

STRATEGIES TO SUCCEED WITH ONLINE FUNDRAISING EVENTS– FAQs from WEBINAR

- 1) Are there specific digital donation platforms recommended? Or a checklist to think about when selecting one? Specifically, for text to give?

You can find some information on virtual fundraising software here - <https://recharity.ca/virtual-fundraising-software/>. Also, this website has some good information including product comparisons. <https://www.wildapricot.com/blogs/newsblog/2018/10/04/text-to-give>

- 2) What are some Digital Donation Platform choices?

St. Augustine High School had good results and used Mobile Cause for text to give, peer to peer campaigns. Their website is - <https://www.mobilecause.com/>. BidPal via OneCause is also pretty user friendly.

- 3) For making donating during the event “easy” - two questions: (1) what should easy look like? and (2) I find a lot of platforms make their money with the % fees. Any guidance on what is acceptable range for this or ways to avoid it?

Easy means simple to figure out how to make the donations. Fees are how they make their money and vary a tiny bit between platforms. No way around them. You can have the donor opt in to pay the fees.

- 4) We are doing a multi-day online silent auction. We guessed when planning how many days. Any feedback on how many days to let an online auction stay open?

Typically, seven days to keep silent auction online open.

- 5) How can we find qualified local online event planners to partner with? This is all impressive and inspirational but definitely feeling like our small org would need to pair up with a professional local event planner to pull this off.

You can contact Kellie Chavez Greene at kellie@gnof and she can provide you with some referrals.

- 6) We are planning our first virtual fundraiser, and pricing strategies in particular are a big point of discussion since the in-person ticket price is typically higher since space is limited, which is not the case with a virtual event. Also, would you price by person or household?

There are two schools of thought on pricing: one is to keep ticket prices the same and either hope folks will pay out of loyalty or pay and receive dinner and wine delivered to their home and they get access to a VIP pre-virtual event party, or the other way to go is free to attend and aim to have the revenue made up by the volume of attendees and their donations. If you are aiming to be more inclusive, extend your current geographical range of support, and expand visibility of sponsors then going the free attendance route makes sense. If you have major donors who enjoy the exclusivity of a gala and high end gathering, then you can charge for tickets. Ideally, over the coming months you can do one of each type of event as they will satisfy two very different type of supporter. In addition, here are a couple of examples of what other partners locally are doing for their sponsorship levels/ticket prices.

<https://one.bidpal.net/lcmgala/custom/custom5>
<https://one.bidpal.net/colorsofthemind/welcome>

7) How do you avoid virtual fundraising fatigue?

In terms of general virtual fundraising (as opposed to virtual fundraising events) the answer would be...the same way you avoid in-person fundraising fatigue. Have a ratio of outreach based on community building vs. asking for money that makes sense similar to what you do (at least hopefully do!) for your regular donor communications. General rule of thumb for donor communications hovers around 70% is "fluff" (non asks) and 30% are asks.

In terms of avoiding burnout from virtual fundraising events, the best way is to create excitement prior to the event with your virtual event's branding and promotion, and then follow up with an event that delivers a well-paced 45 minutes of fun, personal, and moving moments. Bad experiences are what causes people to shy away from attending virtual events hosted by their favorite nonprofits, meaning they anticipate it will be boring and a waste of their time. It is up to you to make your virtual event a good investment of their time!

8) Strategies and tips around hosting Silent Auctions.

Silent auctions are tough right now because it is tough and borderline insensitive to ask COVID impacted businesses for donations. If you already have the items, then you can certainly go ahead and put the items online for auction. Seven days is the suggested time to keep the auctions open, and the silent auction can be concluded with a real-time virtual event that has a virtual paddle raise element.

9) Where can we find all the virtual town hall materials on the website?

<https://www.gnof.org/covid19-nonprofits/>

Additional Articles that might be helpful and provide information on virtual events:

How to make your event more accessible?

- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ryanholmes/2020/06/11/i-asked-2-million-professionals-how-to-make-virtual-conferences-better--here-are-their-top-10-hacks/#4627fd631321>
- <https://associationsnow.com/2020/09/5-ways-to-make-your-virtual-event-more-accessible/>

Hosting a successful online auction

- <https://www.classy.org/blog/host-a-successful-online-auction/>

Check out this article on how the South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center is shifting their Rougarou Fest!

- <http://www.houmatimes.com/lifestyles/rougarou-fest-will-continue-in-2020-with-adapted-plan/>
- Here is the promo for the Ogden Museum's "O What a Night" virtual event!
<https://ogdenmuseum.org/owhatanight/>
- Check out the promo for the Urban League of Louisiana's Virtual Gala that is happening on 10/3
<https://urbanleaguela.org/2020-gala/>