

Campaign Kickoff Ideas

Our goal is to help you make your campaign run smoothly. Keeping employees excited about the United Way campaign is a key element in your company's campaign 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 and keep the campaign energized.

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.

1. **FUNNIEST HOME VIDEO CONTEST** – Invite employees to create their own videos. Charge an entry fee at the viewing party and offer a prize for the winner. Sell popcorn at movie viewing etc.
2. **TUNE IN** – Music is a great way to get everyone moving to the United Way beat. Hold a karaoke kickoff party. Have Participants and volunteers dress up as their favorite musicians. Sell employees old CDs and donate the proceeds. Hold a Talent Show. Organize a sock hop, etc.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **BINGO LUNCHEON/BREAK SESSION** - Sell bingo cards for employees to purchase. Try getting a local store to donate product prizes for all winners.
6. **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.
7. **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.
8. **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!"
9. **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
10. **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. Have a pie-throwing booth with all your favorite executives behind the "eight ball".
11. **AUCTION/GARAGE SALE** - Employees donate items to be auctioned off. Donate any unsold items to an agency in need.

12. **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.
13. **VALET PARKING** - Have management park employee cars and retrieve them at the end of the day. Prizes awarded on giving levels.
14. **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.
15. **BICYCLE RACES** - Employees race on tricycles or bicycles built for two.
16. **LATE MEETING FEE** - Employees who arrive late for meetings pay a nominal fee of \$1 dollar.
17. **SNACK ATTACK CART** - Sell donated homemade goodies.
18. **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. Use a skeleton poster as our campaign thermometer, by attaching "bones" as the goal is neared.
19. **BALLOON/CANDY/FLOWER GRAMS** - This is a great way to brighten your co-worker's day.
20. **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.
21. **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.
22. **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.
23. **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.
24. **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.
25. **BABY PICTURE CONTEST** - Employees bring in their baby pictures and contestants try to match it to the employee. Pay a fee to enter contest- winner get a prize.