



Fundraising Best Practices

General Fundraising Ideas & The Fundraising Campaign

General Fundraising Tips

1. The golden rule of fundraising is: You raise money when you ask for it. ASK! Ask everyone you know, even people you consider acquaintances.
2. Tell your personal story and why you are participating in the event.
3. Set up an online fundraising page.
4. Send personalized emails to everyone in your address book with a direct link to your online fundraising page/website.
5. Send a letter (with a donation form) to any contacts you don't have an email address for.
6. When asking for a big donation, ask face-to-face.
7. Use social networking (Facebook, Twitter) to get the word out beyond your immediate circle.
8. Ask your donors (or potential donors) to pass your request on to someone else to expand your circle.
9. Tailor your 'ask' to the person/group you are approaching. Older donors might respond better to a phone call or visit than a younger donor that might prefer email.
10. Aim high and ask big. Set your fundraising goal high and let your potential donors know what it is.
11. Most participants who are new to fundraising are surprised by how much they can actually raise.
12. Ask proudly! Remember that you are asking for a donation to support a cause you are invested in.
13. Know where the money is going and how it will be used. Make a compelling case for support.
14. Ask donors to check on matching gift programs with their employers. Many times employers will match the amount of the gift, thus doubling the donation.
15. After your 'ask', be patient and let your supporter answer based on what they are able to give.
16. Don't be afraid to send a gentle follow up reminder closer to the event date. Reminders are always helpful.
17. Up-sell - Persuade the first person who sponsors you to make a generous donation. Then encourage others to match it.
18. Make your own contribution – Lead the way by making your donation first.
19. Thank your donors! And follow up to let donors know how close you are to reaching your goal. Often times, donors will make a second donation just to help you reach your goal.

Successful Fundraising Campaigns

Community Fundraising Ideas

- ▶ **BBQs;**
- ▶ **Fundraising Dinner** - everyone donates money to eat;
- ▶ **50/50 Draws;**
- ▶ Start your own **spare change jar** – Every day, put all of your extra coins in a jar near your front door or on your desk. Others will join you, and the cash really adds up!
- ▶ Club **Birthday** Donations, Personal Birthday Donations to the club;
- ▶ **'Wear your jeans to the club day';**
- ▶ Make the commodore/president/executive do **silly things** for donations;
- ▶ **Auctions** - boat parts/ instructors (private lessons), boat rides with the executive, etc.;
- ▶ Oscar pools (or other media event), winner gets half of the money raised, the other half goes to club;
- ▶ **Bake Sales;**
- ▶ **Host a movie party** at the club (outdoor or indoor)– Rent the latest new release, pick up your favourite soda, pop some popcorn, and invite the community over for a movie night. Have your pledge forms or online personal fundraising page ready to go. (Consider a TV Finale night).
- ▶ **Garage Sale and Used Book Sale** – Ask your friends, family and neighbours to donate their old books and set up a weekend book sale at the club. Put signs up so people know where the money is going. This may even encourage them to donate more;
- ▶ **Club Warming Party** - Open up the season with a community club opening celebration;
- ▶ **Key Game** – Everyone purchases a key but only one key will open a lock to a prize;
- ▶ **Fitness/Yoga Classes** - Ask your yoga instructor to host a 'Karma Class'. Attendees are asked to pay what they can. All funds will be donated to your fundraising efforts.
- ▶ **Errand Boy/Girl** – Offer to be your friends' and coworkers' personal assistant for a day in exchange for a large donation of \$250 or more.
- ▶ **Karaoke Night** – Spend a Friday night at a Karaoke Bar and sing to your heart's delight, but make sure to have the announcer tell the crowd that you're singing for donations.
- ▶ **Talented Friends** – Take advantage of talented friends (piano players, singers, magicians, etc.) and host a fun Friday night at the club! Donations at the door.
- ▶ **Game Night** – Pull out your board games and let the fun begin. Pay at the door.
- ▶ Bowling nights – Plan a fun night of bowling at your local bowling alley. Ask the owner for a preferred rate of bowling for the fundraiser event.
- ▶ **Curse Jar** – Place a curse jar at the club and ask that whenever someone swears they put a dollar in the jar with all proceeds going the club;
- ▶ **Car Wash** – Host a car wash. Ask a local gas station to donate the cleaning products, put up balloons and signs, and wash away.
- ▶ Turn all events - social events, AGM, race nights - into mini fundraisers!
- ▶ Understand where your fundraising dollars are going – Prepare & practice your 30 second elevator speech. Everyone is a potential donor. They will be impressed if you're able to speak eloquently about why you're raising money for the club.

Communication

Communicate details ahead of time to any media, special guests, and entertainment. Use multiple channels of communication. Weekly/biweekly emails and e-blasts, newsletters, Facebook and Twitter updates help to inform all of your participants about fundraising activities. TV, newspapers, radio and community web sites are good sources. It helps to get publicity as early as possible.

Using **key messaging** as a way to inform participants/donors of their impact helps to create more awareness for your campaign - review monthly and make sure the entire fundraising committee is on the same page. Create a catch phrase or slogan for your campaign. Create a clearly thought out **communications plan**. This will make sure that your messaging is clear, consistent, timely and regular.

Build a rapport with donors and volunteers. This is crucial so that everyone feels that they are important. You can do this by sending out fun emails using key messaging, invites to meetings and events.

Have one person act as the **main communications** contact for volunteers and donors. This will prevent confusion.

Use **compelling messages** and tools to engage and inspire donors, sponsors and volunteers.

Volunteer Engagement

Recruit great volunteers. Advertise for volunteers widely and publicize opportunities in order to create a functional planning committee.

Reach out to other local fundraisers to get new, creative ideas; share your own fundraising practices.

