



Fundraising Events

How to organise successful events

Fundraising events can generate significant income for your group, but they can also be costly and time-consuming. Read our top tips for successful events.

1. Should you do it?

A fundraising event can be a big, resource-heavy undertaking, so you'll need to think carefully before you take one on.

Key questions to ask yourselves:

- What are your aims for the event? Do you want to raise awareness of your cause as well as raising cash? Events can help to make your group more visible, but ideally, they'll raise money too!
- Do you have a successful track record of organising events, or are you working with someone who does? *If not, it's best to start small.*
- Do you have the time to put into organising a successful event? Do you have volunteers who can help with the organising and can be there on the day? Or do you need to recruit more helpers?
- Do you have contact with people who would want to attend the event? Do you have existing supporters? Links with companies with large staff teams? It's harder to put on a successful event if you're just selling the event 'cold' to people who don't know your group.
- **Will the amount raised at the event be worth the time and other resources you've put into it? This is a key question for your team.**
- Do you have contacts or local sources that can provide what you need for free or at low cost, to keep your spending down e.g., venue, prizes, decorations, food and drink...?

2. Make an event plan

If you decide to go ahead, you'll need a detailed plan. Start planning at least 3-6 months before the event. For larger events, you may need to plan a year ahead.

Consider everything that's needed for the event and list it all with details of the actions needed, timescales, who is responsible for each action etc.

Your plan should include:

- **Venue / location**

Where will your event take place? Are there any costs or other considerations associated with this venue or location? Will it be easy for participants to find and access?

- **Permissions**

Do you need a license or other permission to hold the event? If your event is outdoors in a public place, you may need permission from your local Council, the Police or other authorities. If you're selling alcohol at your event, you'll likely need an events license.

- **Managing risks**

Most events carry risks to health and safety. It's best to draw up a formal Risk Assessment (you can find templates online) to help avoid or mitigate any risks. **Also check if your existing insurance covers the event, or if you'll need to purchase additional cover.**

- **Budget**

Set a realistic income target for this event. Where will the money come from?

Will you sell tickets, will people raise money on your behalf, will you sell food and drink or other products, will you have collection buckets for donations, will you get corporate sponsorship...?

Also consider your costs – will you have to pay for a venue, for publicity materials, food and drink, volunteer expenses...?

It's best to have a budget drawn up that you can keep referring to and updating. It's easy to over-estimate your income, under-estimate your costs and overspend when planning an event.

- **Booking system**

If you're selling tickets or need people to book, you'll need a system for this. Options include an online system such as Eventbrite, a booking form on your website, or asking participants to email or phone you to book... Test your system to make sure it works.

- **Publicity**

What kind of publicity do you need for your event? This might include posters, emails, social media, a Facebook 'event', press releases, radio interviews...

Who will prepare this publicity and when will each publicity item go out?

Consider who needs to know about your event so you can target your publicity accordingly.

If you're trying to get people to fundraise on your behalf, you may need targeted publicity for this purpose.

- **Volunteers**

Once you have your event plan and task list, you'll know how much help you'll need to organise the event and how much help you'll need on the day.

Do you have enough volunteers, or do you need to recruit more?

How will you lead, 'look after' and thank your volunteers?

If event participants are collecting sponsorship, you'll need a plan for keeping in touch with them, encouraging them to raise money, and generally 'looking after' them before, during and after the event – allocate this job to one person to ensure consistency.

3. On the day

We'd suggest drawing up a detailed schedule for the day and giving this to staff, volunteers and anyone else involved.

Make sure each person has clear instructions about their role and responsibilities.

If you have booked entertainment, catering or other services, make sure they know where they need to be and when.

If your higher-level donors, celebrities, or other VIPs are coming, make sure you have senior people in your group or organisation allocated to 'look after' them.

Also have your Risk Assessment to hand on the day and ensure someone is responsible for checking that everything is safe and well.

Consider how will you handle any cash collected on the day – do you have a secure system for receiving, recording and storing money raised and for taking it away safely after the event?

Basically, you need to think through every aspect of your event beforehand and make sure you have it covered in your plan!

4. The aftermath

It's a good idea to review your event to see what went well and what you can do better next time.

Get feedback from everyone involved if you can.

You may also have some 'thank you' emails or cards to send.

And it's always a good idea to say a public 'thank you' and tell supporters how much you raised.

And then it's time to start thinking about your next event....!

Remember, you can speak to Consortium's Engagement team if you'd like further guidance.