

FUNDRAISING: A GUIDE

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The effectiveness of fundraising campaigns depends on a number of factors and a creative approach towards putting the idea together happens to be one of the most important.

A number of very simple and inexpensive fundraising projects have gotten an overwhelming response precisely because of their creativity and high level of targeting.

Is there a particular cause that you support and would love to raise money for? Our free fundraising guide will give you some of the best and most innovative fundraising campaign ideas.

Understanding the monetization potential of each, the challenges and the opportunities will help you collect a sufficient amount of money for your cause.

Turning Luxury Fundraisers on Their Head

What does the traditional fundraiser look like? It's a glamorous and luxurious event that will typically be held at a five-star hotel or a gourmet restaurant. This notion, however, happens to be quite limiting because it appeals to a highly specific group of people.

A mass event can be easier to organize, appeal to a much broader audience and require a limited budget. There's no need to go for champagne and caviar when you could be serving beer and pizza.

A successful fundraising event, whether small or large, will be defined by a few key characteristics.

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The most important ones include:

- The purpose of the event and the fundraising goal you have in mind.
- The budget: Venue selection, catering and entertainment will all be dependent on the amount you can dedicate to planning the event.
- The target audience: The event's theme will be dependent on the group of people you want to win over for the cause.

Once you come up with the idea, you'll need to do great marketing. Internet is wonderful for the purpose because of the low-cost, highly effective marketing possibilities. Organize a practice run and make sure that everyone involved is aware of duties and responsibilities.

Let us move on to the specifics of turning the luxury fundraiser on its head. What kind of ideas can you choose to make your event more approachable, fun and less stiff than the typical gala fundraiser?

Skill Contribution instead of Traditional Fundraising

What exactly do you need the money for? Let us examine a simple example – you're trying to support a charity that is building a shelter for homeless people. Instead of looking for financial contributions, get a construction company or an architect involved. Simply put, you would pay for their services while they can contribute their special skills to the fundraiser.

This approach is going to result in much more comprehensive solutions. Very often, it will expand the scope of the fundraising campaign.

Apart from getting a particular sum, you'll also be benefiting from the experience and know-how of reputable professionals. These companies, on the other hand, will promote themselves as socially-responsible and they'll experience significant PR benefits.

Alternatively, you can organize a campaign in which your supporters exchange their skills for donations. This campaign could involve

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everything from dog walking to interior design and landscaping.

The types of skills will be determining for the size of the donations. This is why the skills for charity approach is great for all kinds of campaigns, even ones that require significant contributions.

For a start, you'll need to establish a website. Alternatively, you can rely on a platform that connects professionals to charities and vice versa. If you are an individual having a particular set of skills, you can find a charity to support through such platforms. Charities, on the other hand, post their project or campaign descriptions and let professionals know what kinds of skills will be needed for successful execution.

To make use of this approach, you'll need to come up with a very detailed and highly specific plan in advance:

- Pinpoint the exact goals you're trying to accomplish (helping unemployed individuals improve their qualification, helping for the medical treatment of children, building homes for people that have lost everything during a natural disaster)
- Make a list of the professional skills you'll need for the execution of the campaign
- Make a list of the skills that can be "traded" for donations in your community
- Decide whether to advertise the campaign through your website or through a platform connecting professionals to charities
- Get a couple of acquaintances or business partners involved in the project. Having a few individuals starting the campaign will encourage others to follow
- Announce the types of perks that participants in the campaign are going to enjoy (marketing through your website, having their logo appearing onsite, etc.)

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Non-financial contributions will often be much more stimulating for participants in the campaign. Many people enjoy the feeling of giving back to their community. The number of socially-engaged businesses is growing all of the time. Use these trends for the successful execution of the campaign. In fact, you can contact local companies before getting started to figure out whether any partnership is possible.

Brainstorming For Relevant Ideas

A masquerade ball is very simple to plan and it can be a lot of fun. If you're raising money for a children's foundation, for example, you can ask the guests to come dressed as a fairytale characters.

