

# Capturing an older generation for the Organ Donor Register

**Category:**

2.5 Sector Stars. Public Sector

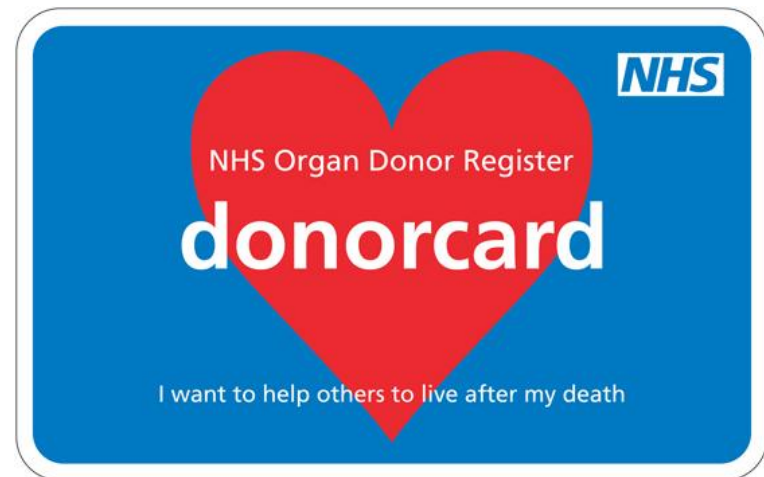
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## Precis

Organ Donation (OD) marketing in Scotland already has a long and successful history of building support from the Scottish population and recruits to the Organ Donation Register (ODR).

It's a fantastic story with numerous past awards. So what more is there to tell?

This paper outlines a new chapter in that story where a new channel, direct mail, brought something different to the OD marketing toolkit.

- Identifying the big challenge of attracting the older, harder-to-reach recruits who provide the majority of donations .
- Developing creative to dispel myths, tackle barriers to action and exploit opportunities like family sign-up and the power of 'official' mail.
- Spending budget wisely with a really cost-effective test mailing strategy to provide a basis for better value to the taxpayer.

And it's a story with outstanding response rates that shows how direct mail can compliment wider marketing to deliver today's and tomorrow's Organ Donors.

## Despite past success, attracting recruits to the Organ Donation register remains a huge challenge

### OD marketing has a successful history

Past OD marketing has played a key role in creating a climate of overwhelming support for the principle of Organ Donation. In fact, the most recent research of public attitudes showed 91% of people support Organ Donation in principle. (source: NHS Blood and Transplant 2009 survey)

### But the challenge remains huge – and urgent

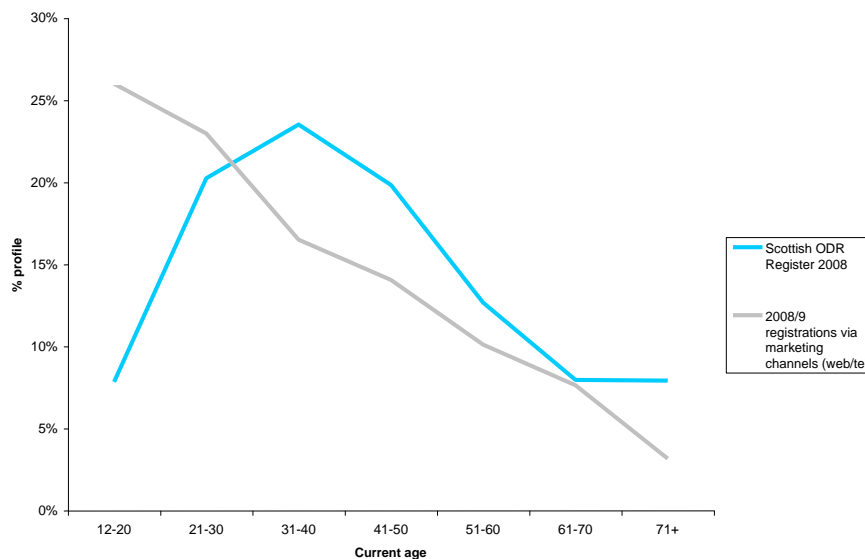
Almost 1.35 million were registered in Scotland as we entered 2010. A testament to the success of past marketing. But this total still represented less than a third of its potential figure.

