A goat for Christmas: exploring third-party gifts

Abstract

Purpose
Some charitable organisations market third-party gifts, in which some good, for example a goat, is given to a developing world beneficiary and at the same time is a present to a recipient in the developed world. Little is known about whether such gifts are successful as presents and whether these are a good charitable marketing device. This paper seeks to examine this issue.

Design/methodology/approach
Two studies investigated attitudes towards, and beliefs about, such gifts in possible and actual donors and recipients.

Findings
Third-party gifts often make acceptable presents, depending on the recipient and occasion. Gifts of specific goods are preferred to gifts of money, particularly when the benefit to the developing world beneficiary is considered. Such gifts also inspire a reasonable degree of trust.

Research limitations/implications
It is not clear how much benefit beneficiaries receive from third-party gifts or why donors prefer to give specific goods as gifts.

Practical implications
Third-party gifts appear to be a successful marketing tool and a means by which poverty can be reduced.

Originality/value
This research extends and combines previous research on gifting to the third-party gift-giving process and offers charities some insights into how they might use this process to facilitate donations.

Keywords
Charitable donations, Gifts, Poverty, Charitable marketing

Citation

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