

# FUN-RAISING EVENT IDEAS



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## Introduction

While special events are not intended to replace employee presentations where individuals are educated about giving to United Way, they are a great way to promote the campaign, spark involvement, encourage team building and have FUN!

Successful giving campaigns have two things in common: planning and participation. Ask yourself these questions before your event.

- What are your organization's goals for giving?
- What do you hope to accomplish through the special event?
- What non-monetary goals do you have?
  - Creating greater community understanding
  - Increasing volunteerism
  - Building morale
- What resources are available to you?
  - People
  - Materials
  - Incentives
  - Entertainment
  - Location
  - Inspiration
- How will you publicize your campaign?
  - Morning announcements with upbeat music
  - E-mail messages listing upcoming United Way schedule of events
  - Newsletter articles highlighting United Way Certified Charitable Agency Partners
  - Voice mail messages
  - Posters and banners hung in high traffic areas

Remember, strong leadership set the pace. Ask your company leaders to send a memo or e-mail encouraging involvement and participation in your campaign activities.

## Using Themes

Themes are a great way to generate interest and make the campaign fun. Start by jotting down a list for possible themes. Here are some examples of popular themed events.

### **Tune into the Community**

Music is a great way to get everyone moving to the United Way beat.

- Hold a “Karaoke Kick-Off” Party
- Sell employees’ old CDs
- Hold a musical show
- Have participants dress up as their favorite musicians

### **Lights! Camera! Action!**

Have employees dress up as their favorite characters from movies or TV.

- Act out a plot that involves United Way
- Incorporate movie lines into flyers and e-mails
- Create “skits” using your favorite movies or TV shows with a United Way theme

### **Be an Everyday Superhero**

Employees dress as superheroes: Batman, Superman, etc.

- Serve hero (sub) sandwiches

### **Be a Lifesaver**

Have some fun, beach style! Sand, sunglasses, beach balls, and Beach Boys music make your office feel like a day at the beach.

- Hand out Lifesaver candies
- Employees who donate are given life preserver vests to wear at a meeting

### **Back to School**

Relive the glory years of school.

- Collect school supplies for a United Way Certified Agency
- Hold a spelling bee with managers vs. employees
- E-mail United Way “pop quizzes”
- Hold a pep-rally where departments create a United Way cheer

## Using Themes (Cont.)

### Mardi Gras

Everyone loves a party, so why not model your campaign after the biggest party in the world - Mardi Gras?

- Invite a jazz band to play at your kick-off event
- Hold a parade float contest where departments decorate shoeboxes as floats
- Hand out beads to donors
- Host a Cajun potluck

### Sports Theme

Create a sports theme to coincide with football, basketball, or baseball season.

- Have departments create their own teams with a team name and colors
- Hold a tailgate party in the parking lot - serve hot dogs, chips, and soda
- “Kick in Your Share” for football or soccer theme
- “Hit a Homerun for your Community” for baseball theme

### County Fair/Carnival

Hold a carnival or fair to kick off your campaign.

- Have traditional carnival games such as ring toss, duck races, etc.
- Serve popcorn, peanuts, cotton candy, and hotdogs
- Have an executive volunteer for a dunk tank or pie toss
- Hold a bake contest and cake walk

### Western Theme

Have some fun “Western Style.”

- Hold a barbeque and serve hamburgers, baked beans, and corn on the cob
- Dress like a cowboy or your favorite western hero
- Hold a kick-off rodeo

## Fun Raising Ideas from A-Z

### A-B-C

#### Auction Hotline

- Set up a special voice mailbox with weekly message announcing auction items
- Outline the items, including their face value, in a flyer
- Employees call the hotline to record their bids
- Update the recorded message daily, announcing the highest bids received to date
- Announce auction results each week and announce next week's auction items
- Ask employees to donate items or services for the auction

#### Baby Picture Match

- Invite employees to try their luck matching baby and/or pet picture to pictures of employees from the management team
- Award the entry with the most right answers a paid day off or some other fun incentives
- Charge employees \$2.00 per ballot

