

The Fundraising Guide  
for Chairpersons:  
Seven Steps to Coordinating  
Non-Profit and Church Organizations  
Fund-Raising Events!

Including Dinners, Dances, Raffles, Bazaars,  
Field Days and Lawn Fetes!

Ron Urbanczyk

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# About the Author

Ron Urbanczyk holds both a Master and Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Technology from the State University of New York College at Buffalo. He held the title of Corporate Director of Performance Development at a leading Multi-National Printing Company where he has managed several departments including industrial engineering, productivity support, technical writing, training and development and commercial technology evaluations. Ron has also led the corporate productivity improvement, waste reduction and cost reduction projects.

Studying job activities and analyzing work places his entire working career, Ron has become proficient at organizing, planning, scheduling and implementing improvement programs.

These programs have resulted in millions of dollars in improved efficiencies and cost savings over the years.

In the “Fundraising Guide”, Ron has refocused these same Industrial Engineering and Management Skills to assist Non-Profit and Church Organizations improve their Fund-Raising activities.

He has been involved in non-profit fund-raising functions for more than 30 years and has helped to raise over \$1 million dollars.

Church functions such as Lawn Fetes, Dances, Drawing and Raffles, Chicken Barbecue Dinners, Roast Beef and

Spaghetti Dinners, Bazaars and Las Vegas Nights have all been part of his successes over the years.

Combining all of these events and adding a few more twists like amusement rides, an outside food kitchen, a football throw and even a dunk tank; became Ron's largest fund-raising project! It was a three-day summertime event, which is commonly referred to as a "lawn-fete".

This event will be running for the tenth straight year. To date, it has provided over a half million-fund-raising dollars in proceeds.

# Dedication

This book is dedicated to my dear wife Kathy, who has been my co-chairperson and inspiration through my entire Professional and Fund-Raising Career and has stood by my side through thick and thin.

Also to my two children Lori and Brian, who I hope, will someday follow in my footsteps utilizing their spare time working for a good cause.

I cannot forget, my mother Adele, who started me off in 1968 as the Entertainment Chairperson of our Church Lawn Fete where I needed to find bands to donate there time and play the entire weekend free, talk about low budgets.

This book could not have been written if it wasn't for the help and dedication of Mike Budowski, Jim Clark, Larry Dubaj and Ron Klavoon, four of the best co-chairpersons you could ask for on your team.

Also to my friend Bill Krause for his time spent proofreading this book.

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# Foreword

So you went to a meeting to volunteer your help and came home as the Chairperson of a major fund-raising event!

You are probably asking yourself:

- How do I get started?
- What do I do next?
- Who is going to help me?
- When will I find the time?
- Where can I go for HELP!

Well, welcome to the CLUB!

If this is your first time as a Chairperson or your 20<sup>th</sup>, this guidebook is guaranteed to give you the help you need to get started and pointed in the right direction!

I have attempted to take you through the typical life cycle of an event from the start when you were **selected** as Chairperson through the final report and closeout meeting.

This guidebook is a must read for every chairperson wanting to save time and energy while improving the bottom line of their event.

This story starts back in 1991 while at a Parent-Teacher meeting at my child's private elementary school. Our Pastor got up and told the parents that the Parent School

Association needed to raise \$20,000 by the end of the school year to meet our portion of the annual subsidy needed to run the school.

If we did not raise the funds, the school tuition would have to be raised.

Well, this proclamation started a flurry of fund-raising event suggestions from the parents. All were practical events that the Parent School Association could have undertaken during the school year.

*The discussions went something like this:*

*“Lets run a wine and cheese party and make \$500 said one mother, how about a raffle for a Color TV, maybe we could make another \$500 shouted another. Someone yelled, let’s have a Chicken Barbecue; we could easily make \$3,000 on a good Sunday afternoon. How about a Spaghetti Dinner, which might bring in \$1,000 if all the needed items were donated? How about a 50’s night with a Rock and Roll band, someone said. Hey how about a Polka Night, we could get a local band for a good price, I know a good German Beer Drinking band said another parent. We ran a Las Vegas Night several years in a row with Black Jack, Money Wheels, Over and Under, Best Poker Hand and the Big Nine Wheel. We actually did pretty well for one night making \$3,000 our best year. We should run “two” of these nights this year? Someone wanted to have a “Craft Show” which could make \$1,000 another person yelled how about a “Bazaar” with games and prizes, if done right this could make \$5,000 for a Sunday afternoon. “What about a Cash Give Away where we would sell 1000 tickets at \$50 each.” If we sold all 1000 tickets, we could give away \$30,000 and keep \$20,000”.*

After listening to all these great ideas, I thought to myself, if we did all of these things on one weekend, add some amusement rides and carnival games, we could have a pretty decent size event. An old fashioned Picnic, Field Days, Carnival, Bazaar or what they commonly refer to around these parts, a Lawn Fete!