Alternatively, you can have a fun karaoke night. Each of the participants in the karaoke session will be raising money for the charity. This is how you mix effectiveness and fun together.

There could be a recording session while the event is taking place with each of the guests bidding for the record that they like the most (or the ones that they hated so much that they'd be willing to buy and destroy).

An 80s or a 90s theme will be a lot of fun, a pet-a-palooza will be perfect if you're trying to support a pet shelter or a wildlife organization. A classic movie marathon, an afternoon coffee party and a toga party can be other fun themes to execute.

Moving on to fundraising specifics, each of these fundraising events and parties should include at least one of the following:

- A silent auction
- A raffle
- Corporate sponsorships for the entire party or for part of the fundraising
- The sale of products or works of art/souvenirs throughout the event
- Giving people something tangible will provide the right kind of stimulus. It doesn't have to be something expensive – a T-shirt with a catchy phrase printed on the front or the back will be sufficient.

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The amount of money you can raise through a fundraising party will depend on your goal, the number of people you invite to the event and the cost of the souvenirs or other products you plan to sell.

You should have a really good idea about your monetary goal in advance. Very often, the sum will help you determine what type of event and what party theme will bring in the biggest donations. You'll also get to choose a party idea that will appeal to the demographic most likely to get emotionally involved with the particular issue.

Additional opportunities that you may want to give a try:

Put together a content-based website. This kind of website will shed a lot of light on the issue you're trying to support. If you have experience with copywriting and website development, this project is going to be a wonderful opportunity for killing two birds with one stone.

A website can be monetized in numerous ways ranging from PPC campaigns to sponsorships and the publication of paid articles. This campaign is only suitable for volunteers and organizers having experience in the world of web design and development. The rules of the game change all the time and experience is a must for success.

A second opportunity is comedy or a stand-up evening full of laughter and fun. Are you targeting a more artistic, fun-loving crowd? Get a stand-up comedian involved in your campaign or even better – ask the volunteers to do a hilarious performance.

People would certainly love to pay money for a funny night. If possible, get somebody else involved.

It could be the town mayor or another public official that people recognize. Showing the funnier side of such an individual will definitely break the ice and it can lead to absolutely spectacular fund collection results.

A marathon or a sports event: this is far from the most creative fundraising opportunity but it proves to be efficient time and time again.

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People will often be much more willing to get involved in a particular cause. Such an idea gives them the opportunity and it enables the organizers to generate funds through the execution of the sports event.

A third opportunity is a charity walk, run or a competitive event is relatively easy to organize. You'll need to choose a route and get the agreement of city officials about it. Make sure that the safety of participants and viewers is guaranteed. Think about the volunteers you're going to need and get them trained in advance. Finally, you'll need to focus on marketing the event and getting the biggest possible number of participants.

To sum it up – a fundraising event doesn't have to be sterile and clichéd. In fact, creating a memorable experience for the sponsors will boost the donations. Think about the theme, the activities and the manner in which you're going to get people involved. Entertain the audience and use this opportunity to educate people about the issue. More casual settings will make a bigger number of people feel at ease, thus contributing to higher levels of awareness.

Eating for a Good Cause: Cooking-Focused Events

Everybody loves food – some adore making it and 100 percent of the population has a great time eating it. All kinds of culinary-based events can be a spectacular fundraising hit. It's all about taking the idea to the next level and making it a bit more creative than having people paying for yet another cooking class with a celebrity chef (though if you manage to get Gordon Ramsey involved, you'll probably get the perfect opportunity to generate a lot of cash for your cause).

Eating contests are always fun and they can get many people interested. You have so many types of foods to choose among! The competition could involve cakes, hot dogs, hamburgers, pizza, pie, ice-cream or anything else that you consider relevant.

A local bakery or a restaurant will possibly express some interest in supporting the cause, especially if the charity supports the local community.

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Just like in the case of contacting celebrities and asking them for participation, you should consider talking to local food-centered businesses. Very often, you'll be capable of getting the food free of charge.

