

Master Plan for Fundraising Success

The fundamental components to implement in every fundraising plan and the blueprint that will result in successful events.



VICKI BLAZEJOWSKI
creator of Entri Ways

copyright

Copyright © 2018, revised 2021 Vicki Blazejowski of Entri Ways

All rights reserved. No part of this manual shall be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any informational or retrieval system, without written permission from the publisher.

DISCLAIMER

All information contained in this publication and on the Entri Ways website is copyrighted and cannot be reproduced without the authorization of the author. his publication is the opinion of the publisher. The purchaser or reader of this publication assumes responsibility for the use of these materials and information. This is a free e-book and is not authorized for sale.

While all attempts have been made to verify information in this publication, the author/publisher assumes no responsibility for errors, omissions, or inaccuracies.

The purchaser or reader of this publication assumes responsibility for the use of and/or reliance upon this material and information. The author/publisher assumes no responsibility or liability whatsoever on behalf of any purchaser or reader of these materials for any losses or damages caused, directly or indirectly, from use of and/or reliance upon information contained in this book. Adherence to all applicable laws and regulations, federal, state and local, business practices, and all other aspects of doing business in the United States or any other jurisdiction is the sole responsibility of the purchaser or reader.

Printed in the United States of America.

Woburn, Massachusetts

Let's Fundraise!



Welcome! I'm Vicki from [Entri Ways](#) and [Ways to Fundraise](#). This training guide is your blueprint to plan any successful fundraising event. It's so exciting to be able to share this valuable information with you – information that will make you a better fundraiser and event planner now, and help you gain work experience for later!

We are going to talk about the planning, execution, and promotion of ANY fundraiser. From simple bake sales, yard sales, and book sales to much more complex golf tournaments and auctions, **there are certain things that you will see repeated in the planning of every fundraising event.** And, if you do them, you're much more likely to have a successful event!

Before we begin, let me take a step back and briefly tell you why I'm even qualified to be telling you how to fundraise. After all, any parent volunteer can do it right? Not necessarily. It takes, planning, organization, leadership, and marketing.

When my three kids entered elementary school, I was asked to get involved in the school's parent-teacher organization (PTO) and to help fundraise and plan events. At first I sat back and observed. Then, in typical me fashion, I started to research information on how to successfully and efficiently plan school fundraisers. It wasn't that I didn't know how to plan events and market them; after all I had a nearly 10 years of sales and marketing background at the time, but I wanted to be 100% sure that I wasn't missing a critical step in the process when it came specifically to school fundraising.

And do you know what I found?

Very little.

Yes, there were a few websites that provided different fundraising ideas, but they were very superficial. Not one of them was written like a detailed instruction manual. They were just sales pages designed to drive you to their site, but when you got there, they only provided an overview of the fundraiser. These pages were missing incredible amounts of information. They were not teaching the planning, marketing, promotions, and sales as an entire package. And every one of these steps is critical to a successful end result.

So I got directly involved in the fundraising, researched, documented the process, and began writing fundraising and event-planning instruction manuals to teach other parent volunteers –

the nurses, office assistants, paralegals, painters, accountants, and landscapers – how to plan and execute fundraising events successfully and efficiently.

Putting my marketing and sales experience to work, I became a fundraising pro and designed creative fundraising programs that sold nationally through my website at the time, *PTO Ideas*. This led to me serving on a community Board of Directors where I assisted with much larger fundraisers.

As the kids got a little older and moved into middle school, I found a second interest – painting and refinishing furniture – which I built into a successful home-based business... *Entri Ways*.

I know... you're probably thinking it's a completely different market and one has nothing to do with the other.

But it does.

I was able to use my 10+ years of marketing, sales, and now school fundraising experience. At *Entri Ways*, I am planning, designing, creating, promoting, and selling. It's marketing! And there is a master plan – a blueprint – for doing it right each time.

Learning these things now could open doors for you later, just like it did for me. So let's get started teaching you some valuable work-related skills that you can add to your resume while at the same time, doing some good for your school or community fundraising organization.

Thinking Creatively!

