

# FUNDRAISING IDEAS & SUCCESSFUL YEAR ROUND ENGAGEMENT



**A GUIDE TO MAKE  
YOUR WORKPLACE  
CAMPAIGN EFFECTIVE**

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## THEMES TO ADD PERSONALITY TO YOUR CAMPAIGN

**1970s (or other era):** Dress up in 70s garb. Sell headbands, smiley face pins, tie-dyed shirts, etc.

**Mardi Gras:** Everyone loves a party, so why not model your campaign after the biggest party in the world — Mardi Gras! Invite a jazz band to play at your kickoff event. Hold a parade, float contest or sell bead-o-grams (beads with thoughtful messages attached). Host a Cajun potluck.

**United We Stand, United We Give:** Use an All-American theme complete with apple pie tosses; picnics; and red, white and blue!

**The Big Shot:** As a variation on the standard thermometer to monitor campaign progress, use a hypodermic-needle design. Great for healthcare organizations.

**Wild West:** Employees dress in Western clothes. Use a cactus as your thermometer.

**Raisin' Money:** Use the California Raisins as a thermometer theme. Pass out boxes of raisins to people as they turn in pledge cards.

**Cookie Caper:** Each pledge card is passed out with a cookie and the slogan “United Way Cookie Caper — help us bring in the dough.”

**Hawaiian Theme:** Each person turning in a pledge card gets a plastic lei. At campaign’s end, hold a potluck where employees wear their leis and dress Hawaiian. Come up with fun events for the potluck, like a limbo contest. Use a palm tree thermometer.

**Beach Bash:** Decorate the cafeteria or break room with beach balls, etc. Serve hot dogs and fruit kabobs. Host a beach wear contest and award prizes for best outfits.

## PRIZES & INCENTIVES TO ENCOURAGE INVOLVEMENT

**Thank You Drawing:** Collect a variety of gifts — either donated, purchased or intangible goods such as vacation days, lunch with the CEO of your company, one year front-row parking, etc. To encourage employees to pledge, every contributor to United Way is entered into the drawing.

**Lunch with CEO:** Auction or raffle off lunch with the boss — CEO’s treat!

**Pledging Participation:** The department, location, division, etc. with the highest percentage of participation will have the pleasure of viewing their supervisor in a funny outfit. If they choose not to wear the costume, they have to buy pizza for the victors.

**Getaway:** Willing co-workers donate time at their vacation cottages to the highest-bidding donor.

- Complimentary hotel stay and/or airline tickets
- Around-the-world dining pack (gift certificates for different cuisines)
- Call in “well” day or “sleep in late” coupon
- “Flee @ 3” coupon
- Car started and windows scraped every snow day in January
- Car washed by manager or co-worker
- Casual Day/Jeans Day
- Company promotional items
- Computers —new or gently used
- Free babysitting
- Free meal or dessert from the employee cafeteria
- Free oil change
- Gift certificates
- Golf with the boss
- Lottery tickets
- Lunch with your manager — his/her treat!
- Pizza party
- Open soda and candy machines
- Theatre or concert tickets
- Sporting event tickets
- Use of company car
- Reserved parking space
- Movie passes
- Coffee delivered to your desk each morning for a week
- Dinner for two at a popular restaurant

# FUNDRAISING IDEAS

## SPREAD THE GOOD VIBES

**Compliment Grams:** Design notes of congratulations or thanks for co-workers to buy and send to each other.

**Balloon Grams:** Sell balloons with notes of recognition inside and deliver to co-workers.

**Happy Holidays to Your Clients:** Make corporate donations on behalf of your clients to United Way. Send clients a holiday postcard communicating the generous gift to the community.

**Thank You Drawing:** Collect a variety of gifts — either donated, purchased or intangible goods such as vacation days, lunch with the CEO of your company, one year front-row parking, etc. To encourage employees to pledge, every contributor to United Way is entered into the drawing.

**Dress Down Day:** Let your co-workers relax by paying a certain amount to wear casual attire to work. Get as casual as possible: jeans, tennis shoes, sports apparel, hats, slippers, etc. Contact United Way for stickers that say “I Dress This Way for United Way” and distribute to participants.

**Participation Goals:** Set realistic participation goals for workplace giving. Have various awards for reaching each participation goal (pizza party, cookout, casual days, time off, etc.)

