

Challenge Corporate Power



RAN.org

ACTIVIST FUNDRAISING TOOLKIT: HOW TO ORGANIZE A RAFFLE/SILENT AUCTION

What is a raffle? What is a silent auction? Raffles and auctions are fun and exciting ways to raise money. A raffle entails selling tickets in advance of an event and then drawing prize winners from a hat. Raffle tickets are usually reasonably priced at \$1 to \$5 a piece, which makes this a good choice to appeal to a broad audience. A silent auction is slightly different in that folks bid on items the day of the event, and bid prices tend to be slightly higher, depending on the items you secure. The auction is “silent” because folks are given bid numbers to place their bids on certain items, rather than using their names. In both cases, you’ll need to ask local businesses (preferably sustainable businesses that share your group’s ideals) to donate prizes that would be suitable to give away to your supporters. Both raffles and auctions can be incorporated as part of house parties, benefit concerts, and other community events.

What are the key ingredients to a successful raffle or silent auction?

RAFFLES AND SILENT AUCTIONS: Enticing and varied prizes. For both raffles and silent auctions, you want to secure a broad array of prizes with various price levels to ensure you have something for everyone. Inexpensive items might include CDs, gift certificates to casual restaurants, t-shirts, and ice cream cone vouchers. Pricier items might include gift certificates to fine restaurants, trip give-a-ways, jewelry, and artwork make better auction items. Remember: approach businesses that share your values! See *How to Get Stuff Donated* guide for more information.

RAFFLES: Ticket sales and drawing. With a raffle, sell tickets beforehand as well as the day of the event. It’s helpful to get the type of numbered tickets that include two tickets with each number—one for the person drawing names, and one for the raffle ticket purchaser. Have each ticket buyer write his/her name and telephone number on each ticket that you keep so that you can get in touch and also ensure that the right folks are claiming the right prizes. You can decide whether or not you want to allow folks not in attendance at the event to still be able to claim a prize. If you decide that they can, you should hold onto their prizes and call them after the event. If you decide folks must be in attendance to claim their prizes, simply keep drawing numbers until you have a winner.

SILENT AUCTIONS: Simple and clear bid sheets are key. For a silent auction, you should have a bid sheet for each item. A bid sheet should clearly include the name and “make” (i.e., Backpack by Patagonia) of the item at the top, as well as a starting bid price which is typically 25% of the price that the item “goes for” on the market, even though it was donated to you. For example, if a local artist donates a photograph of an elephant in the wild and says it would sell for (or it is valued at) \$50, then you’re starting bid price would be approximately \$15. Similarly, if a local organic restaurant donates a gift certificate for \$35, then your starting bid price would be around \$10. Use *Bid Sheet Templates* as a guide.

You then would need to assign each person attending the auction a bid number that they can use to bid. **IMPORTANT:** be sure to record which bid numbers have been assigned to which folks so that

Challenge Corporate Power



RAN.org

you know who wins each item. Items should be placed on a table at your event space with bid sheets taped in front of them accordingly. You can organize the events by category (i.e., artwork, restaurants, jewelry, etc.) to make it easier for auction bidders to find their way. Folks can then make their rounds and write in their bid numbers and bid amounts for the auction items they want to win!

RAFFLES AND SILENT AUCTIONS: Time's up and announcing the winner! You should let folks know when raffle ticket sales are/will be closed, and also when the silent auction bidding will end. You must have a clear "cut off" time if you want your event to be successful—folks will be frustrated if they are "outbid" after time is up. To reinforce this, you may want to have folks collect bid sheets when time is up. It's also good practice to announce raffle and silent auction winners at your event, if possible, because it is fun and exciting for winners to come up to the front of the crowd to claim their prizes!