



Boost Your Fundraising

By Phillipa Windsor

Copyright 2006 All rights reserved

Proudly brought to you by

Lewis Philips signature books

[Email](#)

Recommended Resources

- [Web Site Hosting Service](#)
- [Internet Marketing](#)
- [Affiliate Program](#)

Please Read This **First**

Terms of Use

This Electronic book is Copyright © 2006. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission from the copyright holder(s).

You must not distribute any part of this ebook in any way at all. Members of eBookwholesaler are the sole distributors and must abide by all the terms at <http://www.ebookwholesaler.net/terms.php>

Disclaimer

The advice contained in this material might not be suitable for everyone. The author obtained the information from sources believed to be reliable and from his own personal experience, but he neither implies nor intends any guarantee of accuracy.

The author, publisher and distributors never give legal, accounting, medical or any other type of professional advice. The reader must always seek those services from competent professionals that can review their own particular circumstances.

The author, publisher and distributors particularly disclaim any liability, loss, or risk taken by individuals who directly or indirectly act on the information contained herein. All readers must accept full responsibility for their use of this material.

Table of Contents

Please Read This First	2
<i>Terms of Use</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Disclaimer</i>	<i>2</i>
Table of Contents	3
Pre-Launch Check-up.	5
<i>Your Goal.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Your Resources.....</i>	<i>5</i>
Involving Your Members	8
<i>Your Committee.....</i>	<i>8</i>
Your Plan.....	10
Approaching Sponsors.....	11
<i>Who Could You Approach?.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Before You Approach Anyone</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>It's Getting Harder</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Who Do You Ask?</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Ask Around You.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Your Attitude.....</i>	<i>13</i>
What Can You Give Donors and Sponsors?.....	14
<i>Quick Fix or Ongoing Support?.....</i>	<i>15</i>
Profitable Letters	16
My Letter Writing 'Rules'	18
Long or Short Letters?.....	20
It's an *Appeal* Letter.....	21
I Believe.....	22
Use the Internet	23
Running an Event	24
<i>Auctions:</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Art Show.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Boot Sale.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Breakfast.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Craft Fair</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Door-knock.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Fair.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Fashion Parades</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Quiz Nights.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Talent Quest.....</i>	<i>29</i>
Event Checklist.....	30
<i>Insurance</i>	<i>30</i>

Printing 31
Date, Time and Alternate Venue 31
Licenses and Permits..... 32
Other Necessary Checks 32

Selling Products to Fundraise 35

Publicity 41
Getting Your News Printed 41

More Media Tips 43
If Your Project Has Problems..... 44

Some Online Resources for Fundraisers 45

Thank You. 46

Pre-Launch Check-up.

The first step to successful fundraising is to decide your **goal**.

Then, look at the **resources** that you have already to help you reach it.

Then you can probably work out a realistic **time-frame** for achieving it.

Your Goal.

Maybe, you want to raise some funds in a one-off effort for your group or cause to:

- ❖ Add to or renovate their building.
- ❖ Clear some accumulated debt
- ❖ Buy supplies
- ❖ Repair or replace equipment

Or, you may want to set up an ongoing promotion that will become a source of funds for years into the future.

Your Resources

Ideas are easy to come up with and are not worth much by themselves. That's because it will cost time, effort and money to bring them to a positive result – probably more of each than you expect at the start.

You need to take a realistic look at whether you:

1. Have, or can gather, enough committed, active people to accomplish the project
2. Have enough funds on hand to cover the expenses involved in setting up and running the project, and
3. Have the time, equipment and expertise to do the task in a fully professional way.

1. **The people:** Your organization probably has many people that are fairly passive supporters. Their contribution is valuable even though it may just consist of an annual subscription and attendance at functions. But, any sort of fundraising endeavor will demand more from those who take part.

Unless you are sure that you can find enough people in the group that will be able to contribute the time and effort needed, the project should not start.

But, don't discard your idea. Put it away for later. Come up with a smaller proposal that your group can probably succeed at with its current membership.

Successfully completing that smaller project will be less taxing on those involved and almost certainly create enthusiasm within the group for tackling your original idea, or another more ambitious project, as a follow-up.

2. **Funds for your fundraising:** Your project will involve expenses that need to be met from the group's current resources. You should try to budget these expenses at a level that will not impact too much on

the organization if the fundraising effort is less successful than planned.

These expenses could include printing, advertising, postage, telephone charges and even the coffee and pizza which keeps the volunteers enthusiastically stuffing the appeal envelopes or making those phone calls.

