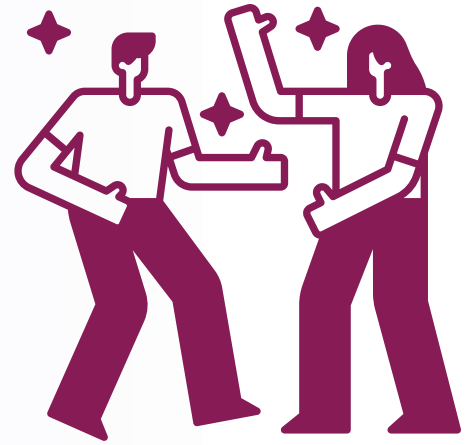


EVENTS



Galas, auctions, and variety shows, oh my! Love ‘em or hate ‘em, at some point you’ve definitely considered using events as a tool to benefit your organization’s bottom line. But how do you ensure that the effort of creating a successful event is a worthy investment? We’re going to take a look at the strategy behind nonprofit events to help answer that question.

DETERMINE YOUR GOALS

Events aren't great fundraisers. That's right, we said it! Many nonprofits view events as a way to generate a lot of dollars over the short course of a couple hours—without taking into account how costly they can be and the amount of staff time used to make them happen before, during, and after the event.

To be clear, we aren't saying don't use events. We're saying, they take a lot of work, so be sure to use them strategically and identify how they can best serve your mission. Events can be used to:

SPREAD AWARENESS.

Utilize events to introduce your organization to a larger audience. You can use them to educate attendees on the reasoning behind your work while positioning your organization as an effective champion of your cause. Events can be great way to invigorate people behind your mission and invite them to join you in your work as donors.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS.

This is one of Women Unite!'s favorite reasons to have an event, and in our opinion it doesn't get utilized as often as it should. Find ways to say "thank you" to your supporters while providing opportunities to build community and connect with folks. Developing events with an eye toward building relationships can increase donor retention, build long-term loyalty to your organization, and also create space to have fun!



MAKE SURE THE MATHS ARE MATHING!

Determine what amount you would have to net from an event to deem it a success. Events might bring in a sexy six-figure total, but if half of what you raise goes to covering costs like catering, venue, not to mention staff time ... well, is it really the best way to go?

Build these goals into any event plan that your organization creates to make sure you are appealing donors and connecting folks to your mission.

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS

Think about events you've been to—odds are, you've seen corporate logos on the event signage, printed on programs, and maybe even mentioned by the speakers. These are corporate sponsors who were contacted in advance and asked to support the event in exchange for some form of recognition. Corporate sponsors provide support through funding and/or in-kind donations—providing the venue, food, auction items, giveaways, or other items needed to make your event a success.

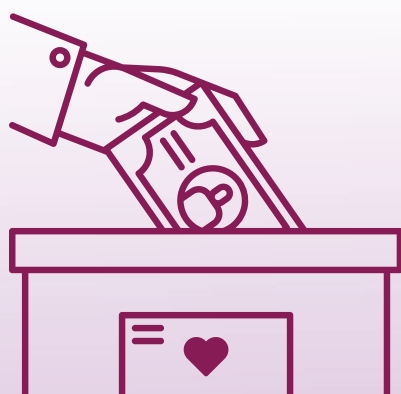
1 **Consider your existing relationships.**
Is your organization housed next to a bakery? Go have a conversation with the owner about a food donation.

Where do your board members work?

Have them reach out to their employers to discuss event sponsorship.

2 **Think about local business and those that align with your organization's mission.**

Businesses that are invested in the community are more likely to want to support what you're doing. Do some research, build a contact list, and start doing some outreach! Be aware: large companies have more money, but not as much heart and are often the first to tighten their belts when the economy takes a downturn.



3 **Create sponsorship levels for different budgets.** Naming sponsorship levels can be a fun and creative way to attract potential sponsors and show appreciation for their support.

For instance, a company that gives \$5,000 may be recognized as a Girl Power Sponsor and will be recognized on all event materials. A company that gives \$10,000 will be recognized as a Sisters in Solidarity Partner and will be given a booth setup at the event. Once you set your event budget, you can determine how many sponsors at each level you need make your event a success.

Gather your materials and prepare for the ask.

4 We recommended developing a sponsorship brochure that outlines your organization's mission and the purpose of the event.

Pair that with a sponsorship form and start asking! [Here is a template you may use to help with email outreach.](#) If you have the capacity, create both a digital and print version so folks have the option of reaching out in-person or via email.

ADDITIONAL PLANNING RESOURCES

When it comes to events, it's all about the details and project management (channel your inner Virgo, because you're going to need her!).

Here are a few guides that may help with the planning process.

[EVENT PLANNING GUIDE AND CHECKLIST](#)

[SPONSORSHIP TRACKING, RUN-OF-SHOW PLANNING, AND A DAY-OF EVENT CHECKLIST](#)

[ONE-PAGER OUTLINING KEY DETAILS AND INFORMATION](#)

(best suited for day-of planning and use)