

OUR GUIDE TO FUNDRAISING



FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS OF FUNDRAISING FOR CHARITY

So you've made the decision to run a fundraising event for your charity - congratulations.

Fundraising events are a great way of not only generating much needed funding for non-profit organisations, but they're also exceptionally good at raising awareness for the cause that the charity supports. Fundraising events don't have to be large scale events; they can be as simple as a cupcake stand at a local market or public place, a raffle or a pub quiz.

Regardless, you need to identify how exactly you want to fundraise, where you're going to do it, why you're doing so and what resources you have available to be able to carry it out.



WHY FUNDRAISE?

- Generate much needed funds for your cause.
- Raise awareness of your charity and what you're supporting.
- Meet your donors face to face and enhance your relationship with the community.
- Attract potential new business sponsors.
- Build your brand.
- Add new leads to your newsletter, social media pages or email list.

In today's society there are so many charitable organisations that you can't expect potential donors to be able to come and find you. Rather, you must get yourselves out there and find your donors. Fundraising is a fantastic way to do this, and should be a key part of any charity's marketing strategy, as this is usually the main way that a charity generates income, especially a smaller charity. There is also no better way of getting involved with the community than by meeting them face to face during your fundraising venture.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING YOUR FUNDRAISING

- Why do you need to fundraise? Do you have a specific target in mind, or are you just trying to raise as much money as possible?
- What kind of people would be interested in your cause? If your charity is supporting a cause that affects men, then make sure you're targeting the male demographic. On the other hand, if it's an issue that affects women, then target your marketing and fundraising efforts at women. A great example of this sort of thing working well is the 'Movember' campaign. A charity event that targets men and inspires them to grow glorious moustaches with the aim of gaining donations via sponsorship for prostate cancer research.
- Do you or any of your staff or volunteers have any strengths that may help you fundraise? For example if one of you are in a band, you could look at putting on a concert, or if you have someone who makes excellent cakes, look at setting up a cake stall.
- How much is it going to cost to put on your fundraising event? Consider the rental of your location, marketing, staff costs (if any), raw materials (if selling a product), prizes (if running a competition) and anything else that you can think of. There's no point in putting on a fundraising event if the costs will outweigh any potential profits.
- Know your market. If you don't know who your target market is, how are you going to market to them effectively?
- Leverage any existing contacts you have. If you can recruit volunteers to help out with your fundraising event, it will make life a lot easier – and cut down potential costs! Make sure you only utilise useful volunteers though, there's nothing worse than getting volunteers on board that are more of a hindrance than a help.
- Do you have any celebrity contacts? This is more important now than ever before as we live in a world that's increasingly dominated by celebrities. If you can get a celebrity to endorse your event and even turn up to help promote it, you'll be able to attract even more people. Use their social networking leverage, for example a single tweet from a celebrity could be seen by thousands of people, which is great marketing for you. You can also effectively use a celebrity as part of your actual fundraising event – read on below to where I tell you how!



GREAT WAYS TO FUNDRAISE

- **Car wash.** This is a tried and true method of fundraising for any organisation. You'll need to gather some volunteers to do the washing, approach the owners of a suitable location (you'll need plenty of space, preferably near a busy road, and access to a running water supply – pub car parks can sometimes be good for this) and good marketing (if you're located near a busy road, then some decent signage would work wonders here). Remember though that this works best in good weather, so it pays to only do this in summer.
- **Sponsored walk.** This is a popular method of fundraising. Simply gather as many people as you can to go out and get people to sponsor them to walk a specified distance. This works great by approaching schools who can easily communicate to their pupils that a charity needs people to walk in order to fundraise – you'll be surprised by how many pupils will actually sign up for this. This is a great one to use social media for as the participants can easily recruit sponsorship via Facebook and Twitter etc.



