



DOUSE WITH PURPOSE

Is the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge a flash in the pan?

Sajini Sahadevan
thesajini@apezmedia.co.om

What started off as a simple yet fun means to raise awareness took the world by storm. With the act required to be recorded

and posted online in order to raise awareness, the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge managed to win support, but also attracted as

many brickbats with people dismissing it as a publicity stunt or narcissist's delight and still others concerned about the volume of water being wasted. Was it just a gimmick or did it create the desired effect?

Jeni D, a British expatriate who

works in academics in the city, refused to be swayed by the infectious atmosphere surrounding the challenge. After being nominated by a colleague, she took a cue from Hollywood actor Sir Patrick Stewart's version of the challenge which caught media attention earlier this week. "I thought it was a very classy way to do it. The challenge has grown so big now that it has lost the impact with all the celebrities doing it. He chose to do it differently. So I am following his lead and only donating money." The *Star Trek* actor wrote out a cheque for the cause in his hotel room, dropped ice cubes into a glass and downed a drink he made for himself.

Individuals like Dr Vijayalakshmi Shetty, as much as she appreciates the awareness created, only wishes there was a substitute for the water. "People walk miles to get a bucket of water. Spin-offs like the Fill The Bucket Challenge in Nepal and the Rice Bucket Challenge in India seem more purposeful. The trend has helped unite people because of technology. You wonder if half

the people doing it know why or if it has become a joke where they also get some screen time. If they could think of something else instead of water, the idea can also be used to raise awareness about other diseases."

Those who did take up the challenge, individuals or companies as they became nominated, were keen that they not lose sight of the objective and firmly believed it served the purpose of spreading awareness. Kathy Cole, RJ of local radio station Hi FM, admitted it was a fad albeit a good one. "People shouldn't forget that it isn't just about a bucket of ice and filming the challenge. The amount raised by ALS had increased from \$10mn just weeks ago to more than \$100mn now. It is a very creative way to get people into action. If a person had just put up a post on Facebook asking for funds, it wouldn't generate as much money." She asked listeners to name similar trends on air which generated as much of a buzz or fell flat. She accepted the challenge too after being nominated by her boss Darren Shortt.



NO HAZARD CAMPAIGN

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Robert MacLean



ALL FOR A GOOD CAUSE

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Sarah Cook

Sales professional Sarah Cook donated to a charity she was personally attached to in the UK. "It isn't a bad thing at all if it is about raising awareness - even if it means making a fool of yourself. The donation is important too. I nominated three others. One didn't do it, another did the Ice Bucket Challenge and the third sent me the receipt from the charity they sent money to. This is a good initiative. It should not be something they do only if they are not donating. I hadn't heard of ALS before this. In the midst of the fun, people tend to forget the meaning behind the act."

Shangri-La's Barr al Jissah Resort & Spa took the challenge at the hotel and nominated National Hospitality Institute (NHI). Robert MacLean, principal of NHI, organised the challenge the following afternoon. He called it a 'harmless idea'. "We got onto the bandwagon after being nominated by the hotel. There are many sides to it; people say it is a waste of water etc. Anything that provides awareness but isn't dangerous and at the same time

encourages people to learn about it is a good experience. There are so many daft things people do otherwise but this is fun and also means you take at least two minutes out of your life to think about someone else. The fun is also a way to break from the monotony of life. But on the serious side, I now know more about Motor Neurone Diseases than I did before the challenge. It was quite something to watch the video of Pete Frates who started the Ice Bucket Challenge after he was diagnosed with it. I can't say that all my students know about it, but hopefully now after the challenge they do. We have raised money as well."

Bishen Singh Bhalla, an analyst with an equity firm, followed the original concept of the challenge - getting doused with a bucket of water if not donating money to the cause. "I chose to just do the challenge because the act really does spread awareness. It is making people sit up and take notice. I knew what it was all about by the time I was nominated because it was viral by then. The whole concept is interesting."