
Fundraising Everywhere keeps charities sustainable

[Fundraising Everywhere](#) has helped hundreds of charity fundraisers avoid the travel costs and the negative impact on the environment of a physical conference.

It does so by organising a global virtual fundraising conference broadcast on YouTube, Facebook and on their website.

ThinkBusiness talked to project co-founder, Simon Scriver about the impact of the unique event and their plans to change the face of fundraising.

What is Fundraising Everywhere?

Fundraising Everywhere is a series of virtual conferences for people in the non-profit world and beyond. We describe them as conferences you can afford to attend but can't afford to miss. It brings world-class speakers and trainers from all over, beamed into your laptop or phone, wherever you are. You can watch it all live while you have virtual chats with the speakers and other delegates in real-time in our virtual networking box. But you can also watch the recordings of sessions in your own time afterwards, as we know a lot of people can't necessarily devote a full day or more to these things.

What was the inspiration behind setting it up?

My co-founder Nikki Bell and I speak at a lot of conferences. We travel a lot, training non-profits, charities, events and more on how to fundraise, market, communicate and build relationships. We love conferences – they're our jobs and they have been incredible for our own personal development and networking. But it was clear that there was a huge percentage of people and organisations who just couldn't afford to attend, in terms of cost and time. Particularly in our sector, accessibility and the environmental issues around travel can be huge issues.

We believe in online training. However, it is usually quite flat. It can feel very isolated and boring, and doesn't bring with it all of the benefits you get at 'real' conferences beyond listening to a speaker. So, we worked hard to combine the best of both worlds. Our events are a mix of live and pre-recorded sessions - we chat with delegates, speakers and special guests live. We give our attendees a 'virtual delegate bag' with lots of bonuses and surprises. And the virtual networking that happens throughout the conference allows attendees to make the connections and ask the questions that we all find so valuable.

Is it part of a larger company and if so what do you do?

Really it's just my co-founder Nikki Bell and I. Sponsors have been very supportive and volunteers have helped with the subtitling in English and other languages. But to date, it's been Nikki and I that have taken care of the marketing, finances, tech, the website, everything. We know that can't go on forever, so in 2020 it's inevitable we'll bring on investors and support to help us grow this and bring even more features to the events.

Why is there a need for something like Fundraising Everywhere?

The number one feedback we get back is on accessibility. It's really affordable. It's reasonably priced for everyone and small charities can participate free of charge and get to hear from and communicate directly with the same speakers you would get at the world's biggest and most expensive events.

About a third of attendees aren't available on the day, as they have work or personal commitments, or emergencies pop up, so the fact that you can come back later and access all the material is a huge selling point. Training and personal development shouldn't get in the way of our lives. We had people watching while they sat on the bus, in the hospital, or listening in their car as they did the school run.

How successful was the live conference?

It was amazing. It really exceeded our expectations. Our ticket sales were already way ahead of goals, but then we saw a steady stream of people registering on the day who had seen the buzz on social media and didn't want to miss it. The positive feedback from attendees was overwhelming and we were so grateful to hear seasoned speakers say it was the best conference they'd ever been involved in.

We smashed our financial targets but to see people on different sides of the world connect and continue their conversations beyond the event has just been incredible.

What are your plans going forward?

We have two main events running in 2020 – we're repeating Fundraising Everywhere and we're also launching the Fundraising Everywhere Festival from May 11-15 next year. While the main conference is 'the how', we're thinking of the Festival as 'the why', with alternative speakers talking about broader subjects such as ethics, equality, personal development, and the very personal and emotional stories behind why people get involved in charity work.

More than that, we'll continue to run smaller, regular online and offline training sessions. We're getting ready to provide Fundraising Everywhere as an add-on to existing conferences. By bringing a virtual element into real life conferences we can help organisers sell more tickets and gain a bigger international audience. While that's not just for charities, we do find charities often feel obliged to run an annual conference that they struggle with in terms of finances and accessibility. We're going to help them overcome that.

We also want to improve the platform and need investment to do that. We have a lot of features we want to offer our attendees and the attendees of virtual conferences we help others to launch but the tech isn't all there yet.

How did you get into this type of work?

I did maths in college and started a career in finance. I also worked in sales but struggled to find motivation. I fell into fundraising - a mix between sales and finance – but for causes I really believed in. I've been a professional fundraising for over 15 years. Along the way I worked hard on my public speaking and presentation skills. Thanks to the likes of Toastmasters, I went from someone with a crippling fear of public speaking to someone who won the UK & Ireland Public Speaking Championships. Now a huge part of my job is speaking at conferences and running training. Fundraising Everywhere has taken all of this and combined it into one package, while making it possible to keep a healthier work/life balance, spending more time in the locations I need to be with the people I love.

Pictured: Nikki Bell and Simon Scriver, co-founders of Fundraising Everywhere

Interview by Olivia McGill

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