

# FUNraising Ideas

*Fun Ideas to Build Employee Morale and Complement Your  
Workplace Giving Campaign*

United Way of  
Northern California



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## Introduction

While special events are not intended to replace employee presentations where individuals are educated about giving to United Way, they are a great way to promote the campaign, spark involvement, promote employee morale, and increase the FUN!

Successful giving campaigns have two things in common: Planning and Participation.

Ask yourself these questions before your event:

1. What are your organization's goals for giving?
2. What do you hope to accomplish through the special event?
3. What non-monetary goals do you have?
  - a. Creating greater community understanding
  - b. Increasing volunteerism
  - c. Building morale
  - d. Other
4. What resources are available to you?
  - a. People
  - b. Materials
  - c. Incentives
  - d. Entertainment
  - e. Inspiration
  - f. Other

We hope you have FUN with your campaign and we sincerely THANK YOU for demonstrating what it means to LIVE UNITED!

***“When you reach out a hand to one, you influence the condition of all,  
and you change the lives of people you walk by every day”.***

# Using Themes

## Brainstorm for Ideas

Themes are a great way to gather interest and make the planning fun. Jot down a list of ideas for possible themes. This list can help you get started.

- Mystery
- Sports: “Kick in Your Share” for football, “Hit a Homerun for local charities” for baseball, etc.
- Hero: Comic Book super heroes
- Circus or Magic Show
- Western
- Horseracing
- 50’s, 60’s, 70’s, or 80’s
- Pirate
- Car Rally: Each department has a race car and team colors

## Community Fair

Invite representatives from United Way and some of their Partner Agencies to set up information booths at your work site.

## Everyone Loves A Carnival

Try a carnival theme with free hot dogs, soda, popcorn, and cotton candy. Include games and entertainment.

## Health and Giving Events

Your organization can host special events that will raise money for the community and better the health of employees at the same time:

- Yoga Classes
- Brown Bag Lunch Workshops
- Stress Reduction Classes
- Personal Trainer Consultations

## Other Ways to Publicize Your Campaign

- United Way screen saver
- Morning announcements with upbeat music
- E-mail messages listing upcoming United Way schedule of events
- Newsletter articles highlighting United Way’s Partner Agencies

## Publicize Well

Strong leadership sets the pace. Ask your leaders to send a memo or e-mail encouraging employees to get involved and make an impact on our community.

# FUNraising Ideas from A-Z

## Auction

- Ask the company to buy or the employees to donate items or services for the auction.
- Outline the items, including their face value, in a flyer.
- Send weekly emails announcing auction items.
- Employees email in their bids or handwrite them and place them in a ballot box.
- Send a daily email message, announcing the highest bids received to date.
- Announce auction results each week and announce next week's auction items.

## Baby Picture Match

- Invite employees to try their luck matching baby and/or pet pictures of employees and the management team.
- Charge employees between \$1 and \$5 per ballot.
- Award the entry with the most right answers a paid day off or some other fun incentives.

## Bachelor/Bachelorette TV Show 50/50 Pool

This event works well with any reality show with a lot of contestants vying to win a top spot, such as Survivor, Big Brother, American Idol, X-Factor.

- Employees pay an entry fee of between \$10 and \$20 to play.
- All participant names from the TV show are placed in a drawing – you need one participant name for each employee playing.
- Draw a participant name for each employee.
- Create a game board with each participant's picture and assign the participant with a participating employee's name, according to the drawing.
- Each week as participants are voted off, cross that participant off of the board.
- The participant/employee who wins at the end of the series wins half of the entry fees. The other half is donated to United Way.

## Balloon Pop

- The company buys or employees donate prizes for this event.
- Before filling a balloon with helium, put a note inside with the name of the prize.
- You can choose to fill all balloons with prizes or leave some without.
- Employees pay a fee to buy a balloon and pop it to find out what prize they won.