This impacts on actual donations. Approximately 620 people are currently on the waiting list for transplants in Scotland – with around 20 people dying while awaiting transplants in the latest year.

### Audience analysis showed the challenge was more than numbers – it was demographics

Direct mail is all about targeting so one of our first steps was to profile the OD register and recent recruits. Chart 1 showed what emerged – an OD register with a relatively young profile and which wasn't attracting enough older recruits.

Chart 1 : The ODR success in recruiting the young

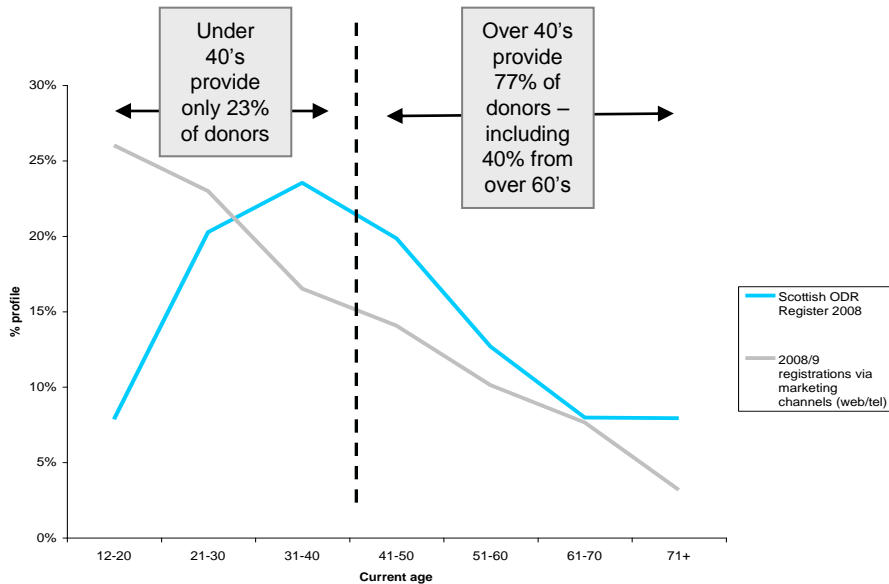


What was going on? We already knew that tick box recruitment when applying for driving licence applications was a huge source of younger people, typically delivering over 40% of recruits. But the chart makes clear that even marketing driven recruitment (as measured by sign-up via web or telephone) was also delivering a relatively young profile.

## Younger people are tomorrow's donors. Older people are today's

The problem is donors tend to come from the older age groups which are under-represented on the register - as chart 2 starkly shows. Those in need don't have time to wait. They need donors now. And that means finding ways to attract an older audience.

**Chart 2: A younger ODR represents tomorrow's donors, not today's**



## An insight driven strategy to deliver quantity and quality

With the overall objective clear, we now knew we needed to develop a DM strategy to deliver quantity (large numbers of recruits in a cost-effective way) and quality (successful recruitment of all ages – but particularly this older, more valuable audience). A series of specific insights then drove our thinking – from tackling myths, to overcoming barriers to exploiting opportunities.

### Tackling myths

We identified two closely related and widespread myths that were hindering recruitment of older audiences.

#### OD Myth

#### So in our marketing....

*Research confirms the widely held view that people “don't qualify through being too old or too ill” (NHSBT Synovate Research study 2009)*

#### Myth - OD is for young people

Intuitively, older people tend to think that donors are young – and aged bodies are somehow not useful.

*“We should highlight how even those in their 70's, 80's or older can be successful donors.”*

#### Myth - OD is for healthy, fit people

Many people believe donors have to be very healthy. Simply being overweight or having some type of medical condition could well be enough to self-exclude.