3. Time, equipment and expertise: Despite the advances in technology, few people seem to have any more spare time than their grandparents enjoyed, which was precious little.

So, you need to be considerate, and not over-demanding, on the people that help with the project. Otherwise, they will be less enthusiastic in the current effort and probably less willing to help with future projects.

Whatever type of fundraiser you undertake, always check what resources might be willingly provided by members of your group and whether you can afford to pay for all of the other requirements without making the project too costly for the potential reward.

If you are going to put on an event, you need to get the equipment and then book and prepare the venue.

If you are going to letter-box your appeal, you need to arrange your printing, reply-paid postage markings (if available) and the people to actually deliver your appeals.

Part I: Getting Started

Involving Your Members

Your organization's greatest resource is the members.

That's where you start when setting up the project.

Those members that are able and willing to contribute time and effort directly to the project are, of course, the most valuable.

In most organizations, there are many passive members that might not be able for various reasons to take an active part, but they can make a worthwhile contribution by telling their friends and colleagues about it and asking for their support.

There may be some members with skills or equipment that they are prepared to contribute to the cause.

Other members might have business or personal contacts that they can ask to assist the project. This should never be done in a pushy way. I suggest that you ask the member just to find out who is the best contact in the other organization to approach about assistance for your project.

Your Committee

"Keep your committee small, your meetings as few and brief as possible. Ideally, reading the Minutes should take less than ..." *P. Windsor*

Any undertaking which handles money and other things of value needs to be carefully documented. That lays the groundwork for later, more ambitious projects too.

But, if setting up of the project is going smoothly, then don't waste your members' time by holding a meeting for the sake of it.

If all members of the committee have Internet connections, use email to keep them up to date. You might even set up a private e-mailing list for them if you believe there is sufficient need.

The first task for the committee could be to express the goal in a short statement that will appeal to potential donors. This will also help to focus the minds of all the people involved.

Other factors for the committee to decide include:

Who will approach potential donors? They need to have good person-to-person skills and be reliable.

Who will be the media contact? There should be one person that is comfortable answering questions, knowledgeable about the whole project and readily available – even at weekends – to the media.

Now, you need to lay out your project as you would any business plan or even a military campaign. If you fail to plan, then you really are planning to fail!

Your Plan

This will help your members to avoid wasting time and other resources and it will also give you the basis for answers to some of the most common questions from people and businesses that you approach for help with your project.

Organization:

Basic Aim:

Address:

Contact Person:

Project:

Start Date: Finish Date:

Goal of This Project:

(Don't put just a dollar amount. Something like "\$1,200 to set up a garden in the junior school that the children can plant and harvest themselves" will have more appeal than a bleak "\$1,200")

How Will You Raise the Funds:

.....

Other Current Projects:

.....

Previous Successful Projects:

.....

Approaching Sponsors

Who Could You Approach?

- 1] Companies that your members are associated with
- 2] Companies that supply your group, its members or the cause that you support
- 3] Companies that are based in your area
- 4] Companies that support similar groups to yours
- 5] Government and private organizations that donate or otherwise provide support to groups like yours or the cause which your group assists
- 6] Individuals and Organizations that provide services to members of your Group or beneficiaries of the cause that you support. They include solicitors, banks, utility companies and insurance companies (including the company that you buy insurance from for your event).

Before You Approach Anyone

You don't want to waste anyone's time – yours or the employees of those companies and other organizations that you approach. So you should 'do your homework' before picking up the telephone or writing that letter.

Check the history of that company with regard to the type of projects and groups that they supported in the past.

Make your first appeals to organizations that appear to have some affinity with your cause – maybe pet food makers if your cause is pet or native animal related.

It's Getting Harder

You may look for a sponsor to fund a significant part of your goal or you may approach some businesses to pay for part of the costs of your fundraising activity, or provide goods or services - a donation in kind.

All businesses, from the neighborhood store to the largest of corporations, get appeals for donations to various causes every day!

Who Do You Ask?

Large organizations have established procedures, and even special departments or nominated staff, for handling charitable requests. You may want to consider using a professional consultant with them, but you do not need to do that if you maintain a professional attitude and put some care into your appeal.

But it can be harder than you might think to find the right person or section in a large organization to address your appeal to, especially if the company has its offices scattered over several States. Some areas that you might seek include:

Marketing. The promotion of the company's products can involve a lot of things apart from straight advertising. That may include supporting community-based projects like yours.

Donation Coordinator. This person, or section, reviews appeals which are sent to the company and accounts for the disbursement of its donations budget.

My best advice is to ask the Director of First Impressions (the receptionist that answers your phone call).