Vicki

MARKETING STRATEGIST & CREATIVE





- 01** Fundraising With Intention
- 02** Setting a Fundraising Goal
- 03** Assigning a Chairperson
- 04** Researching & Planning
- 05** Forming a Committee of Key People
- 06** Being a Great Leader
- 07** Conducting Planned Meetings
- 08** Reserving the Right Location
- 09** Branding Your Event
- 10** Advertising to Spark Interest
- 11** Bringing in Sponsors
- 12** Keeping Records for Future Events

Contents

FUNDRAISING WITH INTENTION

Why are you fundraising? This is the single most important question to ask before you even think about running a fundraiser. You **MUST** know the answer to this question. If you do not have a clear, appropriate purpose to raise money, then people will not give to your nonprofit organization.

People want to know exactly what their money will be used for.

So why are you fundraising?

Are you fundraising to provide summer camp scholarships to 10 students at the school? Are you fundraising to renovate the school playground? Or, maybe you're planning to fund all of the educational field trips in the upcoming year. Whatever your purpose is, be ready to clearly communicate it to your audience.

SETTING A FUNDRAISING GOAL

How much money do you need to raise and how many fundraising events are you willing to organize in order to reach your monetary goal?

If your goal is to raise \$3,000 to pay for one field trip per grade, then the type of fundraiser you choose to run will be very different than if you need to raise \$40,000 to install a brand new playground.

There are hundreds of fundraising options. Go to EntriWays.com and research the different types of fundraisers that may help reach your fundraising goal. Determine which of the fundraiser options would be a good fit for your organization, location, and your audience.

For instance, a square dance in a barn may be a great option for a school in a suburban or rural town, but it would be unlikely you'd have a barn available in a metropolitan downtown. Do you live in an area that would enjoy a golf tournament or an auction with high-end auction items.

ASSIGNING A CHAIRPERSON

Now that you know the purpose of the fundraiser, the monetary goal, and the type of fundraiser, assign a chairperson willing to take on the task of overseeing and coordinating all of the steps that follow.

The chairperson is the event coordinator. The Chairperson will put together the preliminary

proposal to reach the monetary goal, organize a committee of volunteers to help them reach that goal, and keep the volunteers on-track until the goal is met.

Let's assume that Chairperson is you.

RESEARCHING & PLANNING

As the Chairperson you should do the initial research and write up a summary of what would be involved in the planning. To do this, answer the following questions:

Why are you fundraising? Identify the purpose of the fundraiser (i.e. to fund enrichment programs, purchase desks, etc.) and how much money you need to raise.

What type of event will help you achieve your fundraising goal?

Where will the event be hosted?

When will the event take place? Ensure that there are no conflicting school or town events taking place on the same day.

Who is your audience? Is your audience solely school students and parents or will it be open to the general public?

How will you implement the plan? How many volunteers do you need and do you need volunteers with specific skills.

Then, Compile a list of specific tasks that need to be accomplished. The list may include soliciting sponsors, collecting donations, baking, construction, sales, marketing, or event setup/cleanup.

Here's *an example* of specific roles for a golf tournament:

Coordinator (Chairperson) - Coordinates and oversees the tournament. Assigns roles & responsibilities to committee members. Each member provides status reports back to the coordinator who ensures that all committee members are working cohesively.

Sponsorships - Solicits sponsors and develops positive relationships with these supporters.

Donations – Contacts local businesses to request donations that could be used in giveaways, silent auction, raffles, etc.

Web Page - Develops the online promotional pages and sets up online payment processing.

Promotion - Promotes the tournament through email, social media, newspaper, signage, etc.

Event-Day Assistance – Set-up/Clean-up, check-in, raffle, silent-auction, and lunch/dinner assistance on event-day.

Once you have the list of roles and tasks drafted, determine how many volunteers you need to accomplish each. This will give you an idea of how many and the skill level of the volunteers you'll need to recruit.

FORMING A COMMITTEE OF KEY PEOPLE

You cannot do this alone. It takes a village, so to speak. It's now time to form a committee of volunteers. The group of volunteers you bring together will fill the roles we outlined and assist with finalizing and executing the plan.

Committee members may consist of parents, teachers, high school students, and even a college intern. In most instances the volunteers will simply sign up to help; but the Chairperson should be aware that if they need a particular skill to help them carry out the fundraiser, now is a great time to personally ask specific people to join the committee.

Seek out volunteers that can fill specific roles. Let's say you're hosting a golf tournament, then find parents who have attended several tournaments themselves and can provide you with ideas from the perspective of an attendee. Or, perhaps you need a website built to attract buyers to the event and collect online donations, then find a parent who is a webmaster or talk to a local college about hiring an intern for the job.