Some other food-based fundraiser ideas include the following:

- A food or wine tasting event
- A competition for the best type of a particular food
- A silent auction for a unique and unforgettable dining experience (many restaurants already offer unusual possibilities like having a dinner in the dark, trying some really exotic international cuisine, being served by dancing restaurant staff or going to a restaurant that features exclusive panoramic view)
- Organizing a food festival
- Discount cards for a particular local restaurant
- Writing a unique cookbook and trying to sell it (the cookbook could be created by the group of people or the cause creators that will benefit from the fundraiser)

Most of these ideas are quite easy and cheap to execute. The food festival is probably one of the most complex opportunities. If you want to go for it, you'll need to go through a series of very important steps that will determine the outcome of your efforts.

The first, the most obvious and the most important question you'll have to ask is who's going to cook?

If you want to have professional catering, you'll have to collect a couple of offers and figure out which ones makes the most financial and thematic sense. Alternatively, you can have some of your volunteers make the food. Think about the theme of the food fest, the type of food you want to serve and the complexity level of preparing such meals for the visitors.

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Once you have a good idea about who's going to be making the meals, you'll have to move on to doing a bit of budget drafting. Try to calculate the amount of money you're going to need for execution.

Take everything into account – the produce, the cooking process, venue rental, entertainment costs, decorations, prizes, etc.

If the amount comes out to a really impressive sum, you'll have to either decrease the amount of food you're going to cook or you'll have to find a source of funding for the festival. Getting a corporate sponsor involved is a great possibility for taking the fest over the top. Many companies will be willing to offer financial assistance for a chance to have their logo displayed at the event.

After completing all of the preparatory steps, you'll have to spread word about the upcoming festival.

Talk to local coffee shops, hotels and other businesses active in the tourism industry to spread the word. Leaving a few flyers at the front desk or reception of such businesses can help you reach a huge crowd.

The power of internet can be fully-utilized. Dedicate a Facebook page to the upcoming food festival. Start posting information and teasers at least a month in advance. If you have the money, pay for promoted posts. These will reach a bigger number of people and the paid online promotion is one of the most cost-efficient forms of marketing.

Finally, talk to local media representatives. A local newspaper or magazine will usually be willing to present a brief material about the upcoming festival. You can also consider having a paid publication or a print ad. Such media tends to be quite popular among the local community, which is why you'll get to reach a large crowd.

Inform people about the awards and the surprises they should expect during the food fest. Build some anticipation and tease the crowd.

A food-related fundraiser can be small and niche or it could be a large scale charity event. The idea you pick will be determining for the participation.

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A food festival is your chance to reach the biggest group of people. Selling discount cards is simple, effective and suitable for a smaller charity.

Having a good idea about your goals in advance will help you for the selection of the right approach.

Getting a Celebrity Involved

Getting a celebrity involved in your cause isn't as incredibly difficult as you imagine it to be. In fact, you'll be surprised to find out how many popular individuals will be willing to support a good cause.

The reason is simple – participation in fundraisers and charity events is a good form of popularity for a celebrities. Nearly every popular individual would love to be associated with such events. Knowing how to contact famous people and how to present your idea in the best possible way will be essential for winning them over for the cause.

Omaze's campaign involving George Clooney is one great example of such a fundraiser. People were encouraged to donate 10 dollars for the Satellite Sentinel Project and each donation bought them one entry in the competition to win a night out in town with George Clooney. It's easy to see how this amazing possibility got ladies actively involved in the charity (regardless of the fact that Mr. Clooney is no longer a bachelor).

According to reports presenting the results of the campaign, Omaze managed to get donations totaling 1.2 million dollars!

Just like with every other fundraiser variety, preliminary planning and a lot of research will be essential for getting your celebrity. The good news is that social media like Twitter make it much easier to contact famous performers and public figures without having to go through a lengthy, complex and cumbersome process.

For a start, look for a local celebrity. This is a particularly good idea if the particular cause you support is going to be doing something for the local community.

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Many famous individuals that are natives of a certain town will be more than happy to help for the successful execution of your campaign.

