

Corporate volunteering through ProBono support: DotcomRepublic

DotcomRepublic is a digital agency specialising in online strategy and market penetration. Since September 2014, they have been providing Friendship Works with pro-bono support by volunteering their time and skills to manage our Google Grants Adwords account.

Google Ad Grants is a donation programme for selected non-profit organisations. Eligible charities receive an advertising allowance worth up to £10,000 each month to spend within the Adwords search engine marketing platform. By bidding on relevant terms, we can get our ads shown on searches that are relevant to our organisation. In other words, we can direct Google users searching for volunteering or funding opportunities that support young people straight to our website.

Friendship Works mentors are the lifeblood of our organisation. Our model of mentoring relies on their commitment to building a positive, supportive friendship with a vulnerable young person. In order to sustain and grow our service, we need to be able to recruit new volunteers on an ongoing basis.

Before the partnership with DotcomRepublic, we had no in-house expertise to manage our Charity AdWords account, and limited budget to purchase support externally.

Since they took on the account:

- We have seen a significant increase in the number of volunteer applications citing a Google search as their referrer – 85% of volunteer referrals now come via Google.
- DotcomRepublic have achieved Google Pro status for us, increasing the value of our Google grant to £40,000 per month, enabling us to also expand our search words to attract corporate support.
- DotcomRepublic have also helped us to develop online advertising to sell tickets for our key fundraising events.

For a service the size of Friendship Works, the impact of the partnership with DotcomRepublic has been huge. It has increased not only the number of our volunteer applications that we need in order to deliver our Friendship Works service, but also awareness of the service. This in turn has enabled us to secure two new corporate partnerships.

What does this **skills-based volunteer** programme mean to our supporter DotcomRepublic? In words of their CEO, Paloma Tomas,

“The most important benefit for us is in team motivation. People want to contribute to causes they believe in, but the pace of life today makes it difficult to reconcile new activities with personal and professional obligations. Our pro-bono work allows our team to make time during their normal working day to support the project and that helps them balance their personal and professional

goals. Participation has to be voluntary – that’s very important – so we needed to choose a cause that everyone felt motivated by. We involved everyone in the organisation in making the decision. We did some research into charities in our community and when we discovered Friendship Works and looked into the work it does, helping vulnerable kids through mentoring, the team’s decision was unanimous – this was a cause we could all get behind.

When people ask me about the cost of the pro-bono work, my answer is that what we are offering is what we do for all our clients; it’s our specialist field. So the project with Friendship Works fits in well with our list of projects. And the costs involved for us are actually lower than for corporate clients because the charity sector is in many ways less complex to work in.

I would highly recommend this formula to other companies.”