



Bright Ideas

Ideas for campaign kick-off, payroll
campaign awareness and special events
to make your campaign great!

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Themes and Creative Fundraising Ideas

Themes and special events can provide a sometimes-needed boost to your workplace campaign. They can help raise money, build morale, increase awareness, and reward teamwork.

Special Events

Special events can be a fun component of your workplace campaign. They can raise funds, create awareness, motivate, promote team spirit and set the stage for your campaign.

Quality is more important than quantity. Select events with a proven track record that involve as many employees as possible and will be cost effective in terms of time and energy.

Event Timing

If you plan to run a fundraising event, hold it after your employee canvass so that individuals do not feel that the money they are spending on various events replaces their payroll, credit or cash contributions.

If your event is simply intended to create awareness, any time is a good time to hold the event. However, you should consider your campaign strategy and pick a time that is good for both your organization and its campaign.

Things to Think About

Before choosing an event for your campaign ask yourself the following questions:

- **What do you hope to accomplish with this event?**
Do you want to raise money, increase payroll campaign awareness or boost employee morale?
- **Has a similar event been held at your organization before?**
If so, you should determine how successful it was as a fundraiser, payroll campaign awareness builder and/or morale booster. If it wasn't successful, was it due to poor planning or a general lack of interest? You can learn from past mistakes and successes.
- **How much time will you need to organize this event?**
Consider the time commitment the event you are considering will consume. If it will take a month to plan, organize and execute, you can't expect to hold the event in one week.

If you are the chair of your organization's workplace campaign, you may be too busy planning the employee campaign to run a special event. In this case, recruit someone who is resourceful, creative and able to plan a special event. Encourage senior management to be visible and participate in the promotion of the event and the actual event.

- **What are your resources?**

Before committing to an event, you need to think about the resources you have on hand. Is there someone on your committee that has helped organize this type of event before?

Does a committee member know a local business owner that might donate prizes? Consider the tangible and intangible assets available.

- **What is your budget?**

Plan a budget and stick to it. Depending on the type of special event you are running, there may be very real costs involved. Include volunteer time, staff time, program supplies, planning, food and facility expenses when determining the full cost of an event.

You can decrease costs by soliciting donations of supplies, services and facilities. If you solicit donations from a source outside of your organization, it is important to clarify to the donor that this donation is above and beyond their normal contribution to the United Way campaign.

If sponsorship is not an option, compare the estimated cost of the event to the amount of money you expect to raise. You need to make sure the event is financially viable if the main objective of the event is to raise funds.

- **Do you have a back-up plan?**

It's always a good idea to come up with some alternate ideas in case an event proves impossible. You may also need a contingency plan if your event is held outdoors and it rains.

Kick-Off Event Ideas

Polished Apple: Have volunteers deliver a polished apple to each staff member to remind them that their workplace campaign is kicking off!

Tailgate party: Create a sports theme to coincide with hockey season. Hold the party in the parking lot. Serve hot dogs, chips, soda and peanuts.

Ice-Cream Social: Offer employees the opportunity to build their own sundae. Have a selection of ice cream available as well as different types of toppings. Make sure there are plenty of volunteers to supervise, assist and clean up.

International Food Day: Employees team together to create tasty treats from around the world.

Employees decorate their own booths and dress in costumes. Hold the event over the lunch hour, allowing employees to purchase tickets redeemable for food at the booths. A panel of "celebrity" judges award prizes.

Barbecue: Advertise well in advance what you will be serving at the barbecue. Have your tickets on sale a week ahead of time so you will have an idea of how many steaks or hamburgers/hotdogs you'll need. You should be able to purchase your meat/buns at a reduced cost based on volume. Visit a wholesale distributor to negotiate a donation of supplies (plastic plates, utensils, etc.). If you are serving a large number of people, have at least 4 to 5 gas barbecues. Encourage senior management to cook. Provide chefs with United Way aprons.

Coffee Cart: Arrange for volunteers to bring a coffee and snack cart throughout the office one day. You should advertise in advance. Solicit donations of coffee and snacks from suppliers or ask co-workers to contribute baked goods. If you do have to purchase items, make sure you sell them at a profit. While selling coffee and snacks, distribute United Way campaign information.

Miniature Golf: Build a nine-hole course featuring ramps, water and sand around the office. The lowest score will take home a tacky golfing sport coat. Interested twosomes return an entry form, bring a putter the day of the event, and pay an appropriate entry fee.

Kick-off BBQ: Invite the employees to a kick-off BBQ lunch. Invite a local Member Agency to come and talk about their organization. Hand out information on the United Way and your campaign.

