



**FORWARD
ACTION**



The state of digital fundraising

DATE

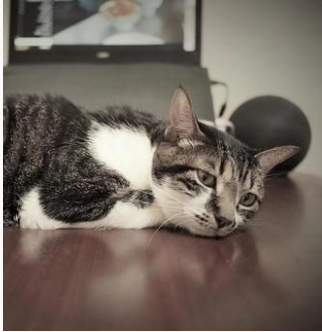
3 July 2025

PREPARED BY

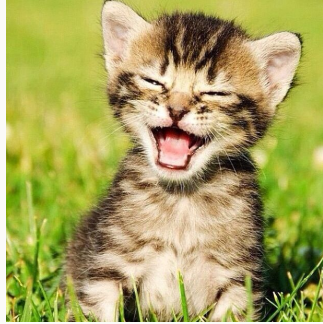
Ali Walker-Davies



In the next 20 mins...



1. Where are we now



2. Reasons to be cheerful



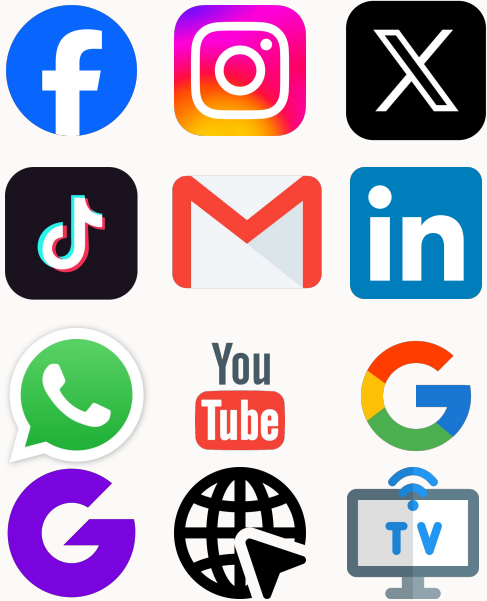
3. Foundations for success



4. What to do next

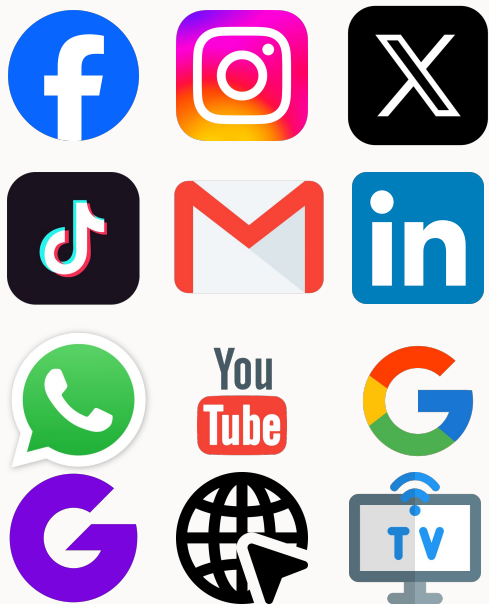
What is digital fundraising... really?

What people think it is...



What is digital fundraising... really?

What people think it is...



What it really is:

- * Reaching people where they are online, *with messages that matter*
- * Turning **digital moments into supporter actions**
- * Building relationships not just driving clicks
- * Using data, storytelling, and tech to fuel long-term income

The numbers aren't pretty...

- * 4 million fewer people gave to charity in 2024 than 2019
CAF Charity Giving Report 2024
- * In 2024, the average cost per email subscriber for Forward Action partners was £1.65. For M+R Benchmarks participants the median was £2.57.
- * Income per 1,000 email dropped by 25% between 2022 to 2023 (it's now £89 per 1,000)
M+R UK Benchmarks 2024

Feeling tired? It's not just you

- ✱ Digital fundraising is harder than ever.
- ✱ Platforms shift. Benchmarks slip.
Budgets tighten.
- ✱ It's a grind. And we rarely stop to say
that out loud.