#### Balloon Pop

- Employees donate prizes for this event (this is a variation of the traditional raffle)
- Before filling a balloon with helium, put a note inside with the name of the prize
- Employees pay \$1.00 to buy a balloon and pop it to find out what prize they won

#### Bingo

- Sell bingo cards for employees to participate
- Ask a person from the management team to call the bingo numbers
- Get a local store to donate prizes for all winners

#### Bowl-A-Thon

- Employees pay a fee to participate in the event
- Invite employee-teams to wear costumes and award a prize to the winners
- Encourage departmental challenges



## Fun Raising Ideas from A-Z (Cont.)

### Casino Night

What are the ingredients for a successful Casino Night?

- A few blackjack tables
- A Bingo game
- A beanbag toss
- Refreshments
- Invite employees and their families
- Local businesses can donate prizes for winners

### Casual Day

- Sell Casual Day badges allowing employees purchasing them to dress casually on certain days  
Employees purchase badges for \$5.00 each through payroll deduction or cash donation. The badges carry an expiration date, depending on the amount donated
- Designate certain casual days as “Crazy Days” and encourage your employees to show their wild side

### CEO Car Wash

- Employees donate \$5.00 to have their car washed at high noon by the boss
- Charge extra for special services like cleaning the interior or polishing the rims
- Charge extra for a copy of a digital photo with the boss

### Children’s Drawing Contest

Give employees official photographs of one or two top executives to take home for their children to draw. Or let children draw a picture that shows what helping others means to them.

- Contest is limited to children under 12 who are related to employees
- \$5.00 entry fee
- Employees vote for the best drawing by paying per vote
- Prizes are given to all participants
- Display winning portraits as part of the organization’s permanent art collection
- A variation of this event: Employees submit photography, drawings, paintings, poetry, or collages depicting “People helping people”



## Fun Raising Ideas from A-Z (Cont.)

### **Chili Cook-Off**

- Employees cook their favorite chili recipe and enter it into a cook-off contest
- A panel of chili experts selects the official Chili Champ
- Talk to a local hotel about donating a free weekend stay for the winner

### **Chocolate Kick-Off Rally**

- Excite those “sweet teeth” when kicking off your campaign
- Print gold paper candy bar wrappers with the employee’s giving theme
- Put the wrappers on chocolate bars and distribute them at your kick-off event

### **Comedy Hour**

Local comedians amuse employees during the lunch hour (pro bono of course)

- Employees buy tickets to attend the Comedy Hour

### **Coupon Book and Other Fundraisers**

Many organizations that sell “entertainment” coupon books will sell the books at a discount to other organizations that are fundraising. Generally, you only pay for the books that you sell.

- There are different types of coupon books available
- Sell books that appeal to your employees, such as coffee coupon books, or Emergency Disaster packs

### **Craft and Bake Sale**

- Employees jump into the holidays by shopping at craft and bake sales
- This gives everyone a chance to share his or her hobbies and special talents

### **Cruise for Donors**

- Organize a local cruise for a fundraising event/dinner dance
- Use a nautical/pirate theme for decorations and invitations

## Fun Raising Ideas from A-Z (Cont.)

### D-E-F

#### Dollar an Inch Contest

- Executives participate in an all-day competition to end the day with the shortest tie
- Employees can cut an inch off their favorite executive's tie each time they give to United Way
- Give prizes for the shortest tie, the ugliest tie, etc.

