

# Business Advantage

News and savings for business and community groups

# FUNDRAISING IDEAS

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# Fundraising

Fall and Winter Planning is in Full Swing

by Diane Rumbaugh



As the economy improves and more businesses and individuals become confident of their financial situation, nonprofits are seeing an uptick in fundraising receipts. This is good news for nonprofits as fall/winter fundraising event season approaches.

**T**he Nonprofit Research Collaborative conducts an annual survey of nonprofits. Its 2013 Nonprofit Fundraising Study found that 63 percent of respondents said they met their fundraising goals in 2012. That's up from 52 percent in 2010. Special event proceeds rose 54 percent compared to a 40 percent decline during the peak of the Great Recession in 2009.

## Planning

Epicurean Charitable Foundation of Las Vegas (ECF), a nonprofit organization that provides financial support to students passionate about pursuing a career in hospitality or culinary arts, is holding its 12th annual M.E.N.U.S. (Mentoring & Educating Nevada's Upcoming Students) fundraiser in October. The "dine around" attracts hundreds of guests and features the creations of many of the top chefs in the city.

"Fall is prime event season in Las Vegas," says Jason Shkorupa, ECF president and vice president of food and beverage for Luxor and Excalibur Hotel and Casinos. "The weather gets a little cooler, school is back in session and there isn't the craziness surrounding holiday time."

For an event to be successful, thorough planning, sometimes a year in advance, must take place. "Planning for the annual fall event usually begins in early spring," says Shkorupa. "There are so many aspects that go into planning an event of this scale and it definitely takes time, including booking locations and entertainment acts.

"M.E.N.U.S. changes every year," explains Shkorupa, "including the location, entertainment and restaurants and beverage distributors. We strive to offer a different genre of entertainment with each event, whether it's a country singer, pop star or world-famous dance crew. This year, we decided to host the event at Luxor Hotel and Casino and feature a private performance by the Jabbawoockeez."

Even the best planning and budgeting can encounter unexpected roadblocks, which require flexibility and quick thinking. A nonprofit client of EMP Management, an events, marketing and promotions company in Scottsdale, Arizona, held a fundraising event to coincide with the Academy Awards ceremony last February. The viewing party attracted over 350 guests. "Traditional budget items included hotel, food and beverage and audio visual as well as floral, printing and

décor," says Amy Corbern, president of EMP. "An unexpected budget item was alcohol. Although a wine sponsor had been identified, an existing Arizona liquor license law that became enforceable last October prevented the non-profit from accepting the donation. My client had to purchase the wine directly from the hotel."

## Keeping It Fresh

Plant With Purpose, a nonprofit organization based in San Diego that partners with rural farmers around the world to restore the environment so communities can support themselves off the land, is holding its annual fundraising gala in October at the Paradise Point Resort and Spa in San Diego. "By October, people are home from summer vacation, children are back in school and we have not yet hit the holidays," says Becky Rosaler, the nonprofit's marketing and events coordinator. The annual event attracts between 300 and 350 people.

There is something good about familiarity, but not when it comes to a fundraising event—especially when ticket prices are significant. Injecting unexpected twists to the event keeps donors coming back. "It is important to keep annual events fresh by switching up location, program or themes," says Rosaler. "Plant With Purpose is working in six developing countries around the world. This provides a variety of options for themes and the overall feel to each year's event. We devise a menu that is appropriate for our audience and the event. This year, the chef has created a menu that has been inspired

from three of the regions where we work: Mexico, the Caribbean and Thailand."

## Auctions

Live and silent auctions are a good source of additional income during an event. "The key to a successful silent auction is soliciting items that are appealing to your audience," explains Rosaler. "The generosity of local businesses, friends of Plant With Purpose, and supporters always amazes me as tickets, gift certificates and items are donated. Creating displays that engage your attendees and communicate the auction packages is important. Mike Hogan, our emcee, keeps the auction moving, draws attention to unique items and closes tables as the hour progresses."

## Marketing and Sponsorships

A fantastic idea for a fundraising event is only the beginning. Creating excitement about the event through a strong, all-encompassing marketing campaign (that includes securing sponsors) is what's needed to make the event a success.

"There is nothing like a personal invitation and word of mouth to encourage people to attend," says Rosaler. "We send the standard 'save the date' (mail and email), include the date in our quarterly newsletter, and then send a formal invitation followed up by phone calls. A number of our supporters purchase tables at a discounted price, which allows them to invite friends. The event is also on our website and promoted through emails and social media like Facebook."

The American Heart Association's

Greater Los Angeles Heart Walk takes a full year to plan, culminating in numerous walks taking place in fall. "We have seven Heart Walks in Greater Los Angeles this year in Antelope Valley, Pomona, Pasadena, downtown LA, Santa Clarita, Santa Monica and Long Beach. We also have Heart Walks in Ventura County, the Inland Empire and Orange County," says Dawn Hoem, American Heart Association regional director. "In Greater Los Angeles, we are expecting a combined 25,000 walkers this fall. More than 1 million participants are expected to walk in more than 500 Heart Walks across the nation."

The American Heart Association relies on its volunteers to court and secure sponsors. "Volunteer leadership is vital to meeting new corporate sponsors," says Hoem. "We also look at the community we serve and identify companies or groups that we can work with to move our mission forward. Some of our wonderful supporters include national sponsors Subway and Jenny Craig and local sponsors Union Bank, UCLA Health and Huntington Hospital. Smart & Final is a sponsor of this year's Heart Walk as well. We conduct email campaigns, make company visits, do phone calls, use social media, media outreach, posters and brochures in high traffic areas in the community to get the word out."