Why it's getting harder

- ✱ Paid tactics are saturated, as costs rise, returns drop.
- ✱ Platforms change constantly - what worked last year won't work next.
- ✱ Virtual event boom? Already waning.
- ✱ Email volumes are up; attention spans are down.




Our digital lives today



The average UK adult is...

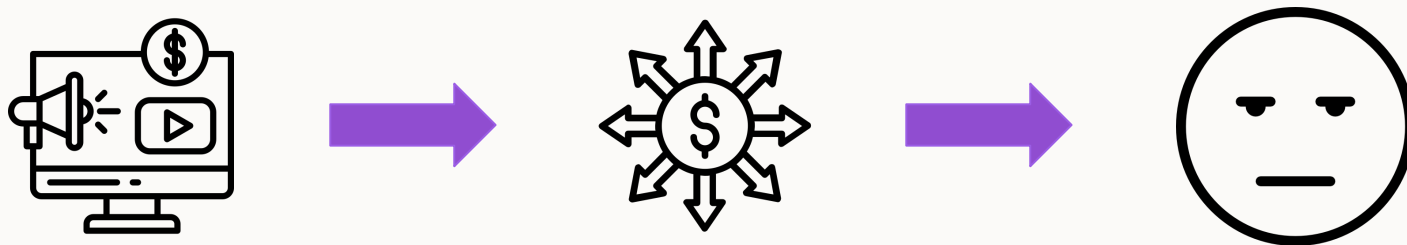
- * Spending 76% of their waking hours online.
- * Of that, 3+ hours a day is on our smartphones
- * And at least 2 hours a day is on social media.



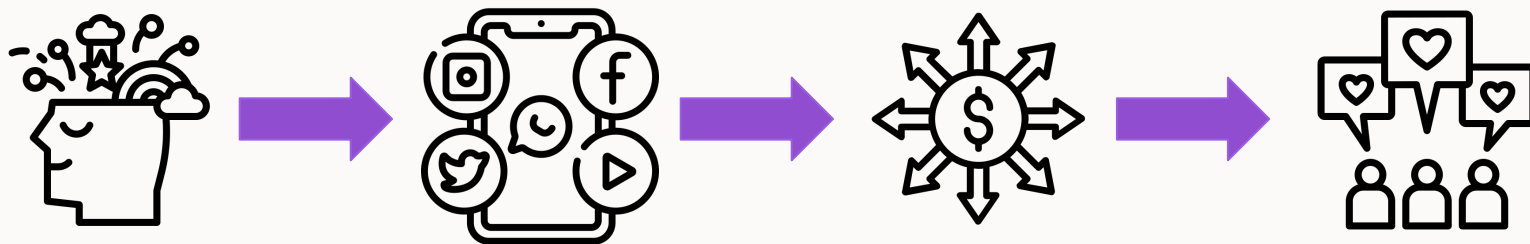
A collage of various banner advertisements. At the top left, there's an ad for a 'GREEN MACHINE' with a green car. Next to it is an ad for 'INNOVATE FASTER' with a blue background. To the right is a McDonald's ad with the text 'ONE PRICE FITS ALL' and 'McCafe'. Below the McDonald's ad is a banner for 'There's Still Time to send the perfect present' featuring Amazon and other gift options. To the right of that is a 'SHOP GIFTS UNDER \$50' banner. Further right is an ad for 'WRECK-IT RALPH' with a red background and a character. Below the 'There's Still Time' banner is an ad for 'iPod nano' showing several colorful devices. To the right of the iPod ad is a banner for 'WEEKLY RALPH' with a red background and a character. Below the iPod ad is a banner for 'Are you comfortable in your retirement?' with a white background and a person's face. To the right of the retirement ad is a banner for 'FREE MUG' with a white background and a person's face. Below the retirement ad is a banner for 'NINJA' with a white background and a person's face. To the right of the NINJA ad is a banner for 'Premium roast coffee' with a white background and a person's face. Below the retirement ad is a banner for 'HOLIDAY INTERNET SALE' with a blue background and a yellow bow. To the right of the holiday sale ad is a banner for 'Mornings' with a white background and a person's face. The central text 'When did you last click on a banner ad (on purpose)?' is overlaid on the collage.

