

10 Ways To Get Noticed

Attracting attention is a major advantage for charity challenges – you have the chance to raise more money, generate vital awareness for your cause and amaze, amuse or astound onlookers.

1 Take on a Major Human Achievement

There are a few things left that have not been done before. Everest, rowing the Atlantic, swimming the Pacific, cycling the length and breadth of every continent have all gone, but there are more out there. To be a genuine physical pioneer you need serious training, resources and experience.

On 10th May, 2005, as she reached the summit of Denali, Alaska, Annabelle Bond became the fastest woman in history to climb the highest peaks on seven continents, raising over £850,000 for the Eve Appeal.

2 Be the First

The first woman to swim the Pacific, the first teenager to reach the North Pole, the first Englishman to run around the world or the oldest person to walk from Land's End to John O'Groats. If so far it has only been tanned, buff American men, then now it's the turn of the British pensioner to take it on.

3 Put Together a Worthwhile Package

Organising a project that hopes to gain attention simply by creating a genuinely interesting and meaningful scheme could catch the public's imagination or not. A long, hard and unpredictable route could be coupled with extensive awareness work, a volunteering project and a topical and relevant cause.

In 1999, Alexandra Tolstoy and three friends travelled three thousand miles along the Silk Road through Central Asia and China. They became the first people to retrace this ancient trading route on horse and camel since the merchants of the Middle Ages and raised £30,000 for Merlin. (see page 160)

4 Follow a Famous Route

There have been thousands of famous historical or mythical routes established, that have caught the imagination of the world for hundreds of years. Similarly, a map of the world is covered with important demarcations.

5 Choose an Emotive Cause

Some issues gain enormous amounts of coverage in the media. The cause that you feel strongly about may not have made a dent in the popular consciousness and you may rather address the imbalance and target an under funded crisis, but if you want to gain attention then you can become involved in a cause that is covering the front pages.

6 Be a Model Example

Charity challenges are a perfect opportunity to show people what's possible and what can be achieved. Most obviously, this is physical and psychological, but it can also be social, political, ethical or environmental: social inclusion, responsible tourism, ethical consumerism to name just a few examples. By making your project a model of best practice in a particular area you can attract worthwhile attention.

7 Give Yourself a Gimmick

The British mentality does not appreciate people who take themselves too seriously, but it does love those who are willing to do something ridiculous. Costumes and fancy dress are a perfect way of drawing attention to yourself. Making people coo in amazement at your bravery and at the same time chuckle at how ridiculous you look is a fantastic combination for raising extra money and awareness.

8 Take a Wacky Challenge

Hugh Sawyer is spending a year living in the woods around Oxford without a tent, whilst maintaining a city job in London and raising money for the Woodland Trust.

For a challenge to be worthwhile, it doesn't have to be an extreme physical test of endurance. It could also be a test of will in other ways, a sacrifice of lifestyle or a sustained period of discomfort. These imaginative and original angles make people smile and sit up and take notice.

9 Big Brother it

If the challenge is wacky enough and catches the popular imagination, you could approach a reality TV production company with a proposal for a programme. If you get a documentary deal in the pipeline then you have the opportunity to raise your profile with the media, the public and your potential sponsors. What happens to the ideals and purpose of your project, however, will no longer be in your hands.

10 Do It Naked

On the plus side, you are bound to get lots of coverage. Unfortunately, it is unlikely you will get very far without being arrested.