



How to plan and execute a killer fundraising event!

Are you looking to raise funds for your organization? Over the past 20 years we've performed at dozens of fundraisers and charity events for a wide variety of organizations including the American Cancer Society, American Red Cross and United Cerebral Palsy. In many cases we were involved in the initial planning.

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, food service 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 are currently in the initial 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 do you expect to attend? Where will you hold your event, in a local restaurant, banquet hall, community center, firehouse, etc. ? Depending on your location we might be able to make a few recommendations. Will the dinner be catered, prepared by the restaurant or volunteers from your organization? If needed, we have contacts with several excellent caterers and would be happy to recommend one. Have you considered the difference between a buffet and a plated three course dinner? We have experience with both and our actors can work around any style of food service. If you're contracting with a restaurant or banquet hall you will have to get a per plate price 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, one with a holiday theme? Here are a few of the shows we have performed successfully at fundraising events, each can be customized and descriptions can be found on our website.

- **Murder by Chocolate**
 - **Murder at the Speakeasy**
 - **Murder at the Mic**
 - **Murder at the Mansion**
 - **Twisted Cabaret**
 - **A Christmas Carol**
3. **Set a date.** Look at the activities and event calendars, both in print and online, to be sure your event isn't going to compete with another event in your area.
 4. **Create a budget for your event.** Outline all of 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 it with other activities the night of your event. Those would include raffles, silent auctions and the selling of products and memberships your organizations may offer. Those "extras" could boost the funds raised for your charity and effect your final ticket price.
 5. **Based on the expected cost of the event, set the ticket price.** Remember that guests will know this is a charitable event and they are getting more than just dinner. It's a party! Most will pay higher than they normally would for just dinner at a restaurant. When setting the ticket price think about what will be included. Do you want a separate cash bar? Based on our experience with fundraising events in the Hudson Valley area of New York State ticket prices range from \$55 - \$65.
 6. **The entertainment fee.** Murder Café's fee is 20% of the ticket price with a \$1000 minimum.
 7. **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, email blasts and social media posts. We suggest you have tickets printed and enlist 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 to all local media including newspaper entertainment sections and be posted on line calendars and local Facebook event pages.
 8. **Finally, the success is in the details.** This is the fun part, so be creative with decorations, invitations and ticket design and costumes.

For more information, give us a call at 845-475-7973 or email us at murdercafe.ny@gmail.com.