Ask Around You

Approaching local businesses should also be done on a professional basis. Always be considerate of their time.

Have your facts and figures straight in your own head before you approach anyone.

When you phone and ask for an appointment, make it clear that you are seeking their support for your organization.

If you ask for their support face to face, it's likely that you will not always get an immediate decision. Make sure that you have some printed information, including your contact details, to leave with them.

Your Attitude

Always be confident of success but prepared to accept a refusal with good grace. That will help to keep their door open for your organization to approach them for help with future appeals and projects.

Be prepared to make many requests of different companies, organizations and individuals in your attempts to get the money your group needs.

All of those that you approach probably get more requests than they could comfortably support. There can be many reasons why your requests are turned down by particular companies that don't reflect on your group or them.

Remember the old salesman's motto, "Each rejection that I get brings me closer to my next sale!"

What Can You Give Donors and Sponsors?

Despite the hard reality of the modern business world, many companies do not tie all their giving to potential bumps in their bottom line.

But, the people that have responsibility for deciding which requests are responded to, are accountable to their Board and shareholders who are most interested in that bottom line.

So, your appeal is more likely to be looked at favorably if there is potential for the donor company to get some positive effect in:

- \$ Favorable press or other media exposure
- \$ Free publicity
- \$ Community response and, of course
- \$ Improved market share.

That means they are probably most interested in new or innovative approaches that will attract wider publicity and generate greater community involvement.

If your project and the cause you support have children, education and/or culture as some of its components, there is a greater chance that you could find some companies very willing to assist your cause.

Local businesses can also be generous without seeking a direct benefit.

But, remembering that they are likely to be getting many more requests than they can comfortably support, it makes sense to work out in advance, possible benefits to them for supporting your project.

Think how your group might promote their contribution without introducing too much hype.

You might:

1. Put their logo on your promotional material
2. Ask the owner to present an award at the end of the event.
3. If they have a trademark character, invite him or her to entertain the children at your event

Quick Fix or Ongoing Support?

You need to specify that your request is for funding to assist with a one-off project or funding over a period.

If you ask for funding for a specific project and your costs are less than the amount donated, then you may legally have to seek permission from the donor before you can use the rest of the money.

That can be avoided by wording your appeal to allow you to use any unexpended funding for ongoing work.

But we're straying close to lawyer territory and that's who you should consult about such technicalities.

Profitable Letters

Writing fundraising letters is not easy and I don't claim to be an expert at this either.

But, following my tips will save you making the mistakes I have and those I've learned to avoid by studying the advice of more experienced fundraisers and also the many, many letters which I've collected and studied over the last couple of years.

That's one way that you can improve your fundraising letter writing ability more quickly too. Gather every appeal, whether it's a letter, flyer, postcard or whatever and store them in a file – what the advertising writers call a swipe file.

When you get a bit of spare time, pull out some of them and read through them. Don't try to analyze them, just read along like your average person would and pick out those that have some effect on you, no matter whether it's good or not.

Then, you can become more critical. Choose one that had the most positive effect for you. Try to see what the writer did that was different to the other letters that you read – how his effort got that prime reaction from you.

You might not see exactly how the effect was achieved. There may be a number of factors involved. But you will learn some lessons from studying the letters that first time and probably even more if you put them away again until you've seen the results of your next campaign.

Don't discard any of your samples that you have collected, even those you think are pretty bad! When you have more experience, you'll be able to better understand what the writers of those efforts were trying

to make their readers feel and why they failed. Then, you can avoid making those same errors.

But maybe those letters were more effective with other people than they were with you?!

There are no rules that apply in every case and most successful writers of any kind will bend their own rules to achieve an effect at some time.

The difference is that they know when they do it and why they do it so it mostly works for them.

My Letter Writing 'Rules'

These are the prime points that I try to keep in mind when I am writing a fundraising letter. I've written a lot of letters and seen the results from most of them in the time it's taken me to assemble my 'rules'. I can't say that I won't have changed a few in a year's time but they seem to be getting good results for me at this point.

Write to One Person. Think of the reader as a friend that you have not yet met. Explain to that person in brief, clear sentences why you are writing to him or her, what benefit there may be in them taking time to read your letter and why they should take action on the information you sent them.

Keep it Clear and Simple. I was going to write, "Eschew Obfuscation" but I wasn't sure what that actually meant. Unless you must include some complicated words or special jargon, use plain everyday language so that your message is easy to understand and act upon.

Try to Inject Some Feeling. The letters and books that have the most effect are those that have some impact on their readers at a personal level. That might be achieved by including a true (and verifiable) account of a real person that your project or the cause you support has helped or by the effect that working on the project has had on yourself. But don't try to present something in this way which is not real. Only very skilled writers can ever hope to get away with that.

