Challenge Corporate Power

RAINFOREST ACTION NETWORK

RAN.org

ACTIVIST FUNDRAISING TOOLKIT:
HOW TO…GET STUFF DONATED

What is an in-kind donation? An in-kind donation refers to the gifting of a good or service which is worth its fair market value. For example, if a local organic bakery donates 60 loaves of bread each valued at $10, the fair market value for the total in-kind donation is $600. The donating business can then "write off" the $600 as a tax deduction, just as it would a cash donation of the same amount.

How can getting stuff donated help you to fundraise? The answer here is somewhat obvious—in-kind donations help to keep costs down and improve the quality of your fundraising efforts and events. For example, food and drink donations can help offset catering costs of your fundraising events. Donation of other goods and services such as dinner gift certificates, spa packages, artwork, and jewelry can help to make your raffle or auction a big success! You can also cut costs by getting recycled copy paper or advertising space donated, and you can even think about getting pro bono services from a lawyer or other contractor—these types of services are also considered in-kind. (See *How to Organize a Raffle/Silent Auction* for more information.)

Who should you ask for in-kind donations? Local, sustainable businesses, nationally recognized brands with strong values, restaurants, family, friends, fellow activists, artists, jewelers, children—anyone you think has a talent, product, service, or fun handicraft to offer and share!

How should you ask folks to donate? ***First***, make a list of sustainable businesses, restaurants, artists, etc. that you'd like to approach. Your list should include the name of the establishment as well as mail, email, and telephone contact information. ***Next***, draft a form letter to send out to the folks you're seeking donations from. The letter should include: (1) a short blurb about your cause and/or event; (2) a case for why their participation in the event will be good for their business (good publicity and visibility, good opportunity for them to reach a certain target market—depending on the attendees, and the opportunity to give a 100% tax deductible gift); (3) a clear ask for a specific good or service that's applicable to the business/person you're asking for a donation; (4) your contact information so that folks can get you their items! ***Finally***, you should follow up the letter with a phone call – letters get lost in the mail and there's nothing like a personal touch to help you secure great items!

Here's an excerpt from a RAN silent auction donation letter to a local spa that you might find useful: "The RAN XX event is a wonderful marketing opportunity for your business. The 500 guests that attend this event are your target market—they are progressive, conscious consumers that care deeply about the products they use and their impact on the environment. Guests will be given the opportunity to read about your company and product on the bid sheet and make a bid on your item. We will also list you with a link to your website on our site and list you in the evening's program. And since

we're a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, your donation is 100% tax deductible! I hope that you will join us in celebrating and honoring our work by becoming a sponsor **with a contribution of a spa package for our auction**, or another gift that you deem appropriate.

I invite you to join all of us at RAN in making this a memorable celebration. So that we may include your donations in our upcoming silent auction, please return the enclosed reply form promptly. If you have any questions regarding this sponsorship, please contact our Event Coordinator [name] at [telephone]. I thank you in advance for your support."