



4 CHECKLISTS

Every Event Planner Needs



Online Promotions



Auction Items



Selling Sponsorships



Finding Volunteers



Online Promotion:

Surefire Ways to Get the Word Out

Gone are the days when a few posters placed strategically around town or a fancy engraved invitation are enough to guarantee a sold-out fundraising event! A well-rounded promotional plan is now a critical component of ensuring success.

Promotion for your nonprofit should go beyond just your traditional supporters - you should be promoting your cause, auction, or event to item donors and sponsors as well. They appreciate hearing from you, too!

The focus of this particular checklist is online promotion. You may not need to use every tactic, but we hope it will help you track your promotional activities and give you some new ideas.

Create an Auction/Event Homepage

Even if your organization has a website, make sure you make a dedicated homepage for your event or auction.

Include homepage elements with high promotional value:

- Cause overview or mission statement
- Specifics of what you are fundraising for
- Event details – location, date and time
- Map and directions to your event
- Purchase Tickets button
- Donate button
- Refer a friend button
- Subscribe for email updates (helps you build your database)
- Featured Sponsors
- Links to auction items
- Real-time auction statistics



Keep your auction and organization in front of supporters with email

Send a “save the date” for your event or online auctions opening. Then keep the emails flowing!

Send a
"Save the Date"
two months
in advance



Invite supporters to sign up for updates:

- Save the Date – send two months in advance
- Email invitations – depending on how formal your event or organization is, you can use email for invitations
- Follow up invitations – if you send a printed invitation to your event, follow up with an email
- Email updates – auction URL, new items, fund-a-need, meet our sponsors, reminder, and instructions to register to bid
- Email Thank You and Acknowledgements
 - Send receipt acknowledging item donations
 - Send email as well as written post auction or event thank you notes to donors
 - Send thank you email and receipt to bidders

Create an Auction/Event Homepage

Social media is the engine of word-of-mouth promotion. Use it to make frequent, small updates about your auction and generate buzz among your supporters. Best of all, see if you can get them talking about your auction or event on their own social networks.

□ Facebook Postings:

- Auction/Event save the date
- Auction/Event details – "pin" the details, including the URL, to the top of your wall
- Promote your best items
- The more posts the better – items, donors, sponsors
- Ask your followers to share your posts on their pages
- Post about what you will do with the funds raised especially if you have a specific need you are trying to fund
- Write posts for sponsors to share on their walls
- Ask donors if you can post about their generosity

□ Twitter Postings:

- Post a "save the date"
- Post the URL to your auction/event homepage
- Use all the same tactics as for Facebook – sponsors, donors, and items all make good tweets
- Post about special item deals – repeat to keep posts about your auction and event at the top of your feed
- Encourage retweeting

□ Pinterest or Instagram Postings:

- Post an image of your invite
- Post images of your best items
- Post images of your venue
- Post images of your committee diligently working to make the auction/event a success
- Post images of the beneficiaries of your fundraising where appropriate

□ Miscellaneous:

- If your local paper or other local media outlets have listings of events online, get your auction/event into it and include your homepage URL as a link, if you can
- Ask sponsors to link to your auction homepage from their sites. Make it easy for them by providing the text/link
- Ask all your volunteers, staff, and board members to promote the auction/event on their social media networks if they are comfortable doing so. (Be aware of any legality about asking employees to use their own social networks)

A few last pieces of advice:

- Have fun promoting your auction or event
- Make promotion a team effort rather than leaving it all to one person
- Make it easy for supporters to support you however they choose
- Encourage sponsors to become part of your promotion network
- There's no such thing as over-communicating



Auction Items Checklist:

Improve Your Auction Catalog by Including Items in These Categories

The types of items you have in your catalog can make or break your auction. When you're looking for item donations, how do you know which items to go after, or which ones are popular? Are there any items that are "must-haves" for your auction? Here's a list of the top 5 based on our experience, with room to write down your ideas.

1. Top-performing Item Categories on the Panorama platform

Ask for donations in each category

Add value and variety to your auction catalog:

- ☐ **Dining**
Everyone enjoys going out for a nice meal
- ☐ **Travel**
There's nothing like a great trip!
- ☐ **Getaways**
Weekend vacations or exotic getaways
- ☐ **Sports Tickets**
Watching your favorite team is exciting
- ☐ **Entertainment Tickets**
Seeing your favorite performer
- ☐ **Retail Gift Cards**
Always popular!
- ☐ **Unique Experiences**
Some experiences are truly once-in-a-lifetime

My Ideas:

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2. Top-performing Items Gathered from Your Community

These are items that your community can supply; they are unique offerings that cannot be purchased at any store or bought online. Here are some examples:

Get the community involved!

Add value and variety to your auction catalog:

- ☐ Principal for a day
- ☐ A reserved parking spot
- ☐ Lunch with the mayor
- ☐ Shadow a local professional

My Ideas:

3. Top Fund-a-need Items

My Ideas:

There may be bidders out there who want to give, but don't see any items they'd like to bid on. Or, they may be actively bidding, but want to be sure they donate a certain dollar amount.

Fund-a-need items offer the perfect opportunity for these individuals to contribute.