Aim Like a Laser. You could write the most wonderful letter but your effort would be wasted if the reader was not at all interested in your subject or your goal. You are not writing to win a writing award, you

want help with your project, so you must present your appeal in a way that engages your reader.

Always be Credible. Keep your claims to what you can easily prove and never promise what you might not be able to deliver.

Make "YES" Almost as Easy as "NO". Include a reply paid addressed envelope with your letter and your full contact details. If you think it's worth saving the cost of the reply paid fee, you're on the wrong track. One successful appeal will pay for a lot of those little fees, won't it?

Give Me Clarity Over Grammar. If you want to follow the strict rules that our English teachers drilled into us, that's fine by me. But my focus is making the message and call to action as clear as possible to my reader. If that causes me to end a sentence with a preposition (whatever that is), so be it.

Please give these 'Rules' a try but I give you permission to break any of them once you're sure that you will get a better result that way.

Long or Short Letters?

Do you think that a short letter might get better results or would a long one that you can pack more information and hot buttons into is the way to go?

I've used both types with reasonable success, so I can't be dogmatic about it.

But let me paraphrase some words from Gary Halbert – a very successful copywriter whose strong language upsets some, but whose strong results keep his customers loyal to him – that I read a while ago.

He said something to the effect that you should make the letter as long as is necessary to include all the information your prospect needs to make his decision and no longer.

It's unimportant whether anyone thinks the appeal is too long because it's probably not aimed at them. The person it's aimed at will be interested enough in the subject to keep reading and take action.

And, of course, you need to have done your homework about the potential donors that you approach so that your appeal will hold their interest and open their checkbooks.

It's an *Appeal* Letter

There are significant differences between our appeal letters and the truly personal letters that we write to our family and friends.

In our Appeal Letters:

We Headline Important Points

- We use bullets for emphasis

We use contractions for:

you are

there is

. and the rest

There's a good reason for the theatrical touches – you have to grab the reader's attention in about 8 seconds or less and you have to hold it until you let him drop the letter so that he can grab his checkbook.

You don't need that with your personal letters because you already have established a relationship and your credibility with the reader.

I don't think that the gaudy inserts which pop out or spin do much for ROI (Return On Investment) but they probably are great if your aim is really just to win some awards.

I Believe

This is not about my credo but an important aid to creating successful appeals.

Don't try to write one while your tongue is in your cheek.

**When you believe what you are writing,
that is somehow transmitted to the reader.**

Can it be faked? I think so, unfortunately. But, only by individuals who can adopt a mind-set that very closely simulates true belief.

Someone like you or I that doesn't practice deception with every other breath can try it but we won't be successful – we can't fool our own basic values.

Use the Internet

1] Reduce committee meetings by contacting members by email.

2] Put your appeal on the Internet. A low-cost website will let you provide a color brochure at almost no cost. You can include your contact details and tell visitors about the site where they can send donations.

If it seems appropriate and your group approves, you could set up a blog (online diary) on the site with ongoing information about the fundraiser and the charitable work that it supports.

The easiest way to do this is to go to <http://www.blogger.com/>

Sign up for your account there and follow their simple directions. You can be putting in your first report in just a few minutes!

They'll even let you add pictures and even a short sound file. Most of their services are free at the time of writing this.

3] Search for charitable appeals, especially those which have an unusual feature that you might be able to adapt for your own cause and location.

NEVER send emails to anyone asking for donations unless they have specifically asked you to do so.

Running an Event

If your group decides to have a function as the main fundraiser or perhaps as a means of raising some money to cover running expenses, this section will help you to make it a success with minimum problems.

There are many kinds of functions that can be used to raise funds while people enjoy themselves.

Auctions:

This can be an auction where all the items offered have been donated and all the proceeds are kept by your group, or you may accept items and charge the sellers a basic fee per item plus a commission on the sale price.

You may need to use the services of a licensed auctioneer.

Many groups combine their auction with a dinner. That gives them an added avenue for fundraising with perhaps a raffle and a contribution by the hotel that provides the catering.

Art Show

This can be a good money-spinner that becomes more popular and profitable each year. It's usually very easy to get coverage in the local newspaper with a picture too!

