

FUND RAISING TIPS

WHAT TYPE OF EVENT

Consider the type of fund-raising activities that are popular in your community and try to come up with a fresh approach to several of them. However, if one particular organization is already well known for having a big annual bazaar or carnival, your group may be wise to come up with a completely different idea.

If you are planning a large event, remember that people are there to be entertained and to spend money. Give them as many opportunities as possible to do both. Choose a theme and carry it through. People always respond better if they can identify an event with a particular theme, especially if it's one that implies having fun.

CHOOSING A DATE

Check dates with your local Chamber of Commerce or local governing body, Lions Club, or other local organizations in your community to make sure that your group will not be competing with another for attendance.

Don't schedule an event for holiday weekends unless that event is specifically tied to that weekend (i.e., Memorial Day festival). Otherwise, attendance at your fund-raiser may suffer.

Many organizations seem to prefer the weekend immediately following a major holiday (i.e., the first Saturday after Labor Day) or before a holiday (the Sunday before Mother's Day) to hold annual fund raisers. Keep dates like these in mind when you begin to plan your events.

Always plan an alternate rain date for any outdoor fund-raiser or, if possible, have an indoor facility available.

ORGANIZATION

Whatever you plan, get people involved. No fund-raising venture can succeed without the cooperation of club members and, in many cases, of the community at large. The more people, the better.

Set up committees to handle each function: food, entertainment, decorations, publicity, donations, cleanup, or any other committee which may be required to make the fund raiser work.

Establish a working calendar and stick to it as closely as possible. That way, you will have enough time to cope with those last-minute problems that invariably come up.

Be sure to notify your local governing body, if applicable, as soon as you plan any fund raising event. They will be able to advise you of what permits (if any) are required. Also, many communities have very strict laws about gambling or the sale of alcoholic beverages. It is far better to find out what is needed or prohibited before you start rather than after the fact.

Let the local police, fire, and sanitation departments know about any large fundraiser. In certain cases, police can be assigned to direct traffic or be in the area for safety purposes, and sanitation people may be able to clean the area before and after your event.

The Lions Clubs are covered under the insurance policy of Lions Clubs International. Check this policy to make sure that your particular fundraiser meets the requisites of coverage or if you would require additional coverage in case of accidents or property damage.

Fit the size of your fundraiser to the members of your club. A member may not like to sell raffle tickets but would be enthusiastic about supporting another project. If your ideas or plans call for more help than your club members can provide, call in a nearby club. It's always good to work with other Lions Clubs or other community service organizations.

Timing is important. Make sure that the type of project you are going to put on is done at an appropriate time. Timing can make all the difference. Make sure that another Lions Club or service club hasn't planned their fundraiser at the same time.

GETTING DONATIONS

Remember the first and most obvious rule of fund raising: The fewer your expenses, the more money you will make. So, try to keep all expenses at a minimum and get everything you can for free.

As an example, ask absolutely everyone you know for donations of old clothes, used furniture, books and household items, etc. if you are planning a flea market or bazaar.

Go to every neighborhood merchant to solicit door prizes, items to be raffled off or auctioned, or anything else you need, such as food, decorations and equipment.

When approaching merchants for donations, remember it's all in how you ask. Be very positive in your approach, explaining who you are, the purpose of your fundraiser, and who it will benefit. As an added incentive, make sure you offer the merchants public recognition for their generosity and prove to them that they will get it. You might bring last year's program listing the various contributors and show it to each person you are asking for help. Tell the merchant "We want to let everyone know who has been responsible for providing such valuable assistance to the community."

PUBLICITY - THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS TOO MUCH

Send notices of your upcoming event to local newspapers and radio and TV stations about two to three weeks before the event is scheduled. Notify the Woman's Page Editor, The Community Bulletin Board Department, and the Features Editor. Also, if you have enough money to pay for it and you think it is worthwhile, consider paying for advertising space in local newspapers.