*“We should highlight that almost everyone is healthy enough to be a donor.”*

## Removing barriers

There were also practical barriers to recruitment applying to everyone, young and old.

## Exploiting opportunities

We also identified two particular opportunities – encouraging advocacy and the signing up of family and friends.

OD Barriers	So in our marketing....	Opportunities	So in our marketing....
<p><b><u>Barrier - The hassle factor</u></b>            Research and the success of tick-box channels indicated that the easier we made the process, the more passive support could be translated into action.</p> <p><i>“45% of people claim they would register on the ODR ‘there and then’ (if given the opportunity), but only 15% say they would definitely register in reality” (NHSBT Synovate Research study 2009)</i></p> <p><b><u>Barrier - Remoteness and lack of urgency</u></b>            OD doesn't have the immediacy of disaster appeals or mega charity events. Like sorting out life insurance, it can be uncomfortable and people find ways to put it off.</p> <p><i>“OD is easy to ignore... little or no personal consequence to not acting.... not an issue most people need to consider. Many don't feel comfortable talking about the topic” (NHSBT Synovate Research study 2009)</i></p>	<p><i>“We should focus a lot of our communication on making it quick and easy to act.”</i></p> <p><i>“We should stimulate action now by highlighting the urgent need of recipients (e.g. 3 people in UK die every day waiting for a transplant).”</i></p>	<p><b><u>Opportunity – The potential for advocacy</u></b>            The consensus of support for OD means most people in most households support in principle. Plus OD registration strongly encourages recruits to inform family of their wishes. This focused our thinking on the social and family dynamics involved. We felt there was a good chance that many individuals would be positive about signing up more family and friends.</p> <p><b><u>Opportunity - The power of the NHS</u></b>            We suspected that many people (particularly older people) might pay greater attention to more 'official' government mail. Perhaps never more so than with the NHS.</p>	<p><i>“We should strongly encourage and facilitate advocacy and the signing up of family and friends.”</i></p> <p><i>“We should test whether branding communication externally as NHS Scotland works better than branding it as part of ODR marketing.”</i></p>

## A test mailing campaign – to explore, refine and deliver

Most successful DM campaigns from fundraising to financial services are built on testing and refining creative, formats, messaging, response mechanisms and targeting – all designed to optimise response levels.

As a new channel for OD without a bank of past DM results, it made sense to adopt a test and learn approach.

### January 2010 Phase 1: A smaller scale exploratory mailing

A relatively small mailing (36,000 individuals) that provided insight, conserved resources and could set a benchmark for the next phase.

Areas we wanted to explore and analyse results for included:

- Testing formats - postcard versus envelope & letter
- Testing messages - tackling myths on the outer (before opening) versus leaving this to the inner (once opened)
- Testing outer branding (an NHS Scotland communication versus an OD register communication)
- Encouraging advocacy and sign up of family and friends (through messaging and response boxes)

3 creative routes were tested each targeting 12,000 individuals each.



**OD 'barrier tackling' letter:** OD branded envelope, letter, 2 x response forms - 1 for the addressee and 1 extra person (family or friend) and a prepaid reply envelope .

**'Official' NHS letter:** similar content to the other letter but within an official NHS Scotland branded envelope.

**OD 'barrier tackling' postcard:** tear off pre-paid self-mailer with reply card for the addressee.

## Results from phase 1 were outstanding

Results showed the short and sweet postcard format at 5.7% response was too short and sweet for this kind of task – and too easy to ignore.

But the letter creative was a different matter. The barrier tackling letter generated a 13.4% response but even this was beaten by the official NHS letter route at 14.8%. Anybody familiar with direct mail response rates will recognise just how exceptional a near 15% response rate is from a cold audience.

