

## Play Fund Win

### Case study

Dean Lynn is the CEO and co-founder of Play Fund Win, a pioneering digital fundraising platform, aiming to revolutionise the way in which charities, foundations and grassroots organisations engage with their supporters and raise much needed funds for worthy causes.

Dean himself has a broad background in the tech space, is a self-described 'digital tech nerd' who started out building online games at fifteen years old; developing online social referral tools for gyms and building online food delivery systems before the likes of Deliveroo and Just Eat dominated the market. In short, Dean has a wealth of experience enterprising in the world of technology and is passionate about the third sector and the potential for technology to enable charities and not-for-profit organisations to reach a wider audience.



### Technology and fundraising

COVID-19 accelerated the business need for charities to adopt online platforms and processes, a demand which Play Fund Win is meeting quickly and confidently. As a digital fundraising platform, Play Fund Win bridges the gap between charities and those who wish to support them through gamification – using technology to digitise raffles and prize draws.

Play Fund Win began in the sporting sector, working mainly with grassroots sporting clubs and local communities. Before 2019, the 50-50 raffle model was used by many of these organisations to raise donations at fundraising events. However, the personnel, admin and incurred costs to run these raffles, including handling of finances which could run to tens of thousands of pounds, was high and risked falling short of compliance standards. The company's solution to digitise the experience transformed an arduous process into one which is safe, quick, and compliant.

Since then, the business has branched out into multiple avenues of revenue streams for sports clubs, charities, and fundraising events. These include a digitised 50-50 draw and a prize draw for incentivised giving, working closely with organisations to offer unique experiences as prizes to help increase donor retention. Examples of partner clubs and organisations include Manchester City Football Club, Chelsea Football Club and Great Ormond Street Hospital.

A simple 50-50 fundraising draw can be live and ready within 60 seconds after its online set up. Play Fund Win has streamlined the onboarding processes for organisations and provides easy to download reports on the number of entrants and value of donations, cutting through red tape to make fundraising an easier and more profitable experience. The data of those entered into the prize draw can be used by the organisations for their own marketing activities in compliance with GDPR regulations.



*“We’ve found that experienced based giving is a big thing, so you need to start giving experiences to individuals because your audience wants to engage with you,” said Dean.*

### A two-pronged approach

Play Fund Win offers a two-pronged approach to its clients. The first is aimed at grassroots organisations and provides them with a hosted digital space that suits all their fundraising needs. The product is self-serve and easily navigated for both the organisations and the supporters who interact with the technology in order to donate.

Bigger partners such as Premier League Football Clubs are offered a managed service, which integrates Play Fund Win's digital offering into the organisation or foundation's app or website, allowing them to easily market their fundraising initiatives to an already established user base.

By catering to the needs of different sized organisations, Play Fund Win's objective is to establish themselves as the digital leader in helping charities and not-for-profits reach their goals of donor engagement. Each fundraising initiative and each organisation require different forms of tech, all of which Play Fund Win is ready and willing to provide.

*“Because we’re able to develop different levels of technology, we can give charities the full white labelled service or an off the shelf product. We want to own the tech world term, the fundraising Application Programming Interface. If you want to fundraise and you need technology, speak to us.”*

### Challenges

The pandemic and now the cost-of-living crisis has led the third sector to consider more innovative ways of fundraising using technology and AI to engage with donors and encourage support. However, Play Fund Win highlights key recurring issues which often limit how effectively their digital platform is put to use by their clients.

Firstly, as many of these organisations are structured around committees and volunteers, approval and adoption rates are often slow. Secondly, many of the charities the company works with do not have the resource to create digitally nuanced marketing strategies to raise awareness of the fundraising initiative to their key audiences. This has resulted in Play Fund Win now offering marketing advice and assistance alongside their digital product.

Finally, another challenge to overcome is on the customer service side in communicating the right messages about fundraising platforms and how donations are being used.

Despite the financial crisis which many charities are facing as a result of the cost-of-living crisis, particularly with regards to fundraising, donations via Play Fund Win seem to be thriving. Donors are still keen to take part in online draws with many signed up to their subscription model, giving between £5 and £15 a month.

### Future ambitions

Play Fund Win is growing and has big ambitions for the future as they aim to create 'relentless change'. They have calculated there are 4 million organisations that could benefit from their offering across 19 countries where their product could be of use to charities and not-for-profits. They already have contracts pending with organisations in Australia, Italy, Spain and the USA, with trial fundraisers in New York planned.

Over the next two years, the business aims to work with 30% of the grassroots market within the UK, covering approximately 160,000 organisations, and reach their goal of being the No.1 fundraising platform. However, Dean understands a key challenge could be resistance to this type of technology from businesses from a legal and compliance perspective.