Talk with the committee members about the tasks that will need to be handled and share with them the list of responsibilities you've compiled. Ask for their feedback and allow them to volunteer for the roles they feel best suit them. You want everyone to do something they feel good about. Not only assign role, but also ask them how best they think they can help.

Ask your volunteers what they'd like to do. Ask them what special talents they have (computer skills, sales experience, construction experience, etc.). Ask them what contacts they may have. Who do they know? Who do they know that may be able to help with these different roles.

Do your best to **match up people's talents with the roles**, but if someone really wants to take on a challenging role, let them – this is how they learn and grow. As the leader, guide them and help them be successful. You want to be a great leader. You want to help others learn and grow.

Once all tasks are assigned, be sure each committee member understands their responsibilities. In a very nice way, explain to them exactly what you need them to do, review how to do it, and set a timeframe in which it needs to be done. Not everyone works in the same timeframe as you and if you are trying to schedule this fundraiser to take place at a certain time, then you need everyone to complete their tasks on time.

People need and want information, just as you're reading this guide on how to plan successful fundraising events. Even with your knowledge, aren't you still seeking out more information? You're still sitting here listening to me. Why? Because people want information. They want to know how to do something correctly. They may already know how to do something, but they want to be sure they didn't miss anything or may just want new ideas. People want information. Don't hesitate to share with them.

So set measurable goals for your committee members. For instance, sell 50% of the raffle tickets within the first 2 weeks of the tickets being given out. Or, print and hang promotional signs by May 1st.

Tread lightly though. There's a fine line between being a pushy person and being a leader people want to follow. Let's take some time to talk about how to be a great leader.

BEING A GREAT LEADER

In the last segment, we talked about forming a committee. When you form this committee, you are the chairperson; but it's really important that as the chairperson, you're a great leader.

This is so important and I didn't want to skip this in this training, because if you can be a great leader, people will want to help out. They will want to follow you. They will want to be part of the events you plan and they will help make them successful.

As the committee chairperson, **be a leader that committee members respect and want to see succeed; but be humble and know that you cannot be successful without the help of your committee.** Trust me on this one. Fundraisers take several people working together to be successful.

Here are some tips on being a great leader...

Guide. A great leader listens to the input of others, and walks behind them to be sure they don't fall. As the Chairperson you can provide the outline, explain what needs to be done, and even show others an example of how; but then allow them to provide input and use their own intelligence, talents, and creativity to complete the task in their own way.

Lead by example. Work as hard or harder than you expect your committee members to work. Do not just hand out assignments and expect others to do all of the work. It may be your job to assign tasks and ensure goals are met, but a great leader gains the respect of others by the work they do and how they do it.

Value others. A great leader makes every volunteer feel as though they're a valuable part of the team. Remember, the committee members volunteered to help, so be sure you have work for each one of them or they will not feel useful, they'll lose interest, and they'll stop attending meetings because they will think you don't need them or don't want their help. Make sure every person on your committee knows they are an important part of that group.

Recognize their work. Committee members will work hard on their tasks. Be sure to recognize that work by discussing it at the meetings. If you asked someone to complete a task and they did it, bring it up at the next meeting and thank them.

Listen. Ask for suggestions and actually listen to the answers. As the leader, you should be spearheading new ideas, but also taking the ideas of others into consideration. Don't take the ideas of others and claim them as your own. Take the ideas of others, give credit to the person and use them.

Research & Plan. Do research ahead of time and become knowledgeable about the subject you're planning. This will help you conduct efficient, concise meetings. People don't have a lot of time. They are volunteering. You want to make your meetings flow smoothly and quickly. So do your research ahead of time of exactly what you need to discuss and exactly what you need to get done.

Take Calculated Risks. Put forth new ideas and take on the challenge of implementing them. It's the advance research and planning you did that shows others you've done your homework, understand the risks involved, and be ready to lead people into new ventures. People want to see new ideas brought to the table and try new things, so take a few risks.

Clearly Communicate. Be very clear about your thoughts and visions when speaking with others. Not every one picks up on subtle hints and others would rather you be direct on your stance than have to try to decipher what you mean. Be kind but direct in your communication; otherwise people may not understand your intention and it could cause problems down the road.

Stay Organized. At each meeting, take notes, keep detailed checklists, assign tasks, set timeframes, and at the next meeting review each item to be sure all tasks are completed.