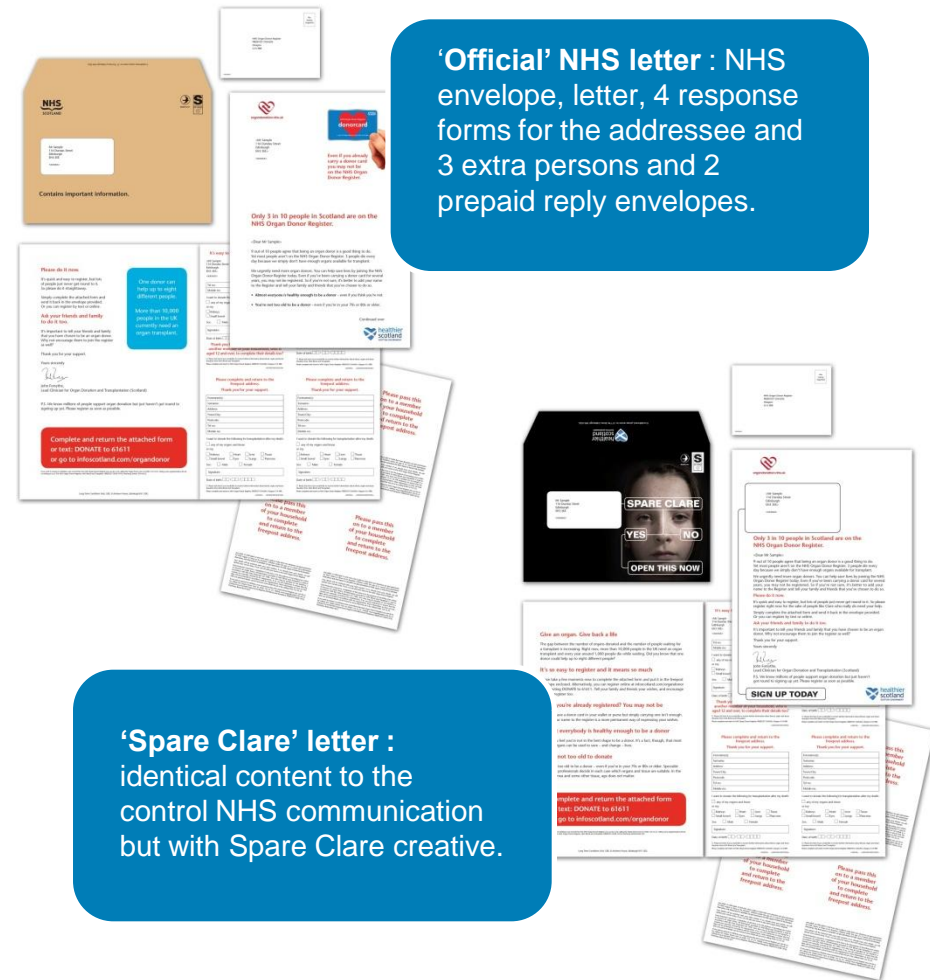


## March 2010 Phase 2: Refinement and further testing within a bigger mailing

We now had a very strongly performing official NHS letter to refine and take forward in an expanded mailing of 85,000 individuals, knowing it generates strong results.

The family and friends opportunity was vindicated so we gave it more visual prominence and scope through adding 2 more response boxes. Otherwise, content remained largely identical.

In phase 2, we could also time our mailing to land whilst the Spare Clare advertising and field marketing campaign was active – testing new creative we developed based on The Union's Spare Clare route.



