

# Campaign Incentive & Special Event Ideas

## What Can Incentives Do For My Campaign?

- Increase enthusiasm and participation
- Increase average gift
- Encourage employees to pledge promptly
- Encourage attendance at campaign meetings

### A note about Incentives and Prizes

Token incentives or prizes are more effective than expensive items. Many people may react negatively to the idea of a lavish “reward” for giving to United Way. It can seem inconsistent with the spirit of United Way so use your best judgment. A good place to start is with your vendors for incentives. Your vendors may be able to provide gifts or loan merchandise. It is a great way for a company’s vendors to show how much their business is appreciated while it spreads awareness of United Way.

### Ideas for Incentives

1. Parking Place
2. Afternoon off of work
3. Lunch with the boss (out of office and the boss pays)
4. Movie/game/play tickets
5. Snooze day (allowed to come in late)
6. Golf with the boss
7. Car washed by boss or co-worker
8. Leave 1-hour early/come in 1 hour late
9. Office redecorated or cleaned — Trading Spaces
10. Gas and car wash gift certificates
11. Jeans on Fridays
12. Company promotional items

### Departmental Competition

The department with the best participation (most pledge cards returned) is rewarded with a pizza party or car wash by the CEO or lunch with the CEO.

## Special Event Ideas

Special events are your opportunity to add a little something extra to the campaign! Not only do they raise extra funding for United Way, but they can be instrumental in team development and great for company spirit. Use this as an opportunity to further educate your employees about United Way and most importantly, have FUN!! And remember, not every special event has to be elaborate.

- Be creative
- Events should be strategically scheduled throughout the campaign to be most successful
- Make it easy for employees to participate
- Secure the support of upper management
- Involve a team in the planning and implementation process
- Have fun!

Remember... when planning special events, please stress that the support of the activities is in addition to the individual campaign pledge.

## **Here's what some of our local companies do for their United Way campaigns.**

### **Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.**

The large and engaged committee at Goodyear looks for new and exciting ways to increase awareness of and contributions to United Way. This group always seeks to put a 'Goodyear spin' on classic activities such as raffles, bake sales, jeans days, game shows and company-wide office Olympics, including office chair races. A 'Texas Hold 'Em' poker tournament is held to benefit United Way. Participants donate \$20 to be included in the tournament with real poker-style ambiance.

### **Myers Industries**

It was "Every Day for United Way" at Myers Industries Inc., where they celebrated with a week of fun events during the 2005 UW Campaign. The series of low budget, fun events were designed to help raise awareness while generating more money for the UW programs. "MonWay" kicked off the week with a donut breakfast. TuesWay hosted snacks for sale in the Exhibit Hall. WednesWay employees contributed baked goods, which were sold throughout the day. ThursWay encouraged each department to pick a theme, dress, decorate, and provide food accordingly to ask for donations from coworkers in sampling the diverse meals. FriWay concluded the week of fun filled events with the annual Chili Cook Off where pledge cards were due and prizes were drawn. Each day offered numerous other activities such as basketball contests, 50/50 raffle ticket sales, food, food and lots of food!!

### **Akron Beacon Journal**

The Akron Beacon Journal hosted monthly activities to create awareness for their staff. Led by a strong and creative committee, the Beacon hosted special events such as basket raffles, book sales, Brown Bag Seminars, hot dog sales, and other baked good sales. Employees and their families also volunteered their time to run a concession stand at Canal Park in order to earn money, which was contributed to UW.

It is the annual online auction hosted by The Akron Beacon Journal that gains the most attention and raises the most special event funds annually. The committee seeks in-kind donations from community businesses and individuals; then auctions off items online, allowing the highest bid to win.

### **Bridgestone/Firestone**

Takes advantage of their employees' enthusiasm for the company's racing program and involvement in the Cleveland Grand Prix race by becoming a Pacesetter Campaign to host a much bigger party!

On the menu is a free lunch for all employees. We're not just talking hot dogs and hamburgers here. The menu is a riblet sandwich, quarter chicken, potato salad and baked beans. Other activities other than eating yourself silly included – go-kart rides for a donation to United Way, carnival games, DJ, classic car show, giveaways, door prizes, 50/50 raffle, and best trailer II - race car display.

