



International Public Fundraising Council (IPFC)

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"Maximizing F2F Fundraising volumes through self-regulatory planning tools"



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Editorial

by Jean-Paul Kogan-Recoing, *President of the IPFC*



Dear IPFC members, dear Face2Face stakeholders,

Today we are focusing on a fundamental issue that affects all self-regulatory bodies and stakeholders in the sector across all markets: the coordination of F2F fundraising areas. In some markets, this issue has even become central to optimising volumes without compromising the quality of campaigns, public and legal acceptance of our F2F campaigns, or the ethical codes of conducts of our sector.

Some markets have been able to optimise their F2F volumes perfectly. Others, with high potential, often miss out. Some markets have developed softwares to manage F2F sites, and their feedback is invaluable to us all. Others have not yet done so, are still looking for a methodology or are still hesitant.

In this newsletter, **Henk Dokter**, head of the Dutch F2F regulatory body DDDN, has accepted to answer our questions on this matter and share his vision with us.



Interview with Henk Dokter (HD)

Head of the DDDN, the Dutch F2F Regulatory Body

by Jean-Paul Kogan-Recoing (JPKR)

JPKR :

Could you give a brief overview of the F2F fundraising sector in the Netherlands, its global volumes and the segmentation between Street, Door 2 Door (D2D) and privates/events channels?

HD :

Yes. We have data from 2014 onwards. For D2D the number of new monthly givers has not been under 400,000 since 2015. Data for street fundraising is less clear, but the number must have been fluctuating between 200-400,000 per year.

JPKR :

Today, in a very mature market, self-regulation has developed significantly under your leadership. Could you tell us what the main stages of this structuring have been and the primary benefits that the sector has gained from it?

HD :

In the Netherlands I choose to organize the market through the association of the Fundraising Companies, DDDN. Two visionaries, Bert Cocu and Kees-Jan Heijdra, understood that for harvesting a maximal result, professional self-organization was the key factor to succeed.

History shows there are three main factors impacting the maximum life-time of a fundraising method:

- declining response rates because the public gets irritated
- governmental restrictions to protect the public against (perceived) wrongdoing
- market monopolies (business or charity based) keep volumes low, prices high and stall innovation

JPKR :

You obviously managed to implement a very efficient location management in the Netherlands. Could you briefly tell us more about it and what makes it so efficient?

HD :

Two factors were key. A good software solution and acceptance in a wider political landscape.

First, we built the software, second, we convinced individual charities. Main argument was that it would be smart not to over-use the best neighborhoods by ringing the same doorbells every week. In those 'best neighborhoods' the local politicians and the board members of charities live. It would not be smart to irritate

those people most. The D2D Plantool would spread the work over the whole country, adding life-time value.

The Dutch D2D Plantool is a simple software tool to plan neighborhoods for fundraising teams to go to for a charity. The rules are simple: A neighborhood is locked up to 4 weeks after use, and locked for at least 12 weeks for the same charity. A fundraising company can plan the number of neighborhoods according to past (last two weeks) needs. Good performance gives a higher historic need and more space to plan. We use an obligatory weekly (only hard) data flow which makes it easy to manage.

Next step was to convince charity organizations, the charity oversight body, local civil servants, local politicians, etc.

JPKR :

The Netherlands are a small European country, but have always been a major F2F market. Do you think the DDDN location management software has played a role in its sustainability – with significant volumes that have remained steady over the years? And if so, in what way?

HD :

The Netherlands are not a small European country. By population, the Netherlands are the 7th largest country in the European Union.

Yes, the way the Dutch Fundraising Companies organised the F2F market through the use of the D2D Plantool, and the smart way they assured a soft political landing for this way of self-regulating this market, is the single factor for the Dutch market to sustain these immense volumes for over 15 years now.

JPKR :

Do you think it has improved the quality of F2F fundraising? Why?

HD :

Yes. The D2D Plantool is an open source system, every fundraising company and every in-house F2F charity team can use the tool. The use is only limited to charities that have an "I Am OK" quality seal from the Dutch charity oversight body.

An open system supports a market with open competition, no monopolies. That this works is obvious, because we see a lot of new entrepreneurs. Most fail, but some have grown to be the biggest fundraising companies in the Netherlands, while former giants have vanished.

Open markets drive competition and innovation, which keeps volumes high and prices low. A negative aspect we see is, that the new and younger entrepreneurs feel less connection with the broader mission. They feel less bound to common rules and feel free-er to find short term profits. For now, there seems to be no movement willing to halt that more modern form of capitalism.

JPKR :

Some other F2F self-regulation organizations spend fortunes employing full-time staff, which is paid by charities and providers in the end. Obviously, the DDDN managed to be very efficient, saving a lot of money for the sector. How would you analyse this? Is it related to the efficiency of your location management software?

HD :

I would say that is not smart nor effective nor 21st century. Real solutions are either software based or are no solution at all.

JPKR :

This summer, the IPFC Board decided to develop a common platform that will be accessible to all our F2F self-regulatory members. In your opinion, what conditions must be met to ensure that relying on a F2F location management software does not create conflicts of interest in any national market and keeps the market fair for all players?

HD :

That is an easy question to answer. Key is the (software-) independency of any regulatory body. Software is the key innovation factor in almost any business these days. With the AI-revolution around the next corner, independency is so important. Within a handful of years just a few, internationally operating, software companies will be the biggest players in our market. Much bigger and much more powerful than national-based fundraising companies.

Imagine this: a girl, 23 years old, worked as a F2F fundraiser for 5 years. Now she wants to start her own business. As a young entrepreneur she needs to find a charity to work for. In her market there are 3 big fundraising companies: all using the same specialized management software of company X. This software helps all the fundraising companies to work smarter, cheaper and better than without this software.

What happens when she tries to find a customer? Charities hesitate to work with her because they are afraid the big company they work with might quit working with them. There are too few options in this market for volume-based F2F for charities, driving up prices and lowering quality. It is also driving up profits for the fundraising companies. See above, they can work cheaper using smart software, and can sell for a higher price for lack of competition.

To be able to compete she needs to use similar smart software as the three big companies. There are two options in this market, either company X wants to work with her or not. If not, it will be hard for her to find a charity that wants to work with her. All charities in this market are used to work with the software of company X as well. If yes, company X does want to work with her, company X can ask any price they want. If she does pay the price for the software of company X she will have no business.

This is why I plea that:

1. Self-regulatory bodies in a national market always use independent software for location management
2. Self-regulatory bodies in a national market need to own the software for location management themselves.

JPKR :

The IPFC board takes the same view. The IPFC board understands the importance of location management software in the F2F market. Charities and fundraising companies both benefit from using smart and innovative business management and payment software. The IPFC board also understands that monopolies of any kind (charity-based, company-based, software-based) are a hazard for any market.

The successful solution chosen in the Netherlands by the self-regulatory body is to use an independent planning software, that is compatible with all other software charities or fundraising companies are using now or want to use in the future.

I am happy to announce, that the common part of this software, which is applicable to all markets, is now accessible to all IPFC members. Henk has kindly offered his expertise to advise all IPFC members on this matter, if needed. We would like to take this opportunity to thank him warmly! Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to know more!

And also...you can become part of the IPFC network!

As a reminder, IPFC membership is now open to all recognised players in our sector as advisory members. To express your interest in joining the IPFC and participating in its working groups, please write to us at contact@ipfc.fund detailing your experience in F2F or your LinkedIn profile.

