

Save Xmas: 2009-10  
Campaign Plan - June 2009

**Summary**

The Save Xmas campaign has run successfully since June 2007. Each year has had two elements: face to face sessions run by Citizens Advice and other partners (delivery partners) and promotional awareness raising activity of both the sessions and savings advice. Evaluation of previous activity has demonstrated that consumers find the sessions useful and more recent (currently provisional) findings suggest that consumers retain knowledge and confidence a year after the session. We therefore propose in 2009-10 to continue with the same strategy as in previous years.

When Save Xmas was first launched it focused on women aged 30-50 from C2DE communities in six regions across Great Britain. With the agreement of the Financial Inclusion Taskforce, we will widen our reach from 2009-10 to all those who are financially excluded or at risk of financial inclusion across the country. Financial exclusion is defined as lacking access to mainstream financial products such as bank accounts and low cost loans. Typically this means people on benefits and low incomes.

In addition, the economic downturn of the present time means we have identified a secondary consumer audience, manifested by reports of a surge in demands for debt advice services. This audience is those consumers who have relatively modest incomes and who may be experiencing difficulty managing their finances in the current climate. We continue to focus the great majority of Save Xmas resource on our primary audience, but we propose a simple online resource which can cost-effectively provide pointers on short term saving for more web-savvy consumers looking for financial advice online.

In addition one additional message we wish to promote through Save Xmas is that saving for Christmas is a cheaper alternative to high interest (doorstep) loans often favoured by people excluded from mainstream sources of credit.

## **Background**

Save Xmas was developed by the OFT, on behalf of HMT, in the wake of the Farepak collapse. It aims to raise consumers' awareness of the different ways of saving for Christmas, and their respective pros and cons. The campaign is overseen by the Financial Inclusion Taskforce. Evaluation of 2007-08 can be found at [www.oft.gov.uk](http://www.oft.gov.uk) and the evaluation of 2008-09 is currently being carried out by Ipsos MORI.

Data from 2008-09 suggests we reached approx 80,000 consumers. There are caveats about how this figure is reached, outlined in the evaluation reports. Feedback forms from consumers indicate:

- 94 per cent of session attendees who filled in an evaluation form said they found the session useful or very useful
- 88 per cent said they knew more about ways to save, and
- 77 per cent had not had any other formal financial advice in the previous 12 months.

## **Strategic objectives**

- To help people make informed choices about the best way to save for Christmas.

## **Communications objective**

- To provide impartial information on Christmas saving options through face to face sessions
- To encourage saving for Christmas as an alternative to high interest loans, and
- To provide an online resource to bring Save Xmas messages to a wider audience of those affected by the current recession.

## **Audience**

1. Financially excluded consumers, or those at risk of financial exclusion, in the UK.
2. Organisations in the voluntary / community sector delivering financial education to this audience.
3. Consumers coming under financial pressure in the economic downturn.

## **Messages**

- There are different ways you can save for Christmas, you need to choose the best option for you
- Taking out a loan to pay for Christmas costs you more than if you had saved, and
- If you want to know more about ways to save for Christmas, call 0800 389 3158 for a free information leaflet or visit the Consumer Direct website.

## **Strategy**

The strategy remains the same as previous years: funding delivery partners to carry out sessions with consumers and other money advice workers. These workers in turn cascade Save Xmas information to their own client groups. This activity is supported by an OFT-designed toolkit. This toolkit contains information on the different saving options for both consumers and more detailed info for advisers, a short film to stimulate discussion and suggestions for how the session could be run. During 2009-10 this toolkit will be updated and developed to ensure it is up to date, accurate and engaging.

In an economic downturn, some consumers may have to plan expenditure for Christmas in a way they haven't previously. To help this section of consumers, we will develop an online resource designed to ask questions about the user's attitudes to short term savings and then suggest some saving options that might suit them. This will sit on the Consumer Direct website and we will drive traffic to it through online marketing in spring 2010. We can use Specific Media for this: this is an online advertising network that serves ads across 94 per cent of the top 500 rated sites. We can use behavioural targeting technology to serve ads to people who have recently visited relevant sites/content.

In addition, we will work with other government departments such as DWP and FSA and the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales to support mutual aims on financial inclusion. This will include sharing this strategy and maintaining dialogue throughout the campaign.

## **Risks and Issues**

1. Money advice workers are less likely to attend sessions, as issues of unemployment, debt, benefits etc. become more pressing and saving less so in the downturn.
2. The online resource is not widely used.
3. The campaign does not benefit from connections with other government-funded financial inclusion initiatives.

## **Mitigation**

1. Renew efforts to promote Save Xmas to the money advice community, by contracting Transact (the UK's umbrella organisation for financial inclusion organisations) to carry out this work.
2. Use digital marketing to promote the online resource, targeting C1/C2 consumers.
3. Keep Financial Inclusion Champions updated with information about the campaign.
4. Direct Transact to promote the aims of Save Xmas to other govt initiatives.

## **Tactics**

1. Update and revise the toolkit: August – December 2009.
2. Continue to fund delivery partners to run sessions with consumers and advice workers: autumn 09 – spring 10.
3. Develop online resource: September – November 2009.
4. Develop links with money advice and financial inclusion communities (ongoing).
5. TV filler (from Oct 2009). This is a 30 second public information film used to regulate schedules. This has been cost-effectively produced by filming it alongside other OFT fillers. The film highlights the difficulty of paying for Christmas in one go. It should receive daytime coverage when our target audience will be watching.
6. We will look to exploit PR opportunities as these arise, but PR does not constitute a major element of the campaign.
7. Evaluation (of 2008-09 activity): autumn 09, final report due December 2009.

## **Resources**

Budget is £670K.

**Evaluation**

Independent evaluation to be carried out in 2010.

**Research**

The following reports and research underpin the Save Xmas strategy:

Save Xmas Evaluation, 2008. Ipsos MORI

Save Xmas interim evaluation, 2009. Ipsos MORI

Pomeroy, 1997. Review of Christmas Saving Schemes, HM Treasury

Financial Inclusion: an action plan for 2008-11, HM Treasury