

I Heart CY appeal

An award-winning individual giving campaign



Image courtesy of Courtyard Centre for the Arts, Herefordshire

Author: Melanie Denning

Courtyard Centre for the Arts, Herefordshire



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



“The one thing that made it truly successful is that it was a fundraising campaign that was backed, supported and promoted holistically by all Courtyard staff.”

Curtis Fulcher

Courtyard Centre for the Arts, Herefordshire



Published 2017

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales Licence](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/uk/)

I Heart CY

fundraising appeal

The Courtyard Centre for the Arts is the leading arts provider in Herefordshire and a registered charity.

In March 2016, we lost our annual grant from Herefordshire Council and we needed to find a way to replace £130,000.

After a period of restructuring and redundancies, the whole team knew the situation was serious and we needed to take action.

We set ourselves a target to raise £20,000 in 16/17 from an individual giving appeal to support our community arts work.

The resulting I Heart CY appeal has just won 'Best Individual Giving Campaign' at the Emcees Fundraising Awards.



Developing the campaign

Most people know The Courtyard as a venue to watch live shows and films or to see exhibitions. Many are less familiar with our community arts programme that delivers enriching activities and workshops for all ages, both at The Courtyard and out across the county.

The Courtyard is rooted in the community. The building was the first lottery-funded arts centre in the country. It was developed within an old theatre space and has grown out of the community for the community. Our work focuses on touching people's lives and we wanted the campaign to reflect that.

We had used video and storytelling to powerful effect before in marketing. I had also attended the Midlands Arts Fundraising Forum where other fundraisers had shared successes in using video so we started thinking about the stories we could tell.

We spoke to our Engagement team and identified four examples of how The Courtyard touches lives. Appropriate staff members then contacted the people they'd worked with and asked them to get involved. We developed four videos, which formed a central part of the campaign and helped build word of mouth through different networks.



Getting the team on board

We began developing the campaign within the Communications team and then talked to other staff and volunteers. We invited ideas and made sure it felt like their campaign, rather than ours.

The team got behind the campaign from the outset and suggested activities that proved vital in reaching our £20,000 target.

Our front of house team put forward the idea of a 50:50 Lotto, which was covered by our lottery licence. They sold raffle tickets at busy events, such as comedy nights, and selected a winning ticket for each event. The proceeds were split 50:50 between the winner and The Courtyard. Throughout the year we raised around £6,500 from those raffles alone.

Our Head of Communications set himself the challenge of running eight half marathons in eight months and raised around £1,500. Other team members took on different challenges and raised money from their family and friends.

All of these activities happened under the I Heart CY umbrella and helped raise awareness of the appeal.

Building audience support

We used all available channels and touch points to engage The Courtyard audiences in the appeal:

- We invited £3 top-up donations on all ticket sales — online, in person and over the phone
- We used bucket collections and the 50:50 Lotto to engage audiences attending events
- Toby from our Youth Theatre recorded a special voiceover, encouraging people to support The Courtyard
- Our technical team played I Heart CY videos before each film screening
- The communications team developed a full calendar of activity including blogs from volunteers and project participants
- The appeal was promoted in the season brochure and on plasma screens around the building
- We made a direct appeal to patron level supporters, either by post or by email
- We printed leaflets and badges to promote the appeal



Engaging the wider community

We knew that, in order for the campaign to be a real success, we needed to build support from the wider community. We particularly wanted to involve children in the appeal.

We'd seen another charity use piggy banks for community fundraising and thought it was a great idea. I tracked down the promotions company that supplied them and the branded pigs cost around £2 per unit. We approached the local butcher that supplies The Courtyard cafe and they agreed to sponsor and part-fund the pigs, which enabled us to purchase 300 of them.

We gave the pigs to Youth Theatre and board members and handed them out at the Box Office. The butcher created an in-shop display and encouraged customers to fill a piggy bank for The Courtyard.