Next comes the tricky part – budget drafting. The majority of celebrities will ask to be paid for each participation in an event, public appearance or media mention of your charity. You'll once again have to do some research to figure out how much it's going to cost you and whether hiring a celebrity for the purpose is going to be justified.

Most often, the time of famous individuals is limited. You'll be asked to describe what's expected of the famous supporter. Should they be available throughout the event? Are you going to offer one lucky individual the chance to meet with the particular star? The second approach is certainly going to make it easier and less expensive for you to get somebody famous involved in your cause.

Remember that regardless of their star status, celebrities are human beings. Research their history and turn your attention towards individuals that have already supported charities and causes. Chances are that these celebrities have a strong social position and they'd be willing to support another worthy cause.

Contact them in a polite way and provide a detailed overview of the cause and the celebrity participation that you envision. Quite often, you'd be surprised to find out that such individuals are going to respond in a highly positive way.

If direct communication is not your thing, try to contact the publicist of the particular celebrity you want to involve in the fundraiser. These professionals know everything about the schedule of celebrities, about their availability and the likelihood of getting that star interested in your cause.

One final word of advice – getting somebody like George Clooney would certainly be nice but people are going to be excited about meeting a local celebrity as well. It could be someone that has already contributed a lot to the cause, hence gaining the local celebrity status.

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Sometimes, starting small and keeping your efforts focused is going to be much more productive than stalking stars and begging them to get involved.

There is an alternative possibility for getting some celebrity involvement in your fundraiser. Instead of asking a star to participate in the campaign, you can request the donation of a personal or a professional item. Organizing an auction for this kind of piece can potentially result in the accumulation of a significant amount for your charity.

Getting somebody famous to support your fundraiser can help you make a lot of money for the cause that you support. This kind of fundraiser, however, can be incredibly painful to organize.

You'll have to dedicate hours to communication and figuring out what the celebrity's conditions for involvement are.

In addition, you'll probably have to spend some money in order to execute the idea. This type of fundraiser is good for larger causes that have to reach a national audience.

The people working on such a project need to have some organizational, public relations and communication experience. If you think that the planning process is going to be excessively burdening or you don't have enough time for it, you should probably look for an alternative.

Delivering Fun, Relevant Services

Have you heard about the fundraiser that made Christmas carol signers available at a sponsor's door during the Christmas days? Such ideas are tremendously successful because of their emotional appeal.

People get something fun, exciting and heartwarming for the contribution that they make. On top of feeling good for helping a particular cause, they'll also get a rewarding experience or a souvenir.

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If you want to execute this kind of fundraiser, you'll have to put your creative cap on. The idea is the one thing that matters and the one thing that could potentially make your campaign viral.

Whether you're planning a silent auction or the online sale of services/souvenirs, knowing what your potential audience will be interested in is going to determine the outcome of your efforts.

Certain items tend to sell much better than others and these are usually personalized things. They'll either remind people of their involvement in the fundraising campaign or address an emotional need.

Some of the fun and great things you can sell during a silent fundraiser auction include:

- Greeting cards created by kids or children's drawings
- A once in a lifetime experience (a trip, a bungee jumping session, a helicopter ride)
- A unique dining experience (the chef could be someone involved in the charity or fundraiser)
- Music and sports memorabilia signed by a famous supporter of the cause
- Original artwork such as paintings or sculptures from artists
- Lunch with a famous supporter of the charity
- Being somebody for a day (a policeman, a fireman or any other relevant profession that will get supporters of the cause excited)
- CDs and DVDs created by young artists, by kids or containing a short film of relevance to the campaign
- Personalized jewelry or accessories

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It's obvious that getting some of these items or experiences will require a lot of hard work. You'll have to do a lot of networking in the local community and you'll even have to approach local/national celebrities. Providing such exciting auction possibilities will require a lot of preliminary planning, so start working on the idea early enough.

Sometimes, you may think that you want to sell a particular item or experience but while doing research, you come up with something completely different. That's ok and that's why you need to dedicate enough time to the preliminary stages of the fundraiser.

