



How to Find Money Fast:

50 great ideas to raise up to \$5000

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Foreword

Talk to staff at almost any not-for-profit group and most will tell you that the job of fundraising ranks a long way down the pecking order. If you think about it, this is somewhat surprising given the importance of fundraising to the survival and growth of any organisation.

We want to help you bring fundraising out of the closet! This guide provides encouragement, support, and ideas for those volunteers or staff who have taken on this vital job. It's time to make fundraising fun again. And it should be fun because there are few things that can provide such a boost to morale as raising the funds that can allow your organisation's plans to become reality.

As experienced fundraisers will tell you, most people want to help community organisations, but they either don't know how or haven't been asked. If fundraisers can help them overcome those barriers and enjoy the experience then you've taken the first step down the road of converting a one-time donor into a long-term supporter.

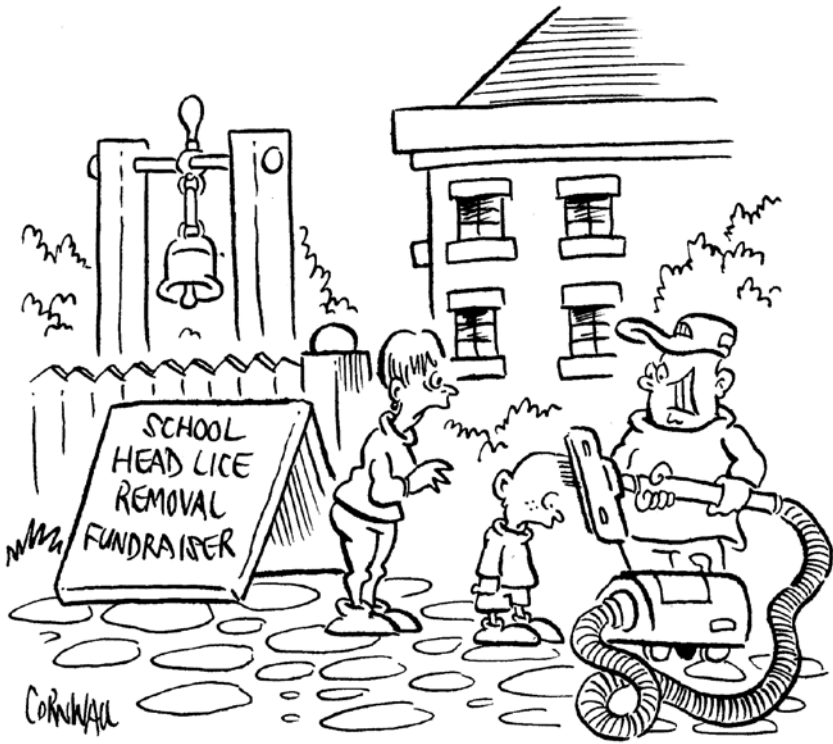
Not-for-profit groups have so many demands on their time and resources that when you turn your attention to fundraising you don't want to waste your precious time on projects that don't bring in enough money to justify the effort you put in. This book contains 50 ideas that have helped other organisations to raise money and that may work for you.

Some are more suited to groups with strong memberships, others to groups with strong links to local businesses, and others to groups that are able to attract strong publicity. We can give only a brief sampling of the thousands of ideas out there, and not every idea will be suitable for your individual group. The trick is to look at each idea and ask how you can adopt the core of the idea or the concept and adapt it to your own organisation's individual needs, membership or supporter base.

Just remember that fundraising IS fun. And the more people in your group who join in the fun, the greater the success of any of your fundraising initiatives.

Denis Moriarty

Group Managing Director
Our Community



Introduction

This guide contains 50 fundraising projects designed to raise up to \$5000. Some groups who try these projects will obviously earn more, while others will earn less – but all have the potential to make money for your group. They also have the ability to attract new friends, supporters and members for your organisation, and this is just as important a consideration.

Remember, your organisation is going to grow, and your fundraisers are going to need an even wider audience to draw on in the future.

There are 600,000 not-for-profit organisations in Australia, and they're all different. Different in their available resources, in their public profile, in their target market and reach, their prospect list, and in their ability to cope with risk. It's impossible to do a one-size-fits-all prescription for all of them, so what we've done instead is provide a list of ideas that can serve as a starting point, together with tips on how you might be able to make your project work better. As you read through this guide, you will find some ideas that are perfect for your group and others that won't suit your organisation as a stand-alone event, function or activity but may work as an "add-on" or value-added activity at your next major function or open day/fete.

And don't forget the simple things! When you're chasing the next great fundraising idea, it's easy to neglect the basics – setting up a membership base; providing regular information in newsletters, emails and press releases; approaching businesses for help; ensuring your website and regular communications tell supporters and potential supporters exactly how they can help and how you want them to help. The people most likely to donate or financially support your group aren't usually strangers; they're the people who already know something about your work and appreciate the value of what you do.

