



## How to Plan and Execute a Killer Fundraiser!

Are you looking to raise funds for your organization? We've performed at fundraisers and charity events for a wide variety of organizations including senior homes, political campaigns, booster clubs, libraries, historic sites, theaters, soup kitchens and food pantries, and children in need of cancer treatments.

The best thing about a fundraiser, besides being lots of fun, is that it can be planned for just about any size gathering. Most events are created for 60-100 people; however, we can accommodate a party of up to 200 depending on the venue and a few other factors.

Although we're primarily in the entertainment business, our involvement with fundraisers has included consultation on the initial planning. If you're in the planning stages or new to hosting a fundraiser, this checklist is for you.

**1. Figure out the logistics of the party you'll be holding.** How many people would you expect? Where will you hold it? In a local restaurant, banquet hall, community center, firehouse, etc.? Depending on your location we might be able to make some venue locations. Will the dinner be catered, prepared by the restaurant or volunteers in your organization? Have you considered the difference between a buffet and a plated three-course meal? We have experience with both and can work around almost any style of food service. If you're contracting with a restaurant or banquet hall, you will have to get a per plate cost for the meal and figure it into your costs.

**2. Decide on a theme for your party.** Which theme would your guests most enjoy? Would your guests enjoy a costume party or a theme that didn't necessarily require a costume? Is your event going to be seasonal, with a holiday theme? Here are few of the shows we have performed successfully at fundraising events, and each can be customized. Descriptions can be found on our website.

- Murder by Chocolate
- The Art of Murder
- Murder at the Mic

- Murder at the Mansion
- Dazzled to Death, featuring Sheila Dee & The Dazzlers
- A Christmas Carol

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**3. Set a date.** Look at the activities and events calendars, both in print and online, to be sure your event isn't competing with a similar event in your area.

**4. Create a budget for the event.** Outline all your projected expenses: food costs, room rental, decorations, marketing, printing, tickets, prizes, etc. The expenses should equal 30% or less of the total funds raised. You can raise all the funds from the ticket price, or combine with other activities the night of your event. Those would include raffles, silent auctions, and the selling of products and memberships your organization may offer. These "extras" could boost the funds raised for your charity and effect the price that you want to charge for the entry ticket.

**5. Based on the expected cost of the event, set the ticket price.** Remember that guests will know that this is a charitable event. Plus, this is also more than just dinner, it's a party! Most will be willing to pay higher than they normally would for just dinner at a restaurant. When setting ticket prices, also think about what will be included in the ticket. Do you want to have a cash bar separate? Based on our experience with fundraising events in the Hudson Valley area of New York State, ticket prices range from \$45-\$60.

Murder Café's entertainment fee is 20% of the total ticket price with an \$800 minimum.

**6. Marketing, publicity and ticket sales.** As added value Murder Café will provide you with customized artwork for your event that can be used for flyers, posters, and mailers. The artwork in JPEG format, is ideal for posting on Facebook and in your email blasts.

We suggest you have tickets printed and have a staff of volunteers, including family members, friends and co-workers, to sell and distribute them.

A press release describing your event should be sent out to all local media, newspaper entertainment sections and radio stations, and be posted on their online calendars. This can be done by a volunteer.

**7. Finally, plan all the details that go into a party.** . . . decorations, invitations, tickets, costumes...this is the fun part, be creative! Get RSVPs from your invitees and call everyone to remind them about the event.

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