

Charity and Benefit Auction Guidelines

Pre-planning and Strategy

- ❖ Date—No conflict with other events and holidays. Does weather need to be considered?
- ❖ Location— Can the event be held in your facilities or will another venue need to be reserved?
- ❖ Timing—Event begins, dinner, silent auction start and end, live auction and entertainment.
- ❖ Theme—Pick something relevant and make it fun!
- ❖ Key Leaders—Organizational volunteers in charge of planning. Appoint 2 Co-Chairmen to each leader.
- ❖ Target Audience and Advertising—Existing members, local businesses and organizations. City and local publications.
- ❖ Key Donors and Feature Items—Brain storm with all your volunteers. Solicit a wide variety of goods and services with a wide range of prices and values
- ❖ Room Setup and Public Address System—Make silent auction items accessible during the entire event. Live auction items should be centrally located. Make sure your public address system can be heard from all areas of your venue.
- ❖ Dinner and Beverages— Select something with wide appeal.
- ❖ Ticket Price— Price should cover the cost of food, beverage, entertainment, facilities and décor.
- ❖ Goals—Aim high, but be realistic.
- ❖ Silent Auction—Items that will sell for \$250 and less.
- ❖ Live Auction—Items valued at over \$250.
- ❖ Door Prizes - Raffle—Drawing at the beginning or end of the Live Auction for prizes or to give out the decorations used for your event.
- ❖ Entertainment— During dinner or after the auction.
- ❖ Registration and Check-out facilities— Have bid packages ready for pre-registered guests with catalogs of Silent and Live Auction items and bidder numbers. Have extra packages for last minute arrivals. Be sure to have phone line access for credit card processing and check verification. Have an ample number of cashiers to speed up checkout.

Soliciting Merchandise and Services

- ❖ Volunteers—Pick enthusiastic, outgoing individuals that will represent your organization well. Remember, people give to people, not causes.
- ❖ Merchandise—Only new items or genuine antiques. Fill out the contribution form and take the item with you when possible, or arrange for pick-up.
- ❖ Services— Go for a large range of services. Everything from Dry Cleaning to Teeth Whitening. This is a chance for local businesses to bring in new clients.
- ❖ Literature and Advertisements— Equip your volunteers with handbills/flyers, tape and contribution forms. Ask to display handbills/flyers advertising your event when appropriate.
- ❖ Incentives for Donors—Offer advertising in your program for donors. Ask for brochures or business cards to display with their donated items or services. Make sure to inform donors if their items are tax deductible. Ask for pens to use in the Silent auction, Registration and Checkout areas as advertisement.
- ❖ Celebrities—Ask for autographed items or unique experiences to spend time with these successful individuals. Try to come up with something that will appeal to a large audience.

Silent Auction Tips

- ❖ Number all the items and divide into sections indicated by Colors. Decorate sections with colored tablecloths, balloons, etc.
- ❖ Have an attractive and organized display of all silent auction items. Place brochures and business cards provided by donors with the items.
- ❖ Have organized and easy to understand bid sheets for each item with starting bid and bid increments. Have spare bid sheets available.
- ❖ Friendly table monitors to mind the silent auction tables, answer questions and close out bid sheets.
- ❖ Allow adequate time for preview and bidding on Silent Auction items.
- ❖ Stagger closing times of different sections.
- ❖ Make clear and frequent announcements to inform guests when sections will close.
- ❖ Close all Silent Auction sections before the Live Auction begins.

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