

Tekkie Tax, more than a fundraising campaign

By  Sindy Peters

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Since its start in 2013 Tekkie Tax has raised R22m, but it's much more than just a fundraising campaign. It is a project in which welfare organisations are empowered, raising the bar in terms of how NGOs are run in SA. Last year's campaign, which raised R8.4m, had a total of 276 NGOs and companies involved, with nearly one million people participating.



We interviewed Annelise De Jager, founder of Tekkie Tax and patron of the campaign, to find out how the concept works, how it was developed, and what NGOs can do better to raise more funds for their causes.

How does the Tekkie Tax concept work?

National Tekkie Tax Day is a fun way of raising funds for a charity sector close to your heart. The main aim (and slogan) of the campaign is to "Protect the Vulnerable" – whether it be people or animals.

Here is the recipe: pay your tax by getting a sticker representing a cause close to your heart, spunk up your tekkies with a pair of Tekkie Tag shoelaces, and dress as you may but wear your tekkies on Friday, 26 May!

Stickers and shoelaces are available from the middle of April from any Clicks, Toys R Us / Babies R Us or right now from nearly 300 welfare organisations countrywide.

You can also order online at www.tekkietax.co.za.

Tell us about how the idea was sparked and developed?

National Tekkie Tax Day is a project owned by welfare organisations, managed by welfare organisations for the benefit of welfare organisations. The project was started to give each and every welfare organisation in SA the opportunity to hook into a national fundraising campaign without any risk or cashflow needed. Many NGOs have tried to run a big national campaign but being a very labour intensive and expensive fundraising model, most of them have failed.

Our NGO slogan is "Together we can achieve more than our individual efforts combined". In doing so, we have brought some of the biggest welfare organisations in SA together for one big campaign with a big impact. 12 national welfare organisations, representing more than 1,000 local NGOs, are part of National Tekkie Tax Day.

The campaign started in 2013 and, since then, more than R22m was raised for the five sectors of service delivery that the Tekkie Tax welfare organisations represent (animals, bring hope, children, disability, education).



How do you work with national welfare organisations to ensure they function as a business?

Training is an important aspect in any individual or organisation's life - and this includes the charity sector. Sadly, because of never having any money for "luxuries" like training, this is most often neglected.

Once a year the Tekkie Tax team travels the entire country to conduct free fundraising training sessions. During these, the people present are not only invited to become beneficiaries of the Tekkie Tax campaign but they are also trained in some basic (or sometimes not so basic) fundraising principles. The importance of a timeplan, the use of social media and various accountability and good governance topics have been addressed in the past.

Both local and national NGOs also have the opportunity to be part of the NGO Empowerment Program run. This is a 12-month journey in which personal as well as organisational development is done with great success.

What can NGOs do better to raise more funds for their causes?

Successful fundraising is the end result of powerful people, terrific technology, and magic marketing.

Without passionate and skilled people, not much can happen in any organisation. Sadly, companies donating money never want to donate money for salaries. Because of that, having the right people for the job is a constant challenge. In our NGO Empowerment Program we train, motivate and give new skills to the staff working at welfare organisations in order to develop each person to his/her fullest potential.

NGOs need to use technology! The sad reality is that there is a very high level of computer illiteracy amongst our charity organisations. Technology saves time and is the language of their donors so there is no other way: if NGOs want to be successful in their fundraising efforts, they need to spend money and time to embrace technology.

Fundraising can never be effective without having a powerful marketing strategy. The main purpose of this is not to make people aware of the organisation, but to instil trust in the impact that this organisation is making. You might know about a NGO and even like the kind of services they render but if you do not trust them, you will not support them financially. A correct marketing strategy (aimed at the correct audience) with enough feedback of success stories, transparency and proof of accountability will do just that!

Can you give us an example of an NGO that has got the formula right?

As we all are, welfare organisations are also still "work in progress" but there are some of them that are very successful in accomplishing this:

- Reinet at SPCA Bloemfontein,
- Barbara at Child Welfare Germiston,
- Saartjie at Polokwane Nasorgsentrum,
- Rebecca at Epilepsy SA in Dullstroom, and
- Lize and her team at Child Welfare Bloemfontein to mention a few.

I include the names of the people as I believe they are a vital part of the success at each of these NGOs.

On a national level I believe that CANSA has what it takes and that is the reason why they are successful in their fundraising efforts. They have powerful, passionate people working at the organisation, they use technology to its best and they follow a clear marketing strategy!



Nearly one million people participated last year in National Tekkie Tax Day, what motivates people to get on board?

This is a fun campaign with lots of team-building opportunities! People can choose which cause they want to support so there is no reason to say "no". There are hundreds of examples of the difference that this money has made on ground-level. Having the assurance that one's donation is really making an impact, motivates people to participate and give with an open heart!

Tekkie Tax is a project you can trust. The board of advisors oversee the distribution of money and the entire campaign is well known for its good governance.

All of the above contribute to a national fundraising campaign worth supporting as it is indeed protecting the vulnerable!

How can the business sector get involved this year?

Get permission from the boss for you and your colleagues to wear your tekkies on National Tekkie Tax Day: Friday 26 May. Choose which sector you are going to support! Get your stickers (R10) or Tekkie Tag shoelaces (R35 sticker included) and spunk up your tekkies. Dress as you may, but wear your tekkies on National Tekkie Tax Day.

Contact the Tekkie Tax office at 0126638181 or order what you need from www.tekkietax.co.za. We have free posters, tent cards and newsletters to help you promote the campaign in your office.

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