#### Don't Forget Your Passport

- Representatives from United Way's Partner Agencies can provide employees with information to complete questions on a "Passport"
- Enter all completed Passports into a grand prize drawing
- Talk to a local travel agent about donating a trip

#### Employee Cookbook

- Collect and group recipes and helpful household hints into a customized cookbook
- Invite the employees' children to illustrate the book
- Find a local copy company who will donate services to print and bind the books

#### Employee Guessing Events

Employees guess:

- The organization's grand total given to United Way
- Community need questions (e.g.: How many homeless people live in our community)
- The amount of candy in a jar

#### Employee Raffle

Ask employees to contribute something special for a raffle prize. Use as incentive for employees to turn in their pledge cards:

- Pies, cakes, and other baked goods
- Lunch with a co-worker
- Weekend stay at a vacation cabin or condo
- One-day vacation
- Prizes donated by vendors
- Those employees turning in pledge forms early receive three raffle tickets.
- Employees turning in pledge forms after the "early" date, but before the final deadline receive one raffle ticket

## Fun Raising Ideas from A-Z (Cont.)

### Executive Chair or Tricycle Race

- Set up a relay course for executives using chairs or riding tricycles
- Use a stop watch to time contestants with the best time winning a prize
- Observers wager \$1.00 on their favorite contestants

### Executive Fantasy Auction

Executives at your organization create “fantasy” packages, which employees can bid on at a special auction

- Cooking the winning bidder a special dish
- Singing at a wedding, party, or special event
- Mowing the winner’s lawn
- Baby-sitting the winner’s children
- Washing the winner’s car
- Washing the winner’s windows

### Executive Prison

Transform an office into a jail cell

- Arrest managers and executives
- Allow them to make a telephone call to their staff members to “bail” them out
- All proceeds go to the campaign

### Flashback Carnival

- Invite employees to an old-fashioned carnival, complete with cakewalks, bake sale, bubble blowing and .50 hot dogs
- Hold a hoola-hoop contest to really give it that flashback flavor
- Charge participants a fee to enter the contest
- Set up a dunk tank, with all your favorite dunkable executives. Charge \$3.00 for three balls
- Throw pies at all your favorite executives

## Fun Raising Ideas from A-Z (Cont.)

### G-H-I

#### Grandma's "Heart Attack" Chocolate Cake

- Sell Grandma's favorite chocolate cake recipe to interested employees
- Tempt them with bite-sized samples

#### Halloween Pumpkin Carving Contest

Plan a Halloween theme and hold a pumpkin-carving contest. Find a local business willing to donate pumpkins for your organizations to sell to your employees

- Employees can purchase pumpkins to take home to their families or to use in the pumpkin carving contest
- Employees enter carved pumpkins individually or by group
- Charge \$5.00 to enter and \$1.00 per vote

#### International Food Day

Employees work together to create tasty treats from around the world

- Employees decorate their own booths and dress in costumes
- Hold the event over the lunch hour, allowing employees to purchase tickets redeemable for food at the booths
- A panel of "celebrity" judges award prizes

### J-K-L

#### Karaoke Party

This has the potential of being a BIG fundraiser and a GREAT team-building event.

- Participants pay to enter and are given a list of songs and a pledge sheet in advance
- Participants ask employees to support them by pledging a certain dollar amount
- Provide a big box of funny hats, boots, and other costume items for contestants to wear during the event
- Pass the hat at the party for even more pledges

A variation of this activity is "Executive Karaoke." Employees pay money for executives to get up and sing the song of their choice. Video tape the event and sell the copies.

## Fun Raising Ideas from A-Z (Cont.)

### Laff Olympics

- Employees compete in crazy “athletic events” for silly prizes
- Participants donate a \$5.00 fee to enter
- Observers wager bets on their favorite entrants

### Lunch Auction

Different departments donate lunches to auction every day for a week

- Use your organization’s intercom system or other employee communication systems to tempt your co-workers
- A variation of this event is to have employees pay \$5.00 for the “boss” to deliver coffee and muffins to them, with all proceeds going to the community

## M-N-O

### Miniature Golf

Build a nine-hole course featuring slinky toys, ramps, water, and sand around the office and test your employees’ skills

- The lowest scorer will walk home with a tacky golfing sport coat
- Interested teams return an entry form, bring a putter the day of the event, and pay an appropriate fee
  - \$25.00 for teams from upper management
  - \$15.00 for teams from middle management
  - \$10.00 for all other employee teams

Try a “Golfing in America” theme with each hole highlighting a different state/city. For example a hole-in-one in a Hawaiian volcano a birdie in Boise, sand traps in Arizona.