- **Raffle.** Get in contact with your local pub landlord and organise a raffle event in his or her pub. This is a win/win for both parties as they'll get an increase of people through the door, and you'll be able to target their existing customers. You can approach local business to donate prizes for the raffle, then all you'll need to do is acquire some raffle books and promote your raffle inside the pub.
- **Cake sale.** Do you know anyone who's an excellent baker? Cakes can be an excellent way to fundraise as the cost to produce is relatively low and so leaves a healthy profit margin. Plus, who doesn't like cake – especially when it's for a good cause! If you're going to try this method then it's a good idea to setup a stall in a busy public area – near a shopping mall for example.
- **Guess the amount of jelly beans in the jar.** This is another great way to fundraise and is a very easy method. Simply fill a jar with jellybeans (make sure you know how many have gone in!), and ask if you can leave it in the reception of a business or school. The aim is to have people guess the correct amount of jellybeans in the jar for a small fee or donation and the closest guess wins a prize.
- **Celebrity auction.** If you do happen to know a celebrity, or are in a position to be able to approach one then this method is one that works very well, especially with the rise of internet auction sites. Simply put up an auction on a site such as eBay listing a dinner date with the celebrity you've got on board. If you can get a restaurant on board with this as well which will provide free or discounted meals, then that's even better. What's great about this method is that it's great PR for the celebrity and/or restaurant, and it's a very good fundraising method for your charity. It's really a win/win. Of course it doesn't have to be a dinner date; you can think outside the box a little with this one, for example if you have a sports star on board, you could offer a personalised training session with them.

AN EVENT IS NO GOOD WITHOUT AN AUDIENCE

No matter what kind of event you put on, it's no good if you're not marketing it to attract more custom. Whatever type of event you put on, you should be aiming to spread the word far and wide. Ways you can do this include:

- **Direct mail.** Do you have an existing client list you can mail to? Use this to promote your fundraising event. Make sure you consider the cost of postage with this, as it can quickly mount up if you're mailing to a large list.
- **Email.** Email lists are a great way to communicate effectively to a large group of people at a very low cost. Send an email a few weeks in advance to make people aware, and follow up a day or two prior to the event as a reminder.
- **Social Media.** Have a Facebook or Twitter page? Let your followers know what you're planning! You can also gain very useful feedback on your event – which is great at helping you tailor the event to your target market.
- **Telephone calls.** Telephone calls can be time consuming, however if you have a key prospect you can contact, such as a potential business sponsor, it's better to do it via phone as it's more personal.
- **Website.** If you have a website, update it with the details of your event. Another great, low cost way of getting the word out.
- **Press releases/media.** Issue a press release to your local newspapers, radio and/or TV stations. Media companies love to promote charity events as it helps to increase their reputation as well. You may even get a new sponsor out of it.
- **Signage/Displays.** No matter what other promotion you've done prior to your event, if you don't have an attractive display on the day, you're not going to capitalise on the true potential of your event. Good signage will ensure that you pick up extra members of the public that see your attractive display and are curious enough to come over and engage with you. Plus, you'll also help your other marketing efforts by ensuring that those people you've convinced to come to your event can easily find it.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

If you have chosen to undertake a fundraising method that means you'll require a stand and need to interact with people, then make sure you have chosen your best volunteers/staff to be on hand to interact with the public.

Make sure they're trained well, know what to say and have the appropriate literature on hand to hand out to the public. Things like fliers can be a great way to increase interest in your charity on the day and are an effective way of communicating what your charity is about, without having to take the time and speak one on one.

Tip: Consider trying to partner with a printing company to decrease/eliminate printing costs, in return for advertising their company on the flyer.



YOUR STAND

Make your stand attractive and inviting. Don't just go with a simple, boring table as that's not interesting and doesn't show anyone what you're about.

Fact is, you'll need great signage and displays so people know what you're representing and are more likely to be attracted to the stand and thus will come over to interact with you. Think about having a great background in the form of a pop up stand which includes your logo and other images / writing that relates to your charity. If you do choose to have writing on any of your displays, try and keep it short and simple so that it's easily read and understood at a glance. Teardrop flags are great in combination with a pop up stand as they can easily be placed a little further away from your stand which gives you a greater area with which to attract an audience. A banner across the front of your table which conveys to people what you're doing or selling is also a winner. If you're looking for something a bit bigger that you can easily takedown and setup again for new events, considering having a tent custom made in your colour scheme and with your logo and messages printed on the walls.

YOUR STAFF / VOLUNTEERS

The purpose of the people manning your stand is primarily to fundraise money for your charity, so a certain amount of sales work is involved.