**Wall of Fame:** Place photos on the wall recognizing employees who have been contributing to the United Way Campaign for the most consecutive years. This is a great way to recognize your company’s Loyal Contributors!

**Smell the Roses:** Have a local florist donate flowers. Employees buy arrangements to send to co-workers or keep for themselves.



## THE CLASSICS

**Spare Change Jars:** Place empty jars near vending machines or gathering places. Ask your co-workers to deposit spare change throughout the year for United Way. This can be a competition between departments to see who collects the most change in a set time frame.

**Entertainment Drive:** Employees donate new or slightly used books, movies, board games, puzzles, etc., and hold a sale to benefit United Way.

**Paid Parking:** Auction off a years worth of free parking.

**Executive Lawn Service:** Managers or executives donate time to do yard work at the homes of employees who bid for their services.

**Front Row Parking:** Hold drawing for front row parking spots for a year, or during the winter months.

**Silent Auction:** The company donates auction items such as office furniture, printers, scanners, computers, corporate box seats at a sporting event, company merchandise, etc. Employees are invited to donate items as well, and all proceeds go to United Way.

**Executive Chef:** Auction off dinner for two or more at the home of an executive.

**Informative Meeting Incentives:** Hold a workplace meeting and have a representative from United Way and/or a partner agency give a presentation. Offer donuts, coffee or raffle tickets to attendees.

**Executive Lawn Service:** Managers or executives donate time to do yard work at the homes of employees who bid for their services.

**Box Raffle:** Boxes are placed in highly-trafficked areas with the name of a prize on each. Employees buy tickets and put them in the boxes corresponding to the prize they want to win.

**Extra Day Vacation:** Auction off a day or a half day of vacation.

# GET CREATIVE

**Spring Plant Sale:** Employees dig up plants and bulbs from their yards or bring in house plants to sell to other employees. Proceeds go to United Way.

**Talent Auction:** Have employees donate their talents for an auction — handcrafted jewelry, scrapbook services or a musical performance.

**Flower Sale:** Sell flowers by the stem. Charge for inter-office delivery.

**Golf Balls “Fore” Sale:** Collect old golf balls. After a clean and shine, charge by the dozen or in smaller packages.

**Themed Baskets:** Ask individuals or departments to create themed baskets and auction off to the highest bidder.

**Pay to Park:** Is your organization close to a sports venue? Charge people to park in your parking lot and donate proceeds to United Way.

**Lego Guessing Game:** Large jar is filled with Legos and employees pay a fee to guess how many are inside. Prize is awarded for the closest guess.

**Trivia Contest:** Employees pay a fee to answer a daily trivia question and the first one with the correct answer wins a small prize.

**Garage/Sidewalk Sale:** Solicit donations of gently used items from co-workers. Promote your sale both internally and to the general public.

**Pick an Egg, any Egg:** Fill plastic eggs with a variety of prizes. Charge a fee for the opportunity to participate and win.

**Pie Toss:** For a fee, employees nominate one another to receive a pie in the face. The top four with the most votes receive a pie in their face at a company event.

**Kiss the Pig:** Voting with their money, employees vote which executive staff will have to kiss a pig.

**Bring Your Dog To Work Day:** Allow your co-workers to bring their pets to work and organize a tricks competition or costume party. If allergies are a concern, try Pet Match Day: employees bring a photo of their pet to the office, and co-workers try to match the animal to their owner.

**Hour of Music Sale:** Employees buy an hour of music to be played in the workplace for an hour (can be for shorter amount of time during lunchtime.)

**Change Bandit:** A co-worker dresses as a bandit (as approved by company security.) Have the bandit visit employees to procure spare change.

**White Elephant Sale:** Employees donate odd/funny items for sale. Co-workers are given the opportunities to buy these items and stipulate where in the office/in whose workspace the object should be displayed. Set a time frame for which the items must stay in the bought location.

**Massage Therapist:** A massage therapist, preferably one that is willing to donate time, visits the workplace and employees pay for time slots to be massaged. Proceeds go to United Way.

**Buy a Boa:** Purchase brightly colored feather boas for employees to buy. The purchaser chooses a person to wear the boa for the day. In order to get rid of the boa, the wearer must pay to pick another employee to wear it. The boa must be worn at least 10 minutes prior to choosing another lucky boa-wearer.