It was never meant to just be ads

Broadcast first: Spend big, push the message out, hope for results.



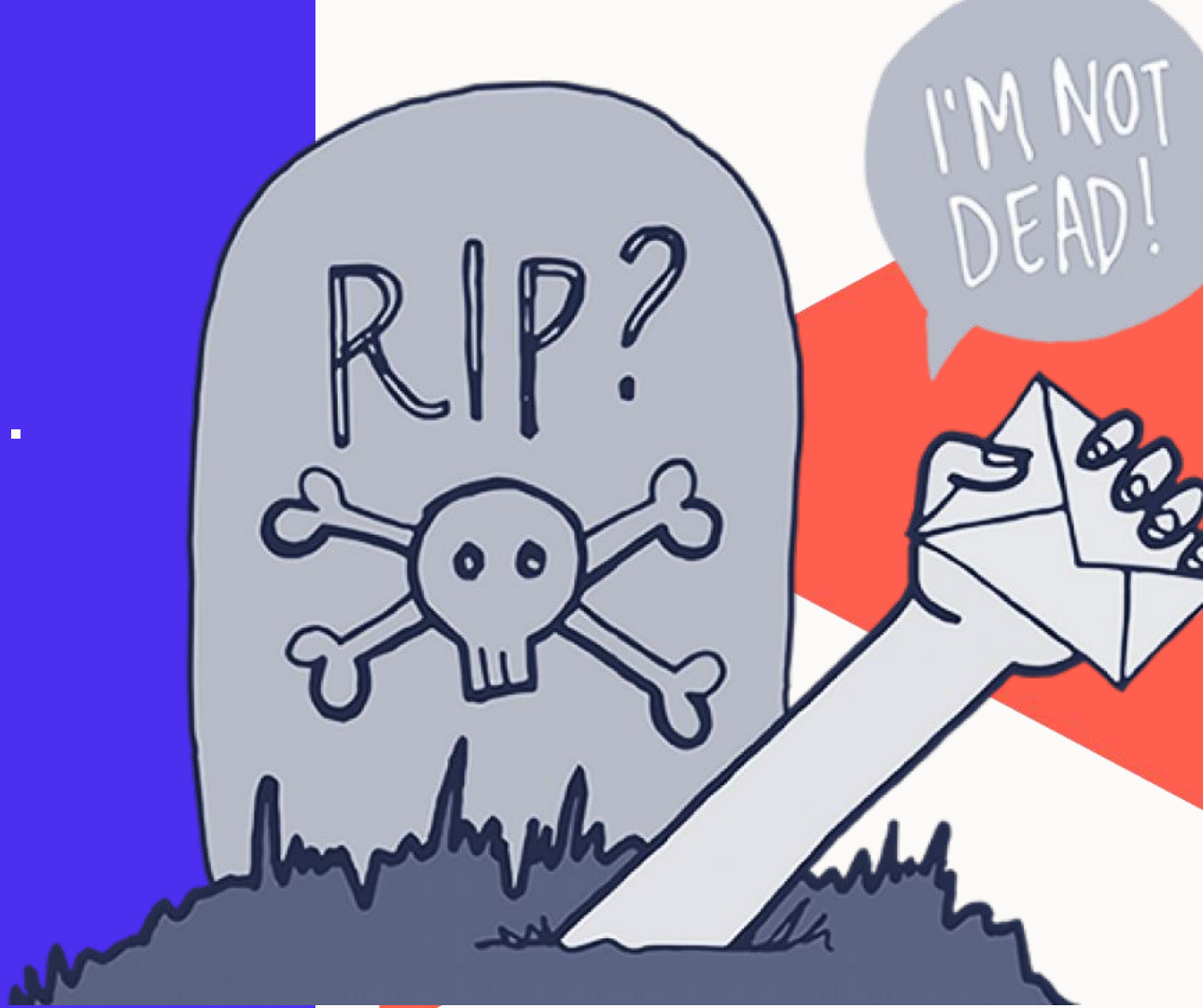
Idea first: Communicate something people care about – invest to amplify it.



