

Fundraising Information Sheet - Running a Sponsored Event

Introduction

Sponsored events are some of the most popular fundraising ideas and can be great fun. A sponsored event offers donors the opportunity to donate at a level which feels comfortable, whilst also raising a lot for a good cause. The actual event can result in great publicity for your charity, group or cause, particularly if it is carried out in a public place.

Ideas for sponsored events:

Activities - a walk, swim, bike ride, travel ;

Giving up something- chocolate, smoking, dieting;

Silly but fun - dressing up for the day, haircut/ hair dying, Wii fitness/tennis/dance session, baked bean bath;

*And many more.....*your imagination is the limit!

A sponsored event must be carefully planned from start to finish.

Considerations:

- What type of event do you want to organise?
- When should it be held?
- How much do you want to raise?
- Who will participate?
- Will there be an entry fee for participants?
- What is the 'unit ' of sponsorship, e.g. miles, hours, squares, etc. ?
- How will you get people to sign up?
- Do you need to obtain any permits, permissions or insurance?

Planning and Preparation

This is a great excuse to find donors outside of your immediate family or group and to get publicity for your event.

Decide upon your lead time for the event.

Assign responsibilities – who will bank the funds raised? Who will oversee logistics - for example, staking out a course and posting signage, book a hall, ensure food and water are available, arrange completion certificates for participants, recruit volunteer helpers for the day?

Well ahead, contact local media (newspaper, radio, local magazines) and tell them what you are doing- ask if they will publish an article to let people know about it. You can produce flyers which you can distribute locally, use your website to publish it, and if you're on Twitter, then tweet about it!

If you're collecting sponsorship online, websites like JustGiving (www.justgiving.com) make it easy for donors to give money online from a debit or credit card.

If you want cash collections, develop a sponsorship form which is clear and easy to complete and solicit donations in person. Your sponsorship form should include:

- Name of the benefitting charity or group
- Name and nature of the event

- Where and when it is to be held
- Who is organising the event
- Contact address and telephone number
- Space for the name of the competitor/participant
- Statement saying that participant is responsible for paying the amount totalled, space for the participant to sign to agree this
- Columns for the name and contact details of the sponsor, the amount they are pledging and their signature.

Running the Event/Activity

Make sure that participants are sure about what they are going to do- e.g. they are clear of the route for a race/bike ride; where and when an indoor event will start, etc.

If you can, recruit a 'personality' to start off the event and to reinforce 'rules of behaviour'.

For those on Twitter, keep tweeting as the event proceeds.

Arrange for someone to take photos of the event, so it is recorded for posterity, as an events feature on your website and for use as good publicity afterwards.

Finish your event with a small ceremony, perhaps award participants a certificate or medal and award prizes if you made the event competitive.

Ensure individual sponsorship forms are stamped or signed to indicate that the activity was completed.

Afterwards

Everyone should be written to and thanked- sponsors and participants alike. You can supply the thank you letters for participants to send to their sponsors if it is easier. Tell those you thank what their money and effort has helped you to achieve, and ask if you can retain their contact details on your mailing list.

What you need to know (legal & best practice)

What permissions do you need to use the venue (particularly if it is a public space)?

You may need insurance to cover your event. Ask the owner of the venue for advice, or contact your local Council if you are not sure.

Collections taking place in a public place are governed by law, which means that going from door to door or standing outside a shop, library or other public building asking people to sign a sponsorship form is illegal without permission. If this is your intention, you will need to apply for a permit. However, collecting within your own centre, school, home or family and friends homes is classed as something different and is permissible. Please make people asking for sponsorship to be aware of this.

Useful references/links

www.justgiving.com to set up an online sponsorship form
how2fundraise.org a section of the Institute of Fundraising's website with useful ideas for fundraising events, including sponsored events.

Books

Tried & Tested Ideas for local fundraising events, by Sarah Passingham ISBN 1 903991 37 4

Need to know? Fundraising, by Michael Norton ISBN 978 0 00 724665 6