**Fund Raiser Tip #1** – Never open your mouth at a meeting unless you are willing to take on the fund-raiser event!

Remember, if you have the best idea, you will be nominated the Chairperson of the fund-raiser. Unfortunately, if you are reading this book, chances are you have already accepted the challenge of being an event “Chairperson”.

**Fund Raiser Tip #2** – Get some help, fast!

Do not attempt to run the event alone. Get some help immediately even before the meeting ends. If you do not have experience with running an event, you will need some time to study what other organizations do with similar events. Try to get an investigating committee together. Getting help at the first meeting will insure that others are committed to helping out from the start.

# Preface

Every Church, Legion Post, Volunteer Fire Company, Benevolent Society and Non-Profit Organization will need to run some type of fund raiser sooner or later in order to improve or maintain their buildings and grounds, pay the bills or contribute to other charities and needs of the less fortunate.

No matter what the cause, someone always seems to step up to the task and takes “Charge” in leading the organization to a successful fund- raising event. If you are reading this guide, chances are you have taken the step forward and have taken charge of a fund-raising event.

“**Fund Raisers**” are events that are held for one purpose and just like every business venture; **they must make a profit to benefit an organization or cause.** Everyone will tell you that it doesn’t really matter how much money you make, as long as you have fun doing it. If this is your philosophy, you are heading for disaster.

Every “fund-raising event”, no matter how small, **needs to have a goal and a business plan to meet this goal.** This will insure focus to set your sights on and a smooth implementation of the event.

**Fund Raiser Tip #3** – Set a financial goal!

You, as the Chairperson, must step up and take charge. Don't wait for someone to start things moving; everyone will be waiting for you to take the first step!

Just like an owner of a business, you must set the goals and objectives, develop the plan, chose the event date, select your committee, delegate the work, pick meeting dates and run the meetings.

Are you ready for that Challenge yet?

Lucky for you, help is only a few pages away. If you want to be successful read on!



# Step 1 – Plan the Event

## Common Fund-Raising Events!

There are hundreds of ways to raise money. You have no doubt heard of some of these: candy sale, flower sale, pancake breakfasts, bake goods sale, ice cream socials, beer parties, movie nights, golf outing, dances, craft shows, raffle and card parties. No matter how small the event, you will need the same method of planning and organizing to get started. In this book, we will focus on a few larger events such as Dinners, Dances, Raffles and Field Days or Lawn Fetes. The methodology used however, will work for every type of fund-raising event. In most cases these larger events are actually a combination of several small fundraisers that can run for days.

If you haven't decided on the type of fundraiser you will run, here are some thoughts on the major kinds of events!

- **Dinners** – these are one-time events that can be coordinated with a local caterer or prepared by the members of the organization. They can be scheduled around a special date or time of the year. Summer Chicken Barbecue Dinner, Thanksgiving

Turkey Dinner, Annual Spaghetti Dinner, Winter Pancake Breakfast. The cost of the dinners should be kept under \$8.00 and should include desserts and beverages. This way everyone gets the same treatment. Figure your costs and add 100% mark-up. So if you are paying a caterer \$4.00 per dinner, charge \$8.00. Look to the members to provide donations for desserts, salads, and soft drinks and coffee. Donations as you will read later in the book can help your profits greatly. Think of adding a raffle or split club at the dinner or even a craft booth too. Being creative is what fund-raising is all about.

- **Dances** – are another popular one-time fund-raising event. They are sometimes combined with a dinner but running a dance is often as easy as booking a band and working out a deal with a dance hall on costs. If your organization has a hall, all you will have to do is reserve a date. As with the dinners, special events or dates like an “October fest”, a Valentine’s Dance, and 50’s Night, etc. are all catchy phrases for running dances. The major expense will be the entertainment, try to negotiate the best price you can with a group and charge admission accordingly. If the band will cost \$700 and you expect 100 people you need to charge at least \$8.00 per ticket to make some money. If you are expecting 200 people, then you know you will make about \$1,000 from admissions. You should run some concessions, food and beverages and add a raffle or “theme tray” raffle to raise some additional dollars. Take advantage of the people

attending and their willingness to spend some money to help your cause.