Reasons to be cheerful



1. Email is still. not. dead.



THE STATE OF DIGITAL FUNDRAISING REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL



Ali - don't you just hate lies?

I *really* do. That's why I'm so driven in my job as Data Officer at Surfers Against Sewage - to use cold, hard facts to flush them out.

But right now, we're struggling to keep up with water companies' shameless cover-ups and toxic tactics.

Together, our fierce campaigning has forced politicians to promise action this year. But promises aren't enough. Until they adopt our roadmap for a sustainable water system, we've got work to do.

It's a race to build a bank of evidence to reveal the truth behind water companies' 'squeaky clean' spin.

That's why I've stepped away from the data today to ask: will you donate to ramp up our work to uncover these lies - and make sure they're IMPOSSIBLE to ignore?



Ocean Activist, this is the FINAL 24 hours to donate and have your donation immediately doubled to have twice as much impact!

So far, you've raised an incredible £X – it's a HUGE effort and we can't thank you enough. But with just a few hours left to hit our £200,000 target and for you to **DOUBLE** your impact with every pound donated, **I want to personally ask every**

They're pouring money down the drain

No images? [Click here](#)



This week, we said we'd be flushing out the lies. So, here's another for you Ali.

LIE 🗿: Water companies say they're investing in better infrastructure. 🗿

FLUSHED 🗿: Funny, that's not what WE'VE found: In the past 35 years, water companies have racked up £69.2 billion in debt and paid out £74.2 billion to shareholders. And last year alone in England, we saw 450,398 sewage discharges.

The money was clearly there. But water companies have repeatedly decided to put shareholder **PROFITS** before people's health and our ocean.

We can't say we're surprised, but we **CAN** call for change.

That's why we're ramping up the pressure – no slowing down, no holding back – until we get the transformational reform to the water industry we so desperately need.

With the Independent Water Commission making recommendations on the future of our waters as we speak, we can't let up the pressure. **Will you chip in this week to help us push for a sustainable water system that protects people's health and our ocean?**

