

General Fundraising Tips & Ideas

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Ask any Dance/Drill Team Director, Coach or Sponsor of an extracurricular activity or school organization what they dread most about the start of their year and you are likely to hear the term "fundraising". Unfortunately, many dance and auxiliary programs today are not included in school district annual budgets and many teams have experienced budget cuts. As a result, fundraising becomes ever so necessary to enable directors the opportunity to provide for their students the items they need for a successful program. Even now, many programs are offering fundraising opportunities to students with limited budgets a way to offset their personal expenses for camp, supplies and travel. The following information is a guide for you to get the most out of your Fundraising Projects.

■ Get Positive! ■

First, the ATTITUDE we bring to fundraising is what can truly make a difference, starting with the first fundraiser of the year to the last and from the director to the students as well as the parents. Try your best not to treat fundraising as burdensome. Take it seriously and keep a positive disposition regarding the project(s), and so will your students. We are models for their behavior and they tend to absorb our attitudes. If you have a positive attitude toward fundraising, you will most likely see a better response from your team. As a fundraising sales representative for the past 14 years, I can honestly tell you that the most successful groups are the ones who are motivated by their Director to get out there and make it happen!

■ Plan Purposely! ■

Next, determine your budget for the entire year and define your needs. Competition fees, costuming, props, music, choreographers, travel and basic budget expenses should be considered. Include your Booster Club on this process even if you have a separate activity account. Make sure you also consider the amount allotted your team by your school district if provided. Once you know how much you will need for the year, you can convey this information to your team and the parents so they will understand the PURPOSE for the fundraising.

■ Set Goals! ■

During the planning process, set a "target amount" for each fundraiser that you plan. Keep the size of your team in mind so that your goal is realistic. One example of how to motivate your team to reach the goal is to assign a budget expense to a particular fundraiser.

Example 1: It costs \$____ for your team to charter buses to an out-of-town competition trip. If our "target amount" of \$____ is met, the team will travel by charter bus...if not, the team will travel by school buses. Several directors I know have tried this approach and they say it definitely motivates! One director even decorated the fundraiser information with school buses to make her point!

Example 2: It costs \$____ for the annual end of the year banquet to be held at an upscale area hotel. If our "target amount" of \$____ is met, the team will have the banquet at the preferred site. If not, the team will have it in the school cafeteria. This generally will get a positive reaction.

Example 3: It costs \$____ for the costumes needed for a certain competition dance. A model (a dummy from a local department store) was set up in the dance studio dressed in a plain leotard. As the students worked toward reaching the goal, the social officers decorated the model with rhinestones, sequins, etc. each time a goal was met. This motivated the students to keep going so they could have better costumes.

Try to limit the total number of fundraisers so that your community does not become oversaturated. Utilize the "less is more" approach and motivate your team members to reach an individual goal to insure the team goal is met for each scheduled fundraiser.

Example: Cookie Dough Fundraiser

Team Goal \$7500 with 60 Team Members

\$5 profit per tub sold X 25 sold (individual goal) = \$125 profit/member

\$125 X 60 Team Members = \$7500



■ Prepare and Proceed! ■

When determining what fundraisers to set for the school year, keep these tips foremost in your mind.

- ❖ Know school policy regarding how many fundraisers are allowed per semester (or per year)
- ❖ Booster Clubs can generally take on more fundraisers if necessary
- ❖ **KNOW WHAT WORKS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY AND FOR YOUR TEAM** (do not be afraid to experiment)
- ❖ Get on the school calendar to avoid conflicting dates or projects with other organizations
- ❖ **START EARLY** before all others begin for the new school year
- ❖ Can it be repeated annually? Stay with successful fundraisers from year to year until it is not as profitable (if it is not broken, do not fix!). Other organizations may lock into your fundraiser if you let it go one year
- ❖ Have a plan and publicize it
- ❖ Take the time to have a kick-off campaign (if using a brochure sale, a company representative should be there to present, organize and motivate you and your students!)
- ❖ Set a timetable to complete project
- ❖ Stay organized - assign a Booster Club parent or Assistant to help you (you are TOO busy and do not need to be overwhelmed!)
- ❖ Bookkeeping - keep accurate, updated records (all reports to Director for review)
- ❖ Make it fun and provide student incentives
- ❖ Understand you cannot please everyone!

