

Devil's Advocate



Ian Moore

Charities can crack Credit Crunch conundrum

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There's been a lot in the news lately about how 2009 is all set to be an annus horribilis for Britain's charities, as donors in their millions tighten their belts and pull in their purse-strings. A recent survey by CCBfast.MAP among 1309 donors found that the most common reason (41%) for ever having ceased donating to a specific charity is 'Couldn't afford it any more' - so you'd think the media have got it right on this one. But I'm not so sure. Having toiled through several recessions - and I'm certain there'll never be one to match the Winter of Discontent when, despite the End Of The World being Nigh, the M62 was still jammed solid with lorries delivering to Asda - I can't help feeling the commentators are missing a basic trick. Even at the worst of Thatcher's recession, there were still about 27 million people with jobs. Right now, I believe the figure's nearer to 32 million, and it's going to stay pretty close to that no matter how bad things get. So - if you're one of the vast majority who stays in work, who benefits from the lowest mortgage rates in recorded history, who stops buying holidays and new homes and new cars because the media have frightened the s**t out of you... what have you got? The answer (I think) is a lot more loose change in your pocket. This is presumably why the supermarkets rub their hands when recession looms. If my theory is right, then the charities, far from mongering doom, should be out there rattling their collection boxes under the nation's noses. For promoters, who might be having second thoughts about employing this relatively modern '4th mechanic' (the old world three being 'free', 'win' and 'save', and the new claimant to 5th being 'vote'), take heart. With all this talk of Hard Times, surely the collective mood should be more charitable than usual, and the wherewithal in greater abundance than at any time since Mrs T sold off the family silver back in the days of El Sid.

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