Want to reach a bigger number of people? Instead of organizing a silent auction, you should think about building a website.

Selling items online can help you reach a much larger group of people. Apart from website development, you'll also need to think about setting the price for each item and about shipping.

Building a well-functioning online store that will support a charity isn't a particularly difficult task but it will require time, once again. It's up to you to find the best developers for the job.

Once you find these professionals, you'll have a lot of fun with the other phases of the process.

Very often, a combined approach is going to be the one delivering the best results. You should be selling items during an event and you should also utilize a website. This fundraising idea comes with unlimited monetization potential.

The results will depend on the types of items you're selling and the group of people that you are targeting.

Making it broader and less expensive or targeting a highly specific group of people with costlier items can both be successful approaches towards raising money with fun and personalized items or unforgettable experiences.

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The Benefits of Crowdfunding for a Good Cause

Crowdfunding will once again utilize the power of new technologies to assist fundraising efforts.

Even if you plan to use another type of campaign, adding crowdfunding to the mix can help you reach a much larger audience, thus maximizing the monetization potential of the campaign.

Let us start by defining crowdfunding and giving you an overview of the way it works.

Crowdfunding refers to carrying out a campaign online and looking for financial support from the general public. Many startups and charities rely on crowdfunding to meet their goals. They present the idea online, do a bit of marketing and stimulate supporters to make a donation.

Various websites enable the execution of crowdfunding campaigns. Some of the most popular websites include:

- Indiegogo
- Kickstarter
- RocketHub
- Onevest
- FundRazr
- GoGetFunding

The possibilities coming with this type of fundraising are obviously amazing. Presenting the cause in an attractive manner, however and getting the general audience to respond emotionally and financially can be a bit more challenging.

For a start, do a calculation to figure out how much money you're going to need. Providing this type of information alongside the cause description will increase transparency and make people likelier to donate. In addition, your supporters will get to track progress being made and share the information with others.

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The budget doesn't have to be incredibly detailed. Still, telling your supporters what the money is going to be used for can be really helpful.

Next, you should think about fun and witty rewards for people donating through a crowdfunding campaign. There should be several different tiers. For example, people that donate 20 dollars or more will receive a customized T-shirt with a funny slogan printed on it. The perks should strike an emotional chord, giving your supporters a valuable souvenir to cherish and hold as a token of their participation in the campaign.

Now comes the time to perfect your message. This is probably the most crucial aspect of doing crowdfunding. Why should people care for the particular cause? How will their contribution make a difference? Why is the issue important and why should there be a higher level of awareness about it?

Once the campaign goes live, you'll have to get ready to do a lot of marketing. Tell a couple of friends and supporters about it. Ask them to spread the news. Remember one more thing – nobody likes to go first.

Having a couple of your friends and supporters donating a little bit will be reflected on the profile of your campaign in the crowdfunding website. Seeing that others are donating will make it easier for more people to get inspired and active.

To conclude the section, here's a list of crowdfunding mistakes that many inexperienced campaign creators commit:

- ❑ Failing to provide enough information about yourself and about the charity you support
- ❑ Failing to be unique in the social activity you choose
- ❑ Failing to give feedback or answer the questions from supporters
- ❑ Failing to do marketing throughout the duration of the campaign

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- ❌ Failing to have realistic expectations in all aspects of your fundraiser
- ❌ Failing to get corporate sponsors involved (through bigger perks) and relying exclusively on small donations
- ❌ Failing to add multimedia to your presentation – people love pictures and videos, which can be incredibly powerful in terms of getting the message across
- ❌ Failing to update your supporters about the progress being made

It's easy to see why the popularity of crowdfunding is growing all of the time. However, certain campaigns will not be suitable for crowdfunding. People are not going to back a project that is yet another charity or yet another questionable cause.

Do your research about the types of campaigns that succeed and the ones that get a lukewarm response. Use this information to come up with something new, something fresh, and something that the audience is going to be excited by. If you manage to create a unique presentation and you have a reasonable budget, the outcome is certainly going to exceed your expectations.

