



## **Charity Begins at Home? (or don't forget the marketing budget)**

The chances are that if you are reading this, you are (at the very least) "interested" in the charitable sector. More likely, you will be actively involved with one or more charities – and in all likelihood will also be actively fundraising for them.

Recent events elsewhere in the world – and in particular those in New Zealand and Japan – have made me think a bit about my motivation, and I thought I'd share that with you.

Let's start with New Zealand. I was fortunate enough to have a fantastic holiday in New Zealand in 2009 starting in Christchurch, and I can picture many of the areas that are now having to be flattened. That saddens me enormously.

Moving onto Japan, while I have never been there I was – as most of us have been – shocked by the coverage of the tsunami and the desolation that followed.

Notwithstanding the comparative wealth of New Zealand and Japan, I really do feel for the people there and the problems they now have. But should my and others' charitable giving to New Zealand and Japanese causes be at the expense of what might be called my normal charitable giving - or in addition? And, if I can't give additionally, then how do I "rank" the more deserving cause?

There are of course no easy – or any – answers to all of this (or if there are, please let me know and help me resolve my dilemma). I guess what this does show, though, is that all of our local, smaller charities and their needs are very much at the "commercial" risk of being "upstaged" by a larger or more dramatic issue, particularly if that problem is played out daily on our television screens.

What that means, I think, is that the promotion of those charities that we favour and help is a legitimate and valid use of that charity's hard won funds. Because, without those promotional activities, I am afraid there must be every risk that the smaller charities would simply sink without a trace from our consciousness. So, please bear this in mind when you next have a "grumble" about charitable monies being spent on non-charitable activities!

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