NEED FUNDS?

The Joy of Fundraising

Truth be told, the word *"joy"* is not often used in the same sentence as the word "fundraising." Perhaps you may more often associate it with the words *"necessary evil"* instead…and that's OK! As if that's not enough, now your fundraising efforts even need to have a plan and a strategy because simply having a bake sale or holding a spaghetti dinner no longer meets the growing financial need that you may have to offset. And besides…does your "job description" really include fundraising as a core responsibility? If you can relate, then please read on – there is **GOOD NEWS**!

WHAT ARE THEY THINKING?

Holding fundraisers has become the norm for both public and private groups – parents and community members have come to expect it and even anticipate requests during the year. However, no one wants to spend money on something they really don't want (especially in today's economy) so one of the key factors in determining what types of fundraisers might be most profitable for your group is to: **think like your "customers."**

- What types of products or services are **they** most interested in…and which ones would they be willing to purchase from you during the year (maybe even 2-3 times during the same year)? If your customers don't want it, they are not likely to buy it.
- Is there something they could purchase through your group that might help them to actually even save money, or save time, or both…could the convenience factor alone be enough to motivate them to buy from you?

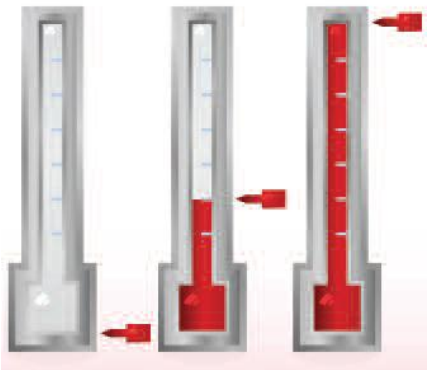
To be most successful, the product or service your group sells should be something that meets either or both of these core considerations.

WHAT OTHER FACTORS ARE IMPORTANT?

Once you've identified the type(s) of products or services that will appeal to your customer base, your goal should be to choose one or more (a) from which you receive a strong profit margin per item and (b) you can sell sufficient quantities of to be successful.

Consider:

- Profit Margin – If you're selling a product, does your group get to keep a reasonable and competitive percentage of your sales? Are there administrative or other charges that reduce your net profitability?
- Affordability – Is the selling price you'll be charging something that is affordable and comfortable for your customers? Often, a lower price-per-item will encourage customers to purchase more items because the perceived value of their purchase is greater…more profit for you!



- Timeframe – How much time is required for planning, preparing, and conducting the sale to be successful? What is going to be required of you to distribute the products or provide the services? While much of your "labor" costs may be free, you should consider the time commitments to be sure they are manageable and to insure that volunteers will be receptive to future fundraising requests.
- Simplicity – How complicated is the fundraiser to plan and manage? Are you giving your customers too many choices and/or requiring them to spend too much time to reach a purchasing decision? In the case of a product fundraising sale, do you have to allocate space for warehousing and are the products easily transportable if your volunteers/customers are picking them up from your group? Simplicity is a valuable commodity in today's lifestyles and it may be best to follow the K.I.S.S. principle (Keep It Simple for Success!). While choice is good, too much choice can quickly become too difficult, from both the "management" and the "buyer" perspectives.
- Repeatability *(is that even a word?)* – What would be easier for your group and best received by your customers…(a) having several different types of fundraisers per year or (b) limiting the types to only one or two that you can repeat during the year? If your group holds 4 fundraising events during the year, having 4 types of events translates into more planning effort on your behalf, more orientation on your students' behalf, and more messaging to your customers. Obviously, if you sell products or services that are popular but do not have a long "shelf life," you can repeat the same type of fundraising event more than once during the year, streamlining your internal processes and "training" your customers to look forward to the fundraiser on a more predictable schedule. Again, can you say K.I.S.S.??

FUNDRAISING FOR ALL OCCASIONS

Sometimes, we do things the way we do things because, well…*that's just how we've always done things!* Maybe it would help to take a step back and again, try to think like your customers…consider holding your fundraising events during occasions when people are already thinking about "spending money." Of course, all of us spend money throughout the year, but there are certain occasions that increase our focus on spending.

- During the Christmas holiday season, which we all know is the season of giving, can you think of ways that your group could capture some of the dollars being spent...especially since they're being spent anyway? A fundraising

event that provides your customers with convenient shopping that is time-saving and from which they can purchase great, affordable "stocking stuffers" and "little-something" gifts for neighbors and acquaintances, could be a great way for your group to exponentially benefit from this season.

- Other occasions with a gift-giving focus to be considered include: Valentine's Day; Mother's Day; Father's Day; Grandparent's Day; Halloween, etc. Researching to find some of the more unusual "holidays" might also pay off for you and give you a very unique spin that will generate some buzz for your fundraiser – you may be surprised at all of the opportunities you find that you can build upon to create a viable occasion to base your fundraising upon.
- Could you possibly combine two fundraising focuses into one, for a profit boost from one event? For example, your group may hold an occasion-themed event (e.g., Valentine's Day) that incorporates advance registration (e.g., a run/walk). As a part of your registration form (printed and/or online), you could add a line item encouraging registrants to purchase a secondary fundraising product as a gift for their "someone special" (or for themselves) – in this way, you would add bonus profitability to your existing event with very little additional effort – more "bang for the buck!"

HOW SOCIAL ARE YOU?

The options we have today to promote fundraising within our communities have grown by leaps and bounds. Word of mouth has long been considered the "gold standard" in the world of marketing and that still remains true; however, word of mouth is now spread exponentially through the many channels available in social media. If your group hasn't adopted social media as a way to spread the word about your fundraising activities, it's worth your most serious and immediate consideration. The reach goes from school-age children to grandparents and the cost is, well, little to nothing…yet the value is incredible. There are several reliable resources available to help you get started with – or enhance – your social media efforts and the payoff is real, so it's definitely time for your fundraising to Get Social!

Hopefully, these thoughts and ideas will help to put some of the "joy" back into fundraising to help you and your group be even more successful. This is sure to be a year filled with both challenges and opportunities and when it comes to fundraising, it's my hope that you'll be profitable and have *FUN raising!*

Schools, Churches, Clubs, Teams & Charities raised ***over $32 Million*** *last year using* ***Krispy Kreme FUNDRAISING****!*

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