

DIY Fundraising

There are lots of different groups out there, all trying to raise enough cash. Planning well and using your imagination will pay you dividends.

Think before you fundraise

A lot of time, energy and heartache can be saved by planning ahead. Make sure you can answer some basic questions:

- How much money do we need?
- When do we need it?
- What do we need it for?
- Is this the best way to raise this amount in this time?
- What resources will we need - equipment, skills, volunteers?
- What are the legal requirements?
- How much will our fundraising cost us? Will there be enough profit?
- What are the risks - weather, etc, - and how can we manage them?
- What else is going on locally?
- Who can we contact for help/advice?

Be daring - and careful

Encourage new, wacky fund-raising ideas, but before you go ahead think carefully about every possible problem. If you can't think of reasonable safeguards, move on to a new idea or try to adapt the original one to make it more manageable. Remember - your responsibility doesn't stop where the legislation stops.

Use your members/volunteers

Everybody has different skills, experience and interests. Your fundraising will be most effective if it uses your groups particular skills in the best way possible. Why not ask people what skills they have? You could be surprised by the answers!

Keep a good eye on the money

Many groups go on year after year making fund-raising efforts that cost, rather than raise, money. For example, if you run a regular cake stall but don't, or can't, charge enough for your produce, you could find out when you have done all the sums that your group would make more money if everyone just donated the cost of making the cakes directly into the funds. If you don't set a budget for your fund-raiser, you could find that well-meaning volunteers have spent your profit before you even make it.

Start a Fundraising group

This is a small sub-committee that can take over the day-to-day fundraising tasks. Don't leave it all up to one person - even a Saint soon gets fed up, and when they leave their skills, knowledge and contacts leave with them.

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Get organised

Keep written records of who, is doing or has done, what. Have regular meetings to check progress. Make sure everyone knows what to do, how and by when. Have a checklist of important jobs, and keep it updated.

Produce good quality, targeted promotional material

We are all used to glossy, well-produced advertising nowadays, and yours will be a lot more effective if you produce it to the best possible standard (but watch the cost!). Use a style that will attract the people you expect to be interested in your event - bright colours for children, etc. and make sure it will be seen in the right places. Promotional material that is not targeted in some way is almost useless.

Use your contacts

If you have contacts with local sports or hobby groups, there are lots of ways you can use them. For instance, a local Martial Arts group could do a display at your Fete, or provide a lesson in self-defence as one of the items in a Pledges Auction. You may have someone in your group who is in contact with a local bigwig or celebrity. These people are used to being approached by people wanting help, so as long as you are polite, sensitive and reasonable in your requests you may attract their support.

Sponsorship

- Remember, every form must have the name of the Charity, the name and nature of the event, where and when held, who is organising it, final date for collection and space for a signature or stamp confirming completion.
- Number the forms, then include everyone in a draw who manages to raise more than five pounds. Ask businesses for a prize for the biggest fundraiser.
- Send certificates, prepared by a friend who has a computer, to everyone who completed the event and sent in their money.
- Suggest, for really big or difficult events, that the participant forms a fundraising group who will do the dirty work while the participant prepares.
- Find a celebrity to take part in/start the event.
- Encourage people to give cash straight away - one of the biggest problems with sponsorship is collecting the money after the event.
- Do a collection as well, if the sponsored event is funny/interesting to look at.

Raffles

- The trick is to approach people at a place or time when they already have their purses out.
- Announce the draw 1/4 hour early, to encourage last-minute sales.

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Collections

- Apply for your licence in plenty of time, as only one group at a time can be issued with a licence. There is lots of competition for the best times, so if you want to collect on Saturdays or around Christmas, you may have to apply up to a year in advance.
- It is illegal to ask people to put money in your tin, or even to shake it! Get over the invisibility by dressing up your collectors in silly costumes or identifying T-shirts, or put up a display about your work.
- Give collectors information and training ahead of time so they are aware of the rules, clear about security arrangements and prepared to smile silently all day!
- Place collectors intelligently - concentrating them in the most popular area (so long as they don't look like a "mob") can be far more effective than spreading them around.
- If you are running a collection on private property you don't have to get a licence, but you do need the permission of the owner. The legislation has changed recently, and may lead to places like Pubs being seen as public within the law

