The Brainathon

For years, the prevention of Alzheimer’s disease has been a moving target, with assumptions fueling a multitude of guesswork among practitioners and patients alike. But the past decade has been an awakening of sorts, and research has led to discovery of avenues to combat the disease.

Exiger, the global regulatory and financial crime, risk, and compliance firm, sought out an innovative way to raise both the awareness of Alzheimer’s and funds to find a cure for the disease. In doing so, they partnered with Fit Brains.

Fit Brains is an innovative brain training program from Rosetta Stone that helps users challenge their minds while playing progressively more difficult brain games. In joining forces with Exiger, the two created a five-week fundraising event: The Brainathon.

The result: over $35,000 raised for Alzheimer’s research in just five short weeks.
About the Brainathon:

Exiger employees pledged to use the Fit Brains program five minutes a day, every day for the five-week period. Exiger then aimed to raise a dollar for every pledged minute of brain training. At the onset, the company’s combined goal was $18,000, the average cost of five weeks of full-time health aid for an Alzheimer’s patient.

Fit Brains provided all employees with free memberships for the duration of the Brainathon, and all funds raised went to supporting Alzheimer’s Society in the United Kingdom, the Alzheimer’s Association and Abe’s Garden in the United States, and the Hong Kong Alzheimer’s Disease Association. But it wasn’t just Exiger employees who rose to the occasion. Friends and families of the firm’s participants were encouraged to play along for a high Fit Brains index score (a measurement of performance on the program drawn from performance scores in six different sub-areas such as Focus or Memory) and donate through online fundraising pages. As an incentive, prizes were set for most money raised, most donations, highest employee index score, and highest score outside of the company.

Results:

Leveraging the partnership and their unique concept, Exiger exceeded their fundraising goals with fervor—they raised $35,000, almost doubling their $18,000 goal. The Brainathon was also extremely well-received—not only did 100% of Exiger employees participate, but feedback about the Brainathon was overwhelmingly positive. Employees were enthusiastic about the Fit Brains program and its role in the Brainathon. One employee said, “I liked the simplicity of the initiative; it took little time to complete on a daily basis and fit into my commute.” Another enjoyed the friendly intra-office competition created through the app. By creating a fundraiser to which all employees could contribute easily, and on their own schedules, Exiger was able to maximize its participation and outreach.

Beyond the funds raised, a vital by-product of the Brainathon was awareness, both of Alzheimer’s disease and the organizations fighting it all over the world. The Brainathon created a vehicle for discussing brain health and training in a casual and informative way, while prizes for family and friends incentivized extra-office participation. While the money raised provided tangible, immediate assistance, this enhanced awareness extended the Brainathon’s impact far beyond its final day.
About Alzheimer’s:

Alzheimer’s, the most common form of dementia, kills brain cells and interferes with cognitive abilities, emotions, behavior, and physical skills. It’s not a regular part of aging, but a progressively debilitating disease that ultimately leads to death. Deaths from Alzheimer’s are increasing, even as deaths from other diseases, such as heart disease, are decreasing. 15.9 million Americans provide unpaid care for sufferers of Alzheimer’s and other dementias. It is also the most expensive disease in America.

### Alzheimer’s by the Numbers

- 1 in 9 people over the age of 65 has Alzheimer’s
- 1 in 3 seniors dies with some form of dementia

Alzheimer’s will cost the U.S. $236 billion in 2016. That number is expected to reach $11 trillion by 2050.

Every 66 seconds, someone in the U.S. is diagnosed with Alzheimer’s.


### Annual Costs of Alzheimer’s

- **$18,000**: 5 weeks of full-time health aid
- **$13,188**: Lost wages for informal caregivers
- **$3000**: Prescription medication
- **$22,206**: Average per person Medicare spending
About Exiger:

Exiger is a leading regulatory and financial crime, risk, and compliance firm. Its professionals work with clients worldwide to assist them in effectively managing their critical compliance challenges while developing and implementing the policies, procedures, and programs needed to identify and avoid them in the future. Believing that corporate responsibility extends well beyond their office walls and into the communities where their employees, clients, and partners live and work, Exiger wanted to offer their employees an easy and fun way to get involved and volunteer their time. Alzheimer’s is an extremely relevant cause for Exiger, as their professionals help clients navigate difficult, complex decisions, a capability stolen from dementia sufferers.

Beyond their devotion to Alzheimer’s research, Exiger chose Fit Brains as a partner because of its reputable brand name, easy-to-use interface, multilingual capability, and fun, innovative brain games. Furthermore, as an international company with offices in New York, London, Hong Kong, Toronto, Singapore, and Silver Spring, Exiger places immense value in global citizenship and cooperation, and logistically needed a program in which all employees could participate. Of Fit Brains, Exiger said, “We chose Fit Brains for their accessibility and connection to Rosetta Stone, a pioneer for globalizing technology, and a perfect partner in the international fight against Alzheimer’s disease.”

About Fit Brains:

Fit Brains is a fun and challenging brain training program. It is a global, award-winning, personalized brain games app and online program that challenges you to perform at your best. Fit Brains has been ranked the #1 education app in over 90 countries, with a rating of 4.5/5 and over 18 million downloads. Fit Brains combines leading technology, world class research, and game trends to give you an exciting experience. It was designed by game experts and neuroscientists striving to make brain training accessible and affordable to all.

The program challenges 6 key areas of your brain, including memory, focus, speed of thinking, logic and problem-solving, language, and visual-spatial recognition. Plus, it targets EQ, Emotional Intelligence, the ability to recognize and manage your own and other people’s emotions, in 4 key areas: self-control, self-awareness, social awareness and social skills. The program also automatically adapts to you based on your progress, and customizes training to give you the appropriate level of challenge along the way.

Want to run your own Brainathon?

Exiger encourages other corporations and organizations to run or participate in a Brainathon to help increase awareness and fundraise for Alzheimer’s Disease. Please email Mark Baxter, General Manager of Fit Brains at Partners@fitbrains.com or Kody Gurfein, Marketing & Communications of Exiger at kgurfein@exiger.com to learn more. Together we can make a difference.

To learn more about the science of brain training with Fit Brains, please go to www.fitbrains.com

Alzheimer's Association. “Dementia is the most costly disease in America.” http://act.alz.org/site/MessageViewer?dlv_id=101541&em_id=80007.0


Alzheimer's Association. “Prescription drugs
http://www.alz.org/join_the_cause_ prescription_drugs.asp