- **Raffles** – we will discuss raffles in great detail in Step 3 Develop the Event. What you should know is that “raffles” are the easiest way to raise funds. There are simple raffles like 50/50 split clubs and elaborate grand prize raffles like vacation trips and cars. The type of raffle you choose to run will determine how much money you can raise.
- **Bazaars, Field Days and Lawn Fetes** – these events usually refer to the combining of dinners, dances, raffles, refreshments, games of skill and chance. These events can be one day long or span a weekend and sometimes a week. The combination of different fundraisers at one event provides choices for the customers to spend their money.

As you read on, you will see how a single fund-raising event and multiple events need the same skills in running as well as the dedication from the Chairpersons and their team. So, how do you get started? Well read on.

## Getting started

By now, you should have a pretty good idea of the type of event you are going to chair.

It may be a single event such as a dinner, a dance, a raffle or a golfing outing or card party. On the other hand, you may have accepted the challenge of a larger, multi-

function, and multi-day event, such as a bazaar, lawn fete or field days.

In all cases, you now are the “major-domo”, the big guy; YOU are the one in charge, the Chairperson!

As mentioned earlier, the very first thing you need to do when planning the event is set a **goal!**

Even if your sponsor organization says you do not need one, for your sanity, write one down. This gives you a metric for measuring the success of the event. Your goal can be any type of metric such as the number of donations received or number of tickets sold. The best measure of success is the actual dollar amount made.

## Set your goal!

A goal will clarify the purpose of the event. It should be a concise statement of the event’s purpose and will help everyone to establish agreement on what is expected.

An effectively written goal should contain the following three elements:

- An action word with an end result
- A target date and length of the event
- The overall objectives and financial expectations

Goals can be simple, for example, **“We will sell 400 tickets by September 11th at \$5.00 each, giving \$500 away and raising \$1500 for the rectory’s new garage roof.”**

Or it may be more elaborate, such as this: **“The St. John Lawn Fete Committee will run a three day event the last**

**weekend of July to raise \$50,000. The proceeds will be used for the Church's Building Debt Reduction Fund and will feature music, games, rides, food and fun for all ages!"**

The key here is to have a written goal. Then you are ready to proceed to the next step!

### *Appendix A - Event Goals and Objectives Form*

The form provides an example of an event goal. You can use the format to get started. Run it by your committee for their input and modification.

## **Pick a Date**

Choose your date in advance; it is best to start your planning 6-12 months ahead. If this is an annual event, start planning next year's event at the conclusion of this year's event. Avoid same day competition by checking for other events in your community newspapers. Call other local non-profit organizations such as Legion and Veteran associations, churches, and volunteer fire companies. Ask them if they will be running a fund-raising event around the date you selected.

If you choose a date without any local competition, you will be able to draw a larger crowd. If you choose your event date after another local organizations event, you can use that opportunity to advertise your event by attending it with slingers of your event to hand out.

It is also better to stay away from dates conflicting with National Holidays, State and County Fairs, Town

Community or Field Days and Hometown Sporting Events and Tournaments. However, some folks have capitalized on running shirttail events.

By checking the farmers' almanac, you can increase your odds of picking a date that insures you good weather. Going with the law of averages based on history is better than throwing darts. This applies more for an outdoor event but success can be enhanced for indoor events in the rainy or winter seasons.

If you live in the north near a lake, you may not want to schedule your event in December or January when you know the lake effect snow machine can start-up at any time. If you can delay the event until February when the chances of heavy snows diminish, do it.

The same holds true for events in the South, you are taking more of a chance running an outside event during the Hurricane, thunderstorm and high humidity season. If you can wait a couple of months when the weather is more appealing, you can enhance your chances of success, early spring, late fall, etc.!

Then again, you may not have much choice in selecting the event date so just bear down and go for it!

**Fund Raiser Tip #4** – Do your homework on a date, check for conflicts with other organizations in your area before setting a date and if you are looking at an outside event, check an almanac for weather predictions!

# Organization Meeting

Let's say your date is set and your event is six months from today.

If you have your goals and objectives drafted, you need to call an "Organization Meeting".

This meeting should only last one hour so pick a time convenient for everyone on your team.

There is nothing more frustrating than to call a meeting and have nobody show up!

This is your opportunity to select a committee or add to existing members.

If you are sending out meeting notices, draw up an agenda and follow it!

Remember this is your first meeting so you get to set all the rules.

## The Meeting Agenda

The first meeting agenda should be simple. State the event's goals and objectives!

At the meeting, you can introduce the existing committee members to each other (if you have them selected) and cover each area of responsibility. Set the next meeting date.

You will need to develop an organization chart and answer the 4 W's:

Who-What-When-Where:

- Who – will be working on what?
- What – will each committee person be responsible for?
- When – will they need to have their part complete?
- Where – will they perform each function?