Yes, I'll give £20 - doubled to £40

Yes, I'll give £30 - doubled to £60

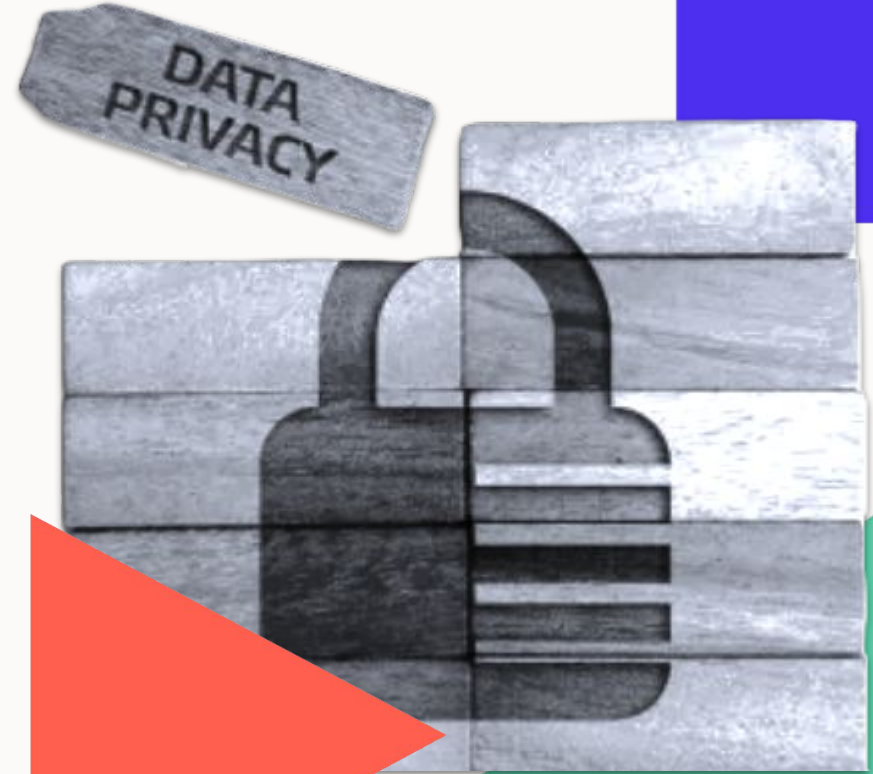
Yes, I'll give £50 - doubled to £100

Give another amount

Concept two:
**The shortest
month. The
biggest impact.**











2. The number of people you can keep in touch with is about to go up



The Data (Use & Access) Bill was passed in June 2025 and will soon become law. Charities in the UK will be able to use a “soft opt-in”. This is implied consent to contact people with marketing communications, under certain conditions:

- They are a registered charity
- The direct marketing must aim to further the charity’s charitable purposes
- Data was collected in the process of expressing interest in, offering support for, or providing support to the charity
- Individuals are given a simple way to opt out of marketing emails at the point of sign up, and in each subsequent communication

Before	After
Legitimate interest	Legitimate interest
Post 	Post 
Phone 	Phone 
Email 	Email 
SMS 	SMS 



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ACTION**



Soft opt-ins: How to grow your list without losing trust

June 2025

Helen Hector, Forward Action
Faye Brookes, Movement

3. People are still willing to fund the fight for a better world



Standing up for trans people

CROWDFUNDER

Fighting fund for trans rights

£123,941.43 raised of £150,000

2676 donations

Please choose the amount that you would like to donate below.

Most donors donate £19.09 or more.

£5

£10

£20

£50

£100

£200



Good Law Project @goodlawproject.bsky.social · 12d

On what is a really difficult day, here are some resources for our trans friends and allies.

Solidarity 💜

goodlawproject.org/resource/sup...



Support resources for our trans friends and allies | Good Law Project

At a time when anti-trans discrimination is rife and hate crime has reached record levels, it's important to know what support is out there for trans, non-...

© goodlawproject.org



Everyone hates Elon

STAND AGAINST ELON

**Let's turn every single tweet
Elon Musk sends into a
weapon against the far-
right.**

Pledge as little as 1p every time
he tweets and we'll turn his hate
into support for anti-racists,
immigrants and trans people.

Make your pledge

Elon Musk tweets around 2,000 times a month. You can pledge as little as 1p every time he tweets, and choose to cap your regular donation.

☐ 1p

☒ 2p

☐ 5p

☐ Other

Monthly limit: £20.00



This is the maximum we will charge you per month.