**Psychic Reading:** A psychic/card reader, preferably one who will donate the time, visits the workplace. Employees pay a small amount to have their fortunes read, with proceeds benefiting United Way.

**Charge Late Fees:** Employees who arrive late for meetings, or produce any other tardiness, pay a fee to be donated to United Way.

**Avant-Garde Attire:** Employees dress in their most dramatic garb to ignite creativity for the day. Have a small entry fee and award the most creative outfit a prize.

**Jail:** Construct and decorate a jail made of cardboard. Managers are sentenced to the office jail for a determined amount of time or until they raise a set amount of bail money that is donated to United Way.

**Executive Service:** Executives donate an hour to serve lunch to employees —have co-workers pay to be part of the event.

**Up on the Roof:** Solicit supervisors, managers, directors and CEOs to participate. Employees raise a set amount of money for the boss to spend a lunch period or night on the roof in a tent. Plan a cookout, so everyone can watch the boss on the roof.

**Octobeard:** Beards are grown throughout the month of October. Contestants pay to participate. At the end of the month there are 3 or 4 days of “beard carving”, where beards are shaved into different shapes. Pictures are taken and voting commences! Voting consists of donating change (negative points) and cash/checks (positive points).

**Car Wash:** Get a rubber hose, buckets, soap and everything else you’ll need to host an old fashioned car wash. Ask a few employees (maybe even the boss in full suit and tie) to volunteer to scrub down and dry cars until they sparkle. Charge employees \$5 with all proceeds going to United Way. Charge more for special extras like cleaning the interior, polishing rims, or pictures of the boss washing the cars!

**Executive Fantasy Auction:** Executives at your office might have some hidden talents that could be offered up as a “fantasy” package. Offers can include gourmet meal preparation or use of someone’s vacation property.

**Fuzzy Slippers/High Heels:** Find a large pair of high heels or slippers and let employees pay to choose a co-worker to wear the shoes.

**Grab Bag:** Fill paper bags with small treats —candy or chips. Solicit vendors or clients for donations to include as additional prizes in half of the bags. Sell each bag at your workplace.

**Extra Time Off Goodie Bags:** Assemble small bags of candy. In each bag, include a slip of paper with a message. Some messages include a “Congratulations! You won four hours of extra time off.” Some messages say “Sorry, you did not win extra time off. Please play again.”

## SPORTS & COMPETITION



**Tricycle Race:** Teams race in relay format around the office parking lot on small bikes. Employees bet on which team they think will win. All bets go to United Way.

**Apple Bob:** Fill buckets with water and apples. Tarps, goggles, shower caps and towels are recommended. On “go!”, contestants compete for 3 minutes to grab the most apples with their mouths (no hands!). Employees nominate contestants and vote using change or cash in jars.

**Golf Putt:** Supply a putting green and club. Employees pay per putt for a chance to win prizes.

**High Score:** Place a dart board in the office and sell dart board shots. Award prizes to winners.

**Office Olympics:** Fire up the Olympic Torch (or grill) and let the games begin. Have a tricycle or office chair race. Use items around your work location for golfing, shooting baskets, etc. Have spelling contests, typing contests, competitions to develop the most persuasive or most complimentary memo, etc. Devise rules for each race in advance and seek participants, combine the event with a cookout as an incentive and designing award medals to display in the cubicles of winners.

**Karaoke Contest:** Each department or team nominates one employee to sing a song. Choose a variety of music or spotlight a particular theme of music. The winner is chosen by audience applause or a panel of judges.

**Balloon Pop Surprise:** Put a prize note in each balloon (soda, casual attire day, gift card, candy bar, sports tickets, etc.) Be sure to have one big prize. Place balloons in a contained area and have participants pay to pop balloons for prizes.

**Spelling Bee:** Hold a spelling bee with an entry fee. Have galley observers place bets on their favorite participants.

**Guess the Number:** Fill a clear jar with candy and have employees pay for a chance to guess the number of pieces in the jar. The most accurate guess wins the candy.

**Penny Wars:** Divide the office by department or teams and have a money jar assigned to each. Members of each department deposit pennies, nickles, and dimes into their own jar and place quarters or “green” into the jars of the other departments. Pennies count as positive while quarters and “green” are negative. The department with the highest number (or often the case, the least negative number) wins a lunch provided by the company.