Your group can raise money by:

- \$ Charging for a printed catalog of the art in the show
- \$ Have an artist doing 'instant portraits' of visitors where your group gets a commission from his fee

- \$ Selling limited, tasteful advertising in the catalog
- \$ Charging a fee for each piece of artwork submitted
- \$ Getting a commission on any that are sold during the show
- \$ Charging admission and
- \$ Raffling one piece of art with all proceeds over the artist's fee going to your group

Boot Sale

This is supposed to be a "Bring 'N' Buy" where people display and sell their items from the back of their cars. But it usually becomes a fair with items displayed on cars, tables or anything handy.

Breakfast

This, of course, could be any meal instead of a breakfast. Your group just have to organize the catering and a speaker whose subject and reputation will draw a crowd of people that are likely to support your cause.

Craft Fair

These events have a wide appeal for people that are interested in doing the crafts and also for people that like to buy and use the craft items that are displayed.

You will need a large building, security and a number of active volunteer helpers that are definitely available over the duration of the fair.

But the potential profit could make your efforts and investment in time and money well worthwhile.

Your group can profit by:

- \$ Charging for space to exhibit in the show. Have one fee for people that are exhibiting craft supplies and another for people that are selling the craft items that they make (it's a good idea to give a discount if they are actively demonstrating their craft during the event).
- \$ Arranging a closed-off area where some of the crafts people teach their techniques to small groups at advertised times during the fair.
- \$ Sell advertising in the program which you give to each visitor
- \$ Charging admission and
- \$ Raffling one exceptional craft piece with all proceeds over the craftsperson's fee going to your group

Door-knock

What could be simpler than a door-knocking campaign? Just about anything! But, the results of a carefully organized and strongly supported door-knock can be spectacular.

But, make sure that your publicity material, envelopes and promotional pieces are first class or the public may start to think your appeal is not genuine.

You obviously need:

1. A sizable pool of enthusiastic and energetic volunteers,
2. Several weeks (say three months!) to dissect the collection area into manageable segments

3. Appeal for volunteer collectors. Try to use collectors in their own neighborhood for their convenience.
4. To check the background of your collectors and coordinators
5. To allocate each collector no more than, say, 60 houses or equivalent
6. Arrange publicity, including delivery of envelopes to every house so people the collectors missed can donate by post
7. Set up a committee that can oversee the whole project and report back to your group what changes to make for next year's door-knock.
8. Make a separate but coordinated appeal to local businesses to support the appeal financially and by displaying your publicity.
9. Emphasize that proceeds will be used locally if that is the case.
10. Print hard-to-fake ID's for collectors.

And, it doesn't end there:

Send a hand-written thank-you to major donors and keep in touch with them by a printed newsletter.

Give your volunteer collectors a public thank you by way of a sizable press advertisement or a free picnic for their families.

Fair

This can be the start of a tradition with greater crowds and profit each year.

You need plenty of varied stalls, food and drink vendors and entertainment. You should invite other groups that promote good causes to set up their stalls at your fair at either a reduced rate or for free just for the variety and good word-of-mouth this will promote for your organization.

You will need to allocate sites and provide a plan showing their location to all site holders. Take into account their differing power requirements. You will have to get the cooperation of your local power company and ensure that the regulations are met by every participant.

Use a professional Public Address System and find the member with the best voice for that task (or even a local radio announcer). Then you can offer your sponsors and site holders advertising and acknowledgements over the P.A. system through the day.

Your group can make money by:

- \$ Charging admission
- \$ Charging stall-holders for their space
- \$ Operating your group's own stall
- \$ Having a raffle with a significant prize (donated?)
- \$ Having contests with certificates or donated prizes for the winners – Happiest Teen, Miss Congeniality, Prettiest Pet (make sure that every child who enters a contest gets some sort of consolation prize!)

Fashion Parades

This is another event that is almost guaranteed to succeed.

You could link with a local modeling school and maybe your local (college) football team could become male models for your cause.

Local stores and their suppliers are usually happy to provide the garments provided the whole event is run in a quality manner. They may also be willing to provide a raffle prize which means another bit of revenue for your group.

The people that attend fashion parades are usually inclined to be conspicuously generous when they are with their friends and you may also be able to make contact with new prospective donors.

Quiz Nights

You need a lot of questions and some people that think they know more than they probably do, but the most important component of a successful Quiz Night is a great Master of Ceremonies.

Talent Quest

This is always a success because some people think they have talent and a lot more people enjoy watching their efforts. Very occasionally, you find an unknown potential star!

But, every time, your group is almost guaranteed to make a good profit and have people asking when you're going to run another.

You can have the judging done by a couple of your members or, better still, by an invited local celebrity or just audience acclamation (level of applause).

Event Checklist.

Aside from the special requirements of particular types of events, there are several important points that you must be sure to cover for smooth operation and to avoid nasty surprises during or after the function.

