

## FUNdraising Ideas

Keeping employees excited about the United Way Campaign is a key element in your company's success. Whether you use a special event for a kickoff rally or your company sponsors a variety of events throughout your employee campaign period, these special activities are a fun way to raise employee awareness about United Way.

Here are some examples of special events and other activities companies have successfully sponsored in the past. You might find one of these ideas helpful, or find a unique twist to create your own event that ties in with your company's campaign theme. The more events you hold, the more fun you can have.

# LIVE UNITED



United Way of Warren County

1. **CHILDREN'S DRAWING CONTEST** - Employees are given "official photographs" of one or two top executives to take home for their children to draw. Contest is limited to children under 12 who are related to any employee in the organization. Employees can vote for the best drawing by paying a nominal fee. Prizes will be given to all participants (try getting a local fast food restaurant to donate a certificate for a free lunch). Count all votes and announce the winners at the campaign's final event. A variation of the contest would be to have children draw a picture relating to a theme creating greater awareness of United Way.
2. **MINIATURE GOLF** - Create a two-hole course in a conference room area to test the skills of your employees. The lowest score (which may be decided by a tiebreaker) will take home a tacky sports coat. Interested employees return an entry form, pay a nominal fee and bring a putter the day for the event. A variation of this event would be to create a tiny golf course in the parking lot of your organization and use child-sized golf clubs.
3. **Casual Day** - Sell Casual Day badges entitling the employee to dress casually on a certain pre-determined day. Badges can be purchased for a nominal fee. Define in your organization what is meant by "casual" to avoid confusion. In some organizations it may mean "business casual", which does not include jeans, sandals, etc. Monitor who is entitled to be dressed casually so that the employees' donations truly entitle them to a privilege that those not buying badges do not have. You may want to post a flier explaining casual dress to visitors.
4. **BINGO LUNCHEON/BREAK SESSION** - Sell bingo cards for employees to purchase. Try getting a local store to donate product prizes for all winners.
5. **EXECUTIVE AUCTION** - Have executives at your organization create "fantasy" packages, which employees can bid on at a special auction. Packages could include fishing trips, dinners, or movie tickets. Executives could also auction their "special services". For example:
  - o Cooking the winner a special dish
  - o Singing at a wedding, party or special event
  - o Cutting the winner's hair
  - o Mowing the winner's lawn
  - o Babysitting the winner's children
  - o Washing the winner's car/windows

Each executive covers the cost of his/her service. Consider having half of the auction be a silent auction, with bidding done by signing up for certain items in a designated conference room. A variation of this would be to have all employees donate items and services for auction.

6. **EMPLOYEE FUNNIEST VIDEOS** - Employees submit videos of their craziest moments. Participants donate a nominal fee to watch the videos. Observers choose their favorite video.
7. **TAILGATE PARTY** - Consider creating a sports theme for your campaign since the United Way campaign period coincides with the football season. Sell football fare from a truck in the parking lot "tailgate" style. Offer hotdogs, popcorn, peanuts, soft drinks, and other goodies. Organize a tag football game, with participants donating an entry fee and observers wagering on the outcome.
8. **TICKET GIVEAWAYS/GIFT CERTIFICATES** - Free tickets for movies, theater productions, amusement centers, and other local attractions can be a pledge incentive. Encourage employees to pledge \$2 per week by giving two movie passes to every employee who meets that challenge. In addition, any employee who turns in a signed pledge card during the first hour following the campaign kickoff can have his/her name entered in a special drawing for two tickets to a fun local destination like Paramount's Kings Island.
9. **CRAFT AND BAKE SALE/CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE SALE** - Bake sales are especially popular events. Try a variation of this by combining homemade treats and handmade goodies for a Craft and Bake Sale. This type of event can raise money for the United Way and help employees get an edge on their holiday shopping. Employee's purchase decorated cookies with proceeds from the sale going to United Way. "Chocoholics, this is your lucky day!"
10. **EMPLOYEE COOKBOOK** - Collect recipes from your employees. Then retype your collection and group it into sections. Sell the cookbook for a nominal fee. Consider having an employee's child provide the cover artwork. Books can be printed and bound by a local business. See if you can get this service done pro bona. This event has been so popular that some organizations have not been able to fill all requests. Plan for an enthusiastic response!
11. **TASTE OF THE COMPANY** - Employees create their own taste treats. Hold the event over the lunch hour, charging a nominal fee redeemable for all the food they can eat. This works well when a cookbook is developed. Dishes from the cookbook can be tested at the luncheon.
12. **BOOK SALE** - Invite employees to donate books they've read and encourage them to bring their donations in early. Price paperbacks at \$1.00 and hardbacks at \$2.00. The leftover books can be donated to United Way agencies.
13. **UGLY TIE OR UGLY EARRING CONTEST** - All contestants pay a nominal fee to enter the best awful earrings or ugly ties they own (or borrow!). Choose a day that the voting will take place. Place voting boxes at various places around the office, and charge \$1.00 per vote. Have a parade for all contestants, offering a last chance to vote at the end of the day. Circulate the names of entrants the day before the event so employees can anticipate the voting. Take photos for use in the organization's newsletter.
14. **HALLOWEEN-PUMPKIN CARVING CONTEST** - How about a Halloween theme for your campaign this year? Have a pumpkin-carving contest. Charge a nominal fee to enter and to vote. Award prizes in categories including:
  - o Best Traditional Pumpkin
  - o Most Creative Pumpkin/Best Effort by Group or Individual
  - o Best entry involving multiple pumpkins
15. **AGENCY FAIR/ADOPT AN AGENCY** - Invite agencies to set up display booths to distribute information and to meet your employees. Beginning several days before the fair, distribute daily

fliers to your employees describing each of the participating agencies. To announce the fair, have a top-level manager write a memo stressing the importance of attendance and of learning how the agencies help people. Encourage attendance by providing a questionnaire regarding the agencies and giving award incentives at the end of the fair for the most correct answers.

