They believe that they can share that information with us and we will do something responsible with it that will benefit them.”

Jo Nove, *Myeloma UK*

Hyper-personalisation is your pathway to trust and loyalty in a world where people crave intimate, authentic, and meaningful interactions. But to unlock this potential, you need to earn their data, and use it wisely.



Case Studies



Represent

American streetwear brand Represent focuses on community above all, tapping into shared experiences above all else.

According to its CEO, the brand is about much more than products: it's about the story, lifestyle, and way it engages with its audience. The brand maintains strong connections with its followers through online communities, like Rep Talks on Facebook, and various physical events that go beyond product launches. For example, "Rep Talk Day" brought together over 50 of the brand's most engaged customers for a Q&A with the head office, giving them a behind-the-scenes look at future plans and gathering feedback to shape upcoming products. They even offer an athletics app where users can access daily workouts from their CEO.

So What: Represent's approach is a good example of a continuous loyalty loop where each interaction strengthens a sense of belonging. It underscores the importance of building multi-channel connections with collaborators. By inviting collaborators into an ongoing, meaningful conversation, whether that's through online communities, exclusive events, or shared experiences, charities can transform engagement into a lasting sense of community.



Blackbird

Blackbird's new restaurant loyalty programme is introducing a new 'guest value score' system. Unlike traditional loyalty programs that focus on points or rewards, Blackbird's approach uses data-driven guest value scores to evaluate the overall value each customer brings to a business. By analysing spending patterns, frequency of visits, and guest engagement, the system allows restaurants to identify and reward their most loyal and valuable customers more meaningfully.

So What: Blackbird's loyalty model shows the power of leveraging customer data to create a personalised loyalty experience. For charities, this approach offers insight into a future where loyalty isn't just measured by donations alone but by the value each collaborator brings through engagement, advocacy, or volunteering. By adopting similar value-based loyalty metrics, charities can better identify and reward their most engaged collaborators, fostering deeper, more meaningful relationships that go beyond one-time contributions.

Case Studies



Patientory Inc.

Patientory Inc. has launched a new decentralised app that empowers users to share their health data securely and earn rewards for participating in clinical research. The app consolidates data from electronic medical records and wearable devices to create a comprehensive picture of each user's health. Users can then choose to share their data for clinical trials or health studies, and in exchange, they receive personalised rewards directly through the app.

So What: This new type of data-driven engagement by giving users the power to share their data on their terms. Incentivise data-sharing, enhance loyalty, and drive valuable insights all at the same time. How are you rewarding the collaborators who share their insights, feedback, and stories?

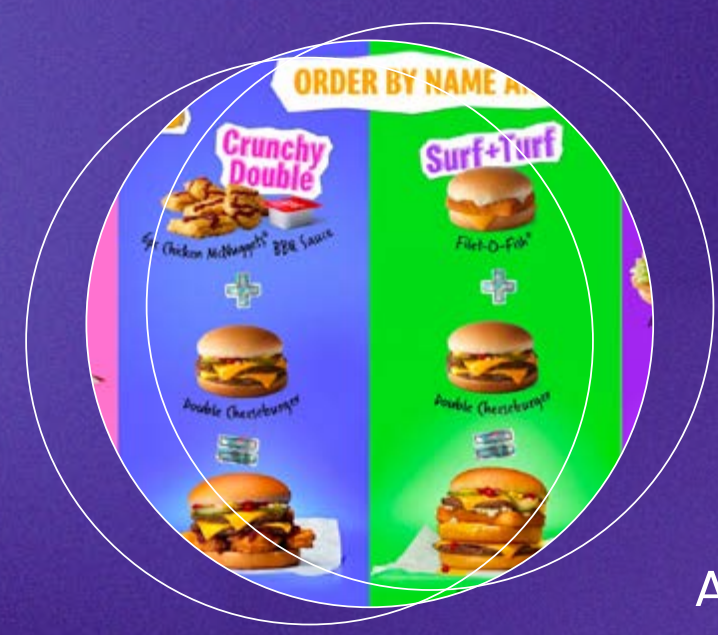


Museumvereniging

In April 2023, during the Netherlands' Museum Week, Dutch museums waived the photo ID requirement for Museumkaart holders, encouraging them to share their annual passes with friends, family, neighbours, and colleagues. Typically, the Museumkaart offers personal, unlimited access to numerous museums throughout the Netherlands, but this temporary change allowed the program's 1.4 million members to introduce new visitors to the nation's rich artistic and cultural heritage, free of charge. This initiative aimed to expand the visitor base by using existing cardholders as ambassadors, inviting new audiences to explore the country's museums and galleries.

So What: Not only does the sharing initiative leverage existing collaborators to reach new audiences, it's an opportunity for the museums to identify their collaborators who may not regularly purchase from them. Who would support you if given the chance, and how are you identifying them?

Case Studies



McDonald's

After years of battling health-conscious criticism, McDonald's decided to lean into its existing fanbase by conducting a deep ethnographic study on what it means to be a "Maccies" fan. This research produced a cultural bible chronicling fan rituals, unique language, and favourite menu hacks, called 'A Book of Fan Truths'. A number of popular campaigns spawned from this book, leading to McDonald's being recognised as the #2 Most Effective Marketers in the global Effie Index. For example: many fans enjoyed combining multiple sandwiches to make custom creations. Inspired by this, McDonald's launched a "secret menu" that allowed fans to order their signature creations by name.

So What: The deep understanding of fan culture and engagement with these insights shows how data can be leveraged to build personalised, intimate relationships with collaborators – even as a global giant.



Chipotle Doppelgängers

Chipotle recently launched their 'Doppelgänger' campaign to create a personal connection with its customers through personalisation. By analysing purchase data, Chipotle identified customers who ordered the exact same thing at the exact same time and introduced them to their "food twins." This playful approach uses the power of personalisation to make each customer feel part of a broader community of like-minded Chipotle fans, all the while tapping into moments of serendipity.

So What: This campaign encourages loyal customers to connect with others who share their interests. Tap into this style of personalisation to foster a sense of community and shared purpose by creating memorable moments of serendipity that keep your collaborators coming back.

So What?

1 Embrace the Loyalty Loop: Moving Beyond Linear Journeys

The idea of a straightforward journey from awareness to action is no longer realistic. People engage with brands and causes in a continuous cycle, connecting through diverse channels and shifting interests. Loyalty now behaves more like a loop, where interactions are dynamic and happen across different touch points as collaborators' interests evolve.

So What: Move away from rigid supporter journeys and build flexible, multi-channel strategies that allow people to engage, disengage, and re-engage in ways that feel natural to them. By creating a loop of inspiration, community, and ongoing engagement, charities can nurture lasting connections that evolve with each supporter's journey.

2 Redefining Value: Loyalty Isn't Just About Donations

For charities, it's easy to equate loyalty with financial support. However, many of the most committed advocates — those who amplify messages, volunteer, or simply keep the conversation going — may never donate. Younger generations, in particular, view brand loyalty as advocacy and engagement rather than transactions.

So What: Broaden your definition of value to include non-financial contributions like advocacy and community building. Recognising and nurturing these emotionally loyal supporters helps build a network of champions who contribute significantly — even if their support isn't financial.

So What?

3 Make it Personal

One-size-fits-all won't cut it in today's landscape. Collaborators expect highly personalised, relevant experiences tailored to their unique interests and needs. This shift calls for a new level of hyper-personalisation that connects with each supporter on an individual level, even at scale.

So What: With AI and data-driven personalisation, you have access to the tools to create experiences that matter to the end user. Invest in tools and strategies that make hyper-personalisation possible, meet collaborators where they are, creating bespoke journeys that deepen engagement and enhance loyalty.

4 Build Trust in Data Exchange

Hyper-personalisation relies on data, but it's only as good as the trust behind it. Supporters need to feel confident that their data will be used responsibly, and that they'll receive tangible value in return. Without a foundation of trust, personalisation efforts may actually erode loyalty.

So What: Focus on transparency in data collection and ensure value is consistently delivered in exchange. By being clear about how data is used and demonstrating the benefits, charities can deepen trust and loyalty with supporters who feel respected and empowered by the relationship.

5 Value Over Volume

In a world of hyper-fragmented attention, loyalty is no longer about maximising touchpoints but about maximising value at each one. Supporters today aren't looking for more content or frequent asks; they want interactions that feel meaningful and worthwhile. This quality-first approach makes each interaction count, ensuring that supporters feel recognized and appreciated.

So What: Shift your focus from quantity to quality, prioritising high-value interactions over frequent, broad-reaching engagements (beware the vomit comet). By making every touchpoint purposeful and rewarding, charities can foster deeper loyalty, demonstrating to supporters that their involvement is genuinely valued and impactful.



Building Community and Fandom

**Fostering Deep
Emotional Connections**



Building Community and Fandom

Introduction

“During the pandemic people were feeling helpless, and by contributing to our work, they were doing something useful, because what we could communicate to them was that, whilst the crews weren’t going out on as many shout outs, they were becoming hubs of help in every community. So our volunteers were delivering groceries to our very old supporters. We gave everybody a means by which to contact us if they needed help, and we put our whole community and engagement teams onto outreach. We gave the people a reason to believe.”

Jayne George, RNLI

In today’s loyalty landscape, community isn’t just important—it’s everything. But building a loyal community isn’t about reaching everyone. It’s about reaching the right people in ways that genuinely resonate. The future of loyalty lies in cultivating close, purpose-driven connections with those who share your mission at a fundamental level. Gone are the days when success was measured by how many you could reach; now, it’s about the depth of your connections and the strength of the bonds you create.

Audiences today are increasingly drawn to niche communities, shared values, and the sense of belonging that only a close-knit network can provide. People don’t just want to support a cause—they want to be part of something that feels personal, meaningful, and bigger than themselves.

Are you ready to activate your most passionate supporters and turn them into ambassadors for your mission? In the end, success in loyalty isn’t about amassing numbers; it’s about nurturing strong, reciprocal relationships with the people who are genuinely invested in your cause.



Fandom 2.0: The Power of Stans

“Loyalty for us isn’t just transactional. [It’s] about commitment, affiliation, and feeling like you are part of something bigger. [...] It’s about creating a sense of belonging and making sure supporters feel valued and part of the organisation’s mission.”

Nick Georgiadis, *Christian Aid*

From the **crowds flocking to the Eras Tour**, to fans **scrambling to get their hands on Oasis tickets**, fandom has been more prominent than ever over the past year. But this fandom isn’t passive. The rise of parasocial relationships has seen fans looking for new ways to connect with their favourite artists both online and IRL. And armed with new tools, tech, and democratised power, these communities are forces to be reckoned with. In the past these fans mobilised to get a glimpse of their favourite artist as they **landed at Heathrow**, now they’re mobilising to **raise funds for BLM**, or coming together to **campaign on behalf of Kamala Harris** to **influence the outcome** of the US election.

But fandoms aren’t just for pop stars – they’re a blueprint for die-hard loyalty to brands as well. Fandom is essentially community on steroids; powerful collectives fuelled by deep emotional engagement and attachment.

Think of the **“1,000 true fans”** theory: a small, dedicated group can drive massive impact, far beyond what a passive, wider audience could ever achieve. In fact, only **13% of consumers** identify themselves as ‘fans’ of a brand, but that small segment is where the magic happens. The idea of reaching everyone no longer exists – the real opportunities lie in the niches. Achieve scale by deepening your connection with your fans, rather than spreading yourself thin.

“If someone’s been with us for 10 years and done a lot for us, we need to treat them differently from someone who’s just donated £5.”

Julie Roberts, *Pancreatic Cancer UK*

That sense of community is increasingly crucial for engaging younger audiences: **85% of Gen Zs** and **79% of Millennials** say it’s important for brands to create a sense of community. Organisations can foster deeper consumer interactions by fostering close-knit connections and delivering on the promise of a real community. These audiences are looking for rich, layered engagement with collaborators, stacking these experiences to create scale. It’s about passion-driven participation – deeper connections, richer experiences, and a sense of belonging. Your real influence isn’t about the size of your following, but the depth of your connection.



IRL Connection

Faced with the digital dopamine loop, people are craving real, face-to-face connections more than ever. Endless scrolling and superficial online interactions have left many feeling isolated. Although we're technically more connected than we were a decade ago, many **don't feel like it**: audiences feel that the last decade has made people more lonely and less community-oriented. So much so that the World Health Organisation has declared **loneliness a global public health concern**.

Charities have the opportunity to drive loyalty by creating those powerful, in-person moments that online spaces can't replicate. While digital communities are valuable, there's something irreplaceable about meeting face-to-face. Events, IRL meet-ups, and community spaces can forge deeper bonds among collaborators by bringing them together around a shared cause. And it's not just about connecting your collaborators to each other; it's about allowing them to see, hear, and feel the tangible impact of their involvement.

Niche Nets

Legacy social media platforms that once promised to connect people across communities have devolved into white noise: they're a constant churn of ads, sponsored content, and superficial engagement. Brands and organisations – and meaningful connection – are getting lost in the static. In short: **there's too much media, and not enough social**.

Enter: the 'splinternet'. With legacy social media platforms losing their grip as audiences increasingly crave smaller spaces focussed on real connection, people are **flocking to niche, cosier digital spaces**, like group chats, closed communities, hobby-based platforms, or even Google Docs. From the rise of interest-based platforms like **Letterboxd** and **Strava**, to the creation of friend-focussed socials like **NoPlace** and **Perfectly Imperfect**. These spaces offer a sense of safety, trust, and community that big socials just can't provide anymore, where web users can be themselves and escape from a constant stream of content overload.

The digital landscape is fragmenting as people seek out depth over breadth. We need to rethink how, where, and to whom we're talking. Future-proof your online engagement by tapping into these micro-communities and social networks. (We covered this in more detail in the **Future of Gaming report**).

But how well do you know the smaller platforms your audience is hiding in? Social listening, audience understanding, and adaptability are key to staying on top of shifting digital dynamics. Find ways to meaningfully engage in small communities, while respecting the nature of the platforms. If you want to thrive online, start thinking smaller, more personal, and more intentional.