## **Bingo**

- Employees pay a fee to participate in the event.
- The prize can be 50% of the participation fees or something else.
- Invite employee-teams to wear costumes and award a prize to the winners.
- Encourage departmental challenges.

## **Bowl-A-Thon**

- Employees pay a fee to participate in the event.
- Invite employee-teams to wear costumes and award prizes to the winners.
- Encourage departmental challenges.

## **Candle Apples**

- Employees make and add delicious toppings to candy apples and sell them to their co-workers.

## **Casino Night**

What are the ingredients for a successful Casino Night?

- A few blackjack tables
- A Bingo game
- A beanbag toss
- Refreshments
- Invite employees and their families. Local businesses can donate prizes for winners.

## **Casual Day**

- Sell “Casual Day for United Way” badges allowing employees purchasing them to dress casually on certain days. Employees purchase badges for \$5.00 each through payroll deduction or cash donation.
- Designate certain casual days as “Crazy Days” and encourage your employees to show their wild side or dress in theme.

## **CEO Car Wash**

- Employees make a donation to have their car washed in the company parking lot by the CEO and/or management team.
- Charge extra for special services, such as cleaning the interior or polishing the rims.
- Charge extra for a copy of a photo with the boss(es).

## **Children's Drawing Contest**

Give employees official photographs of one or two top executives to take home for their children to draw. Or, let children draw a picture that shows what helping others means to them.

- Contest may be limited to children under 12 who are related to employees.
- Employees pay an entry fee, such as \$5.00.
- Employees vote for the best drawing by paying per vote.
- Prizes are given to all participants.
- Display winning portraits as part of the organization's permanent collection.
- A variation of this event: Employees submit photography, drawings, paintings, poetry, or collages depicting "people helping people".

## **Chili Cook-Off**

- Employees cook their favorite chili recipe and enter it into a cook-off contest.
- Employees pay an entry fee, such as \$5.00.
- Employees pay a fee to be "Chili Taster Judges". They get to taste all the entries and cast a vote for their favorite.
- The chili with the most votes wins Chili Champ. Consider awarding 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place and award them with ribbons to display at their desk.
- Talk to a local hotel about donating a free weekend stay for the winner.

## **Chocolate Kick-Off Rally**

- Excite those "sweet tooths" when kicking off your campaign.
- Print paper candy wrappers with the company giving theme.
- Put the wrappers on chocolate bars and distribute them at your kick-off event.

## **Comedy Hour**

- Local comedians amuse employees during the lunch hour (pro bono, or course).
- Employees buy tickets to attend the Comedy Hour

## **Coupon Book and other Fundraisers**

Many organizations that sell "entertainment" coupon books will sell the books at a discount to other organizations that are fundraising. Generally, you only pay for the books that you sell.

- There are different types of coupon books available.
- Sell books that appeal to you employees, such as coffee coupon books, or Emergency Disaster packs.

## **Craft and Bake Sale**

- Employees make and donate craft items or baked goods for the sale.
- Employees buy the donated items.
- This gives everyone a chance to share his or her hobbies and special talents.
- This works well around the holidays, by allowing employees to purchase handmade items for gifts.

## **Cruise for Donors**

- Organize a local cruise and show and shine.
- Employees and customers can bring their hot rods to show.
- Employees and customers pay an entry fee.
- You can also incorporate a dinner/dance.
- Cupcake Bar

## **Cupcake Decorating Bar**

- A department in the company hosts a Cupcake Decorating Bar, with employees in the department each bringing a topping (be sure there are lots of various frostings and toppings).
- Employees in the department bake various flavors of cupcakes, leave them plain, and bring them in.
- Employees pay a set amount for each cupcake and can decorate it with all of the available frostings and toppings.
- You can do a contest for the best decorated cupcake of the day.

## **Dollar an Inch Contest**

- Managers participate in an all-day competition to end the day with the shortest tie.
- Employees can cut an inch off their favorite manager's tie each time they give to United Way.
- Give prizes for the shortest tie, the ugliest tie, etc.
- Take lots of pictures! This will be fun and will keep the morale high for months to come!

