



TRI-VALLEY
NONPROFIT ALLIANCE

Thoughtful Event Planning

MOVING BEYOND THE RUBBER CHICKEN DINNER



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Thoughtful Event Planning

“I’ve got a great idea for
an event!”



Questions You Should Ask

Does this fit in with my engagement plan?

- Goals + Strategic Initiatives + Calendar = Success!
- Goal 1 – Dollars raised
 - Individual donors, Corporate giving, Grants, Fundraising Events
- Goal 2 – Donors Secured
 - New donors, retained donors, reactivated donors, other demographic goals
- Goal 3 – Culture of Philanthropy
 - Organizational training, board participation, collateral, speaking engagements



Questions You Should Ask

What is the Goal of the event?

- To raise some money
- Introducing new people to the organization (with the hope of raising money)
- Keeping your current donors engaged and happy (with the hope of raising money)
- Raising your profile (so that people will notice you and give you money)



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Questions You Should Ask

Who is the audience?

- Constituents
- Donors
- Corporations
- Foundations
- John Q. Public



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Questions You Should Ask

What do you want them to do?

- Learn about your organization
- Donate to your organization
- Promote your organization to others
- Sponsor your organization



Questions You Should Ask

Is an event the best solution?

- We often do events because they are comfortable
- Set a threshold, don't plan an event unless you expect to raise more than \$_____.
- What is the best use of your time and resources?



Questions You Should Ask

What is the return on my investment?

Method	Cost	Return on Investment
Direct mail to general lists (non donors)	115%	-15%
Special Events	50%	50%
Planned Giving	25%	75%
Direct mail to prior donors	20%	80%
Foundations/Corporations	20%	80%
Major Gifts	5-10%	90-95%
National Average, all methods:	20%	80%

(Based on: James Greenfield, Fund-Raising: Evaluating and Managing the Fund Development Process)



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Types of Events

- Cultivation
- Stewardship
- Profile
- Fundraising





Types of Events

Cultivation

- Introducing new, prospective donors to your organization
- Also for lower level donors with higher potential
- Know who is at your event (bio sheets) and have a plan for each one
- No ASK at event
- Follow up with meetings



Types of Events

Stewardship

- Thanking current donors at a certain level
- Making donors feel appreciated (3X rule)
- Giving donors information to understand the impact of their giving
- Encourage continued giving to keep the mission going
- Know who is at your event (bio sheets) and have a plan for each one
- No ASK at the event
- Follow up with meetings



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Types of Events

Profile/Brand Recognition

- Unique event that draws attention to your cause
- Anniversaries
- Seminars/hands-on education
- Award ceremony/honor an individual



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Types of Events





Types of Events

Fundraiser

- Galas
 - Should take a year to plan
 - More than half of your income should come from sponsorship
 - Consider hiring someone
 - The auction dilemma
- Golf Tournaments
 - A lot of work!
 - But a lot of fun!



Types of Events

Fundraiser

- Drawings
 - Know the law
 - Car or house
 - Marketing is KEY – Do you have the staff to help with this?
- Other competitions
 - Fun Runs
 - Casino nights



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Types of Events

Fundraiser

- Take advantage of unique moments
 - Retirement party
 - Milestone event
- Be creative – move beyond the rubber chicken dinner!



Discussion

- Have you developed an engagement plan? If not, what's preventing you from doing it?
- What types of events are you doing (Cultivation, stewardship, profile, fundraising)?
- What's your biggest challenge in regards to events?
- What's the coolest thing you're doing with events that you're willing to share with the group?



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Thank You!

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