Local supporters also are key in Las Vegas, where more than 40 restaurants and beverage distributors participated in M.E.N.U.S. last year. ECF's board is made up of many of the top food and beverage and hospitality executives in the city.

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## Before The Event (Pre-Planning)

- Determine your total budget
- Determine the fundraising goal
- Select an event date and an alternative in case issues arise
- Find your attendance cost
- Find your minimum and maximum attendance (Minimum attendance should aim to cover your expenses)
- Select venue and contact for availability and cost (Look for fundraiser friendly venues and let them know the cause)
- Create your program schedule

Source: EventStir, a custom, white labeled crowdfunding platform that can be tailored to the look and feel of a business.





To make a Peach Iced Tea that is sure to satisfy:

- 1.25 oz. of Torani Peach Syrup
- 16 oz. of Lipton® Unsweetened Fresh Brewed Iced Tea
- prepared Lemon wedge, for garnish

**Directions:** Fill a 32-oz. glass to the top with ice. Add in iced tea and syrup. Pour mixture into mixing tin and back into glass. Garnish with lemon.



**Brew Up Business** You may have read in the media that soft drinks are coming under fire for their high sugar content. You may have even experienced a backlash to sugary drinks in your food service business. So what healthy and refreshing options can you offer to satisfy your guests' thirst? Tap water won't do. Instead, specialty beverages such as premium teas and iced teas have become a must-have in restaurants, particularly sweet and flavored fresh brewed iced teas.

How do you decide what flavors to offer? At minimum, you need to have a simple unsweetened black iced tea offering. Using a Lipton one-gallon iced tea bag, and your coffee maker, you can easily add a refreshing fresh brewed iced tea to your menu. From there, you may want to add simple syrup to for an additional flavor offering. Don't forget to price it right. Typically, flavored iced tea is priced about 65 cents higher than regular iced tea.<sup>1</sup>

Fresh brewed iced teas command a profit of approximately \$1.80 per glass. By converting one glass of water to iced tea every day, you can see significant profits. But just like any beverage, which brand you serve matters to your guests. Lipton® is the brand preferred 2 to 1 by consumers.<sup>2</sup> To maximize your tea sales:

**Communicate to customers that the tea is fresh brewed** They will know you use real tea leaves, not a liquid concentrate. This can be done both on the menu and by your servers.

**Communicate the brand on the menu** 72% of consumers say they would order fresh brewed iced tea if Lipton® is the featured brand<sup>3</sup>

**Communicate assortment** Consumers crave variety; satisfy that craving

**Lipton® Fresh Brewed Iced teas are available at Smart & Final stores.**

Sources:

- 1 Technomic, Market Intelligence Report: Coffee & Tea, 2011
- 2 Based on the question: "How likely are you to order Lipton® Iced Tea if it was available at restaurants near you?" Ipsos InnoQuest, August 2012
- 3 Consumers responding to the question: "When out at a restaurant which brand of iced tea do you prefer?" Ipsos InnoQuest, August 2012

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"It is usually through these connections that we are able to secure participation," says Shkorupa. "We promote M.E.N.U.S. heavily through all local media channels, including print, online and broadcast mediums and through radio promotions. Social media also continues to grow as a promotional tool. We have unique access to promote the event in numerous resorts and first-class restaurants throughout the city, as well, thanks to our board members. We're also able to promote the event by highlighting the entertainment angle. Previous performers at M.E.N.U.S. include Train, Counting Crows, Lifehouse, Al Green, Sarah Bareilles, Stevie Nicks and Chicago."

**The Payoff**

Fundraising events are only successful if they raise money that can then be used to help further the nonprofit's cause.

In its 12 years, ECF has provided more than \$1 million to local scholars and over \$1 million in charitable community grants to

such organizations as Make-A-Wish Foundation, Lied Discovery Children's Museum, UNLV Rebel Athletic Foundation, Nevada Blind Children's Foundation, Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health and The Las Vegas Latin Chamber of Commerce. It also has a strong mentoring program that connects hospitality professionals with students.

"Being a part of ECF and the mentorship program is one of the most fulfilling roles I've ever held," said Shkorupa. "It's inspiring to be able to directly impact the lives of deserving students and the relationships we build last long after their time in our program. They become family to us."

Coburn's client in Arizona exceeded its fundraising goal by more than \$25,000, while also building awareness of its cause. "The takeaway (a swag bag) with top notch gift items created its own buzz for weeks after the event wrapped," she says.

Last year in the Greater Los Angeles area, the American Heart Association Heart Walks crossed the \$1 million mark for the first time since 2004. Its Los

Angeles 5K walk attracted over 12,000 participants, and 2,000 attended in Long Beach. "This was made possible by hundreds of volunteers who devoted their time and energy to helping make the events successful," says Hoem.

Plant With Purpose raised \$255,000 from its 2012 gala. Part of the funds is going toward creating village savings and loan associations in 15 new communities in some of the poorest countries in the world. "Farmers now have opportunities to change their circumstances and create a better tomorrow for their children. They will also gain sustainable agriculture training, providing families with increased income and greater food security," says Roslar.

"All the hard work and heart that goes into the event beforehand pays off the night of, as guests arrive and the party unfolds," continues Roslar. "With proper planning and a great team, the annual gala has been a huge success in not only sharing the triumphs that have taken place in transforming lives but also opening the door to raise even more funds that will be put toward creating brighter futures for those in need."