Next

Give Once

The building blocks of a strong digital fundraising programme in 2025



1: Great content that works in 2025



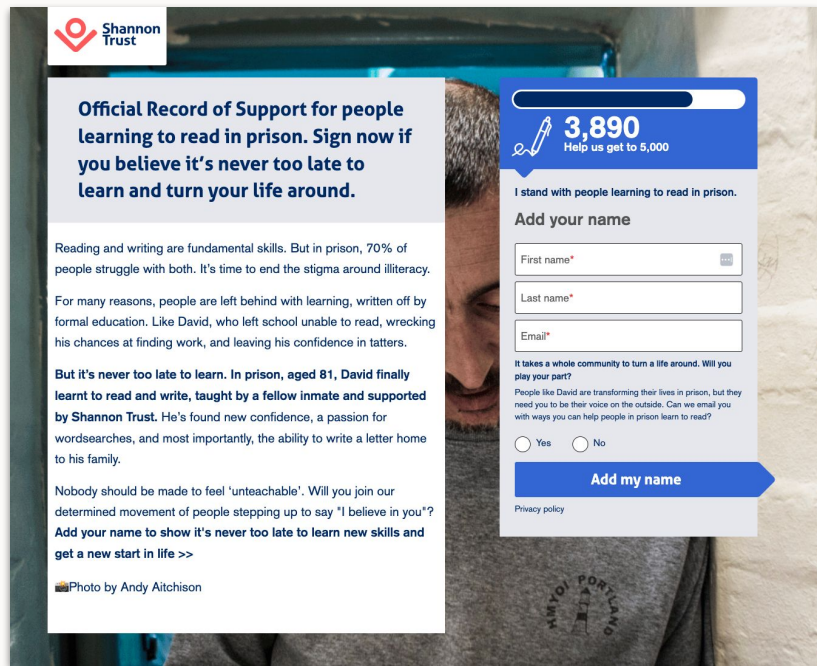
First person factual
breakdowns

Meme-first brand
humour (RSPB win)



Vox pops

2: An irresistible fundraising ask



Shannon Trust

Official Record of Support for people learning to read in prison. Sign now if you believe it's never too late to learn and turn your life around.

Reading and writing are fundamental skills. But in prison, 70% of people struggle with both. It's time to end the stigma around illiteracy.

For many reasons, people are left behind with learning, written off by formal education. Like David, who left school unable to read, wrecking his chances at finding work, and leaving his confidence in tatters.

But it's never too late to learn. In prison, aged 81, David finally learnt to read and write, taught by a fellow inmate and supported by Shannon Trust. He's found new confidence, a passion for wordsearches, and most importantly, the ability to write a letter home to his family.

Nobody should be made to feel 'unteachable'. Will you join our determined movement of people stepping up to say "I believe in you"? **Add your name to show it's never too late to learn new skills and get a new start in life >>**

Photo by Andy Aitchison

3,890
Help us get to 5,000

I stand with people learning to read in prison.

Add your name

First name*

Last name*

Email*

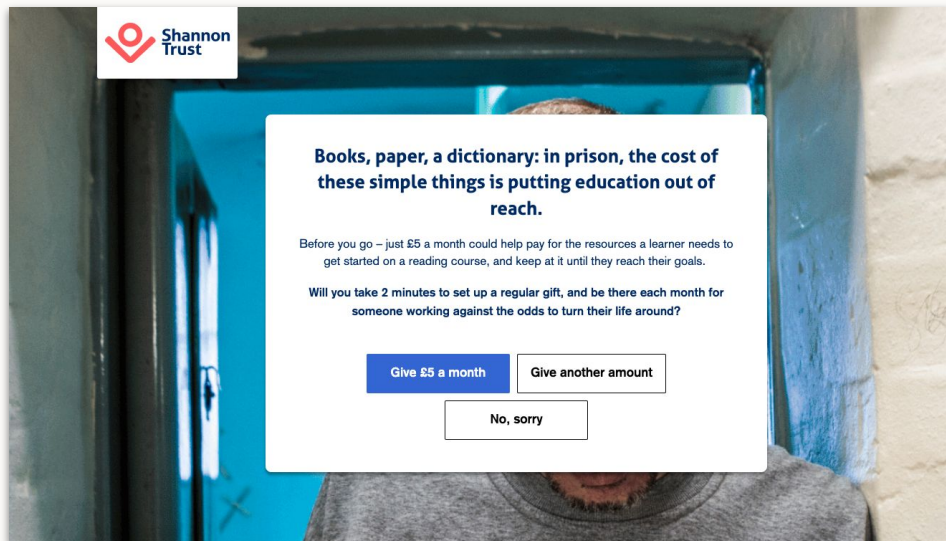
It takes a whole community to turn a life around. Will you play your part?

