

FUNDRAISING

“If my mind can conceive it and my heart can believe it, then I can achieve it” – Muhammad Ali

How many times have you come up with great ideas for programs or events only to see them fold because of a lack of funding? Raising money is a crucial part of most organizations. Whether you want to sponsor a big-name speaker, hold a dance with a good local band or simply print up fliers promoting your group, you need money to get you going. You can raise money to materialize your ideas – you just need to know where to start.

There are several ways to go about the fundraising process. Though you may cringe at the thought of approaching people to ask for money, it does not have to be so bad. In fact, if approached the right way, it can be a great team-building experience. The steps outlined below may assist you in developing a successful fundraising campaign and actually get you to enjoy the process!

Organize your fundraising committee. Elect a chairperson who will keep track of progress, details and so forth.

Decide your goals together – and write them down. Be specific and realistic about how much you want to raise and what you will do with the money.

Develop your strategy. Here are a few suggestions, but you can develop more by brainstorming with your group. Select one or a combination that is best suited for your goals:

- Door-to-door solicitation
- Candy sale
- Telephone appeal
- Car wash
- Variety/talent show
- Magazine sale
- Pool tournament
- Sponsor 5k walk/run
- Dance
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Raffle

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- Movie night with refreshments
- Dunk tank

Fire up! Energize your team and get them excited about the organization and the campaign. Do team-building exercises, go out for dinner – be creative!

Decide whom to approach. Distribute lists of potential donors and decide who will approach which businesses to avoid duplication. You can generate a list of potential donors from sources such as:

- Organization records (list of past donors, former members, parents of members)
- Donor listings from other organizations
- Phone books
- Newspapers and periodicals
- Membership listings (i.e. if you are a golf organization, get member listings from local country clubs)

Develop your techniques. Make an outline of each item you want to include in your “schpiel.” Some examples (be very specific!):

- What your organization is
- How it helps others
- What it is raising money for
- How their donation would be used
- How their business will benefit from donating (This is very important! Everyone wants to know “what’s in it for me?”).

Progress checks. Throughout the campaign, meet to discuss progress. Let the committee know what they have raised so far, how much they have left to raise and review the techniques you

outlined earlier. Allow members to discuss their experiences – what has worked for them and what has not. Thank and encourage the group.

- Don't let it end. After the campaign, take some time to:
- Write thank you letters to donors
- Thank your committee members
- Update your files (for the next campaign)
- Evaluate pros and cons of the campaign
- Collect any unpaid donations
- Enlist new members and begin long-range planning (for annual campaigns)

Whatever fundraising method you choose, keep one thing in mind: face-to-face contact is typically more effective than letter-writing and even telephone campaigns. People are generally much more open and willing to listen if someone approaches them in person. Stay positive, energized and focused on your goal!

Reference: Edles, P.L. (1993). Fundraising. McGraw-Hill, Inc.

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