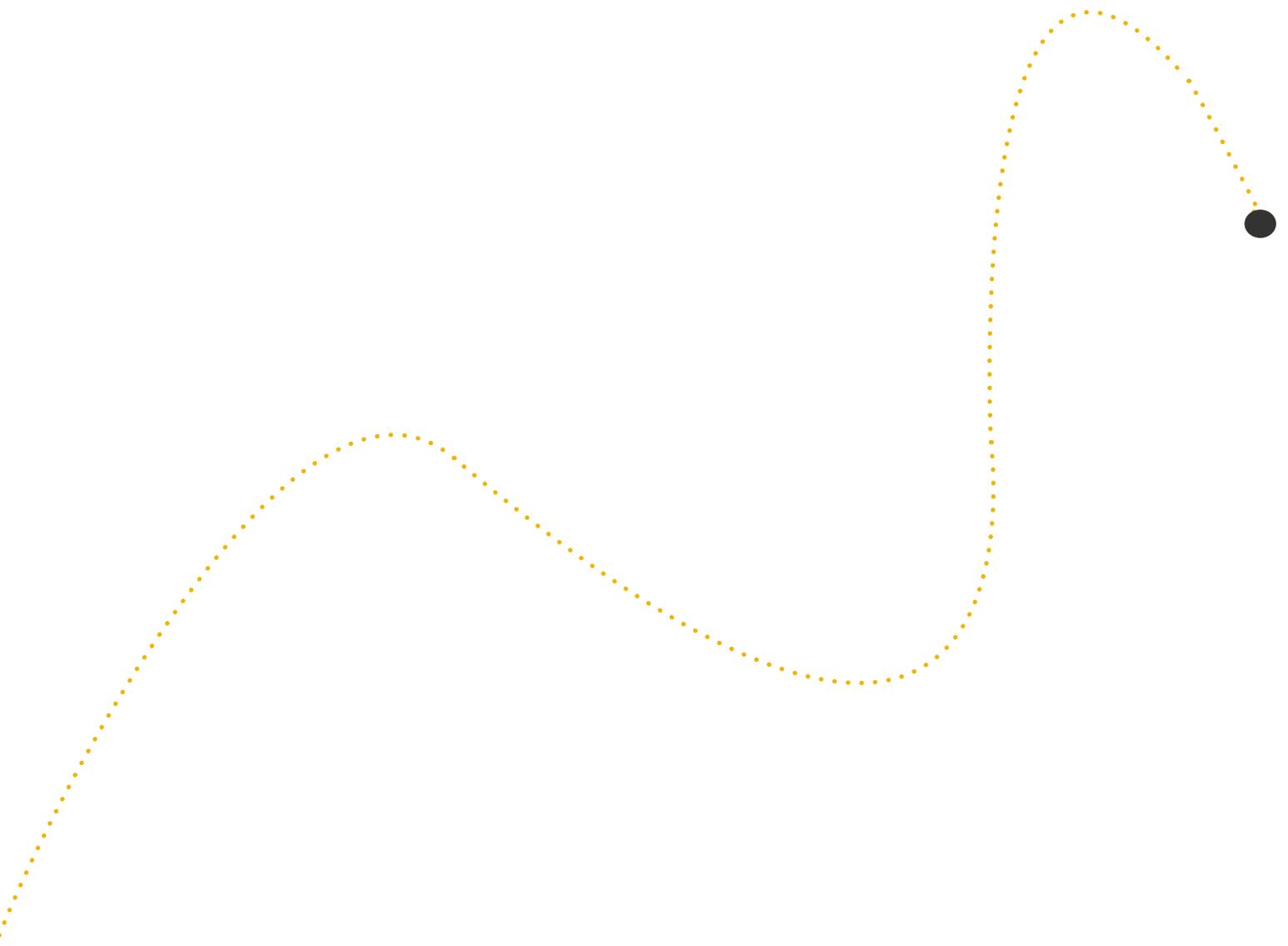
Staff, stewards and members of our membership schemes — especially many Patrons and Life Patrons — also signed up for piggy banks at their regular coffee mornings.

We offered prizes for the top fundraisers and made it a fun activity for people to take part in. Net of costs, the pigs have raised over £1,000 so far and we still have 100 pigs to go.