### Nacho Party

Plan an afternoon to sell nachos or popcorn to interested employees.

- Employees pay \$2.00 for each serving with all proceeds going to United Way

## Fun Raising Ideas from A-Z (Cont.)

### P-Q-R-S

#### Quilts, Quilts, Quilts

Employees donate a quilt featuring the theme of “Community Giving” or “Getting involved.”

- Sell raffle tickets

#### Rose Event

Find a local florist who will donate roses or carnations. Employees can buy them for \$2.00 each or have them delivered to fellow co-workers.

- As an added incentive, the organization matches each \$2.00 donation
- Try the same event with cookies, with employees donating the cookies for the event. Sell the cookies for \$1.00 to send to friends or co-workers in the organization

#### Scavenger Hunts

Employees participate in a scavenger hunt to find unusual items around the neighborhood or office building, as well as to demonstrate community knowledge. You can “plant” items with selected employees for others to discover.

- Teams of four, their choice, pay a group entry fee
- If each team member has a different job title, automatically award them 10 bonus points
- Teams have one hour to accumulate as many points as possible
- The entire team must be present at the end of one hour. If a team arrives late, assess a penalty of 2 points per minute

#### Spelling Bee

- Hold a spelling bee, charging a \$5.00 entry fee
- Galley observers place \$1.00 bets on their favorite participants
- Present the winner with a special “Dan Quayle “ Spelling Bee Award

#### Summo Mania

Call a local company and rent the Summo Wrestling package. Encourage employees to sign up in teams.

- Form departmental teams, or executive teams
- Charge \$2.00 to watch the wrestlers

## Fun Raising Ideas from A-Z (Cont.)

### T-U-V

#### **Taco Day/Make a Potato Day**

Supply the fixings (by donation) to make your own taco or potato. Charge for each meal.

#### **Tailgate Party**

Create a sports theme for your campaign to coincide with football season.

- Hold the tailgate party out in the parking lot
- Serve hot dogs, chips, soda, peanuts
- Play a game of tag or video football with participants donating an entry fee

#### **Ticket Giveaway/Gift Certificates**

- Give free tickets to movies, theater productions, amusement centers, and other local attractions for pledge incentives
- Give movie passes to every employee who meets the challenge of pledging a certain dollar amount
- Enter the names of all employees who promptly return their signed pledge form into a special drawing
- Award tickets donated from a local destination such as a water park to the winners

#### **Trivial Pursuit Match**

Create a pool around the winning team, and give all employees who bet on the winning team a prize.

- Hold the challenge during a staff meeting
- Give the event a game show flavor

#### **Ugly Tie or Ugly Earring Contest**

All contestants pay \$5.00 to enter the contest and wear their most awful earrings or ugliest tie.

- Place voting boxes at various places around the office, and charge \$1.00 per vote
- Have a parade of all contestants, offering a last chance to vote at the end of the day
- Circulate the names of the entrants the day before the event so employees can anticipate voting
- Bring a digital camera and charge for photos taken of employees with their favorite contestant



## Fun Raising Ideas from A-Z (Cont.)

### **Vacation Days**

Many coordinators say this event easily guarantees almost 100% participation.

- Employees “buy” a vacation day
- When an employee chooses to participate, their wages from a days work are deducted from their paycheck
- The organization may choose to match the amount deducted, with all proceeds donated to United Way

### **White Elephant Sale**

Employees donate unique “white elephant” gifts that others can buy at affordable prices.

### **Wine drawing**

Offer employees a chance to win an assortment of specialty wines from a number of different wineries.

- Sell tickets for \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00
- Display the wines in an employee area to entice wine lovers

**United Way**  
**California Capital Region**  
8912 Volunteer Lane, Suite 200  
Sacramento, CA 95826-3221  
tel 916-368-3000  
fax 916-368-3029  
[www.yourlocalunitedway.org](http://www.yourlocalunitedway.org)