Case Study - Cancer Research – No Make Up Selfie

Recently, Cancer Research UK raised a colossal £8 million through the "No Make Selfie" social media campaign. This accidental campaign was not organised by Cancer Research. 18-year-old Facebook user Fiona Cunningham was inspired to create the original page after watching Kim Novak receive an award at the Oscars without make-up.

Fiona started the campaign by simply asking women to post photos of themselves on Facebook without wearing makeup for cancer awareness. Crucially, she asked them to use the hashtag **#nomakeupselfie**.

Momentum began building and people started asking Cancer Research whether the campaign was theirs. Cancer Research responded by posting their own no make-up selfie, saying that they loved the sentiment and provided a number for participants to donate.

Within just a few hours tens of thousands of people shared the post on social networks. TV, radio and online news articles began reporting the viral phenomenon and repeated the donation code. Within a week Cancer Research had raised over £8 million.

What were the results?

- 826,000 Facebook likes
- 140,000 Followers on Twitter
- 8 Million raised in donations in 1 week
- 10 more clinical trials able to take place

Why did it work?

The success of the #nomakeupselfie was down to a principle known as **piggybacking**.

Piggybacking is the process of using a popular trend to extend the reach of a social media message. For example, Fiona's original campaign piggybacked off the publicity surrounding Kim Novaks Oscar appearance. Cancer Research piggybacked off the #nomakeupselfie hash tag by launching their own campaign.

The success that followed can be partly attributed to modern cultural trends – women felt they had to wear makeup to be successful. Celebrities started posting their own #nomakupselfies, popular hashtags were piggybacked and used by Cancer Research, posts encouraged participants to be charitable and appealed to people's higher nature and there were high participation rates because people liked posting about themselves. Finally, the campaign became highly viral as participants nominated friends to post their own #nomakeupselfie.