■ §§ Ideas, Ideas, and MORE Ideas! §§ ■

High profit brochure sales
Auctions
Sponsor golf tournament
Restaurant school dinners
5 K run
Santa-grams
Book fair
Garage sales
Bake sales
Retail store inventory
Program advertising

School dances
Raffles
Kick-a-thon
Breakfasts/ donut sales
Homecoming mums
Gift baskets
Arts & crafts fair
Carnival
Balloon sales
Baby-sitting service
Spring show

Clinics
Sponsor game
Walk-a-thon
Celebrity servers
Flowers/ messages
Donations
Car washes
Concession sales
School talent show
Marathons
School calendar

☞ When utilizing a Fundraising Specialist, you should be provided with a positive experience.
As a rule of thumb be aware that the Fundraising Company should offer:

- High quality product(s)
- Nice profit margin (beware of higher profit-sometimes prices are raised!)
- Reasonable turn around time for delivery of product
- Pre-packaged orders per student
- Accepts undamaged, returned merchandise for credit
- Professional, informative and motivational presentation for kickoff campaign
- No cost for brochures and/or supplies
- Unconditional guarantee (customer satisfaction)
- Instant credit (no advance payment should ever be required)
- No hidden charges (cost of prizes, shipping/handling)
- Shipping charges free or reduced depending on total sale
- Student incentives
- Superior customer service
- Supports the dance team industry by convention attendance
- Provides references



■ Free Incentives and Motivators! ■

Listed are free prize ideas that you might want to think about offering to motivate your students and ultimately increase your numbers. The students will tell you what they really want. It makes it fun and does not cost anything. The more prizes, the better the sale!

- Free day/no dress day (good for dance classes)
- Officer for a day / director for a day / teacher for a day
- Front row seating on bus/free seating
- No carry or no cleanup passes – do not have to carry props, etc. to outdoor rehearsals or clean dance studio
- Merits per item sold
- Demerit reductions – Ex. sell 20 items, get 3 free demerit reductions
- +/- situations – “If you meet your individual goal, you do not have to do _____”.
- Pizza party for top selling company, squad or class
- Free Tardy Pass
- Out of practice early passes
- Homework passes
- 100 on one test score
- No dress out day (only good after contest season!!!)
- Skip running or cardio workout
- Music choice for a day in locker/dressing room
- Free banquet tickets
- Free spring show tickets
- Free dessert – Students that sell at least x win free dessert at restaurant on trip to _____.
- 1st choice for _____, 2nd choice for _____, 3rd choice for _____ based on top sellers.
- Front row parking pass at _____ (football games, practice, spring show, etc.) Free lunch pass – get to leave early or cut in line @ lunch?
- Silly string party for everyone if goal of \$ _____ is met! Top half of group in items sold does not have to clean it up, others do.

■ Publicize & Promote! ■

Make sure to publicize your current fundraiser by making announcements daily. Post fliers advertising the sale at school and locally in the community. Contact the local newspaper and radio/television stations for promotion. Local merchants may donate or help with prizes or even better, may match your profit earned! Remember, any donation is tax-deductible and will also promote their business as well. Contact the company director of marketing for assistance in this area. If selling a brochure, send out parent information letter and extra brochure so that they are aware of team and individual goals and deadlines.

■ Pursue Persistently! ■

During the duration of the project, check on progress on a DAILY basis. Remember the old saying “out of sight, out of mind”. It definitely applies to fundraising. Remind your team daily of their goals and at the very least, simply mention it while checking roll before practice begins. If you act like nothing is going on, chances are the students will let the time pass without pursuing the project. The most successful fund raising programs are those whose directors actively pursue their team’s participation. You know the goal---so strategically plan and pursue to achieve it... good luck!

