

ASK AN EXPERT

How do we pull off a fun and effective fundraising event?

Your club wants to serve its community, but that takes money. Holding a fundraising event is one way your group can raise money — and improve its profile. If this is the right solution for your club, make sure your event is fun, effective and profitable. A successful fundraising event should:

- ① **Be fun!** If you don't enjoy and embrace every aspect of the event, from planning to clean-up, it might not be the right project. Kiwanis is about kids, after all — keep your event playful and child-like!
- ② **Be sustainable.** Assess your event by asking:
 - Do we have the time and capacity to make it successful?
 - Does this event have long-term growth potential?
 - Are we making the best use of our resources and relationships?

Fundraising events can be *a lot* of work, so make sure your efforts pay off!

>> **HERE'S A PRO TIP:** Consider hosting a “non-event.” That's an event that doesn't actually happen, but still raises money! The idea is to show your “guests” how much time and money you're saving them by not doing an actual event. Consider sending official invitations, sharing how much they *won't* need to spend on parking, a babysitter, a new dress, etc. Instead, they can make a donation to you!

- ③ **Promote your cause.** Your event may be the public's first opportunity to learn about your club or the cause you're fundraising for. Make sure that Kiwanis is well-represented and that every attendee understands the cause you're supporting. Consider *why* your attendees should invest in that cause and make it clear to them throughout the event.

Don't forget: Fundraising events can be a prime way to find new members — make sure it's clear to them what your club and Kiwanis are all about.



4 **Highlight your community's culture.** Think locally and think uniquely. We often fall back on familiar fundraising events: golf outings, galas, wine tastings. But are they right for *your* community? Build on what makes your community unique. Is your city proud of its brewery scene? Consider a beer-tasting event. Is high school football a big deal? Think about how you can incorporate the team or a football theme.

5 **Engage your whole community.** Your event can be led by your club, but that doesn't mean you have to go it alone. Ask community members to serve on the event's organizing committee or to participate as volunteers. Partnerships can lead to deeper engagement with your club — these folks may even want to join.

And don't forget about our youth programs! Kids and teens are often fantastic volunteers for special events.

6 **Offer multiple ways to give.** Don't leave money on the table! Every attendee should have a chance to engage with your cause and make a gift. So make sure the attendees who lose in the silent auction have multiple other opportunities to give. Some ideas include:

- Admission fee.
- VIP experience.
- Raffle, auction, gift certificate board, wine pull, diamond dig.
- Merchandise sales.
- Concessions.

7 **Include a follow-up.** Reach out to participants afterward. People who attend your fundraiser may be interested in becoming a member or partnering your club. Don't waste the opportunity to engage!

Send letters or emails to every event attendee — even those who didn't make a gift! Use it as an opportunity to say thank you and share how much you raised. Most important, tell them how donations will be used.

>> **HERE'S A PRO TIP:** Add a personal touch when you can! Send hand-written letters, call attendees or meet in person to express your thanks.



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