Pot Luck Lunch with Cookbook: Ask each staff member to contribute a dish for the potluck luncheon. Encourage them to bring in the recipe for their dish. Organize the recipes later to create a staff cookbook. Sell the cookbooks later to raise money for the United Way.

Hawaiian Luau: Have a mini Luau. Serve ham, pineapple upside-down cake and other Hawaiian fare. Give prizes to employees wearing the most outrageous Hawaiian outfit.

Best Shoes Contest: Line up senior management and/or other employees for some unique mug shots -- shoes only. Hold a contest before your campaign kicks off to see if employees can figure out who's who, then have them vote for the "Best Shoes" at the company kickoff.

Payroll Campaign Awareness Ideas

Seeing is Believing: One of the most impactful and effective things you can do for your workplace campaign is to show your colleagues exactly how their money will help their community. You can achieve this by requesting one of our Member Agencies come in for your kick-off and talk about their organization. This allows employees hear firsthand how their contributions are working and renew their enthusiasm for the upcoming campaign.

Carnival and Talent Show: Hold a carnival and talent show to kick off your workplace campaign. As a part of the program, have a group of executives perform songs, with written lyrics to fit the United Way. An executive dunking booth is part of the carnival games, giving employees the chance to dunk their favorite executive. Employees can participate in traditional carnival games such as the egg/spoon race, ring toss and ducky races. The finale event is the Mr. or Mrs. United Way Pageant where divisions nominate a contestant to compete in the United Way of Greater Moncton and Southeastern New Brunswick, 22 Church St, Moncton, NB, E1C 0P7

pageant. Each pageant contestant must educate the audience about one United Way grantee during the talent competition and the audience votes by placing money in large water jugs.

Battle of the Sexes: It's the men against the women in the company to see which one gets the highest percent participation. At the kick-off meeting, have a short game show in which 2 men and 2 women "volunteer" to be contestants. Women have to answer questions about topics that men know a lot about, and vice versa.

Survivor: Create tribes (teams) to compete throughout your campaign for prizes. Hold luxury challenges every day where groups compete mentally or physically for a treat such as Coke, candy, or raffle ticket. Some suggestions for luxury challenge include the following: United Way quiz, office mini-putt game, Canadian trivia game, and scavenger hunt.

Pirates of the Carribean: Some ideas for this theme include:

- Treasure Hunt - with maps cut up and different sections given if you achieve certain goals
- Pin the Patch on the Pirate - a blindfold game for little prizes
- Giving gold chocolate coins along with the pledge sheets
- Pirate costume/name/song contest

Shoot the Suit: Protective wear is suggested for this game! Set up an obstacle course or 'gauntlet' that volunteer or 'selected' employees must run through while be targeted by paintball guns or water balloons, etc. Persons giving early bird pledges, general pledges and /or leadership pledges can get free shots.

United Way Trivia: A United Way agency is featured each day for a week in a well-traveled area. With the display, a question about the agency is posted. Employees who turn in ballots with the correct answers are entered in a drawing.

A Colourful Event: Encourage everyone to wear red on a specified day. Have a designated "red spotter" awarding prizes and/or penalties. Tie into a raffle for those wearing red and have a red prize.

On a Clear Day: Company, executives and committee members wash every car window in the parking lot and attach a balloon with a flyer explaining that they want everyone to have a 'clear' picture of what United Way does for the community.

Scavenger Hunt: Adaptation of another familiar game. This is always fun. Ask participants to look for items beginning with the letters U-N-I- T -E-D W-A-Y. Provide prizes.

'Canadian Idol' Contest: Employees can conduct an Idol/contest, based on the hit TV show Canadian Idol. Employees make a donation to vote for the management-singing group of their choice. The duo or group that attracts the most will sing a song of their choice in front of an audience.

Top Ten: Have a contest among employees to name the top ten reasons for giving to United Way. Publish the winner's reasons in your next company newsletter or post on the bulletin board.

Family Feud: To be played at employees briefings. Participants have to guess the most popular answer to questions in relation to United Way – educating your employees in a fun way.

Sock Hop: Invite employees to kickoff- "Fifties Style." Give prizes for most authentic dress.

Bon Voyage: With a traveling theme, you can host a "bon voyage" party as a victory celebration. Everyone who gives gets a "passport" to get into the party. Top contributors will be put into a draw to win a prize, possibly donated from a travel agency or cruise line.

Baby/Pet Picture Match Game: Invite employees to try their luck at matching baby or pet pictures to pictures of employees. Award a fun prize to the entrant with the most right answers.