Sacrifice for Somebody Else's Sake

How would you feel about donating the money you planned to spend on Valentine's Day gifts this year? A little bit of sacrifice can go a long way, plus it's going to assist somebody in need.

Base your campaign on this kind of "sacrifice." Have you heard about the class of high school students who decided to wear jeans and t-shirts to their prom? The children donated the money that was supposed to be spent on outfits to the treatment of young individuals suffering from rare genetic disorders.

Such campaigns set a wonderful example and they inspire many others to get involved and support a social cause.

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Leading by example and being the first one to do this kind of “sacrifice” can lead to an avalanche-like effect. The sacrifice has to be relatively small, yet symbolic enough to make an impact.

If you are carrying out a campaign raising awareness about famine and hunger in your country, you can work with a local supermarket.

There could be a shopping cart symbolically set aside for donations. While shopping for food, people will be encouraged to buy a basic for somebody in need.

The campaign can focus on basics like flour, bread, rice, sugar and canned goods. The premise is really simple. People can buy two of each – one item that they need for themselves and one item that they’re willing to donate.

This fundraising approach is suitable for smaller campaigns. It can also be executed for non-monetary contributions.

Such campaigns can help for the collection of clothes, hygiene products or basic items needed for raising a baby.

This kind of fundraising campaign is often great for accompanying another kind of charity.

The success of such a campaign depends on doing marketing, getting numerous people involved and making fundraising go viral.

Start with close friends and supporters. Just like in the case of crowdfunding, having a couple of individuals setting an example is essential for getting started.

Upload photographs documenting their accomplishments. You can encourage followers to do the same, thus creating a gallery.

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Here are a couple of ideas for such financial “sacrifices” that your supporters can make:

- ✓ Give the money dedicated to St. Valentine’s Day flowers to a charity;
- ✓ Buy two Christmas gifts – one for your kid and one for a child in need;
- ✓ Purchase one bag of flour and one bag of flour for people experiencing hunger;
- ✓ Clean your and give to those who need it more than you
- ✓ Buy pet food for animals in a shelter;
- ✓ Look through the toys of your grown kids (most are probably in good condition);
- ✓ Ask supporters to sacrifice buying something new for a particular time period (electronics, books, accessories, cosmetics) and to donate the amount of money that they managed to save.

The premise of this charity idea is quite simple.

Many people will feel inspired to change their everyday existence and to spend their money on something highly useful and rewarding. Raise awareness about the campaign and set your initial goal in advance.

If you need money, draft a budget. If you’re collecting items, come up with quantities. Both of these will boost the effectiveness of your efforts and maximize the chance of reaching your goal quickly.

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Get Kids Involved

What could be more exciting and successful than getting kids involved in a fundraiser? Little ones will get to learn a lot about a particular issue. Plus, their participation is going to boost the emotional factor. A cause dedicated to a school, a health initiative or the local community will benefit tremendously from the involvement of kids and from their amazing creativity.

When you try to get children involved, you'll need to put a bit more thought into the fundraising idea. It has to be child-friendly, safe, educational and entertaining. Putting all of these goals together will require some hard work. Here are a few great examples of fundraiser ideas that children will be capable of executing:

- Selling arts and crafts created by kids at a silent auction
- Washing cars or bikes
- Selling tickets to a show performed by the kids
- Customizing T-shirt creations
- Persuading kids to clear out some of their clutter and donate a couple of toys/favorite items
- Putting on a show for Christmas, Mother's Day or another special occasion
- Creating a unique calendar that features thematic photographs of kids and explains a bit more about the cause you're all trying to support

These are just some of the possibilities but gathering your team of young helpers and taking some time to think about it and brainstorm together can generate a whole bunch of other fun and exciting possibilities.

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Getting kids to participate in a recycling program is certainly a possibility. Making a short play dedicated to your cause is another way to get the entire community involved.

Fundraising with children does open up a whole range of new opportunities but you have to be careful about the execution of the campaign too.