People like David are transforming their lives in prison, but they need you to be their voice on the outside. Can we email you with ways you can help people in prison learn to read?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Add my name

Privacy policy



Shannon Trust

Books, paper, a dictionary: in prison, the cost of these simple things is putting education out of reach.

Before you go – just £5 a month could help pay for the resources a learner needs to get started on a reading course, and keep at it until they reach their goals.

Will you take 2 minutes to set up a regular gift, and be there each month for someone working against the odds to turn their life around?

Give £5 a month **Give another amount**

No, sorry

What's your "why"?

3: Optimised donation pages

GOOD LAW Project

Donate

Menu

Will you help fund the fight for a better fairer future? ❤️

Please choose the amount that you would like to donate below.

£3

£5

£10

£20

£29

£50

£100

£

☐ I'll generously add £2.70 to cover the transaction fees so you can keep 100% of my donation. When you cover our transaction costs, you're covering both our processing and donation platform costs.

Repeat monthly?

Yes, I'm in!

GOOD LAW Project

Donate

Menu

Repeat monthly?

Yes, I'm in!

No, donate once

Start a monthly donation today to help us fight for a better future.

Donate now

VISA

MasterCard

Apple Pay

Donate by Card

Powered by SmartRaise

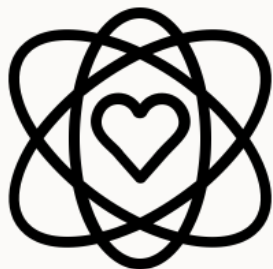
Support us

We can only keep fighting thanks to individual donations. Our people-powered model keeps us fiercely independent, so we can hold power to account.

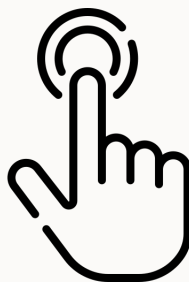
Is your donate page...