In Hot Pursuit of Cool Millions: Campaigners dress up as spies wearing trench coats and carrying magnifying glasses. Pass out the United Way informative messages in code and offer a prize for the employees who can decode the messages.

A Dollar an Inch Contest: Executives participate in an all-day competition to end the day with the shortest tie. Employees cut an inch off their favorite executive's tie each time they give to the community. Give prizes for the shortest tie, the ugliest tie, etc.

Sleep-in: Award/accept bids on a "Sleep-in" package – blankets/Starbucks and mug, etc.

Exotic Locales: Whether you transform your campaign into a Hawaiian luau, African safari or the Australian outback, employees are sure to have a wild time. Encourage staff and volunteers to dress the part of the chosen location. Host a lunch with theme-related food. Organize a scavenger hunt or hula hoop contest.

Volunteer Day: Employees who give at or above a certain level are rewarded with eight hours they can use volunteering with the Annual United Way's *Day of Caring* event.

Vacation Day: Employees "buy" a vacation day. When an employee chooses to participate, their wages from a day's work are deducted from their paycheck. The organization may choose to match the amount deducted, with all proceeds donated to the community. Win-win situation: the organization achieves high participation, the employees get a vacation day, and the community is helped.

Shave the Boss: Have the CEO challenge his staff, "if we make our goal, you can shave my head (or legs!)" and bring an antique barber chair into the office. Employees take turns shaving as customers look on. An alternative could be to shave off his mustache or beard.

Pay Cheque "Pocket Change": For a period of time, employees donate any change above an even dollar from their paychecks.

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Special Event Fundraiser Ideas

Jackpot Joker: Here is a twist on the classic 50/50 fundraiser. Volunteers sell tickets at a cost of \$1/ticket. Once a week a winning ticket is drawn and announced via email. The winner is given a prize of \$20 plus a chance to win half the pot. The winner will choose a card from a deck of cards that includes 26 playing cards and one joker. If the winner chooses the Joker, they win half the pot raised to that point. The other half is donated to the United Way. If they do not choose the Joker, the money amassed that week (less the \$20 prize) will be rolled into the following week's draw and the card pulled from the deck will be removed from the playing deck. This will continue each week until someone picks the Joker. Try Jackpot Joker year round or adapt to use during your campaign.

Balloon Pop: Employees donate prizes for this event, which is a variation of a traditional raffle. Before filling a balloon with helium, put a note inside with the name of a prize. Employees pay \$2 to buy a balloon and pop it to find out what prize they won.

Harvest Festival: Employees bring their products (plants, fruits, vegetables, bouquets of flowers) from their home gardens to the office on the day of the event. Other employees purchase the goods with proceeds benefiting the campaign. You can also raffle off the goods by selling chances for each item, or by silent auction.

Casual Day: Sell Casual Day stickers or "I'm Dressed this way for United Way" stickers (available from the United Way) allowing employees purchasing them to dress casually on certain days (usually Fridays). Employees purchase stickers for \$2 to \$5 each.

Pay Cheque "Pocket Change": For a period of time, employees donate any change above an even dollar from their paychecks.

Employee Raffle: Ask employees to contribute something special for a raffle prize; homemade pies, lunch with a co-worker, or a weekend stay at a vacation cabin or condo. Those employees that turn in pledge forms early receive three raffle tickets. Employees turning in pledge forms after the "early" date, but before the campaign's final event, receive one raffle ticket.

Rose Event: Local florists donate roses or carnations that employees buy for \$2 to send to fellow coworkers. As an added incentive, the organization matches each \$2 donation. Try the same event with cookies, as a variation, with employees donating the cookies to the event. Sell the cookies for \$1 to send to friends or co-workers in the organization just to say thanks.

Silent Auction: Ask each department to pitch in to sponsor a theme basket (golf, chocolates, spa day), and then hold a silent auction to give the baskets away. Or hold a silent auction for talents and services donated by employees: car detailer, golf lessons, personal training, etc.

Win the CEO/President's Parking Spot: Raffle the use of his/her parking spot for a week.

Pancake Breakfast: Create awareness of the breakfast in the community by distributing flyers to the neighbouring houses. Employees are asked to sell breakfast tickets to family members. Negotiate with your cafeteria or a wholesale distributor for a donation of supplies or a discount. Advertise well in advance in the community, especially if there is a school or other workplaces near by, with posters, flyers and letters. Approach the CEO and senior management to serve breakfast.