### **Advanced Elastomer Systems**

Advanced Elastomers Systems selects a theme and plans a week of exciting events for employees – from reverse raffles and silent auctions to crock pot cookoffs – they build momentum and excitement for participants.

### **ASC Industries**

ASC Industries kicked-off their campaign with a month of great events. There was an interdepartmental contest to see who could collect the most pennies. Unfortunately, you could sabotage the other teams by adding to their jar, any currency that is not a penny. The total of silver change and bills was then subtracted from that team's total. They held a "closest to the pin" golf challenge, and chili cook-off judged by United Way of Summit County's own President, Bob Kulinski. The month was wrapped up with the first annual ASC Industries Hotdog Eating contest. Seven of ASC's finest took up the challenge to see

how many dogs they could down in 15 minutes. A rowdy crowd packed the ASC gymnasium to “vote” for the winners with dollars and cheer their favorite to victory.

### **Babcock and Wilcox**

B&W generates employee participation with some unique ideas. All donors that give at \$5 per pay or a one-time gift of \$120 receive a candy jar that gets filled up throughout the year to remind donors that “Giving Has Sweet Rewards”. They also celebrate United Way Wednesdays throughout the length of their campaign. Each Wednesday, every employee receives a surprise to draw attention to the United Way campaign. The last Wednesday, everyone gets to celebrate “Sundae on a Wednesday” with ice cream sundaes in the cafeteria. There is also a parking space auction where people can bid for spaces close to the entrances, something that is a big help in the Ohio winter!

### **Ikon Office Solutions**

Ikon had a great time with their 2005 campaign by holding fun special events for the employees to participate in. A car wash and raffles helped get everyone involved while raising money in support of United Way. Food proved to be a great incentive as well. A pancake breakfast with employee volunteers as chefs, as well as a chili cook-off, bake sale and ice cream social drew people in and helped garner more contributions to Ikon’s campaign. Perhaps the most creative event Ikon held was “Arrest a Coworker Day.” A jail cell was put up in the lobby, complete with a volunteer sheriff and for a small donation, employees could have an “arrest warrant” issued for an alleged wrongdoer. Once rounded up by the sheriff, the accused could do their time, or prove their innocence through a charitable gift to United Way

## **Here are some other fun event ideas**

### **Appreciation Grams**

Appreciation grams are sent to co-workers in the office on an ordinary day or in connection with a holiday such as Valentines Day, Easter, Halloween, May Day, etc.

Appreciation grams consist of little notes with words of thanks, recognition, or good wishes. Along with the note include a bag of candy, a Mylar balloon or flowers.

Some examples include: jelly beans for Easter, Hershey Hugs for Valentines Day, pet rocks for a 70’s theme, candy corn for Halloween.

Take pre-orders for one week in the break-room. Write down the names of the sender and receiver so they can be delivered at a later date. Notes can be computer printed generic messages, or at time of purchase, purchaser can hand write a note of appreciation.

### **Backyard/Parking Lot Bar-B-Q**

Determine costs of set-up. Set a sale price for the Bar-B-Q. Pre-sell tickets to the event. The event may also be set up as a potluck picnic with everyone bringing a dish to share.

Items that need to be purchased include: paper products, meat and fixings, buns, beverages, grill, lawn chairs, tables. Set-up outside. You may wish to include a volleyball net, Frisbee, music, etc. as time and space allow.

### **Bake Sale**

Homemade or store bought items are brought in such as: cookies, pies, muffins, bars, cupcakes, fudge, and candy. Arrange baked items on a table to be seen throughout the day. This is a single-day event; chance ticket sales (\$0.25 a piece) begin that morning. Chances may be sold at the reception desk, in the lunchroom, and during lunch. Committee members draw names of winners at the end of the day and deliver items to the winners.

### **Casual Day**

Every Friday, employees have the opportunity to purchase coupons for a Jeans Day or Casual Wear Day for the following workweek. Cost is \$1 for one day of casual attire or \$4 for a week's worth of casual days. Give buttons to employees purchasing weeklong coupons. Buttons state, "We wear jeans to show support of United Way." Give stickers to daily coupon holders with same message. This publicizes campaign among co-workers and offers customers an explanation for the casual attire.