## Equally strong phase 2 results confirmed a clear 'best performer'

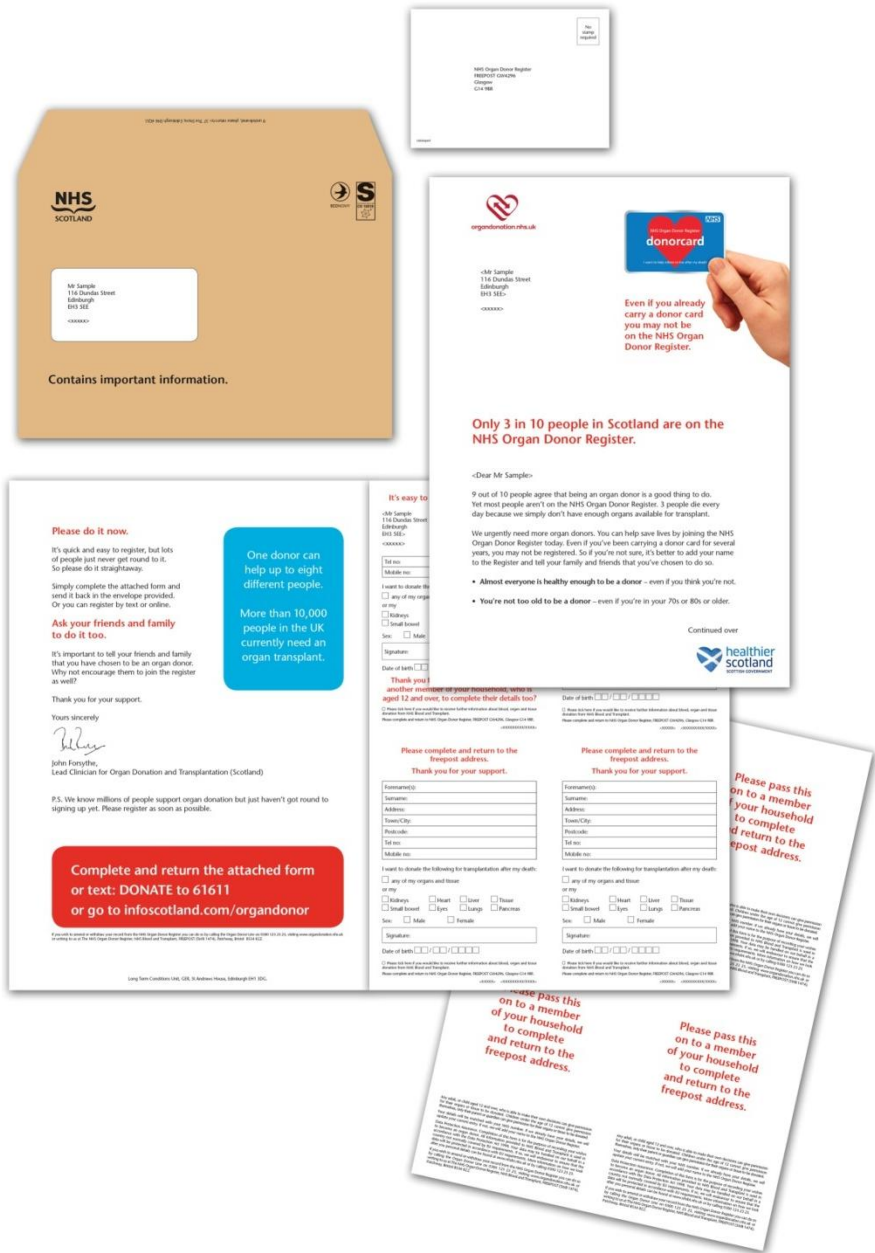
The Spare Clare integrated DM performed strongly at 9.8% response, outstanding in most contexts. But the official NHS DM performed even better producing a 14.5% response rate almost exactly in line with phase 1.

# An best performer to take forward

The 'Official' NHS DM delivered outstanding response rates of almost 15% - and a platform for driving down DM costs going forward.

Response rates built on insight:

- Dispels myths – almost anyone can be a donor
- Quick & easy response
- Highlights urgency of need
- Encourages family/friends sign-up
- Exploits the power of official mail



## Overall results: Direct mail delivered

### Quantity...

For a relatively small scale test mailing campaign, the volumes delivered were striking.

Both mailings combined to deliver **17,335 recruits** to the Organ Donation Register (12.5% of the total for 2010). This was a huge number for this scale of campaign – given that marketing-driven recruitment to web or telephone in the previous years of 2008 and 2009 was approximately 11,000.