Ideas for schools, food banks, hospitals:

- ☐ \$100 -Sends a kid to camp
- ☐ \$50- Buys groceries for a family
- ☐ \$200- Helps renovate the building



4. Top Items Specific to Your Community

While it's important to keep the big picture in mind, remember to include items that are of specific interest to your community. You know what excites them the most.

Get the community involved!

Your community has a lot to offer:

- ☐ Local events
- ☐ Yard maintenance
- ☐ Courier service
- ☐ Paint a house

My Ideas:

5. Don't Be Afraid to Ask for Gift Card Donations

Whether it's a gift card to Starbucks, a local restaurant, or Saks Fifth Avenue, people love to bid on gift cards. Here's their chance to give to your organization, while using the gift card at their favorite place!

My Ideas:

Gift cards are a sure bet!

Most businesses love giving to a good cause:

- ☐ Restaurants
- ☐ Local businesses
- ☐ Car repair/oil change



Selling Sponsorships Checklist:

Sponsorships Give You the Chance to Earn Additional Revenue

Sponsorships give you the chance to earn additional revenue at your fundraising event. But to convince sponsors to support you, you need to make a compelling case. If you are putting your auction online, sponsors will appreciate that additional exposure.

Many businesses like to be perceived as a supportive member of your community and becoming a sponsor of your auction and/or event is a great way to do that. But sponsors also want to get the marketing exposure that your organization can provide. Make sure you articulate those benefits clearly. Here are some key steps in developing a sponsorship solicitation campaign:



1. List your community and event attributes

- ☐ # of people attending your event
- ☐ Demographic information attractive to businesses (e.g. age, gender, income, interests, education)
- ☐ # of days of the online auction
- ☐ # of emails planned to promote your auction/event
- ☐ # of potential website visitors from within your community or outside your usual community

2. Define sponsorship benefits

- ☐ Create several tiers with associated benefits for each
- ☐ Consider additional benefits available at your event (if there is one) such as signage, ads in the program, or tickets to the event.

My Ideas:

3. Define sponsorship packages

Put these benefits together into packages, from Level I of the highest value (including the most benefits and special attention) to Level III of lowest value (basic benefits, less special attention). Also think about what you are going to call these levels.

Here are some package examples

☐ **Default sponsor levels:**

Platinum, Gold, Silver

☐ **Animal welfare sponsor levels:**

Premiere Pups and First Class Felines, Top Dogs and Cool Cats, Classy Cats and Canines

☐ **Theatre sponsor levels:**

Producer, Partner, Patron

My Ideas:

4. Price sponsorship packages

After finalizing the different opportunities available both during the online auction and at your event, consider the companies you are reaching out to, your auction goal, and your community to determine the price of each level.

My Ideas:

Here are some example levels:

☐ **Large:**

Platinum: \$10,000
Gold: \$7,500
Silver: \$5,000
Homepage: \$2,000

☐ **Medium:**

Platinum: \$5,000
Gold: \$2,500
Silver: \$1,000
Homepage: \$500

☐ **Small:**

Platinum: \$1,000
Gold: \$500
Silver: \$250
Homepage: \$100

5. Helpful talking points

My Ideas:

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☐ Remind sponsors of both the soft and hard value of their sponsorship:

Affiliation with a great cause and quantifiable online marketing opportunities, supported by post-auction data.

☐ Be flexible!

If a potential sponsor cannot pay the full amount, see if they can donate in kind or one or more auction items in place of the full monetary donation.

If you are running your auction on the Panorama platform...

There are a number of different sponsorship opportunities available on your event website.

☐ Homepage:

Homepage sponsors are listed in the "Call Out Box" section of the homepage. You can include up to four sponsors in this section.

☐ Global:

Global Sponsors are listed at the bottom of the auction site. They get the most exposure because they're viewable on every page of your auction site. There are three tiers available and you can list as many sponsors as you'd like within each tier.

☐ Email:

Email sponsors are included in emails sent through the Auction Manager tool. You can include up to 10 sponsors per email. They are listed on the right side of the email message.

My Ideas:

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Finding Volunteers Checklist:

How to Assemble a Winning Team for Your Event

There's no doubt that your volunteers will play an important role in your auction's success. Not sure how to find them? Our checklist will help you recruit fantastic volunteers and get you set up for success.

Step #1 - Successful fundraisers don't just happen

They require time, planning, and a great team of volunteers to help you meet your goals.

Step #2 - Assess the skills that are needed to put together a successful fundraiser

Outlining specific needs will appeal to people who want to help, but who may not be able to commit a lot of time to help you meet your goals.

Step #3 - Create different tasks based on the individual skill sets of your volunteers.

Job areas to consider: copywriting; promotion; selling sponsorships; data entry; graphic design; and soliciting donations.

Tools to Track Your Progress

There are a number of tools available to you to organize your efforts. Panorama offers a complete all-in-one fundraising platform that helps you organize your auction from beginning to end. We also have an amazing support team to help you every step of the way.

