

**SPORT RELIEF  
TAPPED INTO  
COMMUNITY SPIRIT  
TO GENERATE  
SIGN UPS AND  
BOOST FUNDRAISING**



# BACKGROUND

Sport Relief first launched in 2002. An initiative of Comic Relief, it is a weekend, every two years when the British public can get active, have fun and raise cash to help people living incredibly tough lives in the UK and around the world. The main event that sits at the heart of Sport Relief is the Sainsbury's Sport Relief Mile, a community event everyone can join. People signing up to participate generate income for Sport Relief by donating and being sponsored. So the more people participate, the more funds Sport Relief can raise.

In 2012, Sport Relief had their most successful year with increased participation and income generated from The Sport Relief Mile. Comic Relief discovered a compelling insight: 'The Neighbourhood Effect' derived from analysis of its database. This demonstrated that, whenever someone participated in an activity for charity, people within a 400-yard radius of the participant – the 'neighbourhood' – were three times as likely to donate and gave twice as much.

Across the country there were certain areas or 'neighbourhoods' with large populations of individuals who had a high propensity to sign-up – based on channel preferences, attitudes to charity and proximity to people who had taken part in the past. Using this insight, it was proven in 2012 that door drops in these neighbourhoods stimulated sign ups and targeted mail requesting fundraising in these areas generated a 400% increase in fundraising vs the control.

In 2014, Sport Relief introduced two more events: the Sainsbury's Sport Relief Cycle and the Sainsbury's Sport Relief Swimathon to form the Sainsbury's Sport Relief Games.

Always up for a challenge themselves, Sport Relief set themselves two tasks, to:

- Drive more people to take part in the Sainsbury's Sport Relief Games
- Increase donations and fundraising.

With such stretching objectives set against the previous bumper year of fundraising, Sport Relief knew they had to build on the insights and learning of past years to create a strategy that was highly targeted and cost effective, while at the same time maintaining reach.



# SOLUTION

Their first hypothesis was that they could enhance their previously successful segmentation by overlaying the Neighbourhood areas with data to identify geographic areas that were heavily populated by fundraising schools and Corporate Partners. By doing so they would identify 'hot spots' where they could amplify the neighbourhood effect to increase participation and income.

Their second hypothesis was that by targeting door drops to these 'hot-spots' they could increase their value further:

- Boosting the already 'hot' hot-spots'
- Increasing the uplift in the 'medium' hot-spots'; effectively turning them into 'hot spots'.

They focused their test in 'hot-spots' in areas around Glasgow, Manchester, Cardiff and London. Each area had a partner control cell that had similar socio-demographic and behavioural characteristics to validate the results.

850k door drop leaflets were delivered in total to the test areas with the sole purpose of generating sign-ups. In certain cells, the door drops were followed by warm mail to donors and influencers to stimulate fundraising.

A significant through-the-line marketing campaign to raise awareness of Sport Relief remained constant in all areas. The door drop landed at the launch of the campaign.

Although highly targeted data and analysis was driving the strategy it was important to remember that the event itself was all about having fun. The door drop had to work hard to communicate the buzz and excitement of the event, capture the community spirit and ultimately drive people online to sign-up.

To maximise impact, recipients were also asked to round up their friends, family and anyone else they could think of to take part. Each door drop contained window posters and sponsor cards to amplify the 'Neighbourhood Effect' by stimulating sign-ups and sponsorship.



# RESULTS

The results were startlingly positive, proving Sport Relief's two hypotheses.

Firstly, the neighbourhood 'hot spots' identified performed better than the general population as a whole.

Secondly, the use of door drop boosted sign-ups and fundraising in 'hot-spots'. Neighbourhoods were given a rating between 1 (coldest) and 7 (hottest). While all areas with a 4 and above performed well, the biggest sign-up and income uplift came from the 'medium hot-spots'.

"Having thoroughly tested the effect of door drops on event sign-up and donations over two Sport Relief campaigns, and seeing the fantastic results we got from them, they are now a major part of our communications strategy for Sport Relief 2016 and will hopefully become part of our fundraising DNA for future campaigns."

Liz Curry, CRM Manager, Comic Relief



Source: Liz Curry, Sport Relief 2014