Inspire & Encourage. Inspire confidence in others by supporting them as they work toward a common goal. Encourage others to do their best and work together as a team. Provide constructive feedback without criticizing. Be kind.

Don't overreact. When a problem arises, remain calm. If this means saying nothing at all, then do just that. Take some time to analyze the situation then offer a reasonable solution. You know the person that says very little, but when they do say something, people listen. That's because they don't overreact. They are usually great leaders because they analyze situations before they respond. So if someone asks you a questions or bring up an issue and you don't know the answer right away, simply say "I have to think about that" and then respond after you've had a chance to fully analyze.

Be honest. Trust and respect is an earned trait and the first step to earning trust is practicing it. Always be straightforward, consistent, and honest and let others know you expect the same in return.

Be Humble & Gracious. It takes a committee of dedicated people to organize and run a successful fundraiser. Remember it takes TEAM to pull a fundraiser together. Let others know you're aware it took a TEAM, you didn't do it by yourself, and you appreciate their efforts. Always say *Thank You*. Say Thank You throughout the process and at the end of the event. Let your team know you appreciate them and all the work they did and their input.

As the Chairperson, it's very important to remember that you are not the boss, you are the coordinator. Even though you've done the preliminary research for the event, it doesn't mean you have all of the answers or the best ideas. When you bring your committee together for the first time, be sure they are aware of this. Let them know you value their input and want their suggestions. Then use as many of their ideas as possible so that they feel valued.

If you can be empathetic and learn to see situations from other's point of view, you can learn to be a great leader.

Now let's move on to Conducting Planned Meetings.

CONDUCTING PLANNED MEETINGS

How often have you joined a committee and noticed lots of people show up at the first meeting, but then those numbers decrease at every meeting thereafter?

As a committee chairperson, you want there to be just as many volunteers at the final committee meeting as there were at the first. So how do you that? You need to **keep committee members motivated and interested in the event**. Let's talk about how to do that.

Prepare agendas for each meeting. People are busy and want to know that the meeting they're attending has a purpose and will be brief and efficient. As the Chairperson, put together a meeting agenda of action items. In the meeting, address each item and identify which committee member will take action on that item then and report back at the next

meeting. Try to assign an action item to each person in the room so they feel they are a part of the planning and operation and have a purpose to be there.

Have regular meetings, but not too many. Schedule regular meetings to keep progress moving forward; but don't waste people's time by having too many meetings. Allow enough time in between meetings for people to complete the tasks they were assigned. For some committees it's necessary to meet every two weeks, while monthly is fine for others.

Schedule convenient meetings. Schedule meeting times that are convenient for everyone. For a school fundraising event that has a committee of school parents it may be best to meet in the morning just after they drop the kids off at school or later in the evening after dinner. A breakfast, lunch or dinner meeting may also be popular. I don't suggest having meetings at busy restaurants. People cannot hear or get a lot work done with too many distractions. Instead choose a quiet location. You can even ask committee members to host each meeting. Providing them with a sense of ownership will make them feel more involved.

Send reminders. Two days prior to any scheduled meeting, email out a reminder of the time, location, and the upcoming agenda. By sending the agenda, it will remind people that they need to complete their action item within two days and show them the next steps that need to be taken.

Welcome people individually. Let each committee member know they are a critical component of the team. Personally welcome each person to every meeting so they feel recognized and not just hidden in the background. When people walk through the door, say hello to them. Welcome them. Connecting with people personally means they will be more likely to take ownership in the event-planning and attend the next meeting.

To ensure every member attends committee meetings you need to keep them interested and motivated in the event-planning. Let them know they are important and keep meetings efficient and moving forward by always being prepared and setting goals.

Now, let's get into some more detailed planning of the actual fundraisers.

RESERVING THE RIGHT LOCATION

We are now getting into the heart of planning fundraisers. These are steps that will need to be considered for almost every type of fundraiser. Let's talk about reserving a location.

Where do you plan to hold the fundraiser? The school auditorium or gym, the school parking lot, a private golf course, or a local function hall? Select and reserve the school, hall, or outdoor space where you plan to hold the event and do this early.