### *Appendix B – Sample Meeting Agenda*

This form illustrates a meeting format that can be followed at each committee meeting. It is a simple but effective meeting format. Feel free to change the words to meet your needs. Basically, each meeting should include an introduction and you need to cover old business as well as new business. End each meeting with a positive closing statement to build the confidence of your team.

## Selecting Your Team

This may be no surprise to you but every organization has a limited number of members who will volunteer for a fund-raising event and another group that usually involves their family and friends.

What you see is what you get! Selecting your team from a group of volunteers is usually easy. However, they may need some prodding to take responsibility. You may have to use some tact to get the right people in charge. You may want to call the people before the meeting to get their support. Otherwise, you may be faced with having to

choose your team at the meeting. This is not an easy task, especially if no one wants to help.

## What do you do?

Here are three questions you can use at your meeting when volunteers are hard to come by:

1. **Does anyone have any experience with (specific fund- raising area)**

If someone raises their hand, you can be assured they will help!

If nobody raises his or her hand, you can ask the following question:

2. **Would someone like to head up this part of the event?**

Chances are you will get a volunteer. But if you don't, you need to ask the third question every chairperson will eventually need to ask:

3. **WILL SOMEBODY PLEASE HELP ME?**

Plead with your members; the event depends on their help. You cannot run this event alone. So make you **final plea**. Ask in desperation: **Will someone take the lead of this part of the event, please, oh please, oh pretty please?**

- You can also use the “place guilt” method of soliciting help. Stating things like: “if we don’t meet our goal it will be your fault”. This tactic sometimes gets a volunteer.
- If all else fails, use the ‘Democratic’ method of selecting volunteers to chair an area. Place each person’s name on a piece of paper; fold the paper sheets and place in a box or hat. Identify the area of responsibility and select a name from the hat. One by one you will fill your positions. If this sounds childish it is, but you are desperate for help and if you are stooping this low, you may want to re-evaluate running the event.

**Fund Raiser Tip #5** – If all else fails, use the “Democratic” approach to soliciting help, put names in a hat and pick one!

- You will not have the right people in the right spot but “By chance” – the lucky individuals are selected and your team is ready to move on to the next step.

Chances are by threatening to cancel the fundraiser you might prompt a few to volunteer for your committee.

Never try to run a fundraiser of any kind by yourself.

**Fund Raiser Tip #6** – If you do not get a committee, do not go any further, CANCEL the event.

So, assuming you now have a committee lets move on to the planning stages of the event.

## Planning Charts

Use a flip chart or chalkboard and start planning the event. As the Chairperson, you need to give a “Chalk Talk” to your committee. Much like a football coach, you need to prepare a game plan for the event. Start at a chalkboard with the help of your committee.

Start your discussion with questions similar to these. They will help you plan your event.

- What do we want to achieve here?
- What is our timeframe?
- Can we break up the duties into smaller tasks or by positions?
- Ask your committee what they need to complete their part of the event?
- What will we be able to say at the end of the event?

After this meeting, you will start to see your goals and objectives come into focus.

When you finalize your plans, keep notes for reference or transfer the information to an 8 ½ x 11 sheet and hand it out at the next meeting.

If you have access to a computer, you can easily prepare the minutes and print them out for your next meeting. By

making copies for everyone, these notes will help get everyone on the same page.

## Monthly/Weekly Meetings

**Fund Raiser Tip #7** – Have regular meetings to make sure everyone is on target!

- If you have 6 months before the event, schedule a monthly meeting.
- If you only have 6 weeks, better meet once a week.

## Meeting Musts:

- Schedule the meeting on a night/day when most or all of the committee members can be present.
- Have an Agenda published or discussed with them prior to the meeting.
- Ask a committee member to facilitate the meeting for you; this allows you to focus on the meeting discussions.
- Have another committee member capture the “Action Items” of what needs to be accomplished prior to the next meeting. This becomes your “checklist” for success.
- It is critical that each committee member completes his or her action items before the next meeting.

- As Chairperson, you must remember to keep the team on schedule, delegate new assignments that come up and help them out whenever you can or by finding more help.

By now your plans should be sketched out in a rough draft. You have a small team of volunteers and have a good idea of what needs to be done. Your next step will be to organize the roles and responsibilities of your committee and their teams.

## Summary of Step 1– The Planning Process

We have discussed ways of how to get started, picking the type of fundraiser, picking dates that will not conflict with other events in the area and how to set achievable goals and objectives. We discussed proper methods of conducting an organization meeting and ways of selecting the “right” people for your team. We showed how to use planning charts and the need for monthly/weekly meetings to keep on track.

You are now ready for Step 2 Organize the Event.