Insurance

You've got to have it, probably more kinds than you've ever heard of and it will almost certainly cost more than you expect.

You need cover for possible damage and/or injury to:

- \$ The premises (they have their insurance but your hiring agreement probably requires you to accept responsibility),
- \$ Visitors
- \$ Exhibitors
- \$ Burglars
- \$ Your property
- \$ Other people's property
- \$ People (including volunteers) working for your organization
- \$ Anything and anyone else that might be affected by an event on the property while your group is using it.

This is likely to be a significant cost, so you should get at least two quotes. Be very clear when you ask for the quotes and try to detail everything which might be relevant to your requirements.

If you fail to disclose some significant details about your event, the equipment used or the activities that will take place, the insurer may be able to disallow any subsequent claim.

Many venues will not permit you to book or occupy their premises unless you can show that you have the required insurance cover in place.

Printing

Decide what signage, posters and other printed material that you need.

Include in your list tickets and ID cards for exhibitors, your group members, entertainers and other service providers and the programs (or the advertisers won't pay you.)

Date, Time and Alternate Venue

You need to fix the date and time of the event (10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.).

If you have an open-air event, what will you do in the event of really bad weather?

- ? Re-schedule it
- ? Move it to a covered venue
- ? Cancel until next year

Will you get rain insurance?

Licenses and Permits

You will need to check your local requirements regarding anything that might be used by your group or others at the event:

- ? Portable power equipment (electricity authority)
- ? Storage and sale of food (health department)
- ? Safety requirements - access, exits, extinguishers (fire Dept)
- ? Local and state taxes
- ? Any other permits (police department or local government)

Other Necessary Checks

Roster and Responsibilities of Your Members. You need to have members that have agreed to accept responsibility for specific areas of the event's preparation and/or running on the day. Each of these people should have the responsibility to find a substitute themselves if, for any reason, they cannot perform their duties. They must also contact your or another coordinator so that other members know as soon as possible.

You must have a full roster (with available substitutes, if any, listed) for the whole event from opening of the venue to the final clean-up.

Amenities for Special Guests. If you have invited the State Governor to open your event, then you need to ensure there is somewhere for him and his party to freshen up before putting them in front of the Press and public.

Cleaning. Where it is your group's responsibility, provide sufficient plastic-lined trash cans and arrange for them to be emptied as

necessary. It may seem a small thing but this, and the adequacy or otherwise of the toilets, are two of the most commented things about most public events in this country.

Change and Cash Bags. Your ticket sellers will need plenty of coin and notes available. If you do not have booths for them to sell from, they will need cash bags with compartments and security support.

Disabled Access and Amenities. Check that any local and State regulations regarding provision of access and amenities for disabled people are complied with.

Entertainers. Most professional entertainers are little trouble but they will probably need privacy to change their clothing and prepare their apparatus (no, the public toilets won't do!)

First Aid. You need to arrange for someone with appropriate qualifications to be at the venue all the time during the event or, as a minimum, have a well-stocked first aid case available and the contact numbers for local medical and other emergency services.

Parking. Is there sufficient parking for the numbers you hope to attract at no more than a comfortable and safe distance from your venue. Don't let Members and helpers from your organization fill all the closest and best spots.

Security. This is a necessity. A visible security presence will deter most problems, but all your members and helpers must keep alert all the time and report anything that seems suspicious.

Thanks. When all the bunting and the streamers have been cleared away, someone must make sure that letters of thanks are written to each of the people and organizations that have helped to make your

event and fundraising a success. You say, "Of course!" Well, sadly, this obvious but important step is 'most often observed by being ignored.' Then people wonder why their requests the following year are declined!

Toilets. This is the necessity.

Selling Products to Fundraise

If your group wants an easy way to do some fundraising, they might try selling products that are specially produced and packaged for non-profits to sell.

Possible advantages are:

The company which supplies the products will have printed guides for your members to use when offering the biscuits, pet treats or whatever.

You will know the approximate amount of time and expense your group will incur.

You will know the profit potential of the project from figures that the company supplies to you.

Possible disadvantages are:

Your members may not be able to sell the products. Some will buy the amount they were supplied with to help the group effort but this will not be possible for every member.

Some members will push the products hard, causing ill-feeling toward them and possibly a lasting resentment in their friends and colleagues toward your organization.

Your potential profits will be limited to the mark-up that can be put on the products. Few, if any 'customers' will add an extra donation.

Start your project with a meeting to plan the distribution of the products and to offer help to members that are not used to selling anything.

Put the project in the hands of a committee with no more than six of your most energetic and capable members.