- You'll need to have at least a couple of parents and teachers or other professionals having teaching experience as volunteers. These individuals should be responsible for mentoring the young volunteers and overseeing their progress.
- Keep the educational part of the fundraiser at the appropriate tone for each age group. There are issues that young kids will understand and other problems that should be reserved for high school students. Anything involving politics or controversial topics should be kept free from the involvement of younger people.
- When getting children involved, it's also very important to refrain from providing rewards or financial stimuli for the top contributors. This practice is incredibly common but it can lead to unhealthy competition and it will also take the attention away from the issue at hand.
- Children should participate because of their understanding of the particular cause and not because of the chance to win some kind of award.
- There could be badges or other symbolic gifts for different levels of achievement. Make sure that the contributions of all kids are recognized and that all of the young volunteers feel equally stimulated to continue participating.
- Finally, make sure that the safety and welfare of the children are guaranteed during both the preparatory stages of the project and while the fundraiser is taking place.

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There should be some entrance monitoring – make sure that only the right kinds of individuals are given access to the event, performance or auction.

A named contact should be available for the children to talk to in the case of an emergency or any problem that is experienced while the fundraiser is taking place.

Such fundraising events are usually suitable for smaller amounts of money or raising awareness about a particular issue in the local community.

Making a lot of funds through the involvement of children will require significant planning and the involvement of numerous individuals. This is why school-based or activity-based fundraisers should focus on niche issues that demand smaller amounts of money.

Otherwise, you'll need to deal with complex logistics for the fundraiser to be both safe and successful.

Building a Digital Support Community

Taking your fundraising efforts to the online realm is the best possibility to reach the largest possible audience and to raise a large amount of money for the cause that you are supporting.

Digital fundraising has its specifics and if you've never tried it before, you'll need to prepare yourself.

The scope of campaigning online is huge, which is why you'll need human resources to make the most of the opportunity.

Find volunteers that will be willing to write content, interact with community members, build your social media presence and monitor the results of the campaign.

Volunteers and supporters don't have to be physically present at your headquarters in order to work on the campaign.

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Building a digital support community will take fundraising to the next level and deliver impressive results.

For a start, the online realm provides a big number of exciting opportunities for you to find the right supporters:

- ☞ Build a Facebook community;
- ☞ Have a call to action on your charity website. Adding a “become a volunteer” button on the homepage will let people know that you’re looking for assistance;
- ☞ Join relevant forums and communities;
- ☞ Learn something about search engine optimization (SEO) or find volunteers with this kind of experience;
- ☞ Organize digital “meetings” of the team via Skype or another video/instant messaging program;
- ☞ Find partners (other websites in the same niche) that will help you reach a larger target audience;
- ☞ Enlist bloggers in your community because they tend to be incredibly active online and they have a loyal audience.

Now that you know what kinds of opportunities you have, it’s time to begin planning the online fundraising campaign and your efforts to build a digital support community.

The two elements will work together and the more you work on building the community, the easier it will be to reach a large audience and to surpass your initial funds collection goal.

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Online fundraising has several essential components. These include:

- Story
- Community
- Website development
- Website administration and marketing efforts

The first step is the most crucial one. Telling the world your story will predetermine the emotional response you're going to get. Why are you doing the campaign, how are you involved in the particular issue and what's your goal? Transparency will be the key to building a support community and getting a bigger number of people involved.

Tell a story – that's the only way to get people responding emotionally. What obstacles have you overcome in order to plan the campaign? Why is the campaign so important and what is it going to achieve?

Answering all of these questions and creating a story is vital for all kinds of fundraisers but when you don't have a chance to meet with potential sponsors, telling a compelling story becomes even more vital.

Once you have a story, you can start building a community.

Who are the people you want to reach? Do you need donations? Are you looking for volunteers or the establishment of a support community that will take the cause to the next level?

Think about the audience when trying to tell your story.

Once you start building some community, you'll have people motivating each other and pushing for the expansion of the campaign.

This is why the potential of such online fundraisers is incredible – you never know how far you'll be capable of going by enlisting digital supporters from all parts of the country.

