

The Persuasive Power of Giving Others a Fresh Start

Jano Jimenez Barreto
Universidad de La Laguna
Grzegorz Kapuscinski
Oxford Brookes University
NICOLETTA OCCHIOCUPO
Sara Campo
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

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Abstract

In the face of declining contributions in charity campaigns, this research proposes a persuasive approach that appeals to donors by employing the metaphor of “giving others a fresh start.” Through a field study and two experiments, the authors show that messages in charity campaigns with the fresh start metaphor significantly increase donors’ empathy, perceived campaign efficacy, and willingness to donate. The effect of this approach is amplified when the campaign includes concrete descriptions of beneficiaries, such as “vulnerable populations,” instead of using abstract terms like “others.” Taken together, this work contributes to charity advertising by identifying ad-copy techniques that move beyond traditional coercive or emotional appeals, offering a metaphor-driven approach to motivating charitable behavior.

Track: Public Sector and Non-Profit Marketing