



Chapter 5 Successful Fundraising Tips

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Charities, unlike other organisations, usually put together an event with one particular goal in mind: to raise funds for a particular cause. To throw a successful charity event, a successful fundraising plan is vitally important. You want to set fundraising goals and targets that you can use in your marketing and media campaigns and in all of your communication and PR materials.

First steps for Fundraising Success

When developing a fundraising plan here are some important steps to help you get started:

Develop an overall fundraising goal. How much money do you plan to raise in total for the event? It's important to have a good general target to reach for as it helps with your marketing and generates more hype about the event. For example, this year the Smith Family set a \$1 million target for its "Around the Bay in a Day" event for 2009.

Assess the donor market. What is your donor demographic and where are your donations going to come from? There are generally three types of individual donor markets, and corporate donations, that you can target:

- 1. Anonymous small donors.** These are the people who click on to your website and sign up to your contribute or sponsor when they see an ad. For these types of donors, you'll need a wide audience capture that's quite generic and facilities that will support small donations. For example, an online portal is a great way to capture this donor market as are collection tins and volunteer sign ups. See Appendix A for our guide on how to set up an online donation portal.
- 2. Family and Network donations.** These are the families, friends and co-workers who will support an individual they know. Things like fun runs and themed appeals work well for these donors. Have a simple way for individuals to sign up and raise money (i.e. via an online registry) and have a simple registration pack that should have all the materials they'll need to collect funds.
- 3. Larger individual donations.** These are larger individual donations from people who will be specifically looking to contribute to your cause. For example, an individual can purchase a table at a charity dinner or become a recognised supporter. These individuals will want recognition for their contribution and they should be targeted personally, such as with a direct mail campaign.
- 4. Corporate donations.** Corporate donations and sponsorships are always a great way to raise funds. Companies will donate to help their business profile and align themselves with a strategic audience. Corporate donations can come in the form of dollars or many businesses will offer "contra deals" where the business will supply you with their product or service to a specific dollar amount in exchange for promotion. For example, a toy company can donate a number of bicycles to a children's charity or a restaurant may donate their facilities for you to host your event in exchange for a mention.

Explore different avenues to raise funds. Be creative about how you can raise funds and how your overall goal can be split amongst various channels. For example, if you're selling tickets to an event, can you raise a bit more money with a raffle? How do you plan on collecting individual donations? What opportunities exist for direct and indirect corporate sponsorships? Keep an organised database of all your potential and converted donors.

Tip: Consider how you can market and push for more funds and maximise these different avenues. For example, can you find companies to “dollar match” individual donations?

Work out the costs and returns. Don't forget that you have to account for costs as well as donations. You can throw a spectacular gala at a five star venue, but this will detract from the amount you ultimately have to contribute to the cause. Alternatively, you might need to spend a bit more if you want to attract celebrities, media and big corporate sponsors.

Make sure you have the resources to support your plan. Whether it's having a simple downloadable form or a setting up an online donation facility on your website, make sure you're implementing your fundraising plan in as simple and straightforward a way as possible.

Developing a resources and sponsorship plan for your charity event

After you have understood the components of attracting resources for your charity event, you now need to turn those ideas into a strategic plan.

Devise a successful resource and sponsorship plan for your charity event by following these steps:

1. Assess your current situation in terms of:

- *Stakeholders.* Who are your target audiences, sponsors, donors, supporters and volunteers? How are they currently supporting your charity (e.g. financially, volunteering etc)?
- *Competition.* Who are your competitors? What are they doing to attract resources? How effective is that? And what can your charity do differently to stand out?
- *Performance.* Financially, how did your charity perform last year? Did you meet your objectives, why or why not? What needs improving?
- *Context.* How are trends, the economy and other factors affecting your charity organisation?

A great way to develop an assessment is considering **SWOT** (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) to analyse and assess each section.

2. **Outline specific objectives.** What are your goals in terms of finance and resources? How much money do you want to raise? How many supporters and donors would you like to attract after your charity event?

3. **Action Plan.** How will you achieve each objective? Think about these questions:
 - What is the action plan for each objective? (i.e. to secure \$1000 in sponsorship from a business, raise \$2000 in donations, have a celebrity come along and endorse the charity event etc)

 - Who will be in charge of what?

 - Timeline – start, middle and end date of each objective. What tangible results can be expected by certain dates?

 - How you will measure success?