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Who knows, you may even be capable of making the campaign international!

Though it comes with huge potential, online community creation requires a lot of hard work.

You'll need to do marketing on a daily basis, update the community members about progress being made and answer questions. Internet channels give you wonderful opportunities to communicate with dedicated supporters. It will be up to you to make it work.

“Cash for Trash” Fundraising

Recycling sends a positive message and it's a great option for raising money for a favorite cause.

The importance of environmental awareness is growing. Are you making use of this trend in your attempts to make some funds?

Cash for trash or recycling fundraising ideas can stimulate a certain types of activity from sponsors, which is great for educating the masses about a pressing environmental issue at hand.

Use social media, your website, blog or your email list to tell people about the rewards they'll get for recycling a certain type of material.

There could be badges, T-shirts, online acknowledgments or other kinds of stimuli for people to collect materials for recycling purposes.

Depending on each program, a portion of the money collected through the recycling campaigns will go towards the cause.

There are numerous recycling programs that you can try in your attempts. [Plane Green Recycle](#) is one of these amazing options. You can easily teach people about the importance of recycling electronics in the correct way.

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Returning inkjet cartridges and smartphones (as well as numerous other small types of electronics) will entitle you to a cash payment that can go towards your cause.

Planning a recycling fundraiser involves a bit more than that. For a start, you have a plethora of products and materials that you can consider recycling.

Some of the best possibilities that you have to choose among include:

- ✓ Electronic Waste such as computers, laptops, iPads, cell phones, CD/DVD's etc;
- ✓ Wine corks (since cork is a very popular material used in a vast range of industries);
- ✓ Cooking oil that is very often needed by biodiesel companies;
- ✓ Human hair to create wigs and support a cancer-related initiatives;
- ✓ Aluminum cans;
- ✓ Plastic and glass bottles;
- ✓ Car batteries;
- ✓ Old books and textbooks;
- ✓ Old clothing items

Look for programs available in your area and always go through the terms and conditions of trash for cash opportunities before getting started. Do a test run to figure out whether the items are going to be accepted and what payment you're going to receive.

A bit of preliminary work will help with the calculations and setting the campaign's goals.

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Planning the collection day itself should be the most crucial part of event organization. Think about logistics because if you don't, you could potentially get backlogged. Having a local partner to deal with the transportation of items for recycling can help you prevent chaos.

Maybe you don't expect significant participation that will create such problems but having a plan for every possible scenario will make the campaign execution smoother and easier.

Think about whether you want to have people coming to a particular place to deliver their items for recycling or whether you are going to have a drive through the city. Both of these approaches come with a few advantages. A drop-off day will keep all of the individuals in the same area, plus it's going to be less cumbersome to organize.

Always go through the collected items to sort them in categories and to make sure that no unacceptable items have been left at the collection site. Getting volunteers actively involved in the process will speed it up significantly.

If you are supporting a school or a youth group, you should use this opportunity to educate younger individuals about recycling and the irresponsible disposal of waste.

The involvement of children during all stages of the process can boost community engagement, so think about the option.

Depending on the scope of the event, a trash for cash fundraiser will be suitable for the collection of smaller sums.

If you do enough promotion and you are logistically-prepared, you can make the event larger but it's preferable to start with something smaller and test your organizational capacity. Finding the right partner and program in advance will also determine your ability to make money through such an opportunity.

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Making It Happen

Fundraising possibilities come in all shapes and sizes. Whether you need to encourage your children to get involved or you are preparing the execution of a mass, million-dollar campaign, you'll need to be creative.

Choosing the right type of campaign will be very important because a number of opportunities feature a limited monetization potential. It's all about preliminary planning and having realistic expectations, as we have already established.

Think about your experience and the budget you can dedicate to organization before getting started. New technologies have facilitated the task of organizing a fundraiser but you'll need some experience to make full use of those.

Think about your target audience, about the best way to reach people and to get them involved. If you manage to do all of your homework in advance, you'll certainly be happy with the results of the campaign.

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