“The digital landscape is fragmenting as people seek out depth over breadth”

Audience Voice and Co-Creation

“The goal is to create communities where supporters don’t just feel like they’re donating but that they’re part of the decision-making process. It’s about making them feel genuinely involved in the mission.”

Richard Lee, Marie Curie

Part of building an engaging community means empowering your collaborators and giving them a voice at every level of your organisation. No one understands what your audience values better than the audience itself. Brands and organisations committed to driving meaningful transformation can open up the conversation, making space for new voices in product development, future strategy and decision making.

“Our focus is on building two-way relationships. Previously, we just ‘projected’ communications at supporters, but now we’re moving towards active listening and responding to what they need.”

Julie Roberts, Pancreatic Cancer UK

Invite your audience in to help shape your journey. Today’s collaborators want to co-create content and contribute ideas; they’re here to help create value and redefine your community. It’s a cycle of reciprocal continuous innovation and collective success. Of course, handing over the keys to your brand can be daunting. But these audiences want to help, and they’re just as committed to the success of your mission as you are.

“It’s about letting go and trusting supporters.”

Charlotte Murphy, National Trust

To resonate on a deeper level, build with people, rather than just for them. Audiences will be loyal to the causes that let them collaborate, rather than treat them as passive collaborators.

“Younger donors are becoming more like investors. They want to see the impact of their involvement and be part of the decision-making process.”

Joe Jenkins, The Children’s Society

And your audience voice also means letting your most passionate collaborators speak for your cause. In the words of **Jacee Scoular, the VP Brand Marketing at Garage:** *“Identify your unofficial brand ambassadors – those who naturally rave about you – and amplify their voices. Authenticity resonates more than any scripted message ever could.”*

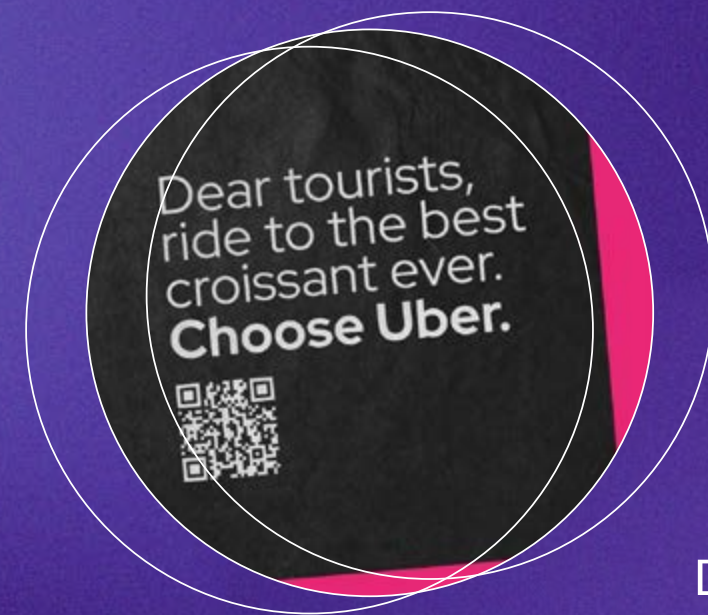
Charity as Lifestyle Brands

In an era of divisive politics and increasing polarisation, people are turning to **visual symbols and lifestyle choices** to showcase their values and community affiliations. From the tote bags they carry to the soap they stock at home, people are leaning into identity statements through lifestyle choices. People are essentially making choices to project a type of conscientious consumerism and virtue.

So how are you giving your audience a way to wear their values on their sleeve? By turning your cause into a lifestyle choice, you're inviting people to make it part of who they are, rather than just something they donate to. From merch to digital badges, charities can create a sense of identity that collaborators *want* to show off. Your fans aren't just buying products from you – they're buying into your organisation's world, values, and culture. Offering these ways for collaborators to express their identities also strengthens the sense of community, while unlocking a new stream of income. In a world where virtue-signalling through visual choices is everywhere, give your collaborators the tools to signal their allegiance loud and clear.



Case Studies



Heetch

During the 2024 Olympic Games, French ride-hailing service Heetch took an unconventional approach by actively directing tourists to Uber rather than promoting its own services. Instead of trying to compete for one-off customers during the Olympic surge, Heetch chose to prioritise its regular user base – those who rely on the service every day. The ‘Choose Uber’ campaign was visible in all the tourist hotspots (hotels, airports, popular brasseries, museums, attractions and Olympic venues). It was also translated into 12 languages, with a message that says “Dear tourists, this summer, for all your travels in Paris, Choose Uber!”, alongside a QR code that linked to the Uber app. Underneath this, in French, Heetch placed their message that they were focussing on their local user base instead.

So What: Heetch’s campaign highlights the value of prioritising long-term collaborators over chasing short-term engagement. While reaching new audiences is important, maintaining a strong relationship with dedicated collaborators often matters more. It’s all about making sure that your most loyal collaborators receive the focus and care they deserve.



Case Studies



Harris-Walz

The Harris-Walz 2024 campaign has leveraged TikTok to create an engaged, fandom-like following among young voters – turning political support into a full-blown social media phenomenon in the process. Instead of focusing solely on traditional messaging, the campaign’s social media team embraced the platform’s playful, trend-driven nature to showcase the personalities of Kamala Harris and other prominent democrats. By posting behind-the-scenes content, meme-driven videos, and culturally relevant humour, the campaign has cultivated a loyal following that feels more like a fandom than a typical voter base. Yet these TikTok fans have become active promoters, amplifying the campaign’s message and spurning exponential engagement through their own content.

So What: The Harris-Walz campaign shows how fandoms aren’t just about loyalty – they’re powerful forces for systemic change. When collaborators feel deeply connected to a cause, they don’t just passively support; they actively campaign, create content, and spread the message. Tapping into the passion of engaged audiences, and building a network of advocates who drive awareness and amplify impact.



Domino's

Domino’s new customer loyalty program is going beyond your typical rewards scheme: it’s tipping customers who tip their delivery drivers. With this initiative, customers who add a \$3 or higher tip to their online order are eligible to receive a \$3 promo code for use on their next order. With the ‘You Tip, We Tip’ campaign, they’re recognising and rewarding customers who appreciate their delivery drivers as an integral part of the company, and creating a cycle of appreciation between its loyal customers and employees. The goal? To drive a sense of shared value within the Domino’s community.

So What: By incentivising appreciation for their own team members, Domino’s is deepening the connection between customers and employees, creating a loyal base that values each other. Take a cue from this approach by building loyalty models that foster reciprocal support, encouraging collaborators to uplift one another and reinforcing the idea that loyalty is a shared, community-driven effort.

Case Studies



PlayStation

In a bold move to combat resellers and prioritise real gamers, Sony has launched a unique approach for the pre-order of its limited-edition PlayStation 5 Pro 30th Anniversary console in Japan. To qualify, potential buyers must have logged at least 30 hours of gameplay on their PlayStation Network account between 2014 and 2024. This threshold is easily met by genuine players (2024's breakout title *Black Myth: Wukong*, for example, requires 35 to 65 hours to complete) while disqualifying latecomers and resellers looking to exploit the demand for this exclusive release. By prioritising real players, Sony gives its core audience a rare opportunity to secure limited-edition consoles and rewards them for their dedication to the platform.

So What: Sony's strategy is a powerful example of how brands can validate and reward their most passionate consumers while curbing unfair practices. It highlights the value of identifying and rewarding genuine collaborators, instead of aiming for mass appeal. How are you validating and rewarding your most loyal fans?



30th Anniversary

PlayStation™
30th Anniversary Collection



Case Studies



NoPlace

NoPlace, a social platform designed with Gen Z in mind, is rethinking how social media can be a source of joy rather than stress. Instead of replicating the endless scroll or promoting highly curated personas, NoPlace emphasises authentic, meaningful connections and closed community. The platform is designed for creative expression and genuine friendship, playing on nostalgia for early internet communities and tapping into online audiences' desire for authentic interaction. A whopping 380,000 people are on the waitlist.

So What: NoPlace is tapping into the audience craving for niche, cosy nets that prioritise community and belonging. As your audiences increasingly move into these spaces, think about how you're reaching them in these closed groups.



WhatsApp x News Media

Amidst changing consumption habits, news outlets are turning to WhatsApp to connect with their audiences directly.

Using the WhatsApp Channels feature, a one-way broadcasting system that allows publishers to send messages directly to followers, publications including CNN (14.5m followers), The New York Times (14m), and BBC News (9.3m) are experimenting with new avenues for reaching their splintered online audiences. Not only is it an intimate, direct line of communication with their followers, it circumvents the algorithms and ad-heavy experiences that are driving people off of legacy social media platforms.

So What: WhatsApp Channels have the potential to create direct, unfiltered pathways to your audiences. There's an opportunity to engage collaborators more personally, while fostering a sense of real-time connection.

Case Studies



PUMA

PUMA's *Voices of a RE:Generation* conference aims to incorporate Gen Z perspectives into the brand's sustainability strategy. By inviting young thought leaders to share their insights on improving environmental practices, PUMA is elevating the voices of those that will live to see the most significant impacts of climate change throughout their lives.

So What: Young audiences often don't feel like their voices are being heard, especially when it comes to climate and political issues. By actively involving these advocates, PUMA hopes to make their impact more accessible and transparent to their community. Make sure you're taking visible steps to include your audience voice in your decision-making process.



Case Studies



Cleats

Cleats Club, co-founded and fronted by soccer star Harry Kane, is a new platform designed to connect athletes with fans in a more authentic, positive space. The app features areas like the “Players’ Lounge” for direct, unfiltered Q&A sessions and the “Terraces” for match-day discussions, and is purposefully designed without algorithmic control, and to keep spam out. The platform hopes to provide a nostalgia-driven, curated space where fans can connect meaningfully with their favourite athletes, outside of the over-saturated landscape of legacy socials.

So What: Cleats Club is helping athletes cultivate genuine and deeper relationships with their fans, by giving them a safe, community-focused space that allows for more positive direct interaction. Creating these exclusive, personalised engagement platforms (which could range from an app to a group chat) is a great way to strengthen your connections with collaborators.



LEGO Ideas Forum

LEGO’s *Ideas Forum* invites fans to submit and vote on product ideas, empowering community members with the title of “LEGO Fan Designer.” There’s a clear invitation for all of their fans to participate in product development. With this, LEGO is tapping into the enthusiasm of its community to create a reciprocal value flow (consumers get creative opportunities and the chance to have their ideas used; LEGO gets new ideas and a stronger community). Even better – LEGO doesn’t have to implement any of the submitted ideas. The request itself is a strong enough community-builder as is.

So What: Create avenues for collaborators to contribute their ideas to foster a sense of creative ownership in the mission. Actively engaging with audience input – whether that’s ideas, feedback, or criticism – shows that their voices are valued and strengthens buy-in.

So What?

1 Fandom as the Heart of Loyalty

Building loyalty isn't about reaching the masses; it's about connecting deeply with those most passionate about your cause. This 'fandom' approach turns supporters into advocates who bring energy and enthusiasm, amplifying your mission through authentic, grassroots support. The most meaningful connections—and impactful support—come from a dedicated few who see themselves as part of a movement.

So What: Actively identify, nurture, and empower your most devoted supporters, treating them as ambassadors. By giving these 'stans' exclusive opportunities to engage, co-create, and advocate, charities can foster a community of advocates committed to helping your organisation grow and thrive.

2 Belonging: Creating More Than Just Loyalty

Fandom isn't just about admiration; it's about creating a true sense of belonging. Today's supporters seek causes that feel like communities, places where they're part of something bigger and personally meaningful. A strong sense of belonging turns supporters into advocates who stand by the cause, even through challenges.

So What: Invest in building spaces—both digital and physical—that foster belonging, encouraging supporters to interact, share experiences, and celebrate milestones together. Creating this sense of belonging strengthens loyalty and builds a resilient community around the mission.

3 Real-World Connection: The Power of IRL

While digital platforms are effective for reaching a broad audience, real-world experiences remain irreplaceable for creating deep, lasting connections. Face-to-face interactions allow collaborators to feel the impact of their involvement firsthand, making the mission more tangible and emotionally resonant.

So What: Prioritise IRL experiences, from events to community meet-ups, that bring people together around shared goals. Offering these real-world touchpoints deepens connection, reinforces trust, and makes supporters feel part of a vibrant, real-life community.

So What?

4 Niche Spaces: Finding Supporters Where They Are

As audiences shift away from legacy platforms and seek out smaller, interest-focused spaces, charities must adapt to meet supporters in these emerging communities.

Engagement in these niche environments fosters intimacy and trust, helping charities connect with supporters on a more personal level.

So What: Identify the niche digital spaces where your supporters gather and engage authentically within them. Tap into smaller, more focused platforms can help you stay relevant, reach highly engaged audiences, and foster closer connections in environments that feel safe and personal.

5 Social Listening: Building Community from the Ground Up

Building a loyal community isn't about projecting a message, it's about listening to what supporters care about and responding in ways that resonate. Social listening provides critical insights into the evolving passions and concerns of your supporters, allowing charities to engage more meaningfully.

So What: Social listening as an essential tool for community building. By staying tuned to collaborators' needs, you can foster a deeper, more responsive relationship that grows organically. Social listening helps meet collaborators where they are, responding to what they care about in real-time.

6 Reciprocal Relationships: Loyalty as a Two-Way Street

Loyalty today is about mutual benefit. Collaborators expect their involvement to be valued and recognised, not as a one-time act but as part of a continuous relationship. Reciprocal value is key to building a sustainable community where collaborators feel their contributions are both seen and appreciated.

So What: Focus on building reciprocal relationships with collaborators, offering tangible value in exchange for their loyalty. By continuously innovating and providing relevant, rewarding interactions, charities can sustain loyalty that feels genuine and mutually beneficial.



Standing Out from the Crowd

*Differentiating Your Cause
in a Saturated Market*

Standing Out from the Crowd

Introduction

In today's world of doom scrolling and endless digital noise, attention is an increasingly scarce resource. Attention spans are dwindling—people now focus on one screen for an **average of only 47 seconds**, down from over two minutes in 2004. We see the demand for quicker, more attention-grabbing media across culture: the average length of a shot in films is **decreasing rapidly**; and the mean length of top-performing pop songs has declined by **more than a minute between 1990 and 2020**. With endless distractions and competing messages, holding your audience's attention is harder than ever.