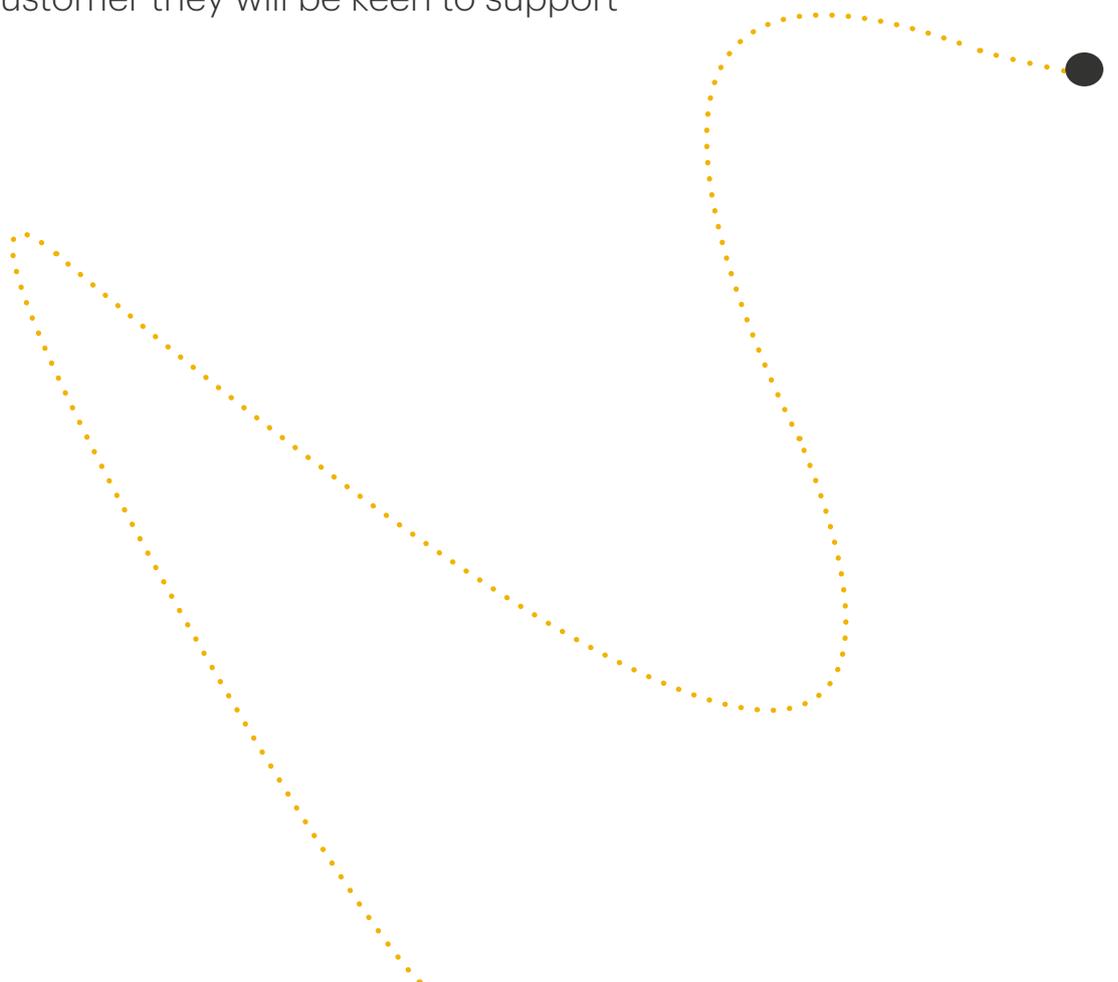
The results

- We exceeded our campaign target of £20,000
- Over £6,500 came from the 50:50 Lotto raffles at busy events
- Our largest single donation was £1,875 (including Gift Aid) and came from a Life Patron who regularly attends The Courtyard
- We had seven donations of £1,000 or more
- The most successful channel, in terms of volume of donations, was the website
- The average donation amount was £8
- We raised £7,000 just from Gift Aid



Recommendations

- Use as many different channels as possible — think about all the ways that people engage with your organisation and make sure you promote your appeal at every touch point.
- Don't forget young people — they are really powerful in passing on messages and engaging family and friends.
- Make sure you contact your members — they are nearly always your best advocates and will talk passionately about your organisation.
- Get the whole staff team involved — talk about the appeal in staff meetings and invite ideas. People are particularly engaged if you are showcasing their work as part of your campaign.
- Work hard to get your board involved — they will have contacts that will help you tap into new networks.
- Contact suppliers of your organisation — if you are a valued customer they will be keen to support your work.





culturehive.co.uk
learn from your peers online