

# CHALLENGE

A Herff Jones IMPACT Resource For Students

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## APRIL CHALLENGE

### *Fundraising Tips*



**Fundraising is necessary to any successful student activity program. Because so many groups are raising funds in the same location, sometimes the job becomes even more difficult.**

It has been said that fundraising is both an art and a science. It is hard work to be successful. If your group is having trouble raising funds, then you are probably making one or more of the following fundraising mistakes:

1. Lack of planning
2. Repeating the same fundraiser
3. Not having enough help
4. Selling low quality merchandise
5. Not knowing how to sell
6. Bad timing
7. Selecting the wrong fundraiser

8. Poor support materials
9. Weak internal communication
10. Lack of publicity
11. Continuous fundraising
12. Not telling your community why funds are being raised.

If any of these apply to your group, then it is time to take a hard look at your fundraising techniques.

When lack of planning is the problem, it means that ideas have not been thought out in detail. Tight deadlines can produce a crisis response. Often, the person in charge (who should have spent more time planning) spends their time moaning about how overworked they are. Have you worked with this person? All of this agony can be avoided if the correct preparations are made before the fundraiser starts.

Another major fundraising error is repeating the same fundraiser year after year. Your supporters are probably tired of it, and it's probably not generating much revenue. Groups keep doing the same fundraisers because of fear of change and not wanting to upset the status quo.

Remember, your goal (if you are repeating a fundraiser) is to increase the revenue every year. Look at the new fundraising activities that are available. Do some research.

Fundraisers are rarely successful if a small number of people are involved. Work to increase the number of people participating.

If your group is selling a product, be sure that the product is a good value for the selling price. **People do not want to buy poor quality, overpriced items.** If lower sales are coupled with disappointed buyers then the reputation of your group will suffer.

All members of the group who are going to sell should be trained how to sell. The timing of your sale is also critical. If several groups are having a sale at the same time, no one will be successful because you are

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competing for the same dollars in your community. Also, select a fundraiser that is suited to your organization and your community. Do not try to sell citrus fruit in Florida!



If your group is selling a product, check out the support materials available from the company. Will the materials help make your sale more successful?

Everyone in your group should be involved in the planning of the fundraiser. Do not let a small group make all of the decisions and then inform the others later. Everyone needs to feel that they were involved on the decision making process.

It does not matter what is being sold or how great your fundraiser is, it will fail if no one knows about it. Therefore, remember **publicity, publicity, and more publicity!**

Plan your fundraisers wisely and do not have a continuous fundraiser that seems to go on forever. Always let your customers know in advance why funds are being raised. People are more willing to be a part of a fundraiser if they know how the money will be used.

Since fundraising is necessary for your organization it should

also be fun! Here are some ideas to keep 'fun' in your fundraising:

1. *Do fun things*
2. *Use fun incentives*
3. *Take lots of pictures*
4. *Show appreciation*
5. *Build in fun goals*
6. *Blend food, fun, and fundraising*
7. *Create fun, competitive activities*
8. *Always say "thank you" to those helping with the fundraisers*
9. *Have a celebration at the end of the fundraiser.*

Do not make everyone in your group dread the fundraiser. Remember, the participants are giving their free time to help. Make them feel good about the fundraiser and that they are an important part of the team. You cannot do it without them.

A fundraising option that many times generates money more than selling a product is **event funding**. Questions asked about event fundraising include:

- **What fundraising events do not cost a lot of money?**
- **Which ones are easy to do?**
- **Which ones make the most money?**

The answer: **It depends!** There is no one answer. Fundraising events vary greatly. They will vary in cost, complexity, and results. Events that do not cost a lot often require more volunteer time to put together. If your group has lots of help then this is a great one. Events that are easy to do are often not the biggest money makers, but not always. There are no absolutes!

Generally, fundraisers with the lowest costs are those that involve direct labor in exchange for a donation or contribution, such as a car wash or a charity bike ride. Money is earned in direct proportion to the publicity effort, and also the number of people who participate. The events that are the easiest to do are those that are fun and of short duration - such as a dinner theater, "roast and toast," spaghetti supper, etc.

The biggest job is getting a good turnout for the event. By making your event fun to attend, more people will be willing to attend.



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