To stand out, you need to think beyond simply asking for support. What are you offering in return? Whether it's clarity of purpose and impact to drive meaningful engagement; taking a stand for your mission; compelling content and activations; or a genuine sense of belonging, charities need to provide value that resonates deeply to keep collaborators coming back. Attention is the price of admission for engagement – are you creating enough value to earn it, or is your voice getting lost in the noise?



"We've just gone through a major rebrand, to be more authentic and clear about what the RSPCA stands for in the modern world. We need to differentiate ourselves in a crowded space while staying true to our mission."

Tracey Pritchard, RSPCA

Clarity of Purpose

"It can become a cycle: here's why membership's great value, here's why you should give us money for planting a tree. But actually it's about clean air, it's clean water. It's about creating a habitat, an ecosystem. It's about protecting history. It is hope."

Sharon Pickford, *National Trust*

Clarity of purpose is everything. In an attention-scarce world, charities that can articulate a sharp, well-defined mission will resonate far more deeply with collaborators than those with vague, catch-all messaging. Is your mission sharp enough to cut through the clutter? Your collaborators need to know exactly what you stand for, why you stand for it, and what you're doing to make it happen. For collaborators to stay engaged, they need to see your purpose in action. Future audiences increasingly want **clear data and measurable results**, to understand your theory of change, and to see the impact of their support first-hand. Without that crystal-clear purpose, why would anyone choose you over others in the same space?

And it's not just about your collaborators – clarity of purpose starts from within. Is your team in alignment about your mission? They're the ones on the frontlines, communicating and demonstrating your values and impact every day. We can't expect others to be loyal to us if we don't have clarity on why we're here ourselves. Although, it can be easier said than done:

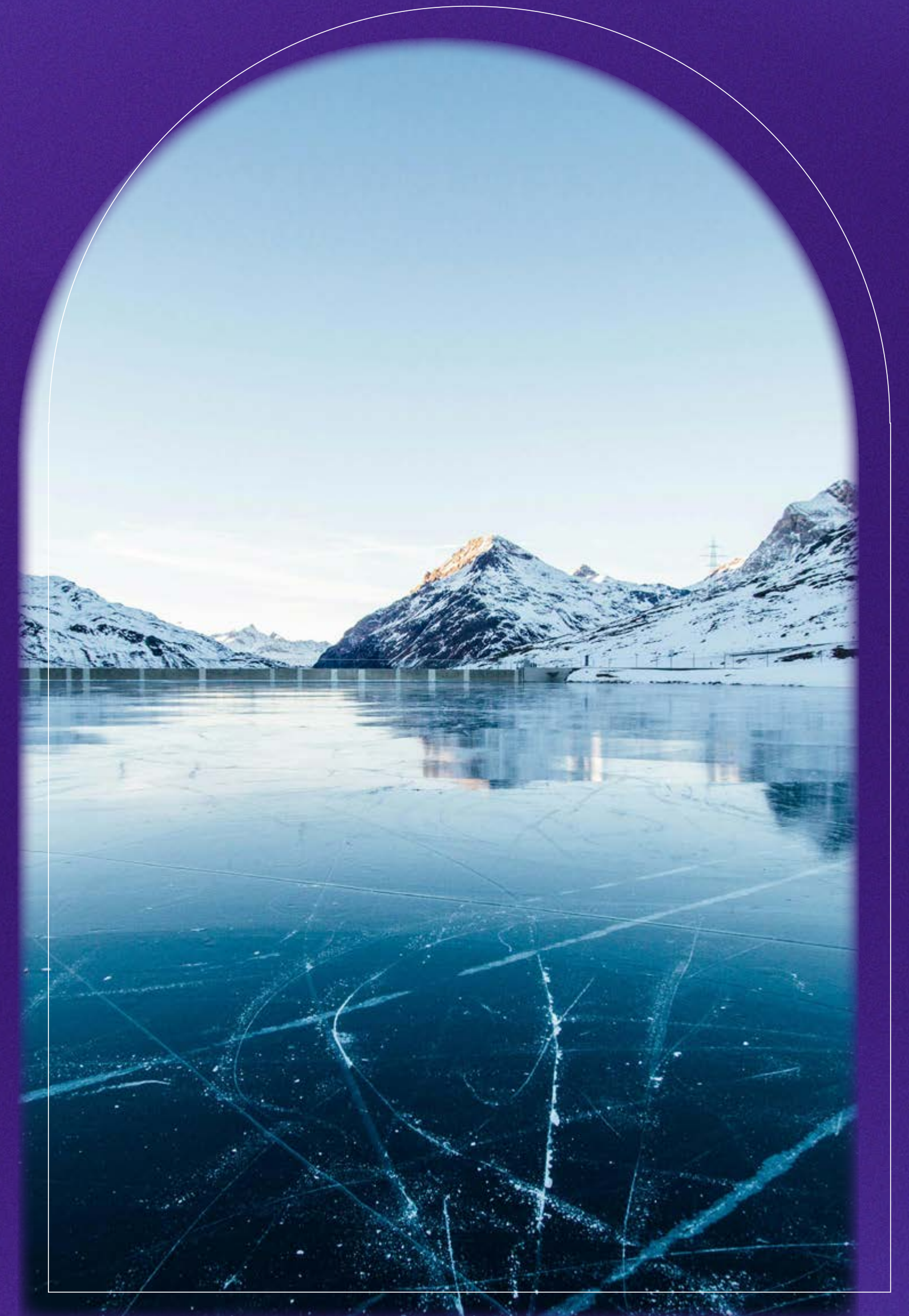
"We're making sure our brand represents our core purpose and consistently communicates that across all channels. For a big organisation, that kind of consistency isn't easy to achieve."

Tracey Pritchard, *RSPCA*

Focused purpose is there to empower employees and collaborators alike, creating a unified vision that drives deeper loyalty both externally and internally.

"Our purpose needs to be crystal clear if we want people to stay loyal. If we can't articulate why we're here, why should they stick with us?"

Laura Savory, *Guy's & St Thomas' Charities*



Taking a Stand

“It’s about being open and brave enough to explain why we do what we do. You can’t always avoid tough conversations, but supporters appreciate the transparency.”

Andy Harris, Shelter

Playing it safe just doesn’t cut through anymore. In today’s noisy, increasingly polarised world, audiences (especially younger ones) are looking for bold, unapologetic voices that align with their values and take a stand. A 2023 report by Enthuse found that **64% of under-45s** support charities campaigning on political issues. On top of that, ‘inverse giving’ – an influx of donations after charities tackle controversial topics – is on the rise. A whopping **48% of Gen Z** say they’ve engaged with inverse giving, compared to 27% of the general public. People want charities that aren’t afraid to tackle difficult, uncomfortable truths.

Of course, taking a stand isn’t without risks. Embracing a bold, unapologetic identity may deepen loyalty for some, while alienating others – especially in today’s polarised society. The question is: are you willing to lose some now in order to build something stronger for the future?

“There’s a tension between who we currently appeal to and who we need to. We need to be appealing to younger audiences, but most of our members are parents of young children or older [...] Our challenge is to reach new audiences without alienating existing ones.”

Tom North, National Trust

At the end of the day, pleasing everyone means inspiring no one. Middle-of-the-road messaging risks fading into the background, while bold stances can spark deeper engagement with your core. It’s not about attracting the masses, it’s about creating a community of engaged, values-driven collaborators who believe in your mission. Taking a stand will help you cut through the noise and build deeper engagement.

“At the end of the day, pleasing everyone means inspiring no one.”



Gamification

Are you ready to level up your cause? The gaming industry is booming and gamified features are becoming ubiquitous across sectors and products. From leaderboards on your favourite exercise app to streaks and rewards for doing a daily language lesson. In fact, the global gamification market size stands at a **whopping \$10 billion**, expected to surpass \$115 billion by 2032. Tapping into this trend can transform engagement into something interactive, playful, and maybe even competitive. Gamifying the collaborator experience, through challenges, rewards, leaderboards, and more, can turn support from passive to active.

From turning citizen science into a game to creating interactive campaigns – make engagement fun and rewarding. Invite people to play, compete, and make a tangible impact.

“We use leaderboards and incentives, like exclusive merchandise, to keep them engaged. It’s an extra layer of motivation in addition to their personal reasons for supporting.”

Lauren Worley, Movember

Case Studies



Refugease

Refugease's latest campaign powerfully contrasts everyday commute with the perilous journeys faced by refugees crossing the Channel. Through haunting radio ads that replay real distress calls, print ads of a child's shoes sinking, and a mural built from lifejackets, the campaign aims to bring audiences closer to the unimaginable experiences of refugees. The core message: "Some journeys cost everything. Help refugees avoid this journey by donating the cost of yours."

So What: The immersive approach highlights the power of real stories to cut through apathy, and oversaturated noise. Sometimes it takes a stark campaign to capture people's attention. In this case, its tangible, resonant imagery enabled Refugease to foster stronger emotional connections with a core, passionate audience.



Case Studies



numan
OWN YOUR HEALTH

Numan

Numan, a UK-based telehealth service focusing on men's health issues like erectile dysfunction and hair loss, embraces bold, humorous messaging to address sensitive topics. Their campaigns use tongue-in-cheek language to break down stigma, making it easier for men to seek help. For example, one ad playfully cycles through slang for male genitalia, ending with: "Call it what you want, but when it stops working, make the right call." Crucially, many of their spots come in at under 1 minute.

So What: Numan's comedic approach shows the power of addressing tough topics head-on. Their humour not only serves to destigmatise men's health issues, it also helps them stand out from the crowd with bold, eye-catching and authentic messaging.



Case Studies



Alzheimer's Society

Alzheimer's Society's 'The Long Goodbye' campaign confronts the brutal impact of dementia head-on. The advert's tagline ("with dementia you don't just die once, you die again and again and again") captures the feeling of anticipatory grief felt by those affected by the condition and their loved ones. It represents the organisation's commitment to be there "again and again and again" throughout every part of the struggle. While the initial release drew complaints for being distressing, the Society has **re-launched it**, saying the charity "needed to be brave in showing just how devastating dementia is by telling stories like The Long Goodbye".

So What: Bold storytelling is sometimes necessary to convey the gravity of an issue. The approach shows the power of authenticity and showing the reality of a cause, even in the face of backlash. Stand up for your message and your mission.



Case Studies



RNLI

When the RNLI faced criticism from Nigel Farage accusing them of being a “taxi service for illegal immigration,” the charity responded decisively, affirming its commitment to humanitarian work and international maritime law. In a powerful statement, the RNLI declared: “Our charity exists to save lives at sea. Our mission is to save everyone. Our lifesavers are compelled to go to those in need without judgement of how they came to be in the water. They have done so since the RNLI was founded in 1824 and this will always be our ethos.” The unapologetic stance resonated with supporters, resulting in a **2000% spike in donations**.

So What: RNLI’s approach underscores the power of standing firm in your beliefs and values. When your collaborators believe in your mission, facing criticism head-on can deepen loyalty and strengthen your community’s commitment to your cause – as long as you’re willing to stand by your purpose.



The Washington Post

For the first time in 50 years, The Washington Post has decided not to endorse a presidential candidate for the US election, seemingly under pressure from owner Jeff Bezos. The outrage at the decision has been swift, with Post employees charting the soaring number of subscribers visiting the customer account page that lets them cancel their subscriptions (a spokesperson declined to provide official cancellation numbers). Many high profile Post employees have resigned, with one stating the decision was a “terrible mistake” in an “election where core democratic principles are at stake.”

So What: The Washington Post’s decision to step back from its long-standing endorsement tradition underscores a crucial lesson: compromising core brand principles and risks alienating your most loyal collaborators. Those who champion your mission and values expect consistency, especially during critical moments.

Case Studies



Stall Catchers

Stall Catchers, developed by the Citizen Science Alliance, invites players to contribute to Alzheimer's research in a gamified, accessible way. Players analyse real research data, identifying blood vessels as either flowing or stalled in videos of mouse brains. Collectively, players could process **50 times as much data** as the scientists working alone.

So What: Stall Catchers is a great example of the powers of gamification in engaging audiences who want to make an impact, but aren't sure where to begin. By transforming research into a fun, accessible game, charities can mobilise a broader base to contribute valuable work. Tap into people's natural desire for play and challenge, making complex tasks like data analysis enjoyable; boosting participation; and supercharging progress – all from the comfort of your collaborators' own homes.



Loyi

New gamified loyalty platform Loyi has raised €425,000 The Loyi platform allows brands to set up interactive challenges—like attending events, engaging on social media, or making purchases—that customers complete to earn digital rewards. These rewards can be exchanged for exclusive brand experiences, limited products, or special offers, adding a layer of gamification to customer engagement and incentivizing active participation.

So What: Loyi's gamification model illustrates how interactive challenges can drive loyalty by making brand engagement fun and rewarding. For charities, incorporating similar challenges could boost participation, allowing collaborators to engage meaningfully and earn unique experiences, deepening their connection to the cause.

So What?

1 Attention is Earned, Not Given

In a world filled with distractions, it's not enough to simply ask for attention; you need to offer something compelling in return. Whether it's a clear mission, impactful storytelling, or engaging experiences, you need to provide value that resonates to earn and keep your audience's focus.

So What: Approach every interaction as an opportunity to provide value that justifies your audience's time and attention. Focus on transparency, impact, and unique engagement opportunities that make supporters feel their attention is well spent. By giving supporters something meaningful in exchange, charities can rise above the noise and build sustained interest.

2 Clarity of Purpose is Non-Negotiable

Collaborators need to understand what you stand for and see your mission clearly in action. A well-defined purpose cuts through the digital noise, offering a clear, compelling reason for audiences to stay engaged. Without clarity, messages get lost and support dwindles. Clarity of purpose isn't just for your external collaborators — it's essential for your most important people: your teams. Because if you don't know why you exist, why would anyone else go on the journey with you?

So What: Articulate your purpose with precision and ensure it's consistently communicated across all channels. Purpose isn't something you set once and revisit every couple of decades. By embodying a strong, unified purpose, you can attract collaborators who feel confident in what the organisation stands for and why their support matters.