With most fundraisers, you'll want to try to keep costs down, so whenever possible, use the school facilities. However, before you decide, be sure it suits your needs. Consider things like:

- Audience. Will the fundraiser be open strictly to school students and parents or will it be open to the general public? Who will be attending the event.
- Number of attendees
- Kitchen facilities
- Tables & Chairs

If the event will be at the school also consider:

- Obtaining principal approval to use the space.
- Ensure you have access to the school on the day of the event.
- Do you need to hire a custodian? What is the cost of a custodian.
- Does the event require a town permit? Some raffles and large events require permits.

Some fundraisers such as golf tournaments are best hosted at a location separate from the school. If this is the case, consider:

- Do you need a function hall with tables & chairs?
- Do you prefer an all-inclusive hall (such as a hotel or country club) that will provide the food and drinks, or will you utilize a local Elks or Lions club and hire a caterer?
- Do you need a location with a liquor license to offer a cash bar?
- Will the hall provide table linens?
- Will a police detail be required for traffic direction?

Once you've decided on an appropriate location for the fundraiser, it's now time to bring your event to life! Let's move on to choosing a theme for your fundraiser.

BRANDING YOUR EVENT

We are going to brand your event. Choose a theme for your fundraising event to brand it, express your 'why', and to bring the event to life. **The theme will be the umbrella that encompasses all other event details.** It acts as a guide for committee members to follow.

All advertising, printed promotions, decorations, games, and gifts should reflect the theme. If committee members understand that all details must relate back to the theme, their planning and ideas will be more focussed, efficient, and effective and everything will come together very smoothly even if there are 10 people working on the event. If they can relate everything back to the theme, the event will feel cohesive.

A theme can be a creative title that expresses your purpose (your 'why'). A perfect example of this is when my sister was asked to develop a theme for the Arthritis Foundation. My nephew has arthritis so my sister and her husband were highly involved in the Arthritis Foundation. One year she was asked to help plan several activities for a wellness awareness event. The very first thing she did was come up with a theme on which to base all of the activities.

The event chairperson had already lined up a few sponsors, one of them being the Boston Duck Tours. Duck tours reminded my sister of the award-winning book, *Make Way for Ducklings*. From there, she came up with the theme *Make Way for Wellness* with a duckling being the primary image.

Once the theme name and image of the duckling were formed, she contacted me to brainstorm activity ideas for the kids. She took the pages of the book, *Make Way for Ducklings*, and turned the activities in the storyline into live activities for the kids. Because we were able to focus on things like ducklings walking in a row, duck eggs, ponds, and fishing, we immediately came up with 15 activities!

As you can see, the details of an event can be planned based on a simple theme. No matter what your fundraising event, develop a theme, turn it into a logo for printed material, and expand on it to choose things like raffle prizes, decorations, and solicitation requests that relate back to the theme.

If your school is raising funds for a new playground, you may consider a theme such as *It's a Jungle Out There*. Jungle may refer to 'monkey bars' on a playground and kids climbing on the playground equipment. Jungle may refer to the additional landscaping that will need to be done and shrubs that may need to be planted around the playground. You may raise money with a calendar raffle with the prizes sponsored by landscapers or local nurseries.

Another example of a branded theme I've created in the past was *One Step Closer*. *One Step Closer* was a series of fundraisers to raise money for area rugs to be installed in a few classrooms for a hearing impaired student. The school was only required to install a carpet in the student's one classroom, but the 100-year old tiled building was still very loud for this student. The theme *One Step Closer* referred to stepping on a carpet and getting closer to creating a quieter environment for this hearing impaired student.

Here are a few more examples of themes to get you started:

Treks & Trail Bars: A theme for a walk-a-thon or to raise money for an outdoor play space.

Old West Roundup: A theme for a yard sale - "Clean out those corrals, round up your goods, and join the townspeople at the local school for a tag sale"; or a walk-a-thon - "Round up your team and join the stampede"; or a pancake breakfast - "Join the townsfolk for pancakes and fresh eggs".

A Knight of Honor: Transform the school cafeteria into the great hall of a medieval castle for a dinner or to put a new twist on a pancake breakfast. Promotions may include a knight in shining armor, a coat of arms banner in the school colors, a goblet, or a medieval castle. Promotions may be subtitled, "Help us join the 21st Century".

A Mid Summer's Night Dream: Promotions may say "make dreams come true", "we're dreaming of new smartboards", or "we dream in color and of colorful art supplies".

Dessert Oasis: Promotions may say "Keep our funds from drying up".