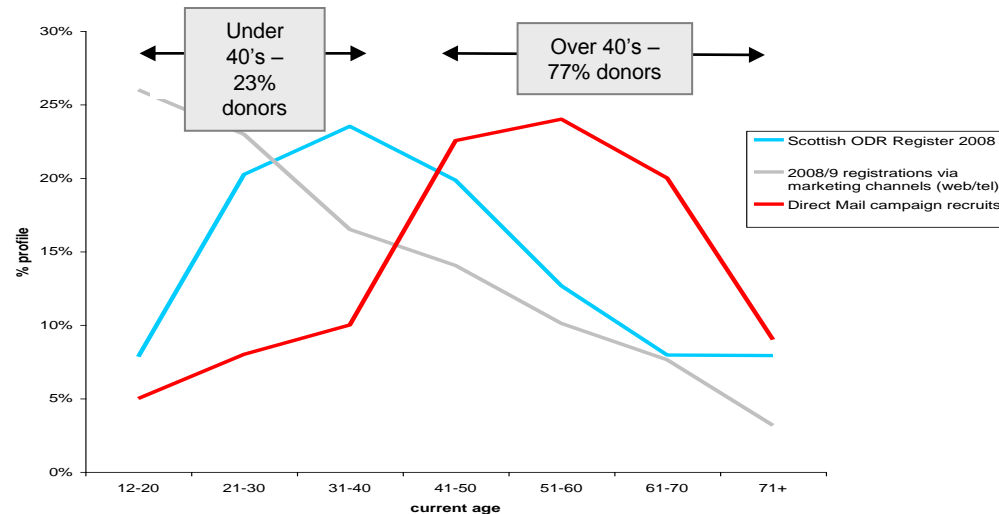
Our focus on family and friends in the creative and response boxes was also well vindicated. A whopping **7,444 recruits** came through this mechanism representing **43% of our total**.

### ...and quality...

But the big question was, were we attracting the older, harder-to-reach audiences we sought? Demographic analysis showed we were.

**76% of direct mail recruits were over 40 including 29% over 60.** This is more than twice the proportion of over 40's that were being recruited through other marketing driven channels. Direct mail could recruit today's donors, not just tomorrow's.

Chart 3: direct mail delivered the key, older, harder to reach audiences



### ...and cost-effectiveness

Test and learn was the smart way to deploy the DM budget – offering a basis for ever more cost-effective future DM.

Phase 1 was small and exploratory but still delivered a cost-per-response of only £10.37.

Phase 2 took the best of phase 1 forward to more than halve the **cost-per-response to £4.84**. An exceptionally low figure when direct mail norms in sectors like charities are typically many times this figure.

Future phases can benefit from pre-existing creative and the volume factor to lower cost per response even further.

## Executive Summary

This story is about a first (and relatively small scale) step for OD into a new channel – direct mail.

It's a story about building a campaign on audience analysis and a smart approach to test mailing and optimisation.

It's also about understanding the real audience challenge – quantity and quality of recruits.

This let us build our creative approach on a whole series of insights:

- Tackling organ donation myths that hinder recruitment of older audiences.
- Overcoming procrastination and practical barriers to stimulate easy and immediate action.
- Exploiting the key opportunities of family and friends sign-up and the power of official mail in an OD context.

And most importantly it's a story of results that really do speak for themselves:

- Well over 17,000 new recruits across both phases – more than doubling those recruited through marketing channels in previous years.
- An average response rate of 14.7% for our best performing official NHS creative route – offering huge scope for future recruitment.
- Conversion of the older and harder to reach audience that is so vital to actual organ donations now for those in need.

*"We were keen to introduce direct mail as a potential channel through which we could recruit more people onto the NHS Organ Donor Register. Tangible's approach and expertise in data analysis and interpretation had a really positive impact across the campaign. The insights that their work provided focused our targeting and led to some great results, Tangible were hugely engaged and ensured adjustments were made as necessary to improve efficiencies and performance at all times. Tangible achieved levels of success that we were really delighted with; they not only added significant scale but also recruited older age groups (35+) who were less likely to respond through other channels and were our key target group".*

**Jonathan Roper, Strategic Marketing Unit  
The Scottish Government**