3 Know Who You're Willing to Lose

Trying to appeal to everyone dilutes your message. In today's polarised landscape, it's essential to recognise who your core collaborators are and focus on serving them. Middle-of-the-road messaging fades into the background, while bold, clear stances resonate with values-driven supporters.

So What: Be willing to take risks that may alienate some to build a historic connection with those who used to be 'core audience'. Define who your key collaborators are, and speak to their values, even if it means losing others. By focusing on your ideal collaborators, you create a more loyal, engaged community that shares your vision.

So What?

4 Take a Stand for Your Mission

Safe messaging doesn't inspire loyalty. Today's audiences, especially younger supporters, are drawn to organisations willing to tackle difficult issues and take a bold stand. Being clear and unapologetic about your mission not only differentiates you but attracts collaborators who are truly aligned with your cause.

So What: Don't shy away from controversy when it serves your mission. Embrace bold, transparent messaging that shows collaborators you're committed to meaningful change, even if it's challenging. Taking a stand builds trust with your core audience and strengthens loyalty by aligning your mission with supporters' values.

5 Advocacy Through Authentic Voices

Collaborators are more likely to trust and engage with messages from fellow collaborators than from the organisation itself. Amplifying the voices of real collaborators as advocates can boost credibility and drive engagement in ways that feel genuine and impactful.

So What: Charities should identify and empower their most enthusiastic collaborators, providing them with platforms to share their stories and amplify the mission. Authentic, audience-driven advocacy strengthens credibility and brings the cause to life in relatable ways.

6 Be Anything But Beige

In a crowded digital world, blending in is the quickest way to be forgotten. Charities that play it too safe risk becoming invisible. Bold, memorable messaging that resonates with your audience's values can be the difference between being ignored and inspiring lasting loyalty.

So What: Avoid 'beige' messaging and focus on distinctive, values-driven communications that reflect your organisation's unique personality. Stand out by embracing bold, creative approaches that showcase your mission's authenticity and appeal directly to your audiences' hearts and minds.



Measuring *Loyalty and* Impact

Beyond Short-Term KPIs

Measuring Loyalty and Impact

Introduction

“One of the big challenges with loyalty is that it’s hard to measure. People can feel loyal without showing it in ways that are easy to track, which makes it harder to prove the case for investing in loyalty.”

Nick Georgiadis, *Christian Aid*

The intimacy economy is quietly emerging as the next evolution of the attention economy. The latter, measured in likes, clicks, and views, aimed to capture and sustain as much attention as possible. Instead, the intimacy economy, driven by a new privacy-focused era and a craving for more meaningful relationships, is measured in human connection. This means doing more and building more profound, more long-lasting relationships with your collaborators. Moving from transactional interactions to relational ones. The challenge here isn’t about how to reach the masses; it’s about finding the meaningful, intimate connections that are no longer a given. Human connection in the intimacy economy means understanding loyalty through new metrics of connection, trust, and shared values.

“People might define loyalty differently—some engage with us once a year but still feel deeply loyal. To label that as ‘part-time’ loyalty doesn’t capture their genuine connection.”

Angharad Mckenzie, *Comic Relief*



Ditching Short-Term ROIs

“Short-term ROI is one of the worst measures you can use—it impacts the next year and the year after. We’ve embedded a long-term view of our fundraising portfolio. Every decision we make today is looked at in the context of what it will mean in 10 years.”

Liz Tait, GOSH

One of the biggest things holding back investment in loyalty strategies is ROI, particularly when cash is tight, and the focus is on in-year returns. We don’t have a perfect answer for how to do this, but the most compelling and powerful message that came through from our interviews was the shift happening in the sector to move away from in-year ROIs and take a longer-term view on loyalty returns (More to come in [The Future of Loyalty chapter](#)).

“Return on investment for areas like campaigning can take 18 months. Legacy gifts might take 5 to 10 years, but this long runway is critical for sustainable growth.”

Johnty Gray, Oxfam

Charities increasingly recognise that the KPIs and OKRs we design to track and measure ROI need to be more sophisticated than simply looking at in-year returns. They must factor in softer engagement metrics, including social capital and emotional connection. However, this is still an evolving landscape in which shared data can help everyone grow. We’re big fans of About Loyalty’s approach to measuring the less tangible elements of charity loyalty.

“Investing in loyalty without a clear ROI is a leap of faith, and we’re still figuring out the levers that actually drive long-term engagement in this rapidly changing landscape.”

Nick Georgiadis, Christian Aid



New Metrics for Loyalty

“As a sector, we haven’t invested in defining loyalty metrics beyond fundraising KPIs. It’s a critical gap because these other forms of engagement, like volunteering or advocacy, reflect real commitment. [...] We’re stuck in the habit of measuring success by financial metrics alone, but real loyalty means assessing broader engagement—like volunteer contributions or behaviour change, which are harder to quantify but equally valuable. [...] It’s difficult to move away from financial KPIs because they are the easiest to measure, but we need to start tracking other forms of engagement if we want to build true loyalty.”

Tracey Pritchard, RSPCA

Churn, click-through, lifetime, retention, repurchase, referral. To get the most out of your relationships, stop measuring loyalty through a purely financial lens and consider social capital. The real value is in something a little more challenging to quantify: the human connection. The loyalty metrics of the future account for advocacy, engagement, and emotional connection and capture those potential collaborators who might exist outside of your direct line of sight.

“The sector talks a lot about lifetime value, but I’d love us to better measure the sentiment of our supporters. We need to understand how they feel about us, not just what they give.”

Liz Tait, GOSH

Collaborators who share your message, participate in events, or rally their networks add immense value – even if they never donate. We used to dismiss slacktivism (clicking an online petition, wearing a tote bag, liking a post), but those actions can be the first step into your ecosystem. These actions drive awareness, build community, and amplify your cause. By focusing on these broader metrics, charities can get a clearer, more holistic view of loyalty and recognise how collaborators contribute beyond their wallets. Our metrics shouldn’t be purely transactional; they should be about

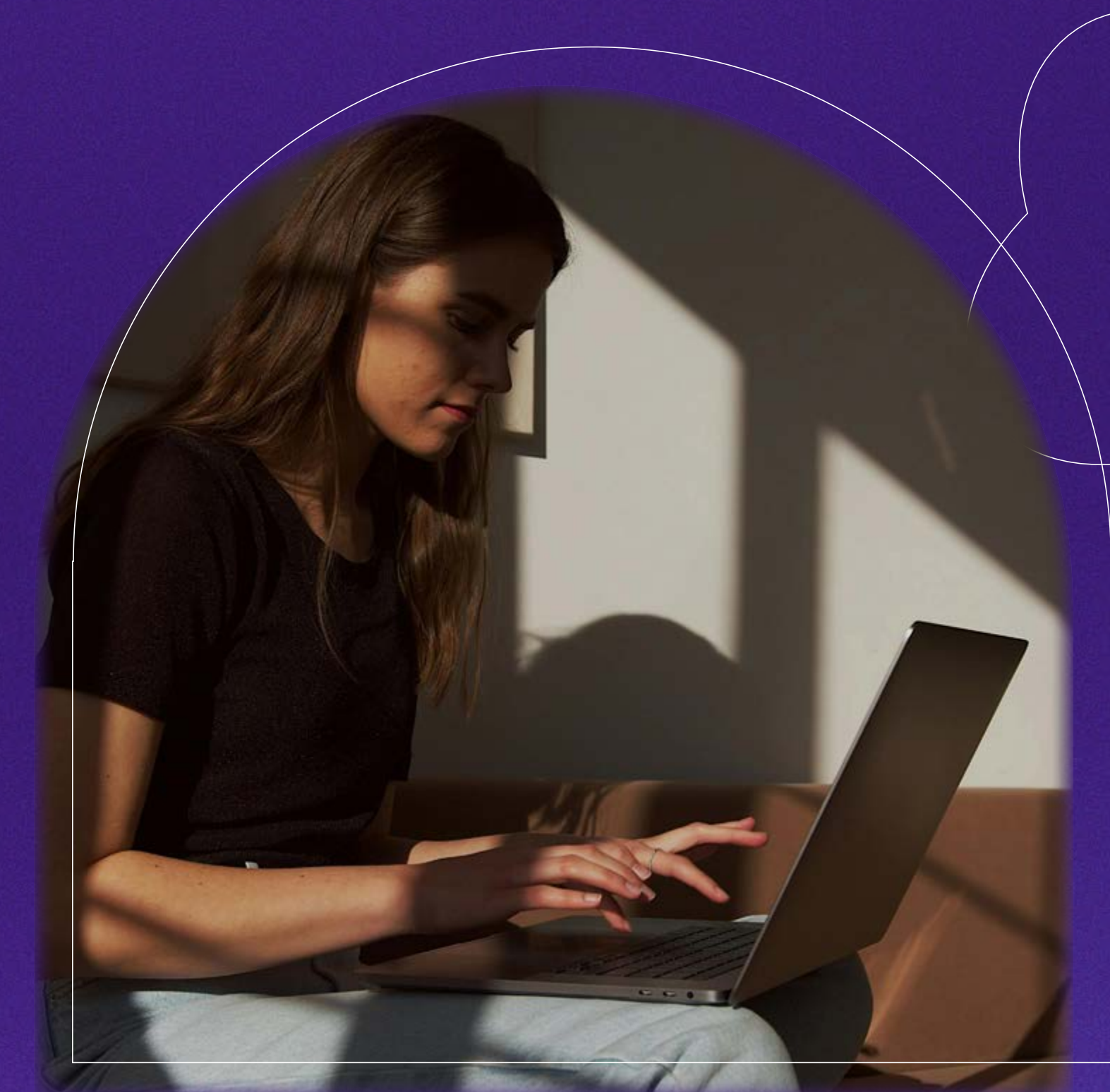
“The different ways people engage with us and continue to support.”

Joe Jenkins, The Children’s Society

If we invest in human connection over the long term, the ROI pay-off will be higher.

“Any sort of measurement of renewal rates or product holdings, or, opting in or engagement, are slightly meaningless. You’re only as good as how little you’ve pissed off people, because they’ll switch that value to a different brand.”

Sharon Pickford, National Trust



Measuring Impact Clearly and Often

“We’ve developed an impact measurement framework that tracks the progress of our assumptions and tells the story of the impact we’re making across direct work, systems change, policy work, and movement building.”

Joe Jenkins, *The Children’s Society*

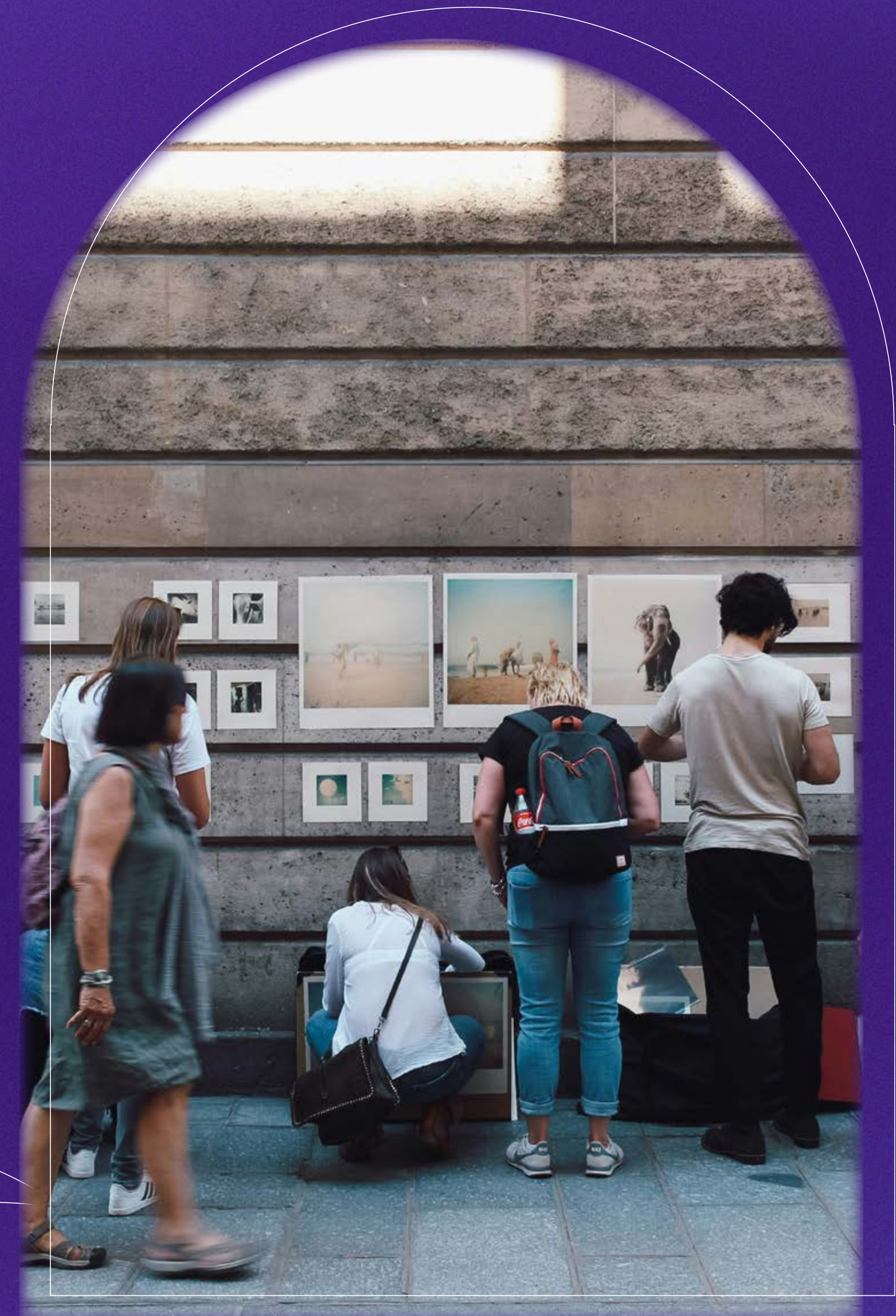
Too often, impact is reduced to a basic equation – money in, money out. Metrics like pence in the pound or lists of activities completed fall short of measuring the real value charities bring. True impact goes beyond numbers, but charities aren’t measuring, explaining, or communicating impact in ways that capture the actual value of their work. Some of this sits in the hands of how narratives are expressed, and some of it in the maturity and lack of consensus on measuring and tracking impact. It is vital to know which data to collect, how to analyse it, and where it fits within the broader ecosystem (of your charity, of your competitors, and of the sector at large). As a sector, we need to invest in creating a shared language and shared metrics for impact. Solving this challenge could be a game-changer in articulating impact – but it can’t be done in isolation.