Each team of employees "adopted" an agency, which they learned about in-depth during the campaign. The teams toured "their" agencies and learned about the services provided. "Adoption Certificates" were proudly displayed on the cafeteria bulletin board. Co-workers talked to each other about the different agencies and became better educated about United Way's role.

16. **EXECUTIVE CAR WASH** - Invite employees to donate a nominal fee to have their car washed at noon by their executives. Charge extra for special services like cleaning the interior or polishing the rims. Take photos for your organization's newsletter.
17. **CARNIVAL** - Invite employees to an old-fashioned carnival, complete with cakewalks, bake sale, bubble blowing, and 50-cent hotdogs. Have a hula-hoop contest and hoop-shoot to really give it that "flashback" flavor. Charge participants a fee to enter contests. Have a dunk tank with all your favorite danceable executives. Charge \$2.00 for three balls. Have a pie-throwing booth with all your favorite executives behind the "eight ball".
18. **JAIL/BAIL** - Employees pledge money to have warrants issued to place executives in jail. Individuals must raise money and post bail to get out of jail. Distribute daily fliers featuring the Sheriff and Deputy(s) well in advance.
19. **BROWN BAG INFORMATION SESSIONS** - Invite employees to bring their lunch and listen to an agency speaker discuss a relevant topic such as day care, stress reduction, etc.
20. **JOB SWITCH** - Raffle chances to switch jobs with executives. Distribute fliers in advance detailing the executive participants. Take photos for your organization's newsletter.
21. **AUCTION/GARAGE SALE** - Employees donate items to be auctioned off. Donate any leftovers to an agency.
22. **OFFICE OLYMPICS** - Teams participate in Olympic events such as wastebasket paper ball free throws, balance of Styrofoam cup on a serving tray while navigating an obstacle course, make a paper airplane and fly it the longest distance, make the longest paper clip chain in one minute, staple, fold, and stuff letters into envelopes in one minute. Teams pay to participate and the company buys prizes or lunch for the winning team.
23. **VALET PARKING** - Have management park employee cars and retrieve them at the end of the day. Prizes awarded on giving levels.
24. **WHO KNOWS THE NOSE** - Take a side picture of employees' noses and see who knows the most noses. People would contribute to participate in the guessing.
25. **BICYCLE RACES** - Employees race on tricycles or bicycles built for two.
26. **TALENT SHOW/LIP SYNC/KARAOKE CONTEST** - Watch your co-workers turn into talented singers once they walk on stage.

27. **LATE MEETING FEE** - Employees who arrive late for meetings pay a nominal fee of 25 cents.
28. **SNACK ATTACK CART** - Sell donated homemade goodies.
29. **OUTRAGEOUS DAY** - Employees who pledge a pre-determined amount get to dress as outrageously as they want (costumes). Invite employees to come to work dressed as their favorite United Way agency. This works well as a wrap up event, as the campaign is over near Halloween. At one company, an employee dressed as a loaf of bread to represent a food pantry, another as a telephone to represent a crisis hotline, and other came as day care kids and Boy Scouts. Use a skeleton poster as our campaign thermometer, by attaching "bones" as the goal is neared.
30. **BALLOON/CANDY/FLOWER GRAMS** - This is a great way to brighten your co-worker's day.
31. **KISS THE PIG** - Employees contribute money to contestants. Whoever has the most amount of money must kiss the pig at the end of the time period.
32. **UGLY LAMP MONTH** - Use any white elephant (an ugly lamp works great) and offer the opportunity to purchase points to move the item to someone's workspace or to keep it out of your work area. Calculate and move daily, weekly, etc. Wherever it ends up at the end of the time period, it must stay for one month or until the next campaign.
33. **GUESS HOW MANY...** - Employees pay to guess how many jelly beans, pennies, peanuts, bubble gum, paper clips, nails, thumb tacks, dimes, pencils, pens, erasers, rubber bands, etc.
34. **WHIPPED CREAM SPONGE THROWING/PIE TOSS** - Use a sponge with whipped cream on it. Get management to participate and let employees buy chances or throw a pie at the department manager. The larger the contribution, the closer they are allowed to stand.
35. **SPORTS CONTEST** - Employees pay to participate in basketball, putting, hula-hoop, jump rope contests. Can also turn this into a marathon. Employees could pay to keep someone participating in the event.
36. **BE A BIG SHOT** - In keeping with its medical nature, a firm used a hypodermic needle LOGO nicknamed "Big Shot", and the campaign theme, "Be A (Company Name) Big Shot - Support United Way." The Big shot logo and slogan were used on napkins and tent cards in dining areas. The slogan was also used on doorknob hangers, payroll stuffers and buttons given to each contributor. The hypodermic needle also doubled for the traditional United Way thermometer. The company held a kick-off luncheon for solicitors, key personnel and department heads and the next day held a companywide kick-off. The kick-off featured music, jugglers and a large hot air balloon (with a United Way message).
37. **NUTS** - "You may think we're nuts" . . . was the campaign theme of one company. The campaign was centered on nuts. Chocolate cashew clusters and assorted nuts were served at the employee meetings and peanuts decorated the posters. The nutty theme showed the company's employees that it only takes peanuts to make a large impact on the needs in the community.