### **Chili Cook-off**

Employees bring in a pot of their favorite chili on the day of the contest. Employees pay a fee to taste the varieties of chili. They vote for the best chili and the winner is proclaimed the "Chili King" and the proceeds go to United Way.

### **Christmas Cookie Sale**

Call bakeries for cookie bids. Determine the cost and selling price. (Charge \$0.75 more per dozen than the cost.) Check to be sure the bakery will package in dozens, if not the committee will need to package. Have sign-up sheet to take preorders.

Selling hints: they make great gifts, saves time from baking and buying at a store. Order, then have committee pick-up cookies in the morning and deliver treats to work.

### **Craft Sale**

Advertise the craft sale ahead of time in the company newsletter, bulletin board, email enabling participants time to make (or buy) crafts. Place items on a display table, each with its own jar to place purchased chances. Employees purchase chances, fill out name and place it in a jar corresponding to the item they desire (example: \$0.25 each or 5 for \$1.00). Run the sale for a week, allowing employees to check each day on their odds by looking at the number of tickets in the jars. At the end of the week, the Committee draws names and delivers the items to winners.

### **Diamond Donors**

Look for the "diamonds" in your company. Diamond Donors are folks that have contributed to United Way for 25 years or more. The company and their employees will be publicly recognized and the "diamonds" will be invited to special events.

### **Employee Car Wash**

Recruit a team of car-washers (consider involving managers) and determine shifts. Team members bring sponges, rags, soap, buckets, hoses, radio, etc. on day of event. Set up wash site in employee parking lot. Wash tickets may be purchased in advance (\$3-\$5) or simply recruit cars on wash day. Car washers get keys from co-workers, pick up vehicle and bring to the wash site to be cleaned. Return washed cars to parking places. Workers never have to leave the office! Another option is to set aside a reserved parking area for employees to park in the morning, leaving keys in the car to be moved if necessary.

### **Employee Cookbook**

Ask employees to bring in their favorite recipes from home. Research publishing companies to print the collected recipes in a book format, or do it in-house. Plan on a two to six month time period for the preparation and printing of the project.

Take pre-orders after determining price per copy with the publishing company. Profit earned from the sale can be added to the United Way donation from your company. Order extra books for last minute shoppers. (Those who have done this always run out!)

### **"Fear Factor" Game**

Group of executives are challenged to face off in events ranging from eating food blindfolded to picking items out of jars full of worms.

### **Identify the Baby Photo Contest**

Employees bring in a favorite baby picture, writing their name on the backside. Pictures are numbered and posted on a bulletin board. Employees purchase a chance to match co-workers with baby pictures. When purchasing a chance, give purchaser a numbered sheet with blanks to write their guesses. Have them put their own name at the top and turn in. Employee with the greatest number correct wins a prize! Remember to have more than ten prizes on hand in the event of a tie.

### **Indoor Mini Golf**

This indoor event is great for swinging away those winter blues! To make the event a contest, have each department design a creative hole using only materials already in their department. Examples include: wastebaskets, letter trays, reams of paper, machine parts, etc. If possible include a shot from the roof.

The employee committee rounds up some clubs and staffs the course during the lunch hour for the week of the campaign. Employees play the course as often as they like for a small fee. The CEO serves as the pro, challenging the employee with the winning score to a sudden death playoff on the final day of mini golf. Prizes are awarded to the department with the most creative hole and to the best mini golfers.

### **Let the Race Begin**

1. For this auto-racing theme, create a large goal poster that looks like an Indy racetrack to set the pace of your campaign race. Use Velcro cars to measure progress along the track as the company moves closer to the finish of the campaign.
2. Decorate main room with race flags, jerseys and auto racing posters.
3. Hold your own auto race with radio-controlled cars in the parking lot.

### **Life is Not a Spectator Sport - Go the Distance**

1. At the start of the campaign, hold a kick-off meeting explaining touchdowns (accomplishments of previous years), penalties and receptions (areas needing improvement), and huddles (ideas for the coming campaign).
2. To launch the campaign, hold a tailgate party in the parking lot or at a park. Arrange to have the party at the same time as a local softball or baseball game and cheer on your home team.
3. Throughout the campaign hold sport fundraisers such as a slam dunk/shootout contest, volleyball tournament, football toss, etc. Aeros, Brown, Indians or Cavs tickets or tickets for other local teams make great prizes.