For School Fundraisers

Here are some tips for schools

Getting the word out early is critical. Here are a variety of tactics to employ:

- ☐ **Include a call for volunteers**
The next PTO meeting is a perfect time!
- ☐ **Contact parents throughout the school**
These folks are likely to be well-connected to other parents who are cause-minded.
- ☐ **Get in touch with existing school groups**
...booster clubs, PTO, theatre, etc.
- ☐ **Reach out to high school students**
Volunteering can be a great résumé builder for college.



My Ideas:

For Nonprofits and Member-Based Organizations

Here are some tips for nonprofits

Getting the word out early is critical. Here are a variety of tactics to employ:

- ☐ **Include a call for volunteers on your website**
...in mailings, and in your e-newsletter
- ☐ **Get your board members involved**
- ☐ **Engage your community members**
...especially those who have already shown a certain level of commitment



My Ideas:

Handwriting practice lines for the 'My Ideas' section, featuring horizontal lines with a small circle at the start of each line.

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For Any Organization

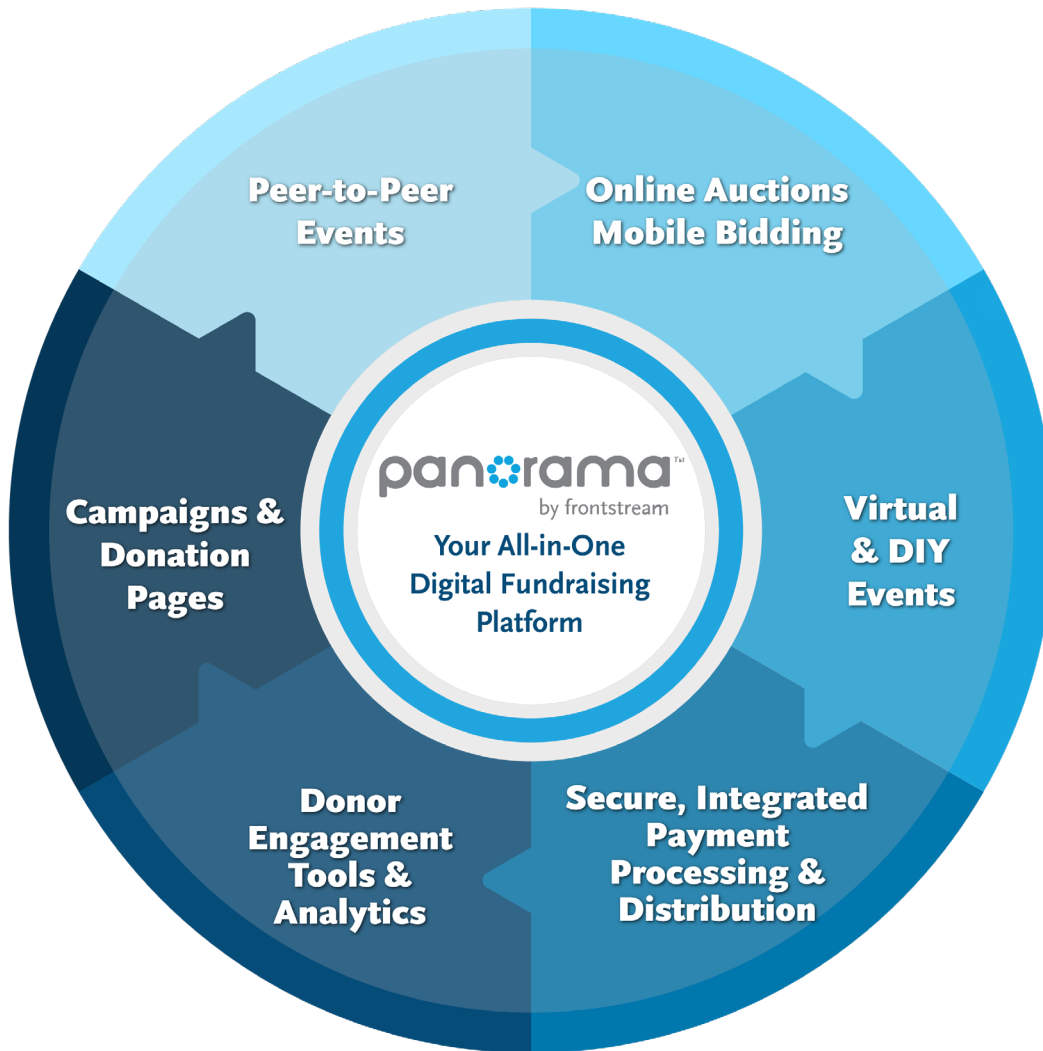
Here are some tips for any organization

Getting the word out early is critical. Here are a variety of tactics to employ:

- ☐ **Contact local colleges or universities**
For many students, part of their curriculum requires an internship, so this can be a great resource for you to draw on.
- ☐ **Ask for help by using social media**
Let your Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn connections help you spread the word.
- ☐ **Search online for "volunteer action center"**
...(e.g., BostonCares.org in metro Boston, NYCares.org in metro New York). Also check HandsOn Network at handsonnetwork.org
- ☐ **Add listings to sites like**
VolunteerMatch.org, Idealist.org & Craigslist.org.

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