Reach out to all participants in a direct way to **encourage participation**. Participants will feel encouraged to raise more funds if they have been communicated with and thanked personally.

Conduct **training sessions** for all volunteers. This will assist with procedures during the planning process like collection of funds, registration expectations, and prize incentive programs.

Orientate event day volunteers and **provide appropriate materials** based on the position description. Volunteers should understand their role before the day of the event, and should have copies of all materials relevant to their role.

Have **clearly laid out plans** for a strategy, critical path, budget, sponsorship, communications plan, and volunteer plan.

Acknowledge the progress being made by the committee members and participants as events approach.

Congratulate top individual fundraisers and teams. This will motivate other individuals and teams, and providing a link to how the money they have raised supports the campaign and the mission will encourage participants to fundraise more.

RECOGNIZE, THANK – REPEAT. This has to be done privately and publically.

Survey your volunteers and donors. This will help to make sure that you are providing the tools, communications and resources that your participants need. Reviewing data will give your committee an idea of how you can increase revenue, donors, and volunteers.

A **debrief** will also allow your committee the time to understand what you did well during the planning process and what can be improved.

Sponsorships

Determine who your **best prospects** are- Identify companies that participate in other like-minded events or have a strong presence in the community.

Leverage **personal relationships**: Ask committee and Board members for contacts they may have at corporations on your list of targeted prospects. Ask committee and Board members if they will make ‘the ask’ with you, this will increase your likelihood of securing that corporate sponsor.

Understand **what you can offer a sponsor** and make sure you can deliver on what you promise. For example - Logo placement on communications materials and on website, company mentioned during speeches, employee volunteer opportunities, or press release and other media coverage.

Understand sponsors’ motivations before making ‘the ask’. If a sponsor views your stakeholders as future or existing clients, their sponsorship participation can often be derived from marketing dollars. If your club/organization aligns with their business or marketing strategy, you have a better chance of attracting their sponsorship dollars.

Who should you ask first?

- Previous sponsors;
- Companies with employees who have participated at previous events;
- Personal contacts from your Board or committee are most important for prospective sponsors;
- New sponsors;

When should you ask? As soon as possible. Many companies make their decisions well in advance (often a year or more) of your event. **Keeping in regular communication** with your sponsor will ensure you know when to ask for your next sponsorship.

Do not ask companies that your club/organization does not want to be publically associated with, i.e. tobacco companies.

You must assume prospective sponsors will not contact you directly; it is your responsibility to **contact them**.

Be **creative**, customize a sponsorship package that addresses their goals.

Follow-up after the event with a **thank you**. This will give you the opportunity to let the sponsor know how their participation helped achieve the success of the event, and position you to ask for next year's event.

Provide a **stewardship report** of what the club/organization did with the money they gave and **demonstrate the impact** they made as a sponsor. Collect pictures of their employees from the event and include these in your report

Create **sponsorship packages** and encourage corporate teams to participate. Local businesses are interested in sponsoring local events as part of their corporate social responsibility. Sponsorship from local businesses will increase revenue and participation. Make sure to approach past sponsors who may increase their involvement.

Recognize sponsors and participants. Thank everyone appropriately, depending on their participation in your campaign. You can thank sponsors, corporate teams and top fundraisers in speeches and thank all participants with a thank you letter. Participants should get a thank you card or email with a link to a photo of them during the event.

Give sponsors and top fundraisers **key roles**. Sponsors and top fundraisers are given key roles such as participating in a ribbon cutting ceremony before the event starts, or helping to pass out the awards. This helps to showcase sponsors and their contribution to the event.

Showcase top fundraisers and families with **powerful stories** to media - an interesting media story that will help to bring awareness to your event.

Ask all participants if they would like to be added to your **mailing list**. This will help to make sure that participants get more information, that they better understand where their money is going, and that they get up-to-date news on activities and future events.

Thank You Letters

Personalize your thank you letter with the donor's name, double check the spelling and write directly to the individual. First names are powerful, so use them if you can.

Use **personal pronouns** such as 'I', 'you', and 'we', and include personal information about the donor that you may know; such as how long they've been a donor, or that you enjoyed seeing them at the last event. Perhaps the donor has received an award or has been promoted.

If this is a first time donor, send a **welcome package**, put the donor's name on your mailing and/or email list to receive newsletters and announcements.

Always use the donor's **personal name** - not "to whom it may concern" or "dear friend".

If possible, personalize the information in the letter. For a loyal donor, consider a **handwritten note** or card rather than a formal letter.

Coordinate the thank you with the **appeal or campaign** that brought in the donation. Draft a thank-you letter when you make your fundraising templates. Think of it as part of one campaign package.

Coordinating the thank you with the appeal will improve the stickiness of your organization's name in the donor's mind. It is also reassuring to the donor and shows that you are organized and taking the time to get it right.

Forty-eight hours is an ideal turn around for a thank you letter. If that is impossible, aim for no more than a week. You want the donor(s) to remember that they made the donation so the thank you should reinforce their action and reward them for that decision. Getting the letter there quickly will make your name stick in the donor's mind, reassure the donor that you actually received the donation, and impress the donor your efficiency and thoughtfulness.

Online donors should receive an **online thank you letter** for their donation, not just an online tax receipt.

Stewardship & Recognition

Recognize your donors & sponsors by:

- ▶ Inviting as a guest of honour to an event;
- ▶ Recognition at a board meeting;
- ▶ Hold a donor recognition event;
- ▶ Present them with a plaque, certificate, or framed photo;
- ▶ Have the event chair make a phone call to say thank you;
- ▶ Have a board member make a personal visit to say thank you;
- ▶ Write an article about the successful partnership in the local newspaper;
- ▶ Keep the donor informed about the club/organization;
- ▶ Send a holiday greeting card;
- ▶ Etc.