

10 EXPERT TIPS TO Boost In-Person Event Attendance & Fundraising



In-person events require a large investment of your organization's time, money, and resources – but, when done right, can have a big return and huge impact!

Learn how to maximize attendance at your next in-person event with these 10 expert tips from our friends at Powered by Professionals

1 Get Creative with Sponsorship Levels and Benefits

- Assume that you will raise at least 50% of your overall fundraising goal through sponsorships (if not more).
- You can increase the number of tickets per sponsorship level to increase attendance and day-of engagement.
- Cost effective sponsorship benefits include specialty cocktail hour presented by the sponsor, opportunity to present an award, signage at the event.

2 Provide Ticket Promotions to Drive Attendance

- Offer early bird pricing to lock in attendance early.
- Create benefactor and VIP packages.
- Promote ticket bundles (e.g., 4 tickets for a discount).
- Comp tickets for stakeholders that get "X" number of people to register.
- Provide a young professional ticket option for a lower price.

3 Reimagine Your Event Format - Be Unique

- Plan shorter programs and be straight to the point – keep the audience engaged.
- Bring in personal stories and video messages to connect on a personal level.
- Provide interactive entertainment like magicians, comedians, action artists.
- Try holding smaller, more intimate events such as a cocktail party for people to connect, mingle, and network.

4 Drive Attendance with Data

- Consider sending out a survey to your donor base – ask about weekend vs. weekday preferences and find out the most important event aspect to them.
- Pay attention to attendee data. Where is your audience from? How can you target these areas? What's your strategy for increasing attendance from other areas?
- Monitor the user experience for those NOT registering. Ask yourself, 'where are we losing people in the registration process?'

5 Tap Into New Marketing Techniques

- Promote videos for e-blasts and social media.
- Take full advantage of Instagram stories, Instagram LIVE, and Facebook LIVE.
- Provide committee members, sponsors, and honorees with graphics to post on social.
- Leverage social media by offering a free ticket/gift if they post about the event.

6 Leverage Technology to Enhance Guest Experience

- Make the event more interactive and fun by offering online bidding for your auction.
- Provide multiple ways to donate for varying technology comfort levels, including QR codes, text-to-give, and online donation forms.
- Use scannable QR codes at check-in to speed up the process and identify VIP guests.
- Plan your raffle for the end of the night to encourage guests to stick around.

7 Be Prepared for Last Minute Drop Off

- COVID-19 has increased the number of attendees cancelling at the last second.
- When an event sells out, keep a waiting list for when this happens.
- Try booking a venue with a high capacity but a low guest guarantee.
- Increase your attendance with complimentary guests; this can be volunteers, past honorees, or other key stakeholders.

8 Increase Post-Event Communication to Encourage Repeat Donors

- After the event, create personalized thank-you messages to demonstrate that your donors aren't just lines in a spreadsheet, but valued contributors towards a goal.
- Continue to demonstrate your donors' impact long after the event by sending out a quarterly newsletter, featuring success stories, donor shoutouts, upcoming events, and the impact your organization has made in fulfilling its mission.
- Consider using social media for an impact series! Video is a great way to bring your mission to life while featuring some of the people impacted by your organization's work.

9 Make Everyone Feel Comfortable with COVID Compliance and Regulations

- Remember, no matter the state of COVID-19, everyone's comfortability levels differ.
- Think about providing alternative participation options for guests who are taking higher precautions like a separate seating area where masking is required, virtual attendance/livestream, or an outdoor event space.
- Before the event, clearly communicate any health and safety protocols from the start and keep them consistent through event day as much as possible.

10 Get The Right People Involved in The Event

- The top expert tip to laying the foundation for a successful event is to form an organizational chart. It's the best way to get the right people into the right roles!

Event / Gala / Run Walk Day, Month, Year