## **Employee Cookbook**

- Employees submit their favorite recipes.
- The recipes are collected and grouped by type, including helpful hints into a company cookbook.
- Invite the employee's children to illustrate the book.
- Find a local copy company who will donate services to print and bind the books.
- Employees and customers buy the book for a specified donation amount.



## **Employee Guessing Events**

This event is to raise awareness of the campaign and create fun. It may also be turned into a fundraising event. Employees guess:

- The company's grand total given to United Way.
- The amount of jellybeans in a jar.
- The closest guess wins a prize.

## **Employee Raffle**

- The company buys, employees donate, or vendors donate prizes.
- Items may include: pies, cakes, and other baked goods; lunch with the CEO; a weekend stay at a vacation cabin or condo; an extra vacation day; other items.
- Each prize is placed on a table with a sealed paper bag with a slit in it.
- Employees buy raffle tickets, write their name on them, and place them in the bag corresponding to the items they like.
- One raffle ticket is drawn from each bag.

The raffle can be used as incentive for employees to turn in their pledge cards:

- Those employees turning in their pledge cards early receive three raffle tickets.
- Employees turning in their pledge forms after the "early" date, but before the final deadline receive one raffle ticket

## **Executive Chair or Tricycle Race**

- Set up a relay course for executives to go through sitting in chairs or riding tricycles.
- Use a stop watch to time contestants, with the best time winning a prize.
- Employees pay an entry fee to observe the race.

The race can also be used as an incentive for employees to turn in their pledge cards:

- If all employees turn in their cards by a certain date, the executives will race.

## **Executive Fantasy Auction**

Executives at the company create "fantasy" packages, which employees can bid on at a special auction:

- Cooking the winning bidder a special dish.
- Singing at a wedding party, or special event.
- Mowing the winner's lawn.
- Baby-sitting the winner's children.
- Washing the winner's car.
- Washing the winner's windows.

## **Executive Prison**

- Transform an office into a jail cell.
- Employees can buy “arrest warrants” to have their favorite manager or executive arrested.
- An employee “deputy” arrests managers and executives.
- Managers and executives are allowed to make a telephone call to their staff members, family members, or colleagues to “bail” them out.

## **Flashback Carnival**

- Invite employees to an old-fashioned carnival, complete with cakewalks, a bake sale, bubble blowing and \$.50 hot dogs.
- Hold a hoola-hoop contest and charge participants a fee to enter.
- Set up dunk tank. Employees can buy balls to throw and dunk their favorite manager or executive.
- Employees can buy pies to throw at their favorite manager or executive.

## **Food Fight**

This can be used as an incentive for employees to turn in their pledge cards:

- If all employees turn in their pledge cards by a certain date, they get to watch the executives partake in a massive food fight.

## **Grandma’s “Famous” Chocolate Cake**

- Sell Grandma’s famous chocolate cake recipe to interested employees.
- Tempt them with bite-sized samples.

## **Green Smoothie Bar**

- A department in the company hosts a Green Smoothie Bar, with employees in the department each bringing an ingredient.
- The host department should have various tried-and-true green smoothie recipes ready for employees who may be new to drinking green smoothies.
- Employees pay a set amount for a green smoothie.

## **Halloween Pumpkin Carving Contest**

Plan a Halloween theme and hold a pumpkin-carving contest. Find a local business willing to donate pumpkins to your company for your employees to carve.

- Employees pay an entry fee, such as \$5.00.
- Employees pay a fee to be “Jack-o-Lantern Judge”.
- The winning pumpkins win a small prize or ribbon to display.
- Employees can purchase leftover pumpkins to take home to their families.

## **Ice Cream Sundae Bar**

- A department in the company hosts an Ice Cream Sundae Bar, with employees in the department each bringing an ingredient (be sure there are lots of various toppings).
- Employees pay a set amount for ice cream only or a higher amount for all the toppings you can handle.