### **Movie Trivia Quiz**

This quiz can be completed at workstations & returned to an appointed person to tally the scores. You can match the actor/actress with the movie, match the quote with the movie, or combine. The highest score wins a prize. In case of a tie, a drawing will be held. Winners can be announced at a group lunch at the close of the campaign.

### **Ornament Raffle**

Buy or have donated an artificial tree, which can be stored and used annually. Employees bring in ornaments either purchased or handmade to hang on the tree. Tree may be kept up and ornaments collected for the entire Christmas season. After all ornaments are collected, most valuable ornaments are selected to be raffled first, giving all a fair chance at high valued ornaments (Hallmark Keepsakes, Precious Moments, etc.) Employees purchase chances for the ornament raffle (example: \$0.25 or 5 for \$1.00) and names are drawn.

### **Pirates of the Caribbean**

For those who don't want to grow up like Peter Pan, this event will be a lot of fun. Decorate meeting room or lunchroom with cut out palm trees, starfish, waves, etc. Bring in shells and fishnets to add to the decor. Bring in a chest with a key that will be your treasure chest, fill it with secret prizes. Otherwise make a treasure chest out of a large cardboard box with gold and silver foil pasted on the outside.

Employees purchase a key (either real or cut-out cardboard keys) from a volunteer dressed in a pirate costume. Cutout keys are numbered and the winner of the treasure chest is determined by a drawing. Real keys are tried in the lock, the winner being the person with the actual chest key. Make a treasure map and mount it on the wall. The display shows the progress toward campaign goal with a pirate ship crossing an ocean, in search of desert islands, with an "X" to mark the spot (goal).

### **Potpourri Luncheon**

Participating employees bring a hot-dish, appetizer, salad, side, dessert, etc. to be shared. Paper products are also needed for this event. There is no sign-up for this event. Items brought in are completely random. Employees pay \$5 to fill their plate and sample everything in the room. If your company has their own cookbook, the theme could be A Potpourri of Company Recipes. Participants must make a dish out of the employee cookbook.

### **Pumpkin Decorating Contest**

Employees form teams and create their own unique design using pumpkins. The pumpkins are displayed in the company cafeteria and employees vote for their favorite pumpkin by placing money in that team's container. The winning team is awarded a prize pack containing gift certificates and other goodies.

### **Put Yourself in Their Shoes**

Encourage the wearing of crazy/funky shoes the week of the campaign. Hold a campaign kick-off lunch with foot-long hot dogs, Shoestring taters, Corn chips, SOFT SHOE drinks and SOLE music (Blue Suede Shoes, These Boots Were Made for Walking). To start the campaign and to get across the meaning of the theme, host guest speakers from United Way funded agencies, or have guest speakers from within the company, speakers relate their experiences with United Way and personally ask people to put yourself in my shoes. Keep track of fundraising progress with a poster board designed with a track and moveable (Velcro, magnetic board, etc.) racing shoes that come closer to the finish as the campaign evolves. Hand out thank yous at the end of the campaign, tied with shoelaces.

### **Reach for the Goal**

Tie together the title with an Olympic theme. The company wins the gold medal when the campaign goal is reached. Create a poster with a bronze, silver and gold medal goal. The Opening Ceremonies are the kick-off to the campaign, explaining the goal and theme.

Symbolic passing of the torch from last year's campaign chair to the new chairperson.

Hold a mini-Olympics with employees forming teams of three or more. Events include hula-hoop relay, tricycle race, basketball dribble, tug-of-war, 100-yard dash, mile relay, and sack race. Winter Olympic events include cross-country ski relay, the luge (fastest sled), tug-of-war in the snow, best snow sculpture, team members push-pull each other in a sled race and snow football. Charge an entry fee for teams, offering prizes for the winning team along with souvenir gold medals. Conclude the Olympic campaign with an awards ceremony, awarding Olympic winners as well as all employees for their campaign efforts.