Karaoke Party: This has the potential for being a BIG fund-raiser and a GREAT team builder! Participants pay \$2 to enter, and are given a list of songs and a pledge sheet in advance. Participants ask employees to support them by pledging an amount of money. At the event, have a big box of funny hats, bags, and other costume items available to dress up in. Pass that hat at the party for even more pledges.

Lunch Auction: Different departments donate lunches to auction every day for a week. Use your organization's intercom system, or other employee communication system to tempt your co-workers.

Toonie Toss: Get a small wading pool filled with water. Place a dinner plate in the center. The object of this game is to toss a Toonie onto the plate to win a prize. The difficulty level can be adjusted by increasing/decreasing the distance between the plate and the Toonie tosser.

Laugh Olympics: Employees complete in crazy "athletic" events for silly prizes. Participants donate a \$5 fee to enter. Observers wager bets on their favorite entrants.

Loonie 50/50 Draw: Stick double-sided tape to the floor in a high traffic area. Have volunteers encourage passer-bys to stick Loonie to the tape. Award each participant with a draw ticket for each Loonie they place on the tape. At the end of the day, draw a winner. Then award 50% of the loonies to the winner and donate the remainder to the United Way campaign.

Get out of Jail For a Fee: Give employees the opportunity to send other staff members to "jail" during their lunch hour or coffee break (or both). Have someone on the campaign team act as warrant officer. The person having someone arrested will go to the warrant officer and purchase a warrant for the arrest of a coworker at a cost of \$2. The warrant officer then advises the prisoner-to-be that there is a warrant for their arrest. The individual may then pay bail to avoid jail time (\$2). If three people purchase a warrant for the same person, the prisoner will have to pay bail three times to stay out of jail (\$6 in this case).

Executive Chair or Tricycle Race: Set up relay course for executives to go through sitting in chairs or riding tricycles. Use a stopwatch to time contestants, with the best time winning a prize. Observers wager \$5.00 on their favorite contestants.

Whose Legs Are Those? Line up co-workers for mug shots of their legs in Bermuda shorts, legs only. Encourage employees to pay a small fee (\$1) to guess whose legs belong to which co-workers.

Bingo: Sell bingo cards for employees to purchase. Have management call bingo numbers. Get a local store to donate prizes for all winners.

Paper Airplane Contest: Have a paper airplane contest from an upper floor of your building. Charge \$1 or \$2 per paper airplane (sheets of paper with folding design already printed on it with space for name). Prizes awarded for longest and straightest flight or, as an alternative, place prizes on floor and plane closest to prize wins it.

Ornament Raffle: Buy or have donated an artificial tree. Employees bring in ornaments, either purchased or handmade to hang on tree. Raffle them off or hold a silent auction for each ornament.

Executive Fantasy Auction: Executives at your organization create "fantasy" packages, which employees can bid on at a special auction; cooking the winning bidder a special dish, singing at a wedding, party or special event, mowing the winner's lawn, changing the winner's car oil, baby-sitting the winner's children, washing the winner's car, washing the winner's windows, etc.

Comedy Hour: Ask a local comedian or improv group to donate their services over the lunch hour. Have employees buy tickets to attend.

Rent-a-boss: Employees bid on services provided by management or supervisors.

Casino Night: What are the ingredients for a successful Casino Night? A few blackjack tables, bingogame, a beanbag toss, a bushel of sandwiches and soda. Invite employees and their families. Local businesses can donate prizes for winners.

Low or No Cost Events

Dessert Cart/Bakery Cart

Wheel a cart of bagels, doughnuts, danish, cookies, brownies, etc., through the office, collecting United Way donations in exchange for the goodies. Everyone wants something sweet after lunch.

Craft and Bake Sales

This popular activity gives everyone a chance to share their hobbies and special baking talents. All the items are donated, and sales go to the Campaign.

Chili Cook-off Contest

Employees cook their favorite recipe and enter it into a cook-off contest. Charge an entry fee and a tasting fee. A panel of "chili experts" selects the Official Chili Champion. Talk to a hotel representative about donating a one-night or weekend stay at their hotel for the winner.

Balloon Pop

Employees donate prizes for this event—a variation of a traditional raffle. Before filling a balloon with helium, put a note inside with the name of the prize. Employees pay \$1-\$5 to buy a balloon and pop it to find out what prize they've won.

Employee Cookbook

Collect and group recipes into a customized cookbook. Employees' children create illustrations for the cookbook, including cover. If possible, print and bind books by a local business, pro bono. You set the price, and proceeds go to United Way.