- ✓ Mobile-friendly
- ✓ Fast-loading
- ✓ Google/Apple Pay
- ✓ Clear ask

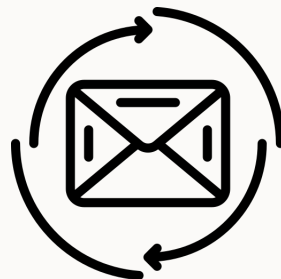
4: Think journey, not just conversion



**Attract people
who share your
values.**

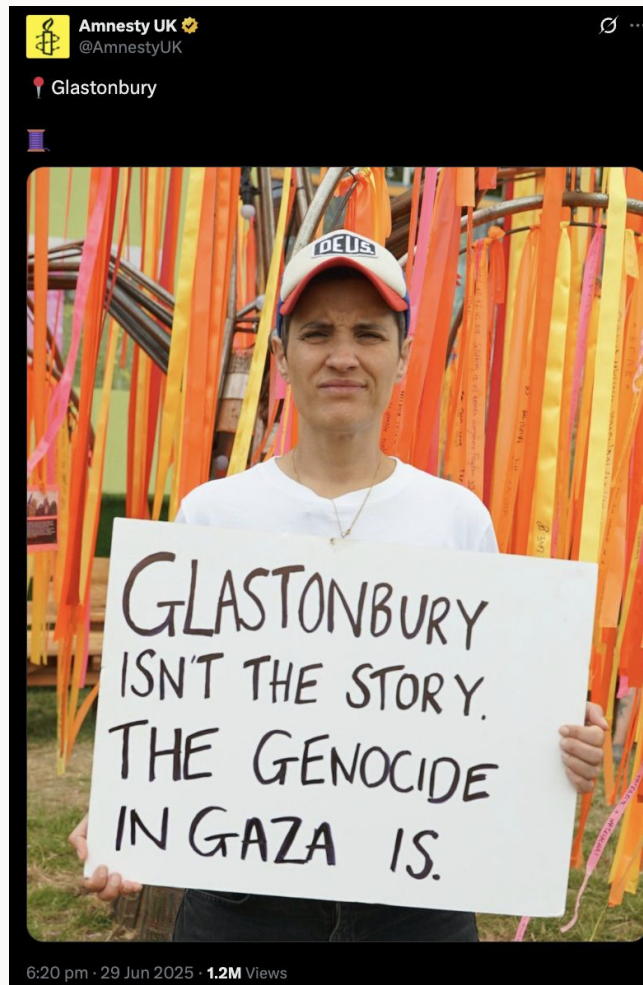


**Make it easy for
them to take
action.**



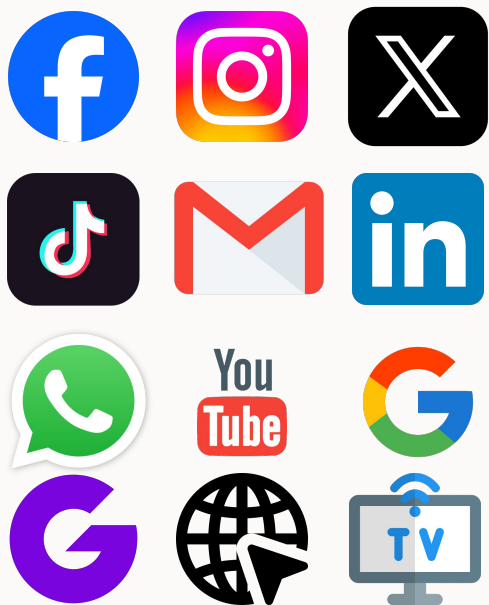
**Keep in touch with
meaningful things
to do.**

5: Be clear. Be bold. Take sides.



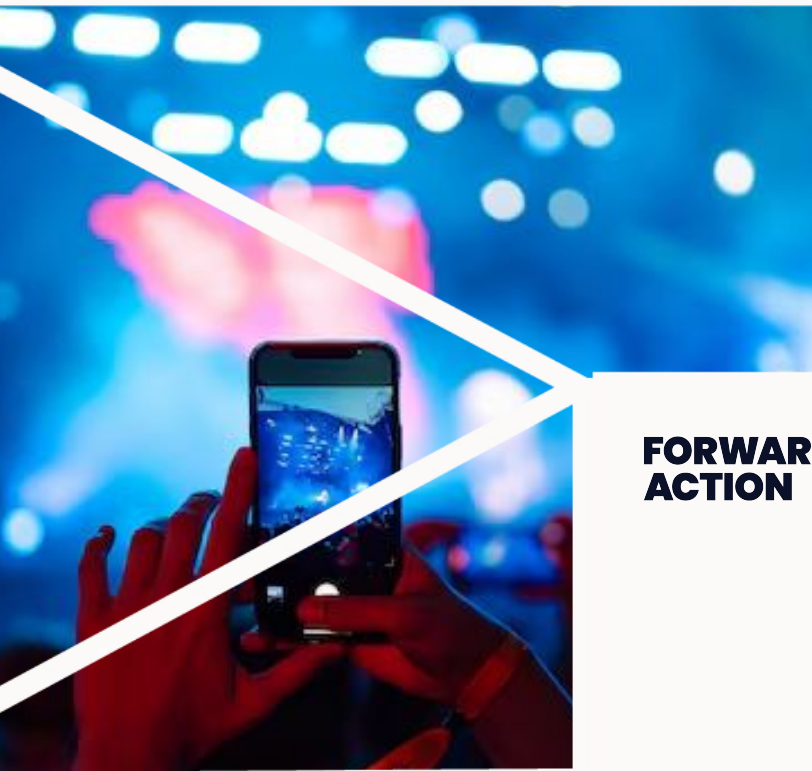
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ali@forwardaction.uk
LinkedIn / forward-action

Let's talk!