Let's say you're selling cupcakes in order to raise money. You may be selling one cupcake for £4, however you could try and upsell two for £7 – the customer is getting a discount for buying in 'bulk' and the charity is getting more money for their cause – it's a win / win. Please remember though that at the end of the day your charity is being represented, so ensure whoever you have that's manning the stand is not pushy, is polite, friendly and remembers to smile!

INFORMATION HAND OUTS

A great way of attracting new people on the day is to have someone standing relatively close to your stand whose role is to hand out fliers and to engage with potential prospects in the aim of having them come over to the stand.

Make sure the fliers easily convey your message, primarily who you are, and what you do. Remember to have your website address or social networking addresses included on the flyer, as those people that hold on to the flyer but don't come over to visit your stand may still be interested in your charity and could still visit your website or social networking page at a later date where they could potentially donate. Also have some flyers on hand at your stand as well and include them with every purchase made.

GET THEIR CONTACT DETAILS

If you've gone to all the trouble of organising a fundraising event for your charity, make sure you make the most of any leads that come your way.

Always gather more than just donations; try and get phone numbers, addresses, email address and new likes or followers to your social media pages. By doing this, you're increasing the value of your visitors and donors as you're able to market to them in the future. Going back to the cake stall example; it's great being able to make a few pounds from each visitor, but wouldn't it be better if you were able to communicate and market to that person for weeks, months and even years to come? Those few pounds could easily turn in to hundreds over time – all just by collecting a simple email address and keeping in touch.

AFTER THE EVENT

Have a team meeting right after you've packed up for the day.

Make a note of what you've all learnt and what you think you could improve upon for next time. Note down what worked and what didn't. It's important that you do this as soon as you've finished so that the event is still fresh in everyone's minds.

REVIEW YOUR TAKINGS

Did you fundraise enough to meet any goals that were set? If not, what can you do to ensure you reach them?

If you did reach your goals, make sure you let everyone know about it! Update your website, post to your social media pages and contact your mailing lists. If people can see that you're actively working towards helping the cause, they'll be more encouraged to help you out.

Make sure you know exactly how much you made from fundraising. This is a simple equation if you were selling goods, which is simply your revenue for the day minus your costs.

FOLLOW UP WITH YOUR NEW LEADS

Did you manage to capture some new leads at your event?

If so, make sure you follow up with them. Send them an email for example thanking them for coming along to your event and that it was nice to meet them, let them know how the event went for you and whether you reached your goals and how you're going to spend the money raised. Don't forget to include a link to a site where they can donate to you (for example a Paypal link). Just because they didn't hand over a donation in the form of cash at your event, doesn't mean they're not willing to Paypal you a few pounds when they're at home in front of the computer.

SHARE YOUR SUCCESS

Whatever you were fundraising for, whether it be for a new school for a village in Africa or some sporting equipment for disadvantaged children in the UK, you should let people know about it.

This is a great way to raise awareness for your cause and to even receive new donations, without having to go out and fundraise again. Make sure you take photos to show the charitable work you're doing, either photos of the sporting equipment being handed over, or the school being built etc. With this you're able to show people where the money that you raised from your fundraising is going, which helps add a great deal of legitimacy to your charity as well. It's also worth issuing a press release and contacting local media outlets, as they sometimes love to run stories like this.

DO IT AGAIN

There's always something that charities can do, for which they need to raise money for.

So don't stop with just the one fundraising effort, get back out there and do it again. Put the lessons you learnt from this event in to action and make changes for your next event, so it's even better. Perhaps try a different method of fundraising to see which works best for your charity – if you had a stand selling goods this time, why not try running a raffle next? There is no best way to fundraise for every charity – you have to find what works for yours.

TO CONCLUDE

- Have a fundraising goal in mind.
- Pick a fundraising method that you think will best suit your charity and enable you to reach your goals.
- Research your market and figure out how you're going to effectively promote your fundraising effort to them.
- Run the event to the best of your ability. Train your staff or volunteers effectively so they know what to expect and ensure your stand (if using one) has attractive signage so people can easily identify you and what you're doing or selling and that it's for charity.
- Obtain as many visitors contact details as possible to enable you to follow up with them later via newsletter, email or social media.
- Have a meeting after your event and see if you met your goals and note down any lessons that were learnt from putting your event on.
- Follow up with those that donated and/or left their contact details and thank them for attending and let them know how and where their donation was used.
- Start planning for your next event!