If possible, have leaflets mimeographed. Put them under doors, on car windshields, next to mail boxes on a door-to-door basis, one or two days before the event as a reminder to local residents. Check local ordinances of passing out flyers. Remember, it is a violation of Post Office rules to put them in mailboxes without postage.

Have a talented member of your group make up posters and ask store owners to put them in their windows about eight days before the event.

KEEP IT PRETTY

Make everything you are selling or displaying as attractive as possible. For example, plants in pretty containers will sell better than those in plain pots. Likewise, food packages wrapped in pastel cellophane and tied with yarn or ribbon are more appealing than those covered with wax paper or secured with rubber bands.

The same principle applies to displays. Keep booths clean and neat and exhibit merchandise in a nice, orderly arrangement.

Have members of your organization wear costumes particularly if you are running a large fund-raising event. Costumes make organization members easy to spot, so that visitors can find them when they need information, directions, or assistance. The costumes need not be expensive; straw hats, or even a ribbon draped from the shoulder to the waist, work well.

MONEY TIPS

If you are planning a large event, it is a good idea to open a bank account as soon as you schedule the fundraiser.

Be sure to keep records of every penny spent and every penny taken in. A treasurer should be appointed to oversee all financial transactions and to report to members of the group at predetermined intervals.

Offer advance sale ticket discounts to give your group some cash to work with. Student discounts, senior citizen discounts, and family or weekend tickets for a two- or three-day event will not only generate good will in your community but may help to boost attendance.

It is sometimes a better idea to ask for donations than to charge a fixed amount for a car wash or other low-cost service. According to some experienced fund-raisers, people tend to give more when they are simply asked for a contribution.

Have one person, and one person only, in charge of each cash box at a large fund raiser.

Always let people know exactly what amounts are charged for everything that is offered. Have large signs posted at booths and stands and legible price tags attached to any items being sold at bazaars and flea markets.

Whenever possible, and particularly at small-scale fund raisers, try to throw in a couple of extras and be sure to let people know about them ahead of time. For example, if you are charging \$2 or \$3 for a film showing, offer free coffee and cake. People won't mind paying inflated prices for a lecture or house tour, for example, if they feel they are getting something "extra" for their donation.

And finally, when the event is over, make sure that "thank you"s are given to everyone involved in the event. Make sure that all bills are paid promptly and a complete and accurate accounting is provided to the club members at the earliest possible moment. Send out letters of thanks to all merchants and people who have made contributions or donations to your event.

FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Pancake Day	Spaghetti Dinner	Bake Sale
Raffle	Bingo	Car Raffle
Used Telephones	Used Cartridges	Fashion Show
Donkey Baseball	Formal Car Wash	Rose Sale
Broom Sale	Concession Stand	Wild Game Dinner
Flea Market	Wine Tasting	Haunted House
Art Show	Ads on Place Mats	Circus
Light Bulb Sale	Turkey Shoot	Coloring Book
Golf Outing	White Cane Sale	Christmas Basket Sale
Specialty Dance	Christmas Tree Sale	Baseball Pool
Las Vegas Night	Bed Race	Book Fair
Home Demonstration	Steak Fry	Pizza Card Fund Raiser
Karaoke Night	Mystery Trip	Progressive Dinner
Used Book Sale	Chinese Auction	Bowl-A-Thon
Cook Book	Theme Basket Sale	Seed Sale
Flower Sale	Flag Sale	Snow Ball Fight
Entertainment Book	Marathon	Regular Car Wash
Silent Auction	Antique Car Show	Christmas Decoration
Night at the Races	Candy Sale	Dirt Sale
Flower/Plant Sale	Town Calendar	Candle Sale

FUND RAISING, WE CAN'T DO WITHOUT IT

(excerpted from: USA Canada Forum September, 2004 – Reno, Nevada)

Very few Lion, Lioness or Leo clubs operate solely as hands-on service providers. Most of us find ourselves involved in the types of community service that require us to raise money to support our projects and good works.

So the questions become:

1. What is a successful fundraiser?
2. How do we capture our share of the market?
3. How do we keep our volunteers volunteering?

