

What were you doing 7 years ago? I (Tahera Mayat) was working at Fox's Biscuits and hosted the inaugural #CharityHour on Wednesday 26th February 2014. The rest as they say is history! In answer to the first question you may be thinking, yes, you get free biscuits. And the second question: what is [#CharityHour](#)? This article answers that and shares 7 learnings I've gained.

A weekly themed national chat, #CharityHour is the place to be on Wednesday 8-9pm UK time. But it's not just for UK charities as everyone is welcome. I like to see people from all walks of life come together for #CharityHour to form connections and to learn from each other.

With 7 letters in the word charity, I thought I'd spell out my 7 learnings using the word charity...

C is for Connections (and community). Not just any connections but meaningful ones that start online and can go offline (in normal times). My advice: be true to yourself. I love to see people connect then go on to collaborate or help each other out by sharing contacts etc. after #CharityHour. The charity sector community is helpful, which brings me onto...

H is for Helpful. Ask and you shall receive! Those in the charity sector are happy to share learnings or mistakes made to help others, offer another perspective, or provide you with advice. I don't actually work in the charity sector. If I don't understand jargon or buzzwords then I'm not afraid to ask. I've learned you just have to ask, and people will help.

A is for Adapt. We all adapted during the lockdown. Sometimes adapt happens on a personal level. As #CharityHour continues to grow and be busy, I adapt and prioritise what is important. One thing I learned was to say 'no' or 'not yet'. Like this blog post, I agreed to write back in late February this year and writing now in April... An ability to flit between tasks of varying expertise and do your best whilst also being resourceful are both things I admire about the charity sector.

R is for Reciprocal. Cliché alert! What you put in is what you get out. Help others however you can. You don't have to be a design expert to offer your opinion on your preferred image or a new website. Any successful relationship is about give and take. And, at times, you may do more give or take more. It's not about keeping score! Help others and you'll get help in return too. Seek advice as needed and give back when/how you can. You contribute to the reciprocal relationship by providing a different perspective.

I is for Innovate. Think innovation and you might think you need millions or it's only for

big charities. Time for some myth-busting! I like to think of innovation as doing something different. This could be as simple as using Trello for the first time (I've heard good things but never used it). Or just managing your emails more efficiently (whatever that means!).

T is for Takeaways from learning. Hands up if you're a perfectionist like me? Sometimes the fear of failure can hold us back. Like many, lockdown forced my hand; I recorded talks for the first time, learned how to host events online etc. I presented at Pizza for Losers. So now every time I fail, I just eat pizza - just kidding! It's not about always getting things right the first time but about what you learn. Reflection and learning go hand-in-hand with doing.

Y is for You're not alone. I can't stress this one enough! Chances are, you're not the first to do an online quiz or start a new role, etc.. Try to find someone who's been there, done that, and got the t-shirt. Because if the charity sector is known for one thing it's lots of t-shirts lol or the wisdom that goes from having done something so others can learn and can take inspiration ☐

I hope that's helped you to see that the learning and fun starts with a single message!

Guest Blog post by: Tahera Mayat

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