While numbers are important, they’re just part of the story. It’s the narrative that truly resonates. Go beyond the stats and bring your impact to life through engaging meaningful storytelling. For your audiences, stories of impact and mission can’t just be annual reports or shiny case studies. Don’t just show what you’re achieving – show who you’re helping. Authentic, emotional stories highlight the difference your work makes in the world, connecting collaborators to tangible outcomes.

“If I had to pick one thing that builds loyalty, it’s storytelling. We need to communicate the real, emotional stories of pets and people we’ve helped to engage and retain supporters.”

Rohan Putter, *Woodgreen*

**“While numbers are important,
they’re just part of the story.”**



Case Studies



CDCU Nigeria

Nigeria's Citizens Delivery Tracker App allows citizens to monitor and report on government deliverables in real time. The app outlines eight key priority areas, including infrastructure and economic growth, and lets citizens give direct feedback about the progress made against these deliverables.

So What: The Citizens Delivery Tracker focuses on measurable deliverables, tracked 24/7 by their stakeholders: the citizens who'll live with the outcomes. It's a great example of setting clear goals, sharing real-time updates, receiving honest feedback, and uplifting your audience's voice. There's an opportunity to build loyalty through transparency and accountability.

Deliverables

1 Reform The Economy
To Deliver Sustained Inclusive Growth



Wale Edun
Honourable Minister



Federal Ministry of Finance
FMFIN

Deliverables **15**

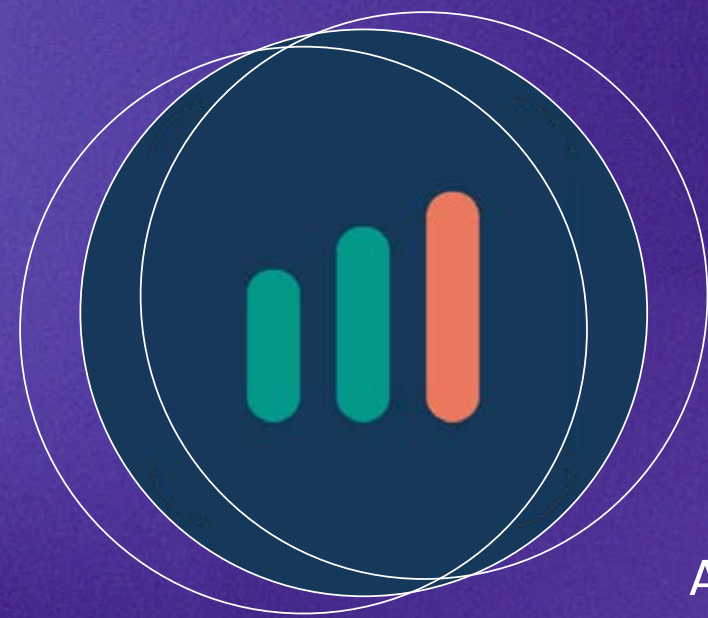
Implement the Fiscal Risk Strategy and the Debt
Management Strategy



Enhance revenue generation and collection among all
Revenue Generating Agencies



Case Studies



About Loyalty

About Loyalty is a research-based consultancy for the third sector, helping charities to measure, understand, and grow their supporter loyalty and income. For their recent report about loyalty, they analysed data from 50,000 donors across 12 charities. The result? A focus on new *emotional* metrics for loyalty. They stripped out all transactional factors that influence retention (method of payment, type of support, donor activity, etc.), to find that the biggest drivers of loyalty are commitment, satisfaction, and trust.

So What: These alternative metrics for emotional connection can help charities understand what keeps donors engaged for the long haul. This means shifting away from purely transactional measures and fostering genuine emotional connections with collaborators instead.



Cancer Research UK

Cancer Research UK has launched a 'centre of expertise' focused on monitoring loyalty across all products, enabling a central view of supporter journeys and guiding decision-making throughout the organisation. By unifying loyalty metrics and impact stories, the charity delivers consistent, personalised journeys, ensuring that each collaborator receives meaningful engagement at the right time. This streamlined approach has increased loyalty rates, raised email response rates, and reduced mailing costs by consolidating communications across products.

So What: Cancer Research UK's centralised loyalty approach underscores the value of a cohesive supporter experience. Investing in a comprehensive loyalty framework can enhance supporter satisfaction and retention while driving operational efficiencies.

So What?

1 Move Beyond Financial KPIs: Recognise the Full Spectrum of Loyalty

Traditional KPIs only tell part of the story. To capture true loyalty, you must go beyond financial metrics and measure the broader range of supporter contributions, from advocacy and engagement to social capital. These diverse forms of support are essential to building a more complete and resilient picture of loyalty.

So What: Develop metrics that recognise all forms of collaborator engagement, including non-monetary contributions like sharing content, volunteering, and community-building. By valuing and tracking these broader loyalty indicators, charities can cultivate a deeper connection with collaborators and foster a culture that acknowledges all types of support.

2 Shift Focus to Long-Term Returns on Loyalty

Short-term ROI measures can hinder loyalty-building by focusing only on immediate returns. Instead, a long-term view of ROI considers the extended value of collaborator loyalty, including legacy giving, recurring support, and sustained engagement. True loyalty often requires a longer horizon for returns.

So What: Evaluate loyalty with a 5–10 year perspective rather than an annual one, focusing on sustainable growth over quick wins. By taking the long view, you can invest in loyalty-building strategies that cultivate deeper connections, ensuring a steady, committed support base that thrives over time.

3 Track Emotional Connection as a Key Loyalty Metric

In the intimacy economy, collaborators expect more than transactional interactions. They're looking for brands that resonate with their values and foster real emotional connection. Sentiment, social capital, and connection should be at the heart of loyalty metrics to capture these meaningful yet less tangible contributions.

So What: Prioritise metrics that measure emotional engagement and sentiment, such as collaborator sentiment, social advocacy, and connection scores. By capturing these qualitative insights, you can better understand the emotional ties that keep collaborators engaged, creating a more personal and sustained loyalty.

So What?

4 Rethink How You Measure Impact

Impact measurement too often falls into simple inputs and outputs, which misses the true value of the work charities do. Effective impact measurement goes beyond numbers, telling the whole story of change in a way that collaborators can feel and understand. It's about capturing outcomes in the real world, not just on spreadsheets.

So What: Develop a nuanced impact measurement framework that captures both quantitative and qualitative outcomes. Move beyond traditional metrics to tell a more comprehensive impact story, showing collaborators the tangible difference their support makes. When measured holistically, impact resonates more deeply, fostering stronger loyalty.

5 Collaborating for Impact

Impact is about more than numbers—it's about demonstrating real change. Without a shared language for defining and communicating impact, the full value of our work can be lost. A unified, sector-wide framework for impact could enable charities to tell a more powerful story, inspiring greater loyalty and trust.

So What: We have an opportunity to collaborate as a sector and lead the way in establishing a shared framework and language for measuring impact. This shared approach could strengthen credibility and help collaborators understand the value of their contributions. By articulating impact clearly and consistently, charities can build deeper trust and loyalty among collaborators.

6 Use Storytelling to Drive Emotional Connection

Data provides essential context, but it's storytelling that builds an emotional connection. Collaborators are moved by real, human stories that showcase the impact of their support. Bringing the mission to life through storytelling personalises the work, inspiring collaborators to stay engaged over the long term.

So What: Combine storytelling with data to create a complete picture of your impact. Use human narratives to show collaborators the real-world outcomes of their support beyond just statistics. By blending data with meaningful stories, charities can foster emotional connections that drive lasting loyalty and commitment.



Surprise & Delight

*Creating Moments of
Connection*

Surprise & Delight

Introduction

The desire for joy, inspiration, and delight is becoming more intense in a time characterised by unease, polycrisis, and financial hardship. Crucially, this means that the desire for brands to pack an emotional punch across their touchpoints is heightened. A whopping **83% of people** are seeking out experiences that actively bring them joy, while **35% of consumers** say it's essential for brands to make them feel good. Tap into the dopamine economy and bring energy, inspiration, and excitement to every touchpoint with your collaborators.

Playfulness is a strategy that can make your mission more approachable, memorable, and impactful. How do you give your collaborators the moments of joy that keep them coming back?

"Loyalty for us is how do we retain our supporters at a level that is engaging, surprising, and delighting them? It's about meeting what they want, not just what we want."

Julie Roberts, *Pancreatic Cancer UK*



Brands with Benefits

“In terms of loyalty, people need to feel that in some way, [they’re] going to get something in return. ‘I’m going to get tangible hope in return for this interaction.’”

Jo Nove, Myeloma UK

Charities are essentially relationship ecosystems. This means it’s not just about what your collaborators give; it’s also about what they get in return. If the old model of brand loyalty centred on how the consumer served the brand through repeat donations, the future of loyalty is brand relationships that feel a little more reciprocal. So, how are you rewarding loyalty and keeping your collaborators engaged?

Creative, thoughtful rewards (think personalised thank-yous, exclusive content or events, and surprise gifts) can turn a one-time donor into a lifelong advocate. We must create the ‘wow’ moments that make collaborators feel valued.

Broadly, these benefits fall into **four categories**:

Reward

Discounts, free products and services, matching a donation, etc. The most common example is your typical ‘buy 9, get the 10th free’ coffee stamp card.

Recognition

Recognition for large contributions, anniversaries of a brand relationship, birthdays, etc. This could also mean offering rewards specifically to your most loyal collaborators.

Connection

Connecting your collaborators around the cause or the values that underpin it. Essentially, offering collaborators value through community. We discuss this one more deeply in the **‘Building Community and Fandom’ section**.

Empowerment

Elevating your audience’s voice by letting them have a say in brand decisions. For more, check out the **‘Audience Voice & Co-Creation’ section**.

While perks are great, it’s the last two – connection and empowerment – that will truly drive lasting loyalty in the coming years. Do the work to understand your audience’s values, desires, and challenges, and what benefits you can bring to the table for them. How can you and your community support each other’s missions, build authentic connections, and create a sense of belonging?

“What we should be doing is creating ‘wow’ moments – surprise and delight moments that deepen engagement rather than just asking for money. [...] We’ve been working on building more dynamic supporter journeys, including surprise touchpoints that make people feel valued, rather than just hitting them with fundraising asks.”

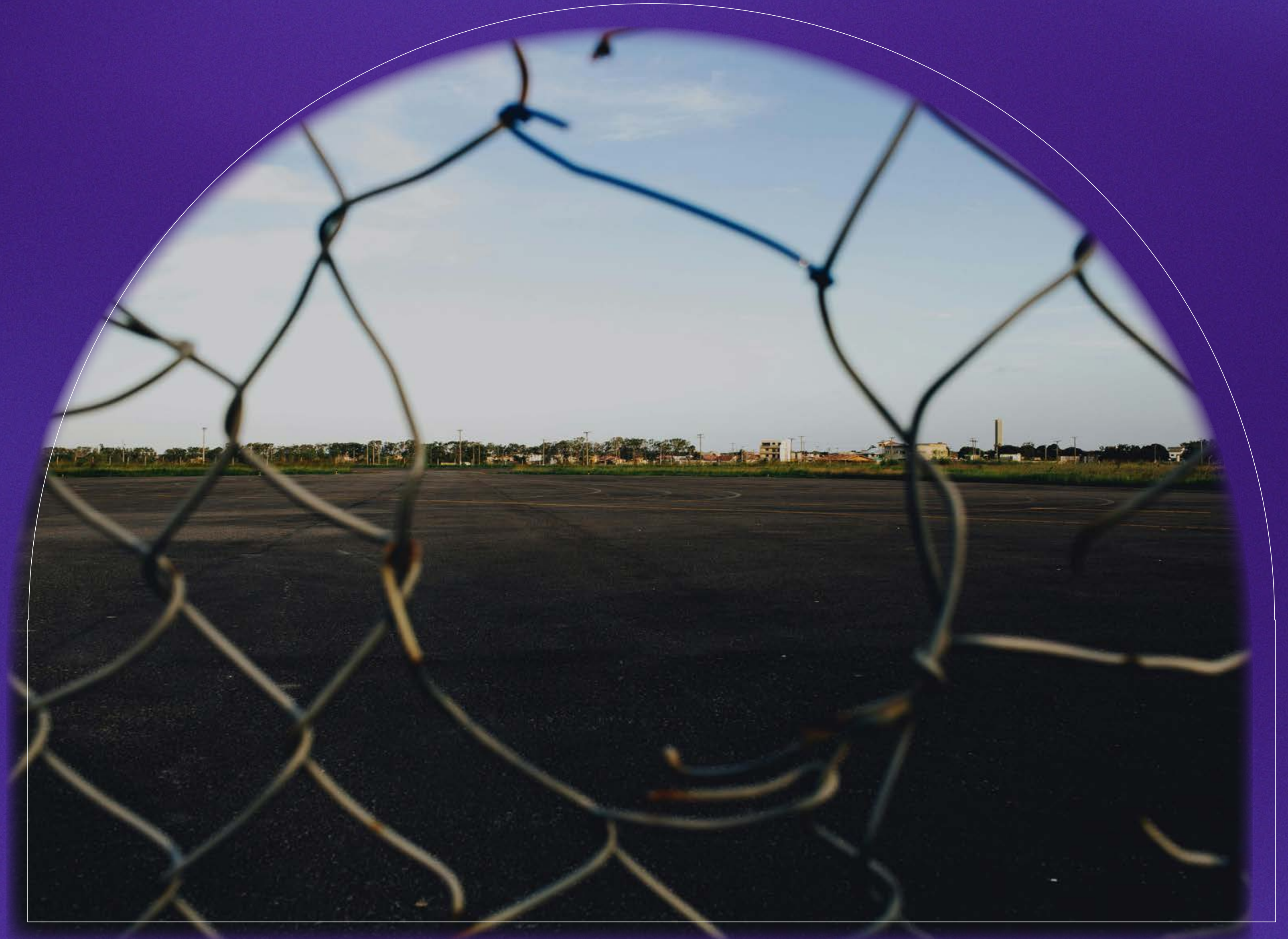
Richard Lee, Marie Curie

Positive Friction

After years of chasing seamless convenience, friction is making a comeback. With information and content constantly fed to us at lightning speed, 'being in the know' has lost its sense of exclusivity and meaning. Instead of having everything, everywhere, all at once, people are looking to brands and organisations to introduce intentional pauses and create moments that encourage reflection and intentional engagement.