Stalls

- Take something to sit on, flask of tea etc. Remember to take a "float" of useful change (if you are charging 4.99 for something, you will need a lot of pennies).
- If possible, theme your stall. It is quite difficult (except at a Car Boot Sale) to sell a little bit of this and a little bit of that.
- Arrange your stall to look interesting, attractive and easy to approach. Put stuff at the back on little improvised shelves, make prices clear and easy to read. Bargain Bins at the front catch passers by and make it easier for people to approach you.
- Decorate/design your stall to fit your theme and attract your most likely customers - pretty coloured cloth under dried flower arrangements, attractive plain wood under pot-plants.
- If you are organising the event; keep the stalls close together, however big the field. Put together a plan with "zones" of stalls selling similar things - this encourages people to buy. Stalls selling heavy or big things should be near the car-park, so that people don't have far to carry their purchase. Put refreshments at the far end - get people buying first!

Good stall ideas: Plants; Home-made cakes, pickles, jams etc.; Wood (collect leftovers and donations); Books and records (need a lot); Crafts (especially at Christmas); Second hand baby/ children's clothes

Before you go ahead....

You will need to think about rules and regulations that may affect your fundraising efforts.

- If you hold an event in a public place check with your Local Council or the owner of the property for permission and to find out how to go about it. Contact the Police if it will affect traffic in any way.
- If you are collecting money in public places you need a permit from your Local Council.
- If you are organising an event you may need to think about insurance.

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Before you go ahead....

Note: If you are selling raffle tickets or organising a competition small lotteries are exempt from the Lotteries and Amusements Act 1996.

The sale of tickets and announcement of results must take place during an event such as a fete, dinner or dance.

You must not spend more than £250 on prizes and cash prizes are not allowed.

However the £250 limit on the value of prizes applies only to those for which you have paid. There is no value limit on prizes which have been donated. In general you do not need a liquor licence to include alcohol among the prizes but you should check with your local authority.

Until the Gambling Act comes into full force in 2007, the Gambling Commission is operating under the 1968 Gaming Act and 1976 Lotteries and Amusements Act.

For further advice contact:

Gambling Commission Transition Team
Berkshire House
168-173 High Holborn
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WC1V 7AA
Tel: 020 7306 6200
Fax: 020 7306 6266
Email: info@gamblingcommission.gov.uk
Website: www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations
Regent's Wharf
8 All Saints Street
London
N1 9RL
Helpdesk Tel: 0800 2 798 798
Fax: 020 7713 6300
Email: ncvo@ncvo-vol.org.uk
Website: www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

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Ideas

Below are some ideas for fund raising events. Use your imagination and you can dream up different ones or adapt these to suit your circumstances.

* Wishing Well

Everyone loves to throw money into water! You'll need a water-feature of some kind (borrow from your local Garden Centre in return for the publicity?), and a venue, for instance a local shopping centre, where plenty of people will pass directly by and where you can maintain reasonable security.

* Ghost Walk

If you have volunteers with suitable public-speaking skills, why not exploit any ghosts or nasty goings-on in your area and take people on an hour-long guided tour after dark. An event of this sort needs to be very well organised - make sure you time things beforehand, arrange to meet somewhere sheltered near a Pub or other source of refreshment and have a "stand-in" ready in case your leader has to pull out at the last minute. You will need written permission from the owner if the tour wants to visit private property or land.

* Double or Nothing

Give each member of a Fundraising team a small amount - £2 for instance - and give them a set time in which they have to (at least) double it. A prize could be offered for the person who makes the most.

Seventies Clothes Stall

Your old cast-offs could be just what the trendy young things of today are looking for - the more outrageous the better! Make sure you run your stall at a venue or event where the sort of people who want your clothes will be.

Sponsored New-Year Pledge

Planning on giving up smoking, or cycling to work at least two days a week? Get sponsored - it will increase your motivation and raise useful cash. Remember to put a time-limit on your sponsor form - people are unlikely to want to pay out for the rest of your life!

Craft Projects Finishing Service

If you have suitable skills, why not offer to finish off those knitting, woodwork or cross-stitch projects that people have lying around, for the price of a donation. To avoid misunderstandings, it is as well to have a short written agreement stating exactly what you will do and by what time.

Items marked * adapted from "Tried and tested ideas for raising money locally",
Passingham, DSC 1994