 - What is your contingency plan if difficulties arise? This is crucial.

4. **Monitoring.** What tools will you use to monitor success? How often will you review and assess the marketing goals of your charity event (i.e. monthly, bi-monthly)? Do you need to revise anything?

Getting registered for charity fundraising

If you haven't done so already, you'll need to register your charity organisation if you wish to receive donations or fundraise, but no fees apply. If you're looking to serve alcohol at your charity event, you will need a special license from various State Departments.

Processes, exemptions and laws vary from state to state, so contact your nearest Office for more information. For example, some charity events (e.g. street collections, raffles) require an entirely different application form in some states.

Attracting Sponsors for your charity event

Corporate sponsors and business partnerships are vital if you want to lower costs as much as possible for your charity event. From printing, web hosting, catering and advertising, there is simply no limit to the type of sponsorship you can secure. The key is to clearly outline how the partnership will benefit **both** the sponsor and your charity.

Here are ten tips, adapted from the NSW Government Event Tips that will help you attract sponsors for your charity event:

1. Appoint a committee or staff member to oversee sponsorship and fundraising. However, it is important to remember that raising money is ultimately everybody's responsibility.
2. Devise a budget and your projected financial goals. How much money do you want to raise before, during and after the charity event?
3. Network at relevant industry, university and social events and observe opportunities for sponsorship.
4. Make sure the partnership is **mutually** beneficial in terms of values and goals. Promote the benefits of partnering with your charity event (i.e. enhances reputation of company, generates media attention, reaches the company's target audience, provides tax benefits etc).
5. Start as early as possible and aim high. Securing a big-name sponsor early on eases the financial stress.
6. Use the contacts that you, your charity event committee members, colleagues, family and friends are already in touch with.
7. Develop a good communication and marketing plan for materials such as print like brochures, sponsorship proposals, a website, industry newsletters and online promotions. These materials should look consistent and professional with an underlying "wow" factor.
8. Meet up in person instead of relying on a phone call, email or a written sponsorship proposal to secure a partnership.
9. Be clear with why and how companies, personalities or the community can get involved. Again, this will require a good organising team and good planning to ensure deliverables are executed smoothly and professionally. You don't want to promise anything that you won't be able to deliver on.
10. Conduct a risk management assessment to identify potential problems that could surface. By partnering with your charity event, sponsors, businesses and individuals are putting their own reputations on the line as much as you are – so minimise adverse outcomes as much as possible.

After you have secured sponsorship, remember to:

- ✓ Be direct and professional with what you want from the partnership. Write down the agreement so you and the sponsor are absolutely clear on what's expected.
- ✓ Communicate regularly and work hard to maintain the relationship.

- ✓ Have a long term partnership strategy.
- ✓ Let the sponsor know how their contribution is specifically helping your charity organisation.
- ✓ Acknowledge key sponsors by including them in your marketing materials and media distributions. Be sure to thank them at the event itself or you can even organise a specific “thank you” dinner for major sponsors.

Fundraising tips from the Experts: Q & A with Belinda Griffiths, Events and Sponsorship Manager for The Smith Family

1. How do I attract sponsorship and resources for my charity event?

You need to do your research – it's about understanding the industry sectors and how the company can contribute. For example, there's no point asking for \$20,000 when a company is struggling to stay in business.

You have to know who you're targeting, what you're targeting, what you want, and what you can give the company in return. And then, it's as easy as going in and making that approach.

A lot of companies want to support charities. But you may need to go to ten different companies in the same industry before you can get something because they may already be supporting a charity. So rejection doesn't always mean you're doing a bad job, you just have to keep trying.

And it's also approaching sponsors on different levels: some are corporate, some are smaller businesses, and some are just individuals who can help out. Just don't be afraid to ask – the worst response you can get is 'No'.

2. What shouldn't charity event organisers do when approaching sponsors?

Avoid asking for money if you have no idea what the company does, and no idea what their contribution is going to do and what you can give back in return. You need to do your research.

Resources:

http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/grant_main.jsp

http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/fundraising_main.jsp

http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding/funding_article.jsp?articleid=1694

http://thirdsectormagazine.com.au/news/creating_successful_special_events/00321/

http://www.fundraisinguccessmag.com/article/the-three-stages-solicitation-34231_1.html

http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketing/marketing_article.jsp?articleid=1510

<http://fundraisingresources.com.au/>