

Strategies for Success

Smart fundraising ideas from Hartsook

Don't Cancel Your Fundraising Event... Reimagine It



As fall approaches, nonprofits are considering how they should handle the loss of fundraising income from an event that will be postponed or canceled.

Before notifying donors of a cancellation, consider hosting a virtual event. They're more cost effective, easier to manage, and nonprofits can engage with attendees before, during and after the event.

Identify the purpose and make it interactive

Some fundraising events raise money and others cultivate donors for a future ask. Whichever type of event to be planned, ensure the goal and purpose are clear. Then, engage donors: ask questions, conduct a poll, have a contest for "best dressed" (loungewear on the sofa might win). Come up with a theme and be creative. Cocktail party? Send a Cosmo kit to attendees. Outdoors theme? Send S'mores fixings.

Pick a platform and run a test

Make sure your team is confident with the chosen platform beforehand. Test things out: speakers off mute, good lighting, appropriate background, minimal distractions, etc.

Track the data and follow up

Ensure you have a system in place to track both the attendees and the level of engagement of guests to determine future follow-up strategies. Having guests pre-register is a great way to gauge how many guests to expect and to capture their contact information. Then, follow up! A hand-written note, phone call, invitation for a private tour, etc. There are endless ways to engage donors. Remember, if they attended the event, it means they're interested. Good communication is often the key that turns interest into lifetime donor loyalty.

There are lots of ways to engage with supporters right now. Needs haven't gone away because of COVID-19. In many cases, they have increased. Don't hit pause on events. Keep raising money, and have fun with it!

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