

# **United Way- Special Event Ideas**

## **Seeing is Believing Tours**

The number one event to raise awareness is Agency Tours or Seeing is Believing Tours. They are one of the most effective and impactful things you can do in your workplace campaign. Employees see firsthand how their contributions are working and renew their enthusiasm for the upcoming campaign. Many companies schedule tours of a variety of agencies so employees can choose which agency(s) to visit. If you are unable to schedule tours for your entire staff, we strongly encourage you and your campaign team of volunteers to tour an agency. We help kids get the education and opportunities they deserve. We help people who are struggling financially get back on their feet. We help people get healthy and stay healthy, physically and mentally.

## **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.

## **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.

## **Casual Day**

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

## **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 who 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.

### **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.

### **Bake Sale**

Arrange for employees to donate baked goods. Advertise well in advance with posters, memos and bulletins. Have volunteer employees available to help set up, serve and clean up afterwards.

### **Pancake Breakfast**

Create awareness of the breakfast in the community by distributing flyers to the neighbouring houses and let the media know. 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.

### **Chili Lunch Cook Off**

Invite employees to bring in a batch of their best chili. Then have coworkers judge each chili based on taste, texture and fire value. Then offer dishes of chili for a price to all employees for lunch. The Cook Off Champ is the recipe that sells the most bowls. Give packs of Roloids or Tums to all employees at the end of the event.

### **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 UWGMSENB 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.

### **Ticket Giveaway/Gift Certificates**

Give free tickets to movies, theatre productions, amusement centres and other local attractions for pledge incentives. Give movie passes to every employee who meets the challenge of pledging a certain dollar amount. Enter the names of all employees who turn in a signed pledge form during the first hour following the kickoff into a special drawing.

### **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.

### **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 UWGMSENB. An executive dunking booth is part of the carnival games, giving employees the chance to dunk their favourite 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 pageant. Each pageant contestant must educate the audience about one UWGMSENB 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.

### **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.

### **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 draw.

### **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 American 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.

### **Book, Music and Video Sale**

Have employees donate old books, CDs and videos for a company or department-wide sale, with proceeds earmarked for UWGMSENB.

### **Comedy Hour**

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

### **Sock Hop**

Invite employees to kickoff "50s 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. Charge employees to vote and award a fun prize to the entrant with the most right answers.

### **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.

### **United Way Jingle Contest**

Employees write jingles for UWGMSENB. There is a \$5 entry fee and voting fee for the best jingles.

### **In Hot Pursuit of Cool Millions**

Campaigners dress up as spies wearing trench coats and carrying magnifying glasses. Pass out UWGMSENB informative messages in code and offer a prize for the employees who can decode the messages.

### **Bingo**

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

### **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 favourite executive's tie each time they give to the community. Give prizes for the shortest tie, the ugliest tie, etc.

### **Bowl-a-Thon**

Employees pay a fee to participate in the event. Have the team do costume contests. Encourage departmental challenges.

### **Casino Night**

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

### **Children's Drawing Contest**

Give employees "official photographs" of one or two executives to take home for their children to draw. Or, children draw what "helping others" means to them. Or, what another theme means to them. Contest is limited to children under 12 who are related to any employee. Employees vote for the best drawing by paying \$1 per vote. Give prizes for all participants. Display winning portraits as part of the organization's permanent art collection.

### **Laugh Olympics**

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

### **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 a hat around at the party for even more pledges.

### **Ugly Tie or Ugly Earring Contest**

Contestants pay \$5 to enter the most awful earrings or ugly ties they own (or can make or borrow). Have a parade of all the contestants, offering a last chance to vote at the end of the day. Circulate the names of the entrants the day before the event so employees can

anticipate the voting. Bring a Polaroid/digital camera and charge for photos taken of employees with their favourite contestants.

### **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.

### **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 in the community any way they wish.

### **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.

### **Greeting Card Sales**

Have your Creative Department design various greeting cards (Congratulations, Birthday, Thank you, Anniversary, and personalized) and sell them with proceeds benefiting UWGMSNB. Have a contest between different departments to see which can sell the most! Give prizes on Kickoff Day.