The committee should consider what various companies offer in the way of fundraising products. I'd give weight to offers from companies that are known to have good reputations, especially if they are located near to your group. This can reduce your freight costs and also encourage more sales because the people in your area will know the company and its products.

When the committee have selected the product for this year's promotion, they must decide how long that your group will run this project.

A member will have to be responsible for checking with your State authorities about what taxes you will have to collect and what licenses or other fees may have to be paid before you can begin to sell the products.

Gather the paperwork (leaflets, order forms and catalogs) and sort it into bundles so that it can be delivered with the first batch of product to each of the members that volunteered to try to sell some for the group. Most companies will give you this paperwork without charge.

Now, you must decide how much you hope to profit from this project. Include an allowance of say 5% to 10% against unexpected losses – damaged stock etc.

Most groups set targets for each member to try to reach based on the number of products that need to be sold for the amount needed for the group's goal (plus the 5% to 10% allowance).

But, I believe that it should always be stressed that the target is voluntary and any member that finds it difficult to sell the product can return it or ask the committee for help.

You could offer prizes for members that exceed their quota of sales by a significant amount. The prizes should be of fairly nominal value – after all, you're trying to raise funds!

Now, the committee can separate the sellers into groups of, say, five to ten, with one person accepting responsibility to regularly follow up with all members in their team and assist any that may be having any sort of problem.

Make the safety of your members, especially any younger ones, your highest priority. Your group must ensure that any young members have their parents' explicit permission to take part in the project and that they are very closely supervised by a responsible adult at all times.

If you don't have a regular scheduled meeting, arrange a special one and ask everyone to make their best efforts to attend so that arrangements for the sales drive can be confirmed and the literature distributed. Remind everyone that the clock is ticking and they'll only have two or three weeks – whichever your committee settled on – to make sales and then collect the money.

You might think that a longer period would increase the potential profit but a short, sharply focused drive usually gets the better results. With your first drive, using inexperienced people, you'll see a great burst of enthusiasm that can rapidly dwindle as their personal focus shifts from the drive to something else in their own lives.

You'll probably find that any members that don't turn up for that first meeting without letting the committee know why or making any arrangements to pick up their stationery will probably not be very productive in this or other projects where they are not the central focus.

Remind everyone of the date when they must turn in their orders and money. Tell them how their customers should write your organization's name on checks and whether you can accept credit card payments.

Never deviate from the rule that no orders will be filled until the payment for it has been processed and the proceeds received in your group's special fundraising account.

Tell them who they should contact about any questions regarding the product that they're selling, the company that it comes from, the use that your profits will be put to etc.

Emphasize that you don't mind how many questions they ask and that the people offering the help will never reveal their discussions to anyone except the committee. But remind them that you want them to get their questions to the helpers as early as possible so that they can take the answers back to the person that asked and get their order. It's also important for maintaining the professional image of each member and your organization.

Display the ultimate goal and the current total of all orders in your meeting room and in your newsletter. Because of the short time-frame, there's no point to displaying individual or team running totals in my opinion.

You should arrange a dinner, (hamburgers would be fine for many groups that I know) for all active participants and their partners. Present an Award to the highest Sales Achiever and the most successful team. Try to arrange that at least every junior participant gets some form of recognition for their efforts.

The Team Leaders will be responsible for making encouraging (not harassing) phone calls or face-to-face meetings with all their team members each week. They also should report the successes and, especially, any problems that their team members are having.

If there is a general feeling among the active sellers that another week would be worthwhile and their enthusiasm remains genuinely high, the committee should quickly discuss the possibility and make a firm decision to avoid confusion or upset among your star sellers. That decision needs to be made by people that are close to the people suggesting the extension but who will also consider whether other members are ready to finish with this project.

When you reach the day of your big finale, when all the orders and payments arrive, collect the money, issue your receipts and make sure that you thank everyone who participated.

Collect all unused order forms and any other material.

Calculate your sales and get everything banked as quickly as possible.

Next, send your payment and total order to the company that is supplying your product.

Keep a copy of every form for your group's own records.

Arrange for a responsible member to deliver or send the taxes due to the appropriate office

Remind your sellers that they will be able to pick up their customers' orders at a specific date, time and place. Ask them to let you know if they cannot meet you at that time so alternative arrangements for them to collect their orders can be made.

Now you can organize and enjoy the thank you dinner.

Thank your stars and committee, of course, but try to ensure that everyone's contribution to your project's success is acknowledged. That's only fair and, anyway, you want them to be just as enthusiastic about your next, bigger project, don't you?