Raffle

Hold a company-wide raffle! Employees turning in pledge forms before a certain date receive 3 raffle tickets. Employees turning in pledge forms after the early date but before the end of the campaign receive one raffle ticket. Employees who make a certain dollar pledge receive two additional raffle tickets. Some ideas for prizes:

Homemade pies/cakes

One day of vacation

Prizes donated by vendors

Car wash

Tickets to a local event

Premier parking spot

Pumpkin Carving or Decorating Contest

Plan a Halloween theme and hold a pumpkin-carving contest. Try to have pumpkins donated by a local business, then sell them to employees for use in the contest or for themselves, their families, and friends. Employees enter carved or decorated pumpkins individually or by group. Charge \$5 to enter and \$1 to vote. Award prizes in various categories, e.g.:

Best traditional pumpkin

Most creative pumpkin

Best effort by a group

Best effort by an individual

Scariest pumpkin

Ugly Lamp

Have employees decorate a lamp and make it as ugly as possible. Employees pay \$5 to have the lamp removed from their desk and put on someone else's desk (their choice).

Silent Auction

Gather gift items and create bid sheets, being certain to provide a minimum bid for each item. Put together a book that shows all items so that everyone is able to see the items available. Tap into employees' talents and resources for themed baskets.

Flowers

Work with a local florist to donate flowers that employees buy for \$2 to send to coworkers or bring home for a special someone. For a special touch, have a couple of employees deliver the flowers in tuxedos.

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Tricycle Relay Race

Create teams with three or four riders. Teams are named and publicized in advance, allowing employees to make pledges or bets on the winning team. Team members ride large tricycles (rent or borrow) through a predetermined course throughout the office or outside. Have the course marked with signs or tape on the floor. Fans are able to watch and cheer from different areas. The race is designed as a relay; team members pass of a flag, pinwheel, teddy bear, or similar item to their succeeding team member. Charge an entry fee to ride, and remember to take photos!

Spelling Bee

Hold an event during staff meetings or over lunch. Contestants pay a \$5 entry fee. Gallery observers place \$1 bets on their favorite participants. The winner walks away with the coveted "Who Needs Spell Check?" award.

Pie in the Face

Employees pay \$5 for a pie to be thrown in the face of the executive of their choice.

Name That Tune

Employees pay \$5 to participate. Contestant then go up against each other to test their knowledge of songs.

Walking Taco

Set up a cart with taco ingredients and have an employee push it around during lunchtime for people to purchase and make their own tacos. Or use a bag of Fritos and place meat and toppings in the bag. This is great for people who don't have a long lunch break.

Sports Team Day

Have employees pay a certain amount (at least \$1) to be able to wear their favorite sports team apparel.

Slipper or Shorts Day

Have employees pay a certain amount (at least \$1) to be able to wear their slippers or shorts to work.

Jeans Day

Have employees pay a certain amount (at least \$1) to be able to wear jeans to work for a day. Or if you work in a casual environment, Slippers and sweat pants days.

Push-up Contest

Ever want to find out who the strongest person in the office is? Contestants pay a \$5 entry fee. Observers pay \$1 to wager on who they think will do the most push-ups.

Jump Rope Contest

Contestants pay a \$5 entry fee; observers pay \$1 to bet on who they think will last the longest jumping rope.

Talent Show

Put on a talent show during lunch. Contestants pay a \$5 entry fee; observers pay \$1 to attend. Consider charging \$10 to be a judge.

Karaoke

Employees pay to vote on the executive they want to sing karaoke. If the executive doesn't want to sing, he or she can pay a hefty fee to pass the task to someone else.

Lunch Box Auction

Have each participating employee pack a special lunch. Encourage them to get creative and make deluxe sandwiches or wraps. Include delicious sides and desserts. Auction the lunch boxes just before lunchtime.

Popcorn Sales

Sell popcorn! Who can resist the smell of fresh popcorn popping?

Egg Baby

A single egg is given to each participating staff member, who must treat the egg with attention and care, just as if it were a human baby. They may choose to keep the baby all day long or pass it to another person for a babysitting charge of \$2. If the egg is dropped, a \$5 hospital fee is charged.

Cake Walk

Have employees bake cakes and hold a cake walk—pay to play.

Order Up!

Take orders for lunch from an area restaurant. Pick up the food, but charge a delivery fee.

Pick an Egg, Any Egg

Fill plastic eggs with prizes or cash; charge for the opportunity to pick one.

Put Your Best Foot Forward

Line up senior managers and/or other employees for some unique mug shots—shoes only! Hold a contest before campaign kickoff to see if employees can figure out who's who. Charge a fee to guess.