

School Advancement Series

Elevating Your Signature Event and Building Brand Awareness

What do you hope to gain?

- **Ways to raise more money at annual event**
- **How to grow our donor pull and increase funding for a more fun and eventful event**
- **New ideas for hosting an event**
- **I would like our SAP team to learn more about hosting an event and bring new ideas to our event**
- **How to reach beyond our parish and community**

Objectives

After this session, attendees will be able to:

1. *Maximize Guest Experience*
2. Increase Event Partnerships/Sponsorships
3. *Create An Event Timeline*
4. Celebrate With Purpose After the Event

**#1 KEY TO ALL FUNDRAISING
SUCCESS:
RETENTION FIRST PHILOSOPHY**

Think of the last fundraising event you attended...

- 1. What stood out to you as a guest?**
- 2. Why did you choose to attend this event?**
- 3. Did you make a donation? Why/Why not?**
- 4. How did this organization let you know about the impact of your donation?**

Signature Event Purpose

The PRIMARY purpose of a signature event?
RAISE-FUNDS

Secondary purposes:

- Attract new donors
- *Spread awareness*
- Build excitement for your school
- *Help increase enrollment*
- Build community

Event Planning 101

1. Assemble an event committee
2. *Create an original event idea or revamp a current signature event*
3. Plan the revenue streams and budget
4. *Maximize the guest experience*
5. Create your marketing and promotional plan
6. *Get sponsors/partners & plan donor touch points*
7. Execute with clarity
8. *Celebrate with purpose after the event*



Maximize Your Guest Experience

The heart of fundraising is really about building and deepening relationships with people who care about your cause.

Your vision and brand will attract attendees, consider:

Who are the ideal attendees for your event?

- Parents
- Parishioners
- Alumni
- Community
- Grantors
- Others to consider

Your vision and brand will attract attendees, consider: What elements at your event will exemplify the mission of the school? Tell your story?

- Personal testimonial-student/family/alumni
- Student ambassadors
- Photos/postcards
- School leader/Teacher Presentations
- School tour
- Hype video

Your vision and brand will attract attendees, consider:

What do you want the experience to be like for key stakeholders? What will they see, hear, feel and see at your event?

Elevate Your Guest Experience with These Tips...

- Send save the dates as early as possible
- **Make sure your registration process online is smooth and clear.**
- Record a video message from your event MC prior to the event
- **Share event details and post clearly on website**
- Send teasers about the event in the weeks prior
- **Confirm your guest will attend the event**
- Answer questions in a timely manner
- **Greet and acknowledge each guest when arriving**
- Share directional information for tables/activities/food/beverages
- **Sweat the details: nametags, seating, special dietary restrictions, accessibility**
- **Acknowledge ALL gifts, thank, repeat**

Elevate Your Guest Experience with These Tips...

- Keep your theme on brand - casual or upscale
- **Diversify your giving channels (consider generations)**
- Recognize the power of peers
- **Start and end your event on time**
- Have all speakers/presenters rehearse in advance
- **Honorees are amazing but make sure they also have shared notes in advance**
- As guests leave, make checkout process simple and exit greeting should be as meaningful as welcome.
- **Acknowledge ALL gifts, thank, repeat**



Increase Event Partnerships/Sponsorships

The heart of fundraising is really about building and deepening relationships with people who care about your cause.

Let's talk about DONOR retention:

- Average retention 43%
- Average retention for first time donor: 29%
- Monthly donations: give 42% more than regular donors; retention increases to 96% for 2nd year for monthly donors...MAKE THIS AN OPTION
- Acquisition cost is 7x the cost of retention
- \$ follow the love - ie. when asked what donors WANT, they consistently answer, THANK & SHOW IMPACT OF DONATION

Build these into your ADVANCEMENT CALENDAR:

Development: Donor Engagement Ideas

Moving from
TRANSACTIONAL→RELATIONAL DONORS

Partnerships/Sponsorships

By creating a culture of giving you can move from:

Level 1:

- **Inviting: Nothing personalized**
- **Giving: Basic, what always has been done for years**
- **Receiving: Little acknowledgement**

TO:

Level 4:

- **Inviting: Mostly personalized, even one-on-one**
- **Giving: People are creative in giving their gifts**
- **Receiving: Excellent acknowledgement, appreciation, affirmation**

Donaldson, F. (2019) *25 Lessons Learned in 25+ Years in Catholic School Development*. NCEA

Partnerships/Sponsorships

How will you make money at this event?

- Partnerships/sponsorships?
- Fund-a-need?
- Individual ticket sales?
- Group ticket sales?
- Games of chance?
- Auction - let's talk about this option.....

Partnerships/Sponsorships

Fundraising: Asks - Starters and Suggestions



EVENT TIMELINE:
Start with the end in mind.....

Partnerships/Sponsorships

Planning Your Signature Event Spreadsheet Template



CELEBRATE WITH PURPOSE AFTER THE EVENT

The heart of fundraising is really about building and deepening relationships with people who care about your cause.



Celebrate with purpose after the event

1. Celebrate the SUCCESSES!
2. Organize any wrap-up needed for event
3. Step back into development efforts by stewarding your donor relationships: thank, educate, connect!
4. [Development: Donor Engagement Ideas](#)

Resources

- [Fundraising: Asks - Starters and Suggestions](#)
- [Planning Your Signature Event Spreadsheet Template](#)
- [Development: Donor Engagement Ideas](#)
- Heyman, D. with Brenner, L. (2016) *Nonprofit Fundraising 101*. Wiley Publishing
- Donaldson, F. (2019) *25 Lessons Learned in 25+ Years in Catholic School Development*. NCEA
- [8 Ways to Measure Fundraising Success](#)
- <https://productivefundraising.com/>
- <https://www.networkforgood.com/>

Questions?



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School Advancement Series

Engaging Families During National Catholic Schools Week: Oct. 24, 9:00-10:00 am

Budget Timeline & Forecasting: Nov. 21, 9:00-10:00 am

Enrollment Season Process & Timeline: Dec. 18, 9:00-10:00 am

All via ZOOM