### **Root Beer Float Sales**

Seek donations or purchase root beer and vanilla ice cream. Other items needed include straws, spoons, cups, and ice cream scoopers. Have committee schedule work shifts. This popular event works well during lunch and breaks in the summertime. Remember a freezer will be needed to store the ice cream if the event is held all day.

### **Shave the Boss's Head**

Employees attempt to reach company goal. If they succeed or exceed the goal, boss agrees to shave off his or her hair (heads of hair or mustaches and beards for men). Create a chart to keep track of set company campaign goal. Have a photo image or drawing of boss without hair at the top, displaying result

of reaching goal, or show progress posters with the slow removal of hair, as the employees get closer to the goal. Employees who make contributions are given the opportunity to vote on whether or not the CEO will have to shave. Host a celebration party with the boss shaving his or her head/mustache/beard at the event.

### **Snack & Dessert Cart**

Employees donate items; several carts travel around the building in the morning and afternoon and offer treats at a minimal cost. A new twist on the traditional bake sale.

### **Tricycle Races**

Create teams each with of three to 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 arrange to borrow from a cooperating store) through a predetermined course through the office. Possibilities include: through hallways, lunch/break rooms, around cubicles, chairs, and in and out of offices. Have course marked with signs or tape on the floor. Fans are able to watch and cheer from different areas around the office.

The race is designed as a relay. Team members may pass off a flag, pinwheel, teddy bear or similar item to their succeeding team member. Remember to take pictures for the company bulletin board or newsletter!

### **Game Ideas**

#### **Jeopardy**

Have 5 - 10 answers about United Way, the agencies, etc., on a board. Make up play cards/answer sheets and have the employees write down the questions & drop them in the box.

#### **Wheel Of Fortune**

Have several puzzles related to United Way, such as the campaign chair, agencies, theme for that year, etc., (give them vowels for free) and have employees write down their guesses & drop them in the box.

#### **The Price Is Right**

Using allocations information for United Way programs & services, have employees match the allocation amount with the program.

#### **Family Feud**

Using a statement from the campaign materials like: United Way agencies that support Older People. Have the employees list the agencies on a sheet (assign equal points to them).

#### **Let's Make A Deal**

Go around the office and ask random United Way-related questions to employees. If they get the answer right, give them a prize on the spot. (Works well if you can get the President to go along with you to hand out the prize.)

#### **Who Wants To Be A Millionaire**

From the list of donors, draw out names randomly to be the contestants. Ask them to name three United Way agencies that help kids (or elderly, families, etc.) Whoever writes them down the fastest and raises the paper in the air gets to play first. Using the United Way brochure or website, put together some questions about United Way and the agencies for the contestant. (Call the United Way office for help if you need.) Use play money for prizes.

### **Other Ideas**

**In Bad taste** – Executive team members wear their ugliest ties, jewelry, shoes or hats. Employees vote for the ugliest item, paying \$1 per vote. The executive with the most votes at day's end is declared the winner and may be awarded a prize.

**Look-A-Like Contest** – Employees are encouraged to dress up like famous personalities. Co-workers then pay to vote on the best costume with the contestant receiving the most votes winning a prize.

**Spaghetti Dinner** - Host spaghetti feed and charge for each bowl.

**Department Penny Jar** – Each department is designated a jar. Employees are encouraged to fill their own department's jar with pennies, each equaling one point. Opposing departments may then add other

coins to their jars that are equal to their value only negative (ex: A dime is minus 10 points). The department with the most positive points at the end of the week is awarded a prize.

**Tug-of-War** – have an interdepartmental competition. Each team pays a fee for entry with the winning team winning a prize.

**Host an International Lunch** – Have employees bring ethnic dishes for a potluck. Charge \$5 per plate.

**Kiss the Pig** – Employees vote through contributions to executive labeled piggy banks for the boss who must kiss the pig.

**Traveling Trophy** – Companies with multiple locations have found that using a traveling trophy generates friendly competition and is a great sign of pride for the location. Trophies may be used for any number of contests including location with the highest participation, raising the most special event dollars, etc.