There's a benefit in making things *less* accessible – encouraging people to find joy in friction or building in moments of reflection. Meaningful experiences are those we put effort into, the ones that require a journey or dedication to earn.

Of course, this doesn't mean we should introduce friction for the sake of it. Some spaces, like your point of donation, still benefit from having a seamless experience. Build in carefully calibrated friction to make your experiences more meaningful and profound.



Weird Marketing

Brands are ditching their polished facades for bold, outrageous online personas. From Duolingo's owl dancing on office tables, to the RSPB's delightfully unhinged 'Bird of the Week' series, these brands are throwing themselves into 'weird' strategies that speak directly to online audiences. They're craving brands that feel real, unpredictable, and are willing to meet them where they are.

So why does this work?

Authenticity

People are tired of polished, perfect content. They're looking for **authenticity and genuine connection** in the media they consume and the brands they support. Traditional marketing, especially on social media, can stand out as insincere or out of touch. Unhinged socials tap into the trends, language and humour native to these platforms to seem more genuine.

Humour

Humour is now officially the **best way to draw engagement** from younger online audiences as people search for content that will distract them from the constant churn of negative headlines elsewhere. People are looking for a laugh and a moment of levity. That doesn't mean you can't discuss a heavier subject matter – consider which platform is most appropriate for a more serious conversation, and know when to keep it light instead.

Engagement

The digital landscape is increasingly saturated, making it even harder to stand out. Edgy or 'unhinged' content can help brands cut through the noise and draw more engagement.



But with everyone going off-script, where's the line between authentic and cliché? With more and more brands adopting this strategy, how do you ensure yours still stands out? Keep your finger on the pulse and find a format that works for you. Embrace the voices on your team who understand this type of humour. It's not about jumping on every meme but creating moments to slow people down with something truly unexpected and memorable.



Post-Donation Experience

The journey doesn't end after donation – it's just beginning. So, what are you doing to keep collaborators engaged after they give? Too often, charities focus on the ask and forget about what comes next. But the real power lies in the floor-up. **78% of global consumers** say they discover things that attract them and create loyalty after their first purchase. It comes back to the idea that the customer journey is a continuous loop rather than a funnel. Every post-donation touchpoint is an opportunity to deepen the relationship, show appreciation, and keep collaborators connected to the cause. Are you making the most of these moments?

Loyalty is about keeping your audience engaged for the long haul, which means creating a whole universe of post-donation touchpoints for them to explore. And it's not just about transactions. The strongest brands engage audiences around connection rather than just donation.

“Too often, charities focus on the ask and forget about what comes next.”

“We have 17 different engagement types. And each of those engagement types has a bespoke journey for that engagement type. We call those conversion journeys, but they are more to do with shouting about the breadth of stuff that they can do with Oxfam. Now, our primary motivation is obviously to get a regular gift, but we will give them discount codes from the shop, there's a welcome pack, we'll ask them to sign a climate campaign etc. The purpose of that conversion journey is to expose them to all the different things they can do with Oxfam.”

Johnty Gray, Oxfam



Case Studies



Artotel

In March 2024, Artotel, an Indonesian hospitality brand, introduced “Rockstar Status:” an extreme loyalty program that rewards its most devoted guests with an unforgettable night where “anything goes.” Guests with this status, which takes a whopping 121 nights to achieve, can live out their wildest dreams; the ad showed their ‘Rockstars’ riding motorcycles down hotel corridors, swimming with a crocodile in a bathtub, or throwing a piano out the window.

So What: While your organisation may not be able to offer your collaborators a dip in the pool with crocodiles, Artotel’s campaign shows the power of creating moments of surprise and delight for your most loyal collaborators. Surprising your collaborators with unique, memorable experiences and personalised rewards can turn loyalty into a real ‘VIP’ experience.

YOUR room.
YOUR rules.

Case Studies



Peet's Coffee

In September 2023, in celebration of National Coffee Day, American micro-chain Peet's Coffee launched a unique loyalty initiative. They let coffee lovers convert loyalty points from competing brands like Starbucks, Dunkin', and Tim Hortons into Peet's rewards. Customers simply uploaded a screenshot of their balance on a dedicated site to receive a Peet's voucher instead.

So What: This creative approach shows the power of unconventional rewards to expand your reach and attract new audiences. Rewards aren't just important for deepening loyalty with your existing collaborators; they're also a great way to grab the attention of potential new donors.



Heineken

In a fun campaign for 2024, Heineken launched its 'beer insurance', dubbed 'HeineCare', to protect fans against accidental (or not-so-accidental) pint spills during games. Fans who lose their drinks—of any beer brand—during the excitement of the game can use the insurance to get a refill of Heineken or Heineken 0.0.

So What: HeineCare is a great example of a creative perk to engage your audiences, and potentially offer customers of a different brand a new route to yours instead. Think about how you're offering inventive, timely and culturally aware rewards that create more memorable engagement.

Case Studies



Decathlon

Each summer, around 250,000 tents are abandoned at UK festivals, many of which end up in landfills. Addressing this colossal waste, Decathlon's "No Tent Left Behind" campaign allows customers to buy one of their MH100 tents, use it throughout festival season, and return it undamaged by mid-September 2024 for a full refund in the form of a gift card. Returned tents are refurbished and resold through Decathlon's Second Life program, promoting a more sustainable festival experience.

So What: Decathlon's sustainability campaign is both an example of incentivised impact and a reward for its loyal (and responsible!) customers. For charities, there's an organisation to think beyond loyalty rewards and consider rewarding your collaborators' values and social impact as well.



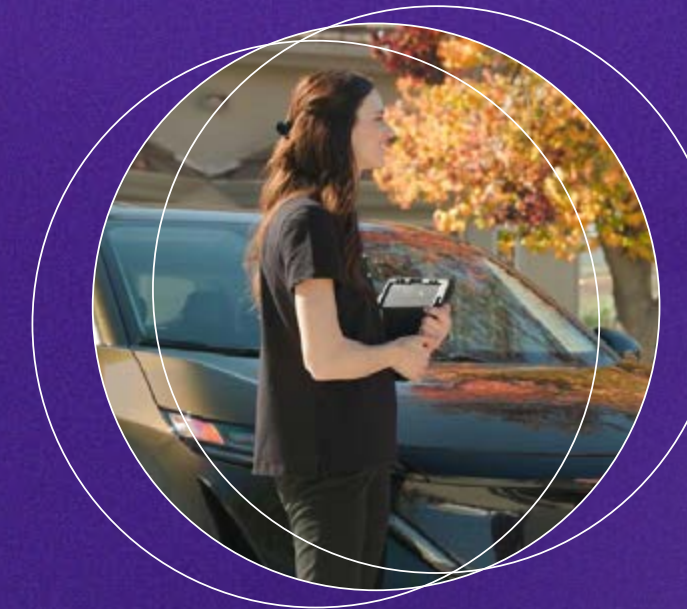
Case Studies



Green Day

After celebrating 30 years of their album Dookie in conventional ways (playing it on tour, releasing a deluxe edition, etc.) Green Day is now releasing their iconic record in a way never meant to be heard – on obscure, low-quality formats. From a Game Boy cartridge to a speaking teddy bear to a toothbrush. Named ‘Dookie Demastered’, the press release explains: “Instead of smoothing out its edges and tweaking its dynamic ranges, this version of Dookie has been meticulously mangled to fit on formats with uncompromisingly low fidelity. [...] The listening experience is unparalleled, sacrificing not only sonic quality, but also convenience, and occasionally entire verses.”

So What: The release sacrifices convenience and clarity to intentionally challenge fans’ listening experience, a great example of positive friction. By making engagement harder, they’re inviting fans to reflect on their connection to the music and its typical formats, driving deeper and unique engagement.



Nissan

Nissan’s new ‘Second Delivery’ programme brings personalised post-purchase support to new car owners, offering in-person tutorials with a Tech Expert two weeks after purchase. The expert then meets drivers at their preferred location and gives a comprehensive walkthrough of the vehicle and its tech. The theory behind this programme is that the expert will be on hand to answer any questions that arise after the customer has spent some time with their new purchase. It’s also a huge hit – it boasts a 93% satisfaction rate, with participants appreciating the tailored, personal approach and thoroughness.

So What: Nissan’s campaign shows the value of thoughtful, personalised post-purchase support for your collaborators. It’s not just about personalised follow-ups; what tailored assistance can you give your audience after the donation points? What questions are likely to arise? How are you involving them in the journey that their donation is making from transaction to impact?

Case Studies



RSPB

The RSPB's 'Bird of the Week' series has taken off on TikTok after cleverly mixing humour, memes, and... birds? The truly unhinged end result is a riot and has struck just the right tone to land well with a digital-native audience. Each post uses topical meme culture to draw viewers in, hooking attention with unhinged comedy and then directing it to educational content about bird conservation. The account now has almost 190k followers and almost 6m likes.

So What: RSPB's approach demonstrates the power of humour-driven content to educate and engage. Using light-hearted, unhinged content can attract broader audiences while embedding meaningful messages.



Case Studies



Duolingo

Duolingo's TikTok account is utterly unhinged, topical and culturally relevant, and bitingly sarcastic in its customer responses. Led by Duo (the iconic bright green owl mascot), the approach has made their account a fan favourite, with over 13.4m followers. From Duo twerking on an office table to the owl dancing on ice, or even crushing on Dua Lipa (get it... Duo and Dua...), the 'anything goes' attitude is at the core of their strategy.

So What: The owl's success shows that you don't always have to play it safe. Sometimes, loosening the reins on brand image can widen your reach and drive engagement. For Duo, nothing is off the table – don't be too precious about your brand if you're tapping into this trend.



NHS GiveBlood

The NHS blood donation service, GiveBlood, offers donors a personal touch after donating. When their donation has been used, which can be months after the fact, they'll receive a text detailing when and where their donation was used, sometimes up to the specific ward. The website also provides a detailed breakdown of each donation's journey – how blood is processed, the uses of its components, and the people involved at each step.

So What: The NHS GiveBlood post-donation experience is a great example of using transparency and personalisation to drive loyalty. Providing collaborators with tangible updates on how their contributions are used gives them a post-donation dopamine hit, drives a longer-lasting connection, and serves as a reminder to book their next session.

So What?

1 Deliver Joy and Inspiration in Every Touchpoint

In challenging times, people are drawn to brands that lift them up. Today's collaborators seek more than just support for a cause; they want experiences that bring joy, inspiration, and moments of delight. In the dopamine economy, creating emotionally impactful touchpoints can keep collaborators engaged and eager to return.

So What: Infuse joy and inspiration into every touchpoint, focusing on ways to surprise and delight collaborators. Consider how each interaction can spark positivity, creating emotional connections that keep people engaged. By meeting the desire for uplifting experiences, charities can build a more loyal and connected community.

2 Reward Loyalty with Meaningful Benefits

The future of loyalty is reciprocal. Collaborators want to feel valued and rewarded for their commitment, not just seen as a source of donations. Thoughtful perks and benefits—from personalised thank-yous to exclusive events and surprise gifts—can transform one-time donors into lifelong advocates.

So What: Go beyond transactional rewards to offer personal and meaningful benefits. Focus on creating “wow” moments that recognise loyalty in unique ways, such as surprise touchpoints or exclusive community access. Building a culture of reciprocity strengthens collaborator loyalty by making them feel appreciated and connected to the mission.

So What?

3 Embrace Positive Friction to Create Meaningful Moments

After years of prioritising convenience, there’s now a place for intentional ‘positive friction’. When collaborators are encouraged to pause, reflect, or put in a little extra effort, they often find greater meaning and value in their engagement. Not every experience should be seamless; some should be savoured.

So What: Introduce thoughtfully calibrated moments of friction that invite collaborators to engage more deeply. Whether it’s intentionally slowing down the checkout experience, a reflective message, or a unique activation, positive friction can create memorable, meaningful experiences that stand out. By slowing things down strategically, charities can foster more profound, thoughtful connections.

4 Stand Out with a Playful, Authentic Voice

People are tired of polished, predictable content and crave real, relatable, and sometimes ‘weird’ interactions. Bold, playful marketing can help charities cut through the digital noise, drawing collaborators in with humour, surprise, and authenticity. This approach makes the mission feel lively, relatable, and engaging.

So What: Embrace an authentic, playful approach to your messaging. Leverage humour and creative formats to engage audiences on a human level, and don’t be afraid to stand out with unique, memorable content. When collaborators see a genuine, unpolished side of your brand, they’re more likely to feel a personal connection that fosters loyalty.

5 Make the Post-Donation Experience a Loyalty-Driving Journey

Too often, charities focus on securing donations but overlook the importance of follow-up. Post-donation touchpoints are an opportunity to deepen relationships, show appreciation, and reinforce the mission, creating a continuous loop rather than a one-time transaction. Every post-donation interaction is a chance to foster loyalty.

So What: Build robust post-donation journeys that engage collaborators beyond their initial support. Use this experience to thank, update, and involve them in the ongoing impact of their contributions. By nurturing these touchpoints, charities can create a loyalty loop that keeps collaborators emotionally and actively connected to the cause.



The Future of Loyalty

*From Supporters to
Partners*

The Future of Loyalty

Introduction

“Loyalty won’t look the same in five years. The younger generation’s relationship with loyalty is disposable and immediate—they can be loyal one moment and detached the next.”

Catherine Hart, *Target Ovarian Cancer*

Future-proofing loyalty means embracing change, challenging outdated assumptions, and daring to disrupt the status quo. It’s about rethinking hierarchies, embracing new technologies, adapting to audience needs and expectations, and, when needed, even reinventing your organisation.