## **International Food Day**

- Employees work together to create tasty treats from around the world.
- Employees decorate their booths and dress in costumes.
- Hold the event over the lunch hour, allowing employees to purchase tickets redeemable for food at the booths.
- A panel of “celebrity” judges awards prizes for most ingenious dish, best costume, best booth decorations, etc.

## **Karaoke Party**

This has the potential of being a BIG fundraiser and GREAT team-building event.

- Participants pay to enter and are given a list of songs and a pledge sheet in advance.
- Participants can ask employees to support them by pledging a certain dollar amount.
- Provide a big box of funny hats, boots, and other costumes for contestants to wear during the event.
- Pass the hat at the party for even more pledges.

A variation of this activity is “Executive Karaoke”. Employees make donations toward the executive of their choice to do karaoke. The executive that has the most money donated has to sing a song in front of the entire staff. You can video tape the event and sell the copies.

## **Laff Olympics**

- Employees compete in crazy “athletic events” for silly prizes.
- Participants donate a \$5.00 fee to enter.
- Observers wager bets on their favorite entrants.

## **LIVE UNITED T-Shirt Sales**

- Invite your customers to be part of the fundraising!
- Sell die-cut LIVE UNITED t-shirts for a donation.
- Customers write their name on them, along with why they LIVE UNITED.
- Proudly hang up them up in your business for all to see.

## **Lunch Auction**

- Different departments donate lunches to auction every day for a week.
- Use your organization's intercom system or email pictures of the lunches to tempt your co-workers.

A variation of this event is to have employees pay \$5.00 for the "boss" to deliver coffee and muffins to them, with all proceeds going to the community.

## **Miniature Golf**

Build a nine-hole miniature golf course featuring slinkies, ramps, water and sand around the office and test your employees' skills:

- Interested teams sign up and pay an entry fee. Ideas include:
  - \$25.00 for teams in upper management
  - \$15.00 for teams from middle management
  - \$10.00 for all other employee teams
- Give prizes for highest score, lowest score, etc.

## **Nacho Bar**

- A department in the company hosts a Nacho Bar, with employees in the department each bringing an ingredient (be sure there are lots of various toppings).
- Employees pay a set amount for a one-time trip through the nacho bar or a higher amount for all you can eat card.

## **Potato Bar**

- A department in the company hosts a Potato Bar, with employees in the department each bringing an ingredient (be sure there are lots of various toppings).
- Employees pay a set amount for a pile-as-high-as-you-can-handle potato.

## **Quilt Raffle**

- Employees donate a quilt featuring the theme of LIVE UNITED.
- Employees purchase raffle tickets.

## **Rock Band Contest**

This has the potential of being a BIG fundraiser and GREAT team-building event. It works best if you have access to a large room where you can set up and use a projector to project the game Rock Band onto a wall.

- Participants register in teams of 4 as a band (guitar player, drummer, keyboarder, singer), paying a participation fee.
- Teams are given a list of songs in advance.
- Teams are encouraged to dress up.
- Employees pay an entrance fee to watch the performances, as well as pay for refreshments during the performances.
- Executives sit at a table, similar to the judge panel on American Idol, and score the teams on various categories such as stage presence, overall game score, creativity, costumes, etc.
- The winning teams get certificates to proudly display on their desks.

There are great photo opportunities with this one that will keep the employee morale going for months to come!

## **Scavenger Hunt**

Employees participate in scavenger hunt to find unusual items around the neighborhood or office building, as well as to demonstrate community knowledge. You can “plant” items with selected employees for others to discover.

- Teams of four pay a group entry fee.
- If each team member has a different job title, automatically award them 10 bonus points.
- Teams have one hour to accumulate as many points as possible.
- The entire team must be present at the end of one hour. If a team arrives late, assess a penalty of 2 points per minute.