**Silent Auction** - Simply gather items and create bid sheets, being certain to provide a minimum bid for each item.

**Dress-up the Boss** - Boss wears a costume voted on by all employees if the campaign goal is reached. Examples: tutu, animal costume, devil costume, etc.

**Guess How Many** - Guess the number of jellybeans, M&Ms, pennies or other items in a jar. Buy chances to guess. Closest guess receives a prize.

**Golf Ball Sales** - Collect old golf balls to clean and shine. Employees purchase golf balls (5 for \$1.00) during lunch or breaks.

**Recycled Goods** - Turn in recycled paper, cans, bottles, etc. and exchange them for money for the United Way.

**Theme Lunches** - Add fun to campaign week by hosting a theme lunch such as 50s, 60s, 70s, or 80s, holiday themes, TV shows, sports, Renaissance, etc.

**Bakery Cart** - Wheel a cart of bagels, doughnuts, Danishes, coffee and juice through the office, collecting United Way donations in exchange for the goodies.

**Boss Cooks for You** - Have a special breakfast at which top managers cook for all donors.

**Wall of Fame** - Put pictures on a wall recognizing employees who have been contributing for the most consecutive years.

**Buck Coupons** - Give everyone who attends campaign meetings a buck coupon that can be redeemed in the company cafeteria or company store.

**Just Desserts** - Campaign committee furnishes the main dish but sells desserts for \$1.50 more with proceeds going to United Way.

**Best Photo Contest** - Employees submit photographs taken at campaign and celebration events. Photos are displayed on a bulletin board and judged by committee, with the best photo receiving prizes such as a new camera, free film developing, photo album, camera carrying case and film.

**Easter Egg Raffle** - Fill plastic Easter eggs with raffle numbers. People buy eggs or “chances” for springtime prizes such as Easter lilies and gift baskets.

**Food Fight** - Divide into two or more teams and elect captains. Team members collect money and turn in to captain. Team raising the most money is awarded a pizza/sub party, which they may verbally throw into their competitor’s faces.

**Buttons** - Give all who donate a button stating, “ I gave to United Way.”

**Garage Sale** - Find a volunteer willing to loan garage space or use work site after hours. Two or three weeks before the sale, employees bring in sale items which volunteers price and sell day of event. Advertise within the company and outer community.

**Tourney Time** - Hold a broomball, softball, tee-ball, kickball, racquetball, tennis, walleyball or ping-pong tournament.

**Karaoke Contest** - Hold a contest to determine who has the best and worst karaoke talent. Coworkers may buy votes ahead of time to elect the “Star of the Show” who will sing the first song. Charge an entrance fee for the show.

**Jail And Bail** - Hold in correlation with an employee picnic or carnival. Have a “Catch and Cuff ‘Em” Jail booth where employees pay to have co-workers, supervisors, managers or executives incarcerated for short periods during the event.

**Team Tees** - Design a T-shirt with your company logo joined with the United Way logo to give to contributing employees who “team up” in the United Way effort.

**Slogan Contest** - Employees develop in-house campaign slogans/themes. The committee picks the top ten, which are then voted on by the entire company, the winner receiving an award.

**Wild West** - Employees dress in cowboy/cowgirl attire. Works well with a BBQ or chili cook-off.

**Grease** - Have employees cast ballot for which members of the Executive Team should dress up like which characters in the musical Grease (or any other popular movie / play). Have them stand in front of the assembly of employees and let employees pick the best look-alike by loudness of applause. Charge them \$1 per vote, with proceeds going to United Way.

**Thank You** - Thank employees in newsletters through e-mail with a special brunch or dinner payroll stuffer message of thanks personalized letters from the President at staff meetings with thank you mugs handed out by the CEO by hosting a United Way agency representative at a staff meeting who brings personal thank you greetings with thank you cards attached with heart pins (for "opening their hearts" or "having hearts of gold") personal phone calls made by President or board members thank you posters that include the names of all donors (consider posting in public places) or an announcement on the local cable television station newspaper ads that recognize all donors by name thank you flyers on cars.

Or for an extra special Thanks - Hold an unexpected early morning meeting to say thank you and surprise employees by giving them the rest of the day off. Or have President or committee members treat each donor individually to lunch.



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