

Wrapping Up Your Fundraiser & Moving On

By Adina Genn

- Most groups need time to regroup after a drive
- Make sure things are in order for the future
- Post your results & thank everyone involved

After a major fundraising drive, most organizations require time to regroup. People often need to step back and detach themselves for a while to catch up with friends and family. The larger the project, the more downtime your organization may find necessary. Take time to pat yourselves on the back regardless of whether you raised your projected total.

A wrap party is often a good way to conclude your busy fundraising efforts. You might choose to wait a week or two before celebrating to give everyone a chance to recover. The party should be simple and come from the organization's ongoing budget, not from the project.

Preparing for the Future

Make sure everything is in order for the future. For example, do you have a file for each donor, complete with contact information and amount contributed? Do you have the names and contact information for each person who volunteered and worked on the project?

Software programs can make this kind of database management easy. Be sure to file all vendor numbers and those of any fundraising experts so their information is easily accessible for future reference. Also, make arrangements to return any items borrowed from friends or neighbors, as well as rentals and leased equipment.

Reporting Fundraising Results

Post your results in some manner. For example, you might publish a story in your monthly or quarterly newsletter about the success of the fundraiser. In addition, you might write a press release, detailing the highlights of your event, whether it was meeting your fundraising goals or attracting 500 people to the auction. No matter how your fundraiser turned out, put a positive spin on the final results.

Board members should meet to hear a final report that includes the budgetary details, number of attendees, and so on. Inform stakeholders, sponsors, and anyone else who was involved in your fundraiser about the details of your event.

After all, if sponsors are pleased with the results, they will be eager for you to call on them in the future.

Finish Up Paperwork

Finish off all accounting procedures, which will include payment of any outstanding bills and fulfilling any contractual obligations. Make sure all bookkeeping is up to date and all information is accessible for the board members or other stakeholders who will review the figures. Have 1099 forms ready for the people you hired to work on the project. In addition, you may need to file reports with local government offices or follow up on any grants you received.

In short, there are plenty of loose ends to tie up after your fundraiser is completed. Plan for these activities ahead of time. Generally, this occupies the time and efforts of only a few key people, particularly whoever was handling the books, budget, and accounting procedures.

Saying Thank You

This concept is worth repeating. Thank everyone who made your carnival, walkathon, or golf tournament actually happen. Whether you raised the money you hoped to or not, you still must recognize the efforts of those who helped. Nearly all nonprofit groups agree that cards, notes, or even just saying thank you are the top ways to bring volunteers back for your next fundraiser. Appreciation goes a long way.

From a simple thank-you note to a token gift to acknowledgment in front of a group of peers, a thank you means a lot. Make sure everyone who was involved feels appreciated when your fundraiser is completed, and promptly send out thank yous to donors and vendors. This way you can count on their efforts in the future!

... from ***The Everything Guide to Fundraising.***