What is a Successful Fundraiser?

We can focus our attention for a moment on the aspects of Lionism that can be achieved only through financial support:

- Helping Youth Exchange students pay for airline tickets (few of us can simply volunteer to fly them places, we have to donate money)
- Buying a wheelchair— I know for sure that I don't know how to build one from scratch
- Paying for a Peace Poster kit for each school in my community — so far i have had no success trying to pay the club supplies office using the barter or trade system, so cash I the Lions Club bank account is required.

Fundraisers come in all shapes and sizes.

Sometimes the money raised comes from:

- o The public [individuals and corporations)
- o Grants, or
- o Planned giving.

It often helps us to get out of that same old fundraising rut that has become our worn path to the bank if we simply look at the fundraisers that have been successes for other Lions Clubs. I've reviewed successful fundraisers and categorized them by their descriptions, the types of skills your members need to make these successful, the types of charities that are the beneficiaries, the club to contact for more information and the types of monies raised .

How do we capture our share of the market?

There can be no doubt that we spend part of our volunteer service time raising funds. Our time is valuable even if we call it *'free'* time. Most of us don't want to find out that our efforts did not capture the imagination or participation or donations of the public.

In today's society, parents are often called upon to help raise funds for minor sports teams. Sometimes the grandparents are conscripted into service too. With all the demands for the public to contribute to our fundraisers, the pressure is on when we try to capture our share of the market out there.

How do we capture the market?

Why do we all buy those Girl Scout cookies every year? We know that they are coming. We should just lock the doors and save ourselves the 4000 calories that we really don't need. But no, every year, we buy the cookies. Why? Because we know they are coming, we understand the cause, and the cookies are good. The Girl Scouts or Girl Guides have cornered the market on door-to-door cookies sales. How did they do that? Well, they it predictable, they have a desirable product, and they have imagination in their unique sales pitches that I love to hear each year.

Predictability — some fundraisers work because they are predictable. Our communities know that we will come to them every *year* support and they build our needs into their community giving.

This is particularly true for sponsorships for events such as golf tournaments. We need to be advising these corporations or partners that we will be asking for their support, or we may find ourselves very disappointed. Many of the larger organizations allocate their donations at least 12 months in advance. If we find ourselves being turned down when we approach them, it is important to ask them to plan for our return the next year.

Desirability — Are you raffling a prize that is desirable? People won't pay much to golf with me but they might pay to golf with Tiger Woods.

Are you offering a product that people will want or use? I have never found a use for some of the things one buys at the fair each year, but boy didn't those sales people make the gadget sound desirable. Are we fundraising on the basis of a desirable product?

Are we fundraising for such a good cause that I won't care if my ticket wins: I'll make the donation anyway?

Novelty — People like the unusual. We've all been asked to buy tickets to a fundraising dinner. For many of us that costs more than the price of entrance: there is the baby sitter the outfit to wear, the bidding on the silent auction items when we get there and so on. Have you ever been invited to buy a ticket to a dinner that wasn't going to happen — just buy the ticket, stay home and relax?

How do we keep our volunteers volunteering?

In order for a volunteer to continue to contribute their free time, project after project, year after year, there must be something in it for them.

- For many volunteers the rewards come front
- Spending time with fellow Lions — don't send those Lions out to work alone.
- Meeting with the public and talking about Lionism or the project
- Not meeting with the public, but working behind the scenes
- Making the fundraiser into a social event with friends
- Celebrating when the project is over and recognizing the Lions for their various contributions
- Being recognized on the broader community stage
- Being able to make a difference to a cause or an individual
- Feeling part of something important

CONCLUSIONS

If dollars raised is our measure of success, then fundraisers are successful if they meet the target.

If feelings of satisfaction are our measure of a success, then fundraisers are successful if they provide the most service minded men and women with a sense of involvement in a satisfying project.

If bettering our communities is our measure of success, then fundraisers are successful if our Lions and our Community can take pride in the results gained from the event.