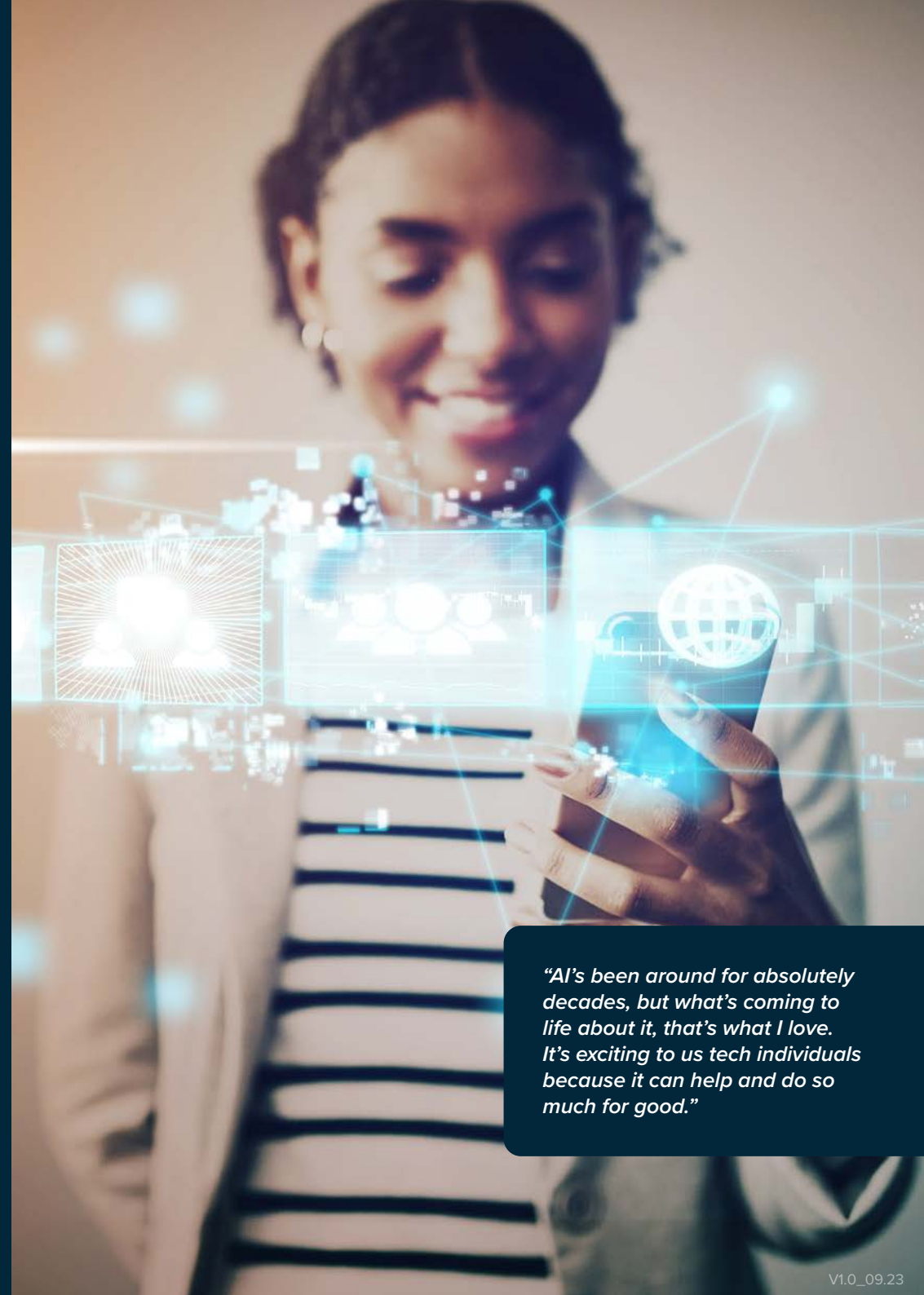


### The potential of AI

Charities are already using AI in their marketing activities over and above digital fundraising platforms but the future potential is huge. Play Fund Win is developing an AI language model that can understand the end cause of an organisation, why it's fundraising, its audience, and utilises data to suggest targeted social media and other marketing activities. It will also be able to alert an organisation if they are going to experience a retention problem with donors and offer solutions to overcome this.

Dean is aware there is still a way to go, especially in terms of its public image and with governance issues. Play Fund Win is fighting for governance on AI to enable safe and trusted technology to support organisations without overstepping into the privacy of individuals. However, he believes 'tech giants shouldn't be the ones to give governance'. People don't trust AI because they don't fully understand it. Nonetheless, Dean is emphatic that AI is here to stay and is passionate that building trust is the right answer to this obstacle.

Play Fund Win's AI language technology will be available by the end of this year, with active trials amongst 100 organisations currently taking place. However, Dean is clear that we must not jump on the bandwagon of tech for tech's sake. The best solution can be reached by looking at specific need and then tailoring the technology to suit that need.



*"AI's been around for absolutely decades, but what's coming to life about it, that's what I love. It's exciting to us tech individuals because it can help and do so much for good."*