Let It Rain: Promotions may say "Shower us with your generosity." Graphics may be a child under an umbrella.

Expeditions & Explorers: A theme to raise money for educational field trips.

Mexican Fiesta: taco dinner

Garden Party: auction

A Little Spring in Your Step: walk-a-thon

Fashion Forward: fashion show

Swing Into Spring: golf tournament

The Roaring 1920's: auction

Phantom of the Auction: auction

By choosing a fun theme for a fundraising event, you're also creating a concept for committee members to follow as they plan all of the event promotions, decorations, gifts, games, and prizes. They'll be creating a complete story with which people can connect. The theme will keep committee members focussed and attendees will love the way you make the storyline come alive!

So get creative!

Next, let's talk in detail about advertising.

ADVERTISING TO SPARK INTEREST

One of the most important components of a successful fundraiser is the advertising. You can plan the most amazing event, but if you cannot draw customers to your event, it will fail.

The first key to successful advertising is knowing your audience. Is the target audience students, school families, grandparents, students and families of all schools in town, local businesses, or church groups? Is it an online fundraiser that reaches nationally or even internationally?

The second key to successful advertising is developing a plan to reach your audience. Here are

some very specific ways to do that. Be sure to review this plan with the school principal to obtain their approval ahead of time, make sure the wording is accurate and non-discriminatory.

Flyer: Printed paper flyers can be displayed around the school and be sent home in student backpacks. For a community-wide event, distribute the flyers to local businesses, churches, libraries, and boys & girls clubs and ask them to display them in the front window or at the front desk.

Signs: Print (or even hand-paint) a large banner sign that can be hung outside the school. An A-frame sign will work too. If your audience is parents, then place the sign where parents can see it at drop-off and pick-up. For two weeks prior to and throughout the event, the sign should be displayed where parents can see it. If your audience is community-wide, display a sign facing the main road or even on the town common (with approval from City Hall or your Town Manager). Be sure to include a date on the sign and take the sign down when the event is over.

Newsletter: Publish an announcement in the school's printed or online weekly newsletter.

Website: Post announcements on the school webpage or create a webpage specifically dedicated to the event. Free websites can be created at Wordpress.com. Most email providers also offer the ability for you to set up landing pages. A landing page is like having a 1-page website. Once created, be sure to constantly publicize the website/landing page in all printed material, online newsletters, and loud-speaker announcements.

Email: Send emails about the event to school parents, teachers, and staff. If the event is community-wide, send emails the PTO's and principals of other schools, and ask them to share the information. Use an email service provider. You may be familiar with Constant Contact and MailChimp, but my favorite is MailerLite. It's extremely easy to use and you can create landing pages and newsletter templates right from your MailerLite account.

Announcements: Ask the school principal to include reminders to students in the morning announcements over the loud speaker.

All-Call: An all-call is a automatic phone message that can be sent out to school parents by the principal. Sometimes this is reserved for emergencies, but some principals will use it for event reminders.

Social Media: Publish regular announcements on the school's social media feeds. Be sure there's a "share" button on the bottom of your post and ask parents to *share* the information.

Create an Event on Facebook: Create an "Event" on Facebook. If you create an "Event", the post will be displayed in the feeds of people who already follow you. If someone

clicks the button that says they are “Interested” in the Event or “Going”, the event will then show up to that person's network of friends. So ask them your network to click that they are “Interested” in the Event.

Facebook Lives: It's a proven fact that Facebook Lives get more exposure in the Facebook feeds than a typical written post. Now it not the time to be shy! Film Facebook Lives that announce your event, show the students or parents planning, feature a business that sponsored, and post reminders leading up to the event. On the morning of the event, go Live and remind people to attend. Following the event, go Live an thank everyone who helped out. If you're nervous about going Live, film short videos and post those.

EventBrite: Post your event for free on EventBrite.com for exposure throughout the city and state. Pre-sell tickets here.

Local Publications: Publicize in the local newspaper (printed & online), radio, community television, Craigslist, and your community's Facebook pages.

Craigslist: If you're running a yard sale fundraiser, post a free ad on CraigList on the Wednesday before your event and then again on Friday in order to be viewable to the largest number of people who search for area yard sales.

Letters: Personalized, printed letters can be mailed to local businesses and other nonprofit groups. In the letter, directly ask them to make announcements to their groups.