### **Paycheque "Pocket Change"**

For a period of time, employees donate any change above an even dollar from their paycheques.

### **Spelling Bee**

Organize a spelling bee with participants paying an entry fee. Have other employees pay to place bets on the winner. Award the winners with a special incentive.

### **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.

### **Makes Cents**

Advertise a penny collection competition between departments. Identify a drop location for rolled pennies. Award prizes to those departments collecting the most pennies (per capita), then exchange pennies for bills at a local bank.

### **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 co-worker 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).

### **Loonie 50/50 Draw**

Stick double-sided tape to the floor in a high traffic area. Have volunteers encourage passers-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 UWGMSENB campaign.

### **Decorate Your Office Door**

Employees vote on the most creative door decorations to win prizes. You can organize this contest around a theme or holiday for example, Halloween, Thanksgiving or Christmas.

### **Baby Pool**



Have employees pay a \$2 fee to guess the day, weight and sex of a baby due and the closest correct guess wins half the pool with the campaign getting the other half.

### **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.

### **Auction off a Friend**

Ask a friend if they would be willing to auction off their services. Employees buy raffle tickets for a chance to win those services.

### **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.

### **Team Chia Pet Contest**

Employees divide into teams. Each team is given a Chia Pet, which they care for. The Chia's hair may be cut, primped and styled. Prizes awarded for fullest growth, longest single sprout, and most original.

### **Tupperware Fund Raising**

Find a Tupperware representative and organize a party at your workplace with 15%-25% of sales going towards your campaign.

### **Sleep-in**

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

### **Family Feud**

To be played at employees briefings. Participants have to guess the most popular answer to questions in relation to UWGMSENB - educating your employees in a fun way.

### **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 on their favourite contestants.

### **Newly-Hired Game Show**

A spoof on the classic Newlywed Game. In a test of personalities and relationships, new employees are paired with veterans for a question and answer period. Audience members bid on the "couple" they believed to have the most potential for a strong and lasting working relationship. Commercial breaks created by employees to encourage giving.

### **Rent-a-boss**

Employees bid on services provided by management or supervisors.

### **Something-a-Thon**

Walk-a-thon, dance-a-thon, skip-a-thon and other "marathons" are popular events. Have participants collect pledges for your event based on the number of hours danced, miles walked, etc.

### **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 Caribbean**

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.

### **Good Neighbor Barbecue**

Join with other nearby companies to have a cookout with games and giveaways.

### **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 UWGMSENB.

### **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.

### **Grandmas 'Heart Attack' Chocolate Cake**

Sell your grandma's favourite chocolate cake recipe to interested employees. Tempt them first with little bite-sized pieces for samples.

### **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 awards prizes.

### **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.

### **Wine Drawing**

Offer employees a chance to win an assortment of specially selected wines from a number of different wineries. Sell tickets for \$1 each or 6 for \$5. Display the wines in an employee common area to entice wine lovers.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Nacho Party**

Plan an afternoon to sell nachos or popcorn to interested employees. Employees pay \$2 for each serving with all proceeds going to the community.

### **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.

### **Strike up the Fun**

Start the project early by contacting a bowling alley with the idea of a tournament and advertise well in advance. Hand out sponsorship forms and have an entry fee for each bowler, arrange 50/50 draws, trophies or prizes for best team, and best and worst score, etc.

### **Mini-Indy 500**

Rent or borrow remote controlled cars and set up an "Indy 500" race. Use office supplies to make the track more interesting. Teams can be sponsored to compete. Spectators can place bets on the winner.

### **Halloween Pumpkin Carving Contest**

Plan a Halloween theme and hold a pumpkin-carving contest. Find a local business willing to donate pumpkins for your organization to sell to your employees. Employees buy pumpkins for their families to use in the contest. Charge \$5 to enter and \$1 per vote. Award prizes for various categories; best traditional, most creative, best effort by group, best effort by an individual.

### **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.