Choosing a fundraiser

Resources

Some organisations have their own buildings, while others meet in the secretary's livingroom.

Some organisations have large endowments, some have a piggy bank to cover the stamps on meeting notices. Some not-for-profits have hundreds of volunteers, and can undertake mass-marketing exercises like button or badge days or door-to-door drives. Some organisations can muster only the committee and their immediate relatives. (If you're one of the latter, bear in mind that your fundraisers should also be trying to build the kind of public recognition and support that will bring you in the volunteers who can take you up to the next stage. Every person you ask for money, every person who sees your project, is a potential recruit, and every button or badge you sell is an advertisement for your services.)

All the ideas that follow have a Resources tag on them with estimates of what you'll need to run them.

Public profile

The chance of somebody putting their hand in their pocket is governed by how much they like your event plus how much they like you. If they've never heard of you, you have to get over the top on your ideas alone, and that's a big ask.

The Red Cross and the Salvation Army have high name recognition. People know what they do and what they stand for, and they don't have to put much work into explaining why people should give them money or why celebrities should turn up to their events. The less people know about you, the harder it can be to get money out of them, and the more you have to give them for their money. If your work is at all contentious, even more work is needed. Again, one of the aims of any fundraiser, as well as to raise money, is to build up your public profile so that it will all be easier next time.

If you decide to put on a fundraiser – no matter what event it is – part of the planning should be on getting the widest possible publicity, particularly free publicity, for your event. The earlier you start thinking about story angles and listing the various media organisations, community websites, noticeboards and chat sites where you can publicise your event, the better. And don't just do it once. Keep looking

for potential stories or media stunts during the lead-up to your fundraiser that will keep you in the news.

Visit www.ourcommunity.com.au for free help sheets on compiling a media list and preparing a press release.

Contact database

Ideally, your organisation will have an extensive database listing everybody who has ever given you money, everybody who has ever received services from you, and, in fact, anybody who has ever come into contact with your organisation. It is important to maintain good databases of “friends of your organisation” and even more important to communicate regularly with them to tell them what you are doing, why you are doing it, what effect it is having and, of course, how they can help you to continue that important work.

If you have that kind of list you can take on tasks and ideas that have a much lower payoff – one response to a hundred letters, say. If you only know 20 people who are likely to be interested you will need to go for a more elaborate project with a higher cost/benefit ratio.

Do you have people who are prepared to donate items for sale? Do you have any businesses that are prepared to donate large items (holiday packages, etc) to raffle? Do you have local businesses willing to get involved? Do you have contacts with celebrities who would be willing to get involved? If you answered yes to these questions, you have more options.

And remember the maxim that most people are happy to help. They just need to know how.

Downside risk

Not all good ideas come off. You can be too ambitious and fall short of your projections, or there can be a downpour on the day of the fete. There is an element of risk in every project, and the more money you have to put in up front, the greater the risk. If you can lose money, then there is a downside as well as an upside. If you're an established organisation with a comfortable cushion of funds you can maybe afford to play the averages and make money on two out of every three events; if you're just starting out and have no reserves you may have to stick to projects with very little potential downside.

When you run an activity with the main aim of making money, you need to examine the downsides and see if there is some way –

sponsorship, pre-sales, in-kind support etc – you can limit the chances of losing money.

Sometimes groups will run events or activities for their membership base or to build friends or support. While no organisation likes to lose money, the purpose of these events is not solely to make money but as an investment for the future or as a thank you to hard-working volunteers.

Public liability insurance

We strongly recommend you check with your insurer or broker to ensure that the fundraising activities that you are undertaking are covered by your public liability policy. If not, seek an early estimate on the cost of public liability insurance for your event or activity from your insurer well before the date of your fundraiser. You want to avoid putting in all the effort of planning an event or fundraiser only to find its viability threatened by the cost of a separate public liability insurance policy. At least if you check early you can shop around for a better price, or restructure your event and manage your risk to assist in bringing the price down.

Many of your activities will be covered as part of your normal policy, and this may be one of them, but it's absolutely imperative that you know for sure well before the scheduled date.

We also recommend to all groups that they include a risk management element in all their group activities, including fundraising, to ensure they identify any possible risks to members, volunteers, staff and the general public. For information and free Help Sheets on dealing with risk management strategies, visit the Insurance and Risk Management Centre that can be found at www.ourcommunity.com.au/risks.

While we're on the subject of risk, do note that while Our Community believes that the fundraisers and websites we mention from time to time in this guide are ethical and effective we cannot and do not guarantee or vouch for their services. We recommend you use your own discretion and that you ask for (and check) references when dealing with any organisation in the fundraising area.

Legal requirements for fundraising

There are a number of state, territory and local government regulations surrounding public events and fundraisers and they can differ markedly, depending where in Australia your group operates.

It is important to check with your local council as to what by-laws or