But creating lasting loyalty takes time, commitment, and thinking beyond annual targets. This means setting up sustainable, non-financial metrics that measure genuine engagement, retention, and the emotional connection collaborators feel toward your mission. It’s about moving away from in-year KPIs and adopting a long-term mindset that positions loyalty as a key driver of future success. When loyalty becomes part of your long-term strategy rather than a short-term goal, it builds a legacy that stands the test of time.

“You need a certain type of culture and staying power to do loyalty well. It’s not a short-term endeavour – it’s long-term, it’s a strategic choice that you have to get 100% behind with a major alignment from the top (CEO) to the bottom of the organisation.”

Jeremy Hayward, *via [OgilvyOne](#)*

“Future-proofing loyalty means embracing change, challenging outdated assumptions, and daring to disrupt the status quo.”



Flexible Loyalty

“We’re aiming for people to think of us as a charity that’s always there for them, even if they’re not actively engaging with us all the time. It’s about making sure they feel like they can come back to us when they need us.”

Rohan Putter, Woodgreen

Between the cost of living crisis pinching wallets and constant polycrisis hitting the headlines, expecting unwavering loyalty from collaborators just isn’t realistic – no matter how much they may want to keep supporting you. People’s circumstances change, and sometimes, they have to step back from supporting causes they care about. But that doesn’t mean that they’re gone forever.

“Create pathways for collaborators to easily re-engage when the time is right.”

“We’re seeing a shift where families visit for just a few months, then cancel. This ‘part-time’ loyalty is new, and it’s particularly common among Gen Alpha families. They visit, engage briefly, and then leave.”

Katy Baird, WWT

Embrace the ebb and flow – create pathways for collaborators to easily re-engage when the time is right. In uncertain times, flexibility is everything, and loyalty doesn’t have to be continuous to be meaningful. The days of ‘set and forget’ are fading fast. Instead, focus on creating adaptable, accessible ways for people to stay connected, no matter where they are in their journey.



Collaborative Fundraising

“You can’t do it in competition with everybody else. You have to do it as part of a collective. [...] We don’t have to own everything. We don’t have to be investing in everything, but we can still be measured against those KPIs on the basis that the structure that we’re delivering will impact those at the highest possible level.”

Sharon Pickford, *National Trust*

Post-pandemic, we’re

“Seeing a shift towards more outcome-focused giving, where people care more about the impact than the brand itself,” **Laura Savory**, *Guy’s & St Thomas’ Charities*,

alongside an **increasing willingness** across the sector to pool resources and embrace collaboration. Charities in an ecosystem are coming together to prioritise outcome. What would a future look like where collaborators contribute to mission—and outcome-focused relationships rather than brand loyalty?

Of course, collaboration isn’t without its challenges. Differences in culture, values, and administrative demands can complicate the process. The administrative effort that goes into creating sustainable partnerships can often be more than people are able or willing to invest in, especially with rising pressures to deliver in-year cash. That’s not to say it’s not worth it – by prioritising collective mission over brand, charities can focus on creating the lasting, sustainable change that resonates with collaborators and drives deeper engagement.

“In the future, I see loyalty becoming more about collaboration, not competition.”

Katy Baird, *WWT*



Mobilising the Mass

Your collaborators aren't just donors – they're partners in your mission. Too often, charities treat collaborators as passive contributors when they could be active participants in the change you're creating. We need to treat them like collaborators, co-creators, investors, and advocates. Enter **type 2 growth**: doing more with what you already have instead of adding more to the pile. It's about unlocking the potential of your existing collaborators, turning them from passive backers into passionate stakeholders.

"It's about creating an active community rather than a transactional relationship. We need people to campaign with us, stand with us, and take action with us."

Joe Jenkins, *The Children's Society*

"Your collaborators aren't just donors – they're partners in your mission."

Are you giving them a sense of shared ownership in your mission? When collaborators feel like they're part of the solution, not just funding it, they're more engaged, more loyal, and more likely to champion your cause.

Loyalty now means being a part of something bigger—a dynamic relationship where donors feel like true stakeholders and every interaction adds value to both sides.

"For me, when I think about loyalty, it's about bringing a large community together, both in support of each other and to take mass action. We don't have that yet for dementia. Goodness me, we need it."

Emma Whitcombe, *Alzheimer's Research*



To Movement or Not To Movement

"We're focusing on creating a movement for change, not just acquiring supporters. It's about giving people a reason to feel like they're part of something bigger, whether they're donating or not."

Tracey Pritchard, RSPCA

So, you want to build a movement? Discussions about movements seem to be everywhere right now. But the question is: is your cause truly a movement, or are you trying to force it to be one? Yes, movements, when they're done right, are a highly effective way of **creating a two-way relationship** and shared purpose with your collaborators. They inspire deeper, mission-driven loyalty by giving people something bigger than themselves to rally around.

Ask yourself why you want to create a movement. You have to understand your motivation in doing this – if you don't know why you're acting, why would anyone else? Is the purpose income generation, brand awareness, or out of a genuine need for systemic change? If fundraising or awareness is driving the charge, a movement may not be the solution. People aren't going to get behind a movement that primarily serves your organisation's needs rather than a community's problem. At the end of the day, people invest in your movements because they genuinely believe in the cause, feel a genuine emotional connection to it, and believe that the movement is built on the same emotional connection that they feel towards your mission.

"For us, building a movement is about creating a sense of belonging, a sense of shared values. We want our supporters to feel part of a collective action."

Johnty Gray, Oxfam

All that to say, not every cause is a movement. Those that are can have an immense impact. To build a genuine movement, you need to create a true community and empower them to take systemic action.

Designed to Be Deleted

“We used to think loyalty meant a lifetime supporter, but today, it might be more ‘time-boxed’—where people engage passionately for a short period around a specific issue or campaign.”

Tracey Pritchard, RSPCA

Loyalty doesn't have to be a lifetime contract. As collaborators move through different stages in life, their engagement may ebb and flow – or maybe they step away entirely. That doesn't mean that their time-bound loyalty isn't valuable. Some collaborators may be more motivated by timeboxed, outcome-focused engagement rather than an unending regular gift. Take the success of capital appeals in the last 18 months from organisations like GOSH. High-impact, mission-driven loyalty can drive significant results, even if it isn't forever. People will leave, but they may return if you make it easy.

Or, going one step further, what if your organisation doesn't need to be forever? Not every mission is endless, and reaching an endpoint can be part of the journey. Some charities may find their goals achieved, while others may need to adapt, radically transforming their offerings to stay relevant or aligned with evolving social and environmental standards. For instance, charity Lankelly Chase has announced that they'd **abolish themselves** for being unable to reconcile its mission with its place in global capital markets that it considers to be rooted in exploitation. Today's charity may look different tomorrow as it evolves to meet new challenges or shifts focus. Or maybe it won't exist anymore.

“Loyalty is really important because we want to put ourselves out of business, but we also want to make sure the one and a half million people living with a macular condition are able to live well in spite of their sight loss.”

Emma Malcolm, Macular Society



Reimagined Governance

The future of not just loyalty, but your entire organisation, may require new approaches to governance and decision-making. For example, decentralised governance models that empower collaborators as active stakeholders. By giving collaborators a voice in decisions and strategy, charities create a sense of shared ownership that goes beyond traditional donor relationships. Think of this as a more [radical] version of elevating your audience's voice. In theory, this shift allows for more transparency, agility, and resilience – all crucial in today's rapidly evolving landscape. Decentralised approaches, like **blockchain-based voting systems**, provide transparent systems where decisions are decided and recorded on an immutable ledger. These approaches democratise influence, giving collaborators tangible stakes and increasing accountability. For example, collaborators could vote on specific projects, funding allocations, or community initiatives, making them genuine partners in the mission.

Alternative structures, like **holacracy** (where self-organised teams have a flat hierarchy) or **sociocracy** (values-based governance based on equal voice), can also help distribute decision-making power across the organisation. These models are similarly more adaptable and inclusive and encourage a culture of co-creation where your employees feel valued and involved, building loyalty and trust from within.



Investing in the Long-Term

“We have an eight-year growth plan that outlines sustainable pathways and sets out non-financial pipeline metrics, so we’re not just relying on immediate cash but also tracking long-term loyalty indicators. [...] We’re setting long-term objectives and using non-financial pipeline metrics to give us confidence that our investment in loyalty is paying off over time. [...] Our governance approach has shifted to a more co-ownership model with trustees, so it’s about working together to build trust and focus on long-term impact, not just annual budgets.”

Joe Jenkins, *The Children’s Society*

As we mentioned in **Measuring Loyalty**, one of the most exciting things we heard in our interviews was the shift in some charities away from in-year KPIs to a longer-term outlook on the value of loyalty. This shift goes hand in hand with unlocking larger investments in tech, people, and data.

But unlocking these investments has required some fundamental changes inside organisations to give reassurance and tracking:

Embrace Non-Financial Pipeline Metrics

Loyalty isn’t just about the numbers in your financial reports. Non-financial metrics, like engagement levels, retention rates, and how collaborators feel about your mission, provide a more complete picture of loyalty. These metrics help you see where loyalty efforts are working—and where they might need a tweak—allowing you to build relationships that aren’t just about cash flow.

Think Long-Term with Loyalty Indicators

Building loyalty takes time, and not every effort will immediately pay off. Long-term indicators, like multi-year retention and volunteer engagement, help you focus on creating loyalty that lasts. When you commit to tracking these over time, you’re setting the stage for stronger and more reliable relationships with each passing year.

Plan for Loyalty Over the Long Haul

If loyalty is going to be a priority, it needs to be part of a long-term plan. Moving away from annual pressures and placing loyalty within a bigger 8-, 10-, or 12-year outlook lets you focus on where you want to go rather than reacting to every twist and turn. This planning gives everyone a clearer picture of when investments will start paying off and help avoid panic over occasional slow years.

Position Loyalty as Part of Your Legacy

Loyalty investments aren’t just about the present; they’re about building something for future generations. By considering loyalty as part of your charity’s legacy, you give people a more significant reason to care. Ask your team and trustees, “What are we building for those who come after us?” and let that big-picture thinking guide your loyalty strategy.

Make Loyalty Investments a Priority, Not an Option

Even when budgets are tight, investing in loyalty is critical to long-term success. It's not just a nice-to-have; it's essential. Case studies from other sectors show that the payoff from loyalty-building can be huge down the line, so it's worth making this a core part of your strategy rather than something that only happens when times are good.

Build a Collaborative Approach with Your Trustees

To secure the investment needed for loyalty strategies, it's vital to have trustees on board. Creating a collaborative approach with trustees, sharing responsibility and the big picture, helps keep everyone aligned. Showing both long-term impact and short-term progress can help trustees see the value of investing in loyalty as part of your organisation's vision for the future.



"We're using the lessons from other industries to shape our approach to measuring loyalty, focusing on how much more a customer is worth over time if you invest in their experience. [...] Selling this long-term vision to the Executive Group and subsequently to trustees has been a multi-step process. We're fortunate that our Exec. and Board are on board, understanding that this investment in customer-centric end-to-end experiences (both in-the-moment interactions, as well as interactions over a lifetime), creates lasting impact and not just immediate revenue. We've painted a big picture, using examples from other sectors to show how loyalty investments have paid off. It's about showing the Exec. and trustees this isn't a luxury—it's a necessity."

Leah Mates, BHF

Case Studies



Funders Collaborative Hub

The Funders Collaborative Hub connects UK funders, creating more effective partnerships to tackle complex social issues. Launched by the Association of Charitable Foundations, the Hub provides a space where funders can align resources, share strategies, and collaboratively address challenges that require complex solutions. The hub frequently hosts collaboration events, offers personalised introductions to peers, and gives advice and guidance on best practices for collaboration.

So What: The Hub underscores the potential of pooling resources to scale efforts and drive lasting change, especially in tackling society's most complex issues.



Extinction Rebellion

Extinction Rebellion (XR) has been one of the most visible environmental movements globally, known for their creative, nonviolent protests (think of the iconic pink boat in Oxford Circus). How have they reached their success? Essentially, XR operates as a decentralised network, encouraging groups to self-organise, guided by their principles. Larger XR bodies support with resources, branding, and training, but autonomy is at the core, to encourage grassroots organising.

So What: XR's model shows how decentralised structures can scale a movement and empower communities. It's the potential for people-powered impact and letting localised, on-the-ground voices shape action while staying united by passion for a shared mission.

Case Studies



Swifties4Kamala

Taylor Swift's influence extends beyond music; her fans (known as "Swifties") have shown remarkable power in political activism. Through fan-led initiatives like Swifties4Kamala, they mobilise to support causes aligned with Swift's own values (or, at least, what they perceive her values to be), demonstrating the impact of fandom as a force for social and political change. Swifties4Kamala has, at the time of writing, raised over \$234,000; and is actively organising grassroots efforts and hosting virtual and in-person events to support the Harris campaign. By inspiring her fans to engage on issues she champions, Swift turns fandom into active advocacy. In the words of Swifties4Kamala: "We're harnessing the power of fandom to boost voter turnout, create impactful social media campaigns, and drive engagement in key battlegrounds."

So What: Swift's approach reveals how passionate fan bases can drive real-world impact. This is a reminder for charities that rallying a dedicated community around shared values can create a powerful force for change, engaging collaborators beyond donations to become advocates in their own right. How are you mobilising your advocates?



Case Studies



Friends with Benefits

Friends With Benefits (FWB) is a social DAO (Decentralised Autonomous Organization) that merges community and economy, transforming traditional fanbases into thriving, self-sustaining ecosystems. Members of FWB use tokens to gain access to exclusive content, events, and unique opportunities, creating a framework where everyone contributes to and benefits from a shared pool. This structure empowers community members and creators to co-create value and build new income streams, blurring the line between collaborators and creators and giving all participants a stake in the community's success. FWB's model is tearing down the old barriers between creators and audiences, enabling a collective ownership experience where value isn't just produced but is owned and distributed by the members themselves. This dynamic creates a new kind of loyalty—one driven by direct engagement and shared investment in the community's growth.