Publicity

The best publicity of all is also the cheapest. That's W.O.M. - "word-of-mouth."

The only way that you can affect what W.O.M. transmits about you is to either always be reliable and friendly or the opposite.

Getting Your News Printed

Your event and other activities are not hard news – the stuff that sells papers or makes headlines.

It's soft news (local interest) but it still has value for your local paper because that's the information which their readers – your neighbors – can only get in the local paper, a point of difference from the more well-known city papers.

So, they'll print your information if you present it, and yourself, to them in a professional manner.

- ✓ Be available, even at short notice and weekends.
- ✓ Be reliable. Never guess an answer to their questions or pass on something as fact which you have not checked.
- ✓ Never ask for something to be "off the record"

Make your news "print-worthy";

- ✓ **Add a "twist"**. If you do what someone else has already done, that's not news. Try to add an original, appealing twist to it that will catch the eye and the imagination of the newspaper readers – then you're thinking like a journalist!

- ✓ **Make it picture perfect!** Tie a pretty girl, cute animal or even a celebrity into your story. Those types of pictures "sell" stories to readers and improve their awareness of your information too. They'll take the picture to be sure that it meets the standard that they need for satisfactory publication

- ✓ **Get real feeling into the story.** Readers are people and they are mostly interested in people like themselves. So, try to show the effect of your project in helping people like them (and you.)

More Media Tips

Use the Public or Community Service Announcements sections of your local newspapers. Most television and radio stations offer short segments, sometimes two or three times a day, for announcements of functions and other activities by local not-for-profit organizations like yours.

Check their requirements which usually include that the announcements are submitted some weeks before the events on the letterhead of the organization and with full contact details for (preferably) two office holders.

Watch or listen to the segments a few times so that you have a good idea of about how many words you are allowed to use for the announcement.

They'll probably edit what you submit anyway. They will definitely contact at least one of your members that's listed on the announcement.

Don't Forget Radio. Many people think that radio has become less influential as TV has become so widespread. But, while almost everyone has a television on around their home, lots of people listen and respond to radio.

Look for opportunities to promote your fundraiser through local radio stations, through talkback or actually having one of your best performing members actually interviewed on air.

Stick with just one spokesperson and media contact where possible.

If Your Project Has Problems

I hope that with your preparation and planning, that you never become a source of 'bad news' but it can happen to even the best-prepared groups.

Your first decision must be about who will answer media inquiries. The State office of your organization or your President, if you are located in just one area, is probably the best choice. Do not let more than one person speak to the media.

If the task falls to you, stay calm. It's not the end of the world or even your group. If you appear to panic, the impression that will be relayed to the television or radio audience will be that much worse.

Do NOT use "No comment" or any variation of that phrase. The media would then use whatever information they could get from other sources and that may be detrimental to your group.

Tell them that you need to get the latest information and you will answer their questions, if there are no legal impediments, at a specified time and place.

If your group has sufficient funds and the situation is a real, ongoing crisis, then **you should consider hiring a media adviser** for the duration. But, this can quickly become very costly.

Some Online Resources for Fundraisers

<http://www.charitynet.org/> provides news and contact information about non-profit organizations around the world from their sites in the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

You can join Charitynet. As a member of Charitynet, you can become part of an online network of non-profit information, accessing a growing audience of around 20,000 visitors a month.

You can create your own personalized 'myCharitynet' home page where you can enjoy a range of services and benefits including:

- Quick access to websites that are of interest to you
- Discovering new websites which closely match your interests
- Being informed via email when new sites of interest or news items are published on Charitynet
- Keeping up to date with voluntary sector news from around the world
- Having full editorial control over your listing by updating your details as often as you like.

<http://nonprofit.about.com/> Joane Fritz' excellent guide to Nonprofit Charitable Organizations at About.com. you can sign up for a regular free newsletter which may include some advertising.

<http://www.ftc.gov/charityfraud/> The Federal Trade Commission Guide to Charity Fraud.

Thank You

I want to thank you for buying my book and hope that the results of my fundraising experience will smooth your way into your own first ventures.

This is also a reminder of a point that I've made a couple of times already through the book:

Wherever you are located and however great or modest your fundraising efforts, remembering to thank those that support them will pay greater dividends than you might ever imagine.

You may never know the effect of your thoughtfulness. I remember listening to a friend recommend someone's services to another friend of mine.

He said to me that the serviceman did good work, but he knew several that were just as good, some of whom charged slightly lower rates.

"But, this guy always says, 'thank you', and treats everyone in my business like they were his most valuable customer. I wouldn't let some of these others near my dog!"

[Another eBookWholesaler Publication](#)