Face-To-Face: People will buy from you if you directly ask them, so you have to ask them! Talk to each other. Remember, your committee needs to help you network. Stand outside during morning and afternoon drop-off and directly ask parents to participate in the fundraiser or attend the event; especially those kindergarten parents new to the school who may be looking for ways to get involved.

Table: Set up a sale table at school events (sports program, holiday show) or outside the local grocery store (with approval from the store manager and with parent supervision). The more you advertise, the larger your audience, and the greater chance for a higher number of sales. This is the one area where so many school groups fall short when planning a fundraiser. They go through all of the effort to plan an event, but then never draw enough customers to it. So advertise like crazy! You cannot do to much advertising, so go overboard on the advertising!

The information you include in your promotional material is just as important as where you publish it. Here's a list of items to include in your promotions:

Organization Name

Event Title

Purpose: State that the event is a fundraiser and how the funds raised will be used.

Location

Date & Time

Contact Person: Name, email, and/or phone

Price

Quantity: Number of people attending or number of tickets being purchased

RSVP Date

Requests for Volunteers (if needed)

When you begin advertising will depend on the type of event. A bake sale or pancake breakfast may only need to be advertised a week in advance, but a yard sale should be announced more than a month in advance so that people have plenty of time to clean out their closets and make donations.

The general rule of thumb for most fundraisers is to begin advertising four weeks prior to an event. It's enough time to create anticipation about the upcoming event without being too far out that people lose interest.

A few exceptions to this 4-week rule are events such as auctions and golf tournaments. Events that require function hall reservations and caterers will require final headcounts well in advance of the event. Begin advertising as much as 3 to 4 months in advance and set RSVP and registration deadlines 2 to 4 weeks prior to the actual event. The function hall and caterer will guide you on the timeline.

The success of your fundraising event will depend on how well you advertise it. Put together a detailed plan about what you're advertising, to whom, and how you'll get the word out to your target audience.

In the next segment we'll be discussing sponsors and you'll see how a well-developed, focussed plan helps to identify companies willing to sponsor your fundraising event.

BRINGING IN SPONSORS

Fundraisers make money by selling products, tickets to events or raffles, or services such as a car wash. A fundraiser may also incur expenses, such as printing, food, beverages, facility rentals, and prizes. **The lower you can keep your expenses, the greater your net profit.** One way to keep your expenses to a minimum is to bring on sponsors.

Sponsors are businesses and individuals that donate money, products, or services to help off-set the cost of an event by paying for operation costs. Let's discuss how to find sponsors that are both willing and happy to be part of your fundraiser.

Match sponsors to your audience. A sponsor is more likely to be willing to sponsor an event with which they have customers in common. For instance, if you're planning a fundraiser for a school, your audience will be school families (students, parents, grandparents, aunts/uncles, etc.). Find sponsors that also market to these families and their lifestyle. Movie theaters, grocery stores, toys, landscapers, house cleaners, power wash companies, car maintenance, daycares, and dance schools are all potential sponsors.

Match sponsors to the event theme. Use the theme to highlight sponsors. If your theme is titled *Take the Time*, the promotional material could state things such as *Take the Time for dinner together* (restaurant); *Take the Time to eat well* (grocery store); *Take the Time to see a movie* (movie theater); *Take the Time to smell the roses* (nursery/landscaper); *Take the Time get healthy* (doctor/dentist, fitness club); or *Take the Time to read* (bookstore). Think creatively!

Promote sponsors. Businesses like to identify themselves with local charities. It shows the community they are willing to give back to the people that have kept them in business. A little extra publicity for their business helps too, so be sure to let the sponsors know you plan to publicize (perhaps in print or online) their business. You could publish their business name and logo on social media, flyers, signs, or the fundraiser webpage. Include direct links back to the sponsor's website whenever possible.

Following a successful event, write an editorial article thanking every who participated in and supported the event and ask the local newspaper to publish it. Local newspapers are almost always willing to print editorial articles, especially *Thank You's*, for free.

Send business their way. Encourage sponsors to offer something that will bring them return business even after the event. A sponsor could donate gift cards that bring customers into their shop. Or they could include store coupons in a raffle basket they donated. Buy-one-get-one-free coupons bring not just one customer, but two or more.

Companies willing to sponsor charitable fundraising events are out there, you just need to know how to ask and offer them something of value in return.

Once you know the value you can offer a potential sponsor, it's time to find sponsors that are a match. Begin with your network.