So What: Friends With Benefits exemplifies how DAOs can give communities a tangible stake in shared success. The model offers a blueprint for creating reciprocal relationships with collaborators, where contributors are not just donors but co-owners in the mission's impact.



EpilepsieNL

In 2023, in honour of Brain Awareness Week, Dutch epilepsy charity gave its community a vote. First, through their 'Vertel Het Ons' ('Tell Us') campaign, they asked their collaborators and beneficiaries to suggest research questions about epilepsy, which were then distilled into 18 questions. They then opened the polls and let their community vote to prioritise these subjects, which would help inform the research focus for the charity over the coming years.

So What: One of the charity's primary goals is to provide accurate and potentially life-saving information for people with epilepsy and their loved ones. They're choosing to trust their beneficiaries to know what information would be most helpful and handing over the reins.

Case Studies



Hinge

Hinge’s CMO has set an unconventional KPI—creating dates so successful that users no longer need the app. By prioritising user outcomes over retention, Hinge embraces authenticity and positions itself as the dating app for people serious about finding love. This approach challenges traditional metrics, showing that loyalty and satisfaction can be built even when the goal is for users to “leave.”

So What: Hinge’s model underscores the power of prioritising genuine impact over typical engagement metrics. For charities, designing programs around authentic outcomes can deepen trust, making collaborators feel their involvement truly matters.



Lankelly Chase

In a groundbreaking shift, UK charitable foundation Lankelly Chase is dissolving its £130 million endowment to directly support grassroots, community-led organisations working on social justice. Citing traditional philanthropy’s roots in “colonial capitalism,” Lankelly Chase aims to relinquish control and redistribute wealth. The foundation’s approach emphasises transparency, accountability, and the empowerment of communities previously underserved by conventional funding models.

So What: Lankelly Chase’s decision challenges charities to rethink the structures of wealth and power in philanthropy. By radically redirecting resources, they pave the way for charities to adopt more inclusive and decolonised funding practices that prioritise community-led solutions.

So What?

1 Embrace Flexible Loyalty

Loyalty today doesn't look the way it did even a few years ago. With changing economic pressures and evolving personal priorities, people's ability to engage isn't always continuous. Charities need to recognise that loyalty may ebb and flow, with collaborators stepping back for periods before re-engaging.

So What: Create flexible pathways that make it easy for collaborators to reconnect when the time is right. Building loyalty in the long term means embracing this ebb and flow, focusing on accessible, adaptable ways for people to stay connected, regardless of where they are in their journey.

2 Build Loyalty Through Collaborative Fundraising

Our missions are too big and complex to solve in isolation, so why are we asking collaborators to choose who they work with? By embracing collective fundraising efforts and focusing on shared outcomes, charities can create a collaborative ecosystem that resonates deeply with collaborators prioritising mission over individual brands.

So What: Prioritise collective impact over brand competition and seek partnerships with aligned organisations. By focusing on a shared mission, charities can attract collaborators who want to make a difference and value the unified approach to creating change.

So What?

3 Evaluate If Your Cause Is Ready to Be a Movement

Movements are powerful drivers of loyalty, but not every cause is suited for one. True movements are built on a deep sense of shared purpose and require collaborators to feel a genuine emotional connection. Before launching a movement, consider if the goal is genuine systemic change or simply raising awareness—movements need a cause that collaborators can rally around wholeheartedly.

So What: Ensure your motivation for starting a movement aligns with community needs. Movements work best when driven by a strong, shared purpose that collaborators can connect with. Build a movement only if it serves a larger mission that people can genuinely believe in and rally behind for the long haul.

4 Redefine Loyalty as ‘Time-Boxed’ Engagement

Not all loyalty needs to last forever. Some collaborators may be drawn to time-bound campaigns or specific projects rather than ongoing support. This doesn’t diminish their loyalty; it highlights the value of purpose-driven, high-impact engagement that may only last a season but deliver strong results.

So What: Embrace time-boxed loyalty and make it easy for people to engage on their terms. Allow for short-term, outcome-focused collaborations that give people meaningful ways to contribute without requiring a long-term commitment. By valuing these moments of intense, focused support, charities can achieve high-impact results, even if the relationship isn’t permanent.

5 Rethink Governance to Empower Collaborators as Stakeholders

Future-proofing loyalty may mean rethinking how decisions are made. Governance models that bring collaborators into decision-making foster transparency, trust, and shared ownership. Decentralised approaches, such as collaborative voting or input on critical projects, create a sense of co-ownership that goes beyond traditional support.

So What: Consider governance models that allow collaborators to have an authentic voice in your organisation’s strategy and mission. Experiment with participatory models—like community voting or shared decision-making—to build a culture of trust and shared purpose. By empowering collaborators as stakeholders, charities can create a loyalty that feels deeply personal and enduring.

So What?

6 Invest in Tech and Data for Personalised Loyalty

Future loyalty strategies require understanding and responding to collaborators on a personal level. Investing in technology and data enables charities to build personalised engagement journeys, helping collaborators feel recognised and valued over time. As loyalty shifts from transaction-based to relationship-based, these tools are essential for adapting to individual preferences and needs.

So What: Prioritise technology and data analytics investments to understand and track collaborator preferences. By creating personalised experiences, charities can deepen loyalty and ensure each interaction feels relevant and meaningful, building a stronger foundation for long-term engagement.

7 Make Loyalty Investments Sustainable by Thinking Long-Term

Building loyalty is a strategic choice that doesn't yield immediate cash returns. Charities investing in loyalty must commit for the long haul, creating multi-year plans that integrate loyalty as a central part of organisational goals. Sustainable loyalty requires organisations to prioritise consistent growth and adaptability over quick returns.

So What: Develop multi-year loyalty strategies that align with organisational goals, focusing on sustainable engagement rather than immediate results. This approach helps build a stable support base over time, rather than reacting to short-term shifts and ensures loyalty investments align with the charity's mission.

So What?

8 Create Pathways for Collaborators to Reconnect

In a world where loyalty is more flexible than fixed, making it easy for collaborators to re-engage after stepping back is essential. Life circumstances change, and collaborators may need to temporarily pause their support. By creating clear pathways for reconnection, charities can ensure they remain a welcoming space whenever collaborators are ready to re-engage.

So What: Design simple, accessible ways for collaborators to reconnect. Reengagement campaigns, periodic check-ins, or flexible membership options can remind collaborators that your organisation is always there for them. Charities can nurture lasting relationships by focusing on adaptability, even when engagement isn't continuous.

9 Reimagine Loyalty as a Value-Driven Culture Within Your Organisation

Building loyalty externally requires internal alignment. When employees, trustees, and volunteers are all invested in and motivated by a strong, shared mission, it creates a culture of loyalty that naturally extends to collaborators. Loyal collaborators are drawn to charities that feel authentic and united in their purpose.

So What: Foster a culture of loyalty within your organisation, ensuring every team member feels aligned with the mission and understands the value of long-term collaborator relationships. A unified internal culture of loyalty can strengthen every outward-facing loyalty effort, creating a more authentic and compelling experience for collaborators.

10 Co-Creation: Turning Supporters into Collaborators

Today's supporters don't just want to donate; they want to actively contribute to the cause. By inviting them to share ideas, provide feedback, and co-create initiatives, charities can build a sense of shared ownership that deepens commitment and drives innovation.

So What: Charities should create genuine opportunities for supporters to contribute to decision-making, content, and strategy. This approach builds trust and empowers supporters to feel like true partners in the mission, fostering a reciprocal relationship that strengthens loyalty and commitment.



*But Really,
So What?*

But Really, So What?

1

Break Free from the Funnel. Embrace the Loyalty Loop

Forget the outdated idea of a linear journey. Loyalty today is a continuous loop—an ongoing, evolving relationship. Build strategies that allow collaborators to flow in and out, engaging in natural ways. Don't chase rigid paths; create a cycle of inspiration that keeps them returning.

2

Redefine What Loyalty Looks Like

Loyalty isn't just about money. It's about advocacy, community, and showing up. Start valuing every act of support, from spreading the word to building connections. The future of loyalty demands that you see the actual value of your champions, even if they never give a penny.

3

Take a Stand

Playing it safe doesn't win loyalty. Today's audiences want brands that live their values unapologetically. Go beyond feel-good messaging—take bold, authentic stands that resonate deeply. Make people feel something, even if it's uncomfortable. In today's landscape, loyalty belongs to the brave.

4

Commit to Loyalty for the Long Haul

Loyalty isn't a quick fix. It's a long-term play that requires patience, investment, and commitment. Move away from short-term results and focus on building a resilient base of supporters here for the long run. It's time to commit to loyalty, not just flirt with it.

5

Measure What Matters

Stop relying solely on numbers and financial metrics. True loyalty lives in sentiment, advocacy, and emotional connection. Start tracking the intangible qualities, showing how people **feel** about your mission. Emotional connection is the currency of tomorrow's loyalty.

6

Treat Supporters as Collaborators, Not Passive Donors

Your collaborators don't want just to support your mission; they want to shape it. Give them the chance to create, advocate, and act alongside you. When people feel part of the solution, loyalty transforms from transaction to partnership. Empower your community to co-create the future with you.

9

Embrace Positive Friction

Not everything should be instant. Build in moments that make people pause, reflect, and engage more deeply. Intentional friction can create powerful, memorable experiences that leave a lasting impact. Slowing things down is okay—some journeys are meant to be savoured.

8

Deliver Moments that Matter

Loyalty isn't a one-way street. Surprise your collaborators with thoughtful touches, exclusive perks, and memorable "wow" moments. Don't just say you value them—show it in ways that make them feel seen, appreciated, and motivated to stay connected.

7

Build Bridges for Re-Engagement

Life happens, and collaborators may need to step back. Just because you class them as lapsed, we doubt they see themselves that way! Don't let that be the end of the story. Create open, accessible pathways for people to rejoin when they're ready. Loyalty isn't a one-time gig—keep the door open and let them know they're always welcome.

10

Collaborate, Don't Compete

Big challenges demand collective action. Join forces with other organisations and focus on shared missions, not brand competition. By rallying collaborators around collective impact, you can create a loyalty ecosystem that's bigger, bolder, and far more powerful than any single brand.

11

Dare to Be Different

Polished, predictable content is forgettable. Dare to be bold, playful, and a bit unpredictable. Embrace the weird, the joyful and the authentic. When collaborators see your organisation's genuine, unfiltered side, they're more likely to feel a personal connection. Don't blend in—stand out.

14

Be Transparent and Build Trust in Data Use

Hyper-personalisation is powerful, but it requires trust. Be transparent about collecting and using data, ensuring collaborators understand the benefits and feel respected. Trust is non-negotiable—without it, loyalty has no foundation.

13

Make Post-Donation Count: Start the Real Journey After the Ask

The donation is just the beginning. Engage collaborators with thoughtful follow-ups that show gratitude, share progress, and deepen their connection to the mission. Post-donation touchpoints aren't an afterthought; they're vital to creating lasting loyalty.

12

Create Spaces for Belonging, Not Just Loyalty

True loyalty grows in communities where people feel they belong. Invest in digital and physical spaces where collaborators can connect, share, and support each other. Build belonging, and loyalty will follow.

15

Make Loyalty a Value-Driven Culture from the Inside Out

Loyalty begins within. When your team is deeply connected to the mission, it shows. Build a culture of loyalty across every level of your organisation so that authenticity radiates outward. Loyal collaborators are drawn to organisations that are unified in purpose.

16

Think of Loyalty as Your Legacy

Loyalty isn't about short-term gains; it's about building a legacy. Start thinking of loyalty as the foundation you're laying for the future, one that will stand the test of time. True loyalty leaves a mark that lasts.

19

Know Who You're Willing to Lose

Trying to please everyone dilutes your impact. Be clear about who your core collaborators are, and build loyalty with those who truly align with your mission. Loyalty is strongest when it's specific—standing for something, even if it means letting go of the rest.

18

Invest in Tech and Data for Personalised, Lasting Loyalty

Personalisation isn't a luxury—it's essential. Invest in the technology and data tools needed to create experiences that make collaborators feel recognised and valued. Build loyalty that adapts to each individual, fostering more profound, more personal connections.

17

Use Storytelling to Turn Impact into Inspiration

Data may prove your impact, but storytelling makes people feel it. Bring your mission to life with stories that connect emotionally, creating bonds that inspire lasting loyalty. Let collaborators see the human side of your work—numbers tell, but stories sell.

20

Collaborating on Impact

Impact is about more than metrics on a spreadsheet—it's about real, lasting change. Imagine if the sector came together to redefine how we measure, report, and talk about impact. By creating a shared language that captures social value—things like community strength, emotional connection, and long-term benefit—we can tell a story that resonates on a human level. Let's move beyond the financials and start measuring our actual currency: the social impact we create together.



Future- Proofing Loyalty



Future-Proofing Loyalty

Want to explore the future of loyalty for your organisation?
Good Innovation are here to help.

How Future-Proofed is Your Loyalty?

Is your loyalty strategy built to last, or will it need an overhaul in five years? As audiences evolve, so must your approach to loyalty. Where does loyalty sit within your organisation? Is it valued by your Board and trustees as a strategic investment, or is it viewed solely through the lens of in-year cash flow? Do you have the metrics in place to navigate the highs and lows of fundraising, and are you truly ready to meet the expectations of modern collaborators?

To help answer these questions, we've developed a loyalty diagnostic tool designed to assess how future-proofed your loyalty strategy really is. Through a structured conversation using the themes in this report, we can evaluate your current approach, highlight strengths and gaps, and give you a score that shows where you stand—and where you can grow. Ready to see how your loyalty strategy measures up?

[Get in touch for a conversation.](#)

Social Currency Collaboration

We need a shared language and metrics for impact—one that goes beyond “money in, money out” or participants engaged, to capture the true, real-world impact of our work. It's time to move beyond broad terms like ‘purpose’ and ‘sustainability’ and communicate what our work achieves in concrete, meaningful terms.

Creating this framework could be transformative, making it easier for organisations to demonstrate value and develop more effective solutions. But this can't be done in isolation. Good Innovation wants to help convene a collaboration of charities, academics, and industry experts to explore this topic. If you're interested in shaping the future of impact measurement and helping to build a common understanding of social value, we'd love to have you join us.

[Get in touch to find out more.](#)

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