

Three minutes with...



Ashish Poddar, managing director, freshties website

Who is your website for?

www.freshties.com is an online networking opportunity. Students can use it to get in touch with people from the not-for-profit sector who can help them with their studies. Alternatively, people who are interested in a career in the sector can email people who have already worked in it to find out what it's really like.

What message are you trying to get across?

The idea is to unite people through common interests and ambitions. We have made it as mainstream as possible, so it is also used by businesses. We felt that if it only had information about charity jobs, it would effectively be preaching to the converted – we want to attract a new audience.

How does the website work?

When you register, you fill in a short profile of yourself, or you can start your own blog. The St David's Foundation, which offers support to patients with life-threatening illnesses, has started a blog, as has the *Ethical Consumer* magazine.

The site also contains opportunities for people who want to get involved with community projects. The message we want to get across is that helping others is good for you. I don't think pure altruism exists because it's only normal to feel a sense of satisfaction at doing something good.

Is it free for charities?

Yes, there will be no charge for charities, but we do charge corporates. So far, 3,000 people have registered since we launched at the beginning of the year. When we have got 20,000 members we will probably introduce a £5 annual membership fee to ensure it's self-sustaining, and up to 60 per cent of what we make will go to a community fund. The idea is that we will have pictures and blogs from the projects the money has benefited so people can see how their money has helped. From our own research we found that people are happy to pay if they know it's going to a good cause.

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