## **Spelling Bee**

- Hold a spelling bee, charging a \$5.00 entry fee.
- Galley observers place \$1.00 bets on the participant they think will win.
- Present the winner with a special Spelling Bee Award to place on their desk.

## **Stick It To the CEO**

This event works best at an All Staff meeting where everyone is in one location.

- Employees buy lengths of duct tape for \$1 per foot.
- The CEO stands against a wall in front of everyone
- The employees take turns taping the CEO to the wall with their tape.
- This is a great photo opportunity that the employees have a lot of fun with. Once the CEO is stuck to the wall, you can post a sign next to him/her that says “My employees stuck it to me for charity” and take a picture.

(Tip: Be careful to only tape where the CEO is covered by clothing – not on bare skin.)

## **Summo Mania**

- Call a local company and rent the Summo Wrestling package.
- Employees sign up in teams of 2 and pay an entry fee.
- Charge a fee for employees to watch the wrestling match.
- Charge an increased fee for employees to watch the “main event” with executives wrestling.

## **Taco Bar**

- A department in the company hosts a Taco Bar, with employees in the department each bringing an ingredient (be sure there are lots of various toppings).
- Employees pay a set amount for each taco.

## **Tailgate Party**

- Create a sports theme for your campaign to coincide with the football season.
- Hold a tailgate party out in the parking lot.
- Charge employees for hot dogs, chips, soda, peanuts.
- Play a game of tag or video football with participants donating an entry fee.

## **Ticket Giveaway/Gift Certificates**

- Get donations of tickets to movies, theater productions, amusement centers, and other local attractions to use for pledge incentives.
- Enter the names of all employees who promptly return their signed pledge form into a special drawing.

## **Trivial Pursuit Match**

- Employees sign up in teams of 2 and pay an entry fee.
- Let the employees know which teams have signed up and who they consist of.
- Employees pay money into the pool of the team they think will win.
- Hold the challenge during a staff meeting and give it a game show flavor.
- Give all the employees who bet on a winning team a prize.

## **Ugly Tie or Earring Contest**

- All contestants pay \$5.00 to enter the contest and wear their most awful earrings or ugliest tie.
- Employees pay \$1.00 per vote and cast their ballots in a ballot box.
- Have a parade of all contestants, offering a last chance to vote at the end of the day.
- Circulate the names of the entrants the day before the event so employees can anticipate voting.
- The winners receive a certificate to proudly display on their desk.
- Bring a digital camera and charge for photos taken of employees with their favorite contestant.

## **Vacation Days**

Many coordinators say this event easily guarantees almost 100% participation.

- Employees “buy” a vacation day.
- When an employee chooses to participate, their wages from a days work are deducted from their paycheck.
- The organization may choose to match the amount deducted, with all proceeds donated to United Way.

## **Valentine Gram**

- Find a local florist who will donate roses or carnations.
- Employees place orders, along with a customized message to their co-workers.
- Employee volunteers write and attach the messages and make the deliveries on Valentine’s Day.
- Additional Valentine Grams can be purchased and given to employees to give to other friends and families outside of the company.
- As an added incentive, the company can match \$2.00 for every Valentine gram purchased.

## **White Elephant Sale**

- Employees donate unique “white elephant” gifts.
- Employees bid on the items.
- The highest bids win.

## **Wii Bowling Tournament**

This works best if you have access to a large room where you can set up and use a projector to project the wii game onto a wall.

- Participants register in teams, paying a participation fee.
- Teams are encouraged to dress up.
- All teams play preliminary rounds, with the winning teams advancing to subsequent rounds.
- Employees pay an entrance fee to watch the performances, as well as pay for refreshments during the performances.
- The winning teams get certificates to proudly display on their desks.

## **Wine Cellar**

- Get donations of wine and wine items.
- Display the wines in an employee area to entice wine lovers
- Sell tickets (depending on the number of wine bottles included and the value, you may be able to charge \$20 or more per ticket).
- The winning ticket drawn gets the entire wine package.