Parents. As a school, you automatically have a network of parents available to you. If a parent owns a landscape company, ask them to donate two hours of residential landscaping. If a parent works for a bank, see if that bank will be the main sponsor for your golf tournament.

Alumni. Parents that had children graduate from the school may still be willing to support the event. Reach out to these alumni through email, a personal phone call, or with a letter.

Businesses. Contact the owners of small to medium sized local businesses that are a match for your event. Many large corporations have budgets set aside for charitable giving. Theme parks, zoos, vacation resorts have been known to donate tickets and overnight stays, but you will need to request these in writing on school letterhead months in advance.

Committee Members. Have a brainstorming session with all of your committee members and put together one master list of all of the companies to be contacted.

Draft a letter that committee members can send out to these parents and companies to request sponsorships. If you need help drafting this letter, go online and search sample sponsor letters and you'll find plenty to get you started.

If you decide to hand this task off to a committee member, let them know you'd like to proofread the final version. As a matter of fact, all promotional pieces should be proofread by the same one or two people to ensure they're all accurate and clearly state the same message.

Ask committee members to help make follow-up phone calls. Companies can receive several donation requests by mail every month. Many of them never get addressed. If you make a phone call or two to support the printed letter you send, you're more likely to receive a positive response, so always call!

Finally, **make it easy for the sponsor to give.** Offer the potential sponsor specific ideas as to what they could donate, whether it be cash, gift certificates, or services. Would you like a chef donate an in-home dinner party for 6 people as a silent auction item? An interior designer could offer a half hour in-home consultation then take the homeowner on a 3-hour home décor shopping trip (products purchased to be paid for by the homeowner). An accountant could offer year-end personal tax preparation services. A donut shop could donate coffee and donuts.

Make it easy for the sponsor to give by letting them know exactly what you have in mind. Include a form on which they can confirm their donation and mail it back to you. Offer to pick the donation up at their convenience and always thank the sponsor for their generous support! Identifying and asking for corporate sponsorships for your fundraising event is much easier if you know who to contact and how they relate to your purpose, your audience, and your event theme.

KEEPING RECORDS FOR FUTURE EVENTS

Up to this point, you've researched and developed a plan to meet a fundraising goal, you've brought together a committee of volunteers and learned how to lead, and you've branded your event to make identifying and signing sponsors easier. Every piece of this information you've

gathered throughout the event-planning process is invaluable and should be recorded to make planning the next event even easier and efficient.

Rather than start from scratch each year, keep detailed records of your plans – everything including parent and alumni names and occupations, the list of sponsors, location details, theme ideas, and advertising methods that worked well (and that didn't work well), and any other details surrounding the fundraiser. You will want to know exactly what each sponsor donated or which parent was the contact in obtaining the donation so that you can ask them for assistance in doing the same next year.

Keep track of expenses and ticket sale prices so you can better estimate your fundraising goal next year. The more details you keep, the better. Maintain a written file that you can refer to or that can be passed on to another committee next year.

THANKING EVERYONE INVOLVED

Finally, remember to say Thank You. Saying Thank You shows that you respect and appreciate what someone has done for you. Thank committee members, sponsors, guests, and anyone else who had a part in the fundraiser. This can be done with a personal thank you note, a phone call, or look them in the eye, shake their hand and tell them directly how much you appreciate their help.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for joining me to learn more about the fundamental components of every fundraising event plan. But, this is only the beginning. Now that you have the basics, it's time to get into running actual fundraising events. Successful fundraising events!

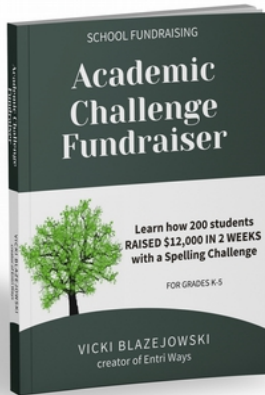
You can find a directory of events online at [Entri Ways](#) and on social media at:

[Entri Ways on Facebook](#)

[Entri Ways to Fundraise on Facebook](#)

Entri Ways on [Instagram](#)

If you found this Master Plan helpful, please consider a few of Entri Ways' profitable school fundraisers:



[Academic Challenge Fundraiser](#)



[Humanity Challenge Fundraiser](#)



[Cash Calendar Raffle Templates](#)

Entri Ways

EntriWays.com