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

**Scavenger Hunt:** Employees search for unusual items around the neighborhood or office building. Teams pay a group entrance fee and have a set time frame to accumulate as many items as possible. The entire team must be present at the end of the hunt or have a penalty for late arrivals. Work with local businesses for gift certificates or other items as rewards for the winning team.

**Dollar-an-Inch Contest:** Executives participate in an all-day competition to end the day with the shortest tie. Don’t forget the ladies, they can wear ties too! Employees cut an inch off their favorite executive’s tie each time they donate. Give out prizes for the shortest tie, the ugliest tie, etc.

**Baby Picture Match Game:** Employees bring their baby pictures to work and post the photos a few days prior to the event. Contestants pay to match employees to their pictures. The employee with the highest number of correct matches wins a prize.

**Mystery Pumpkins:** Buy miniature or regular pumpkins for employees to purchase. Write numbers on the bottom of each pumpkin and draw numbers for prizes corresponding to the numbers. Pumpkins can be taken home and carved for a later Pumpkin Carving contest.

**Rubber Duckies:** Write numbers on the bottom of rubber ducks and have prizes corresponding to those numbers. Charge participants for each time they pick up a floating duck from a large tub of water.

**Executive Dunk Tank:** Employees pay per ball for a chance to dunk their boss or pay a higher fee to walk up and press the “dunk” button. Participants pay extra to add a bag of ice to the dunk tank water.

**Costume War:** Choose an executive to wear a costume for the day by placing money jars outside the office doors of willing participants.

**Sports Day:** Charge employees a fee to wear their favorite sports team’s jersey or t-shirt.

**Bean Bag Toss Tournament:** Charge an entry fee for a single elimination bean bag tournament. Winner receives bragging rights for a year or different prize (see incentives.)

**Wii Olympics:** Organize a series of one-on-one Wii sport challenges among your co-workers.

**Look-a-Like Contest:** Employees dress as celebrities; host a personality parade and have co-workers pay to vote for the best costume.

**Kickball Tournament:** Teams donate a small sum to participate. Spice up the game by adding obstacles that can be “purchased” by teams or individuals. Example: the opposing team has to kick with their nondominant foot.

**Bingo:** Purchase Bingo cards and sell to employees. Every day, email a bingo number to all participants. The first one to reply “BINGO” wins a prize, and the game continues until all prizes are distributed.

**“United Way Idol” Contest:** Employees donate to vote for the management singing group of their choice. The duo or group that attracts the most votes will sing a song in front of an audience.

# EVERYBODY LOVES FOOD

**Lunch Box Auction:** Employees create gourmet lunches to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Give prizes for the most creative, nutritious, elegant or clever meals.

**Bake Sale:** Co-workers buy employee-donated baked goods with proceeds benefiting United Way.

**Build Your Own Ice Cream Sundaes:** Have a wide variety of sundae toppings (nuts, fruit, cookies, gummy bears, crushed candy bars, whipped cream, cherries, etc.) available for sale for employees to build their own sundaes.

**Nacho/Pretzel Sale:** Sell large plates of nacho and/or soft pretzels with cheese and jalapeno peppers. Donate proceeds to United Way.

**Ethnic Food Festival:** Ask employees to bring dishes symbolic of their heritage or recipes handed down from family members along with interesting facts about their background. Another option is to have various departments sponsor a lunch representing a specific ethnicity.

**Ice Cream Cart:** On a hot day, visit employee cubicles and offices selling popsicles, ice cream sandwiches and other cold snacks. Donate proceeds to United Way.

**Peanuts, Get Your Peanuts!** Decorate a push cart with a sports theme. Stock the cart with individual bags of salted peanuts, chips, hot dogs, soda, and all necessary condiments (ketchup, mustard, relish, onion, etc.) Visit cubicles and sell items. This is a great way to kickoff a sports season.

**Potluck:** Post a sign-up sheet for employees to bring entrees, salads, and desserts to ensure a variety of good food. Decorate the room with a theme for a nice touch.

**Root Beer Float Sale:** Buy necessary ingredients. Floats made and served by executives can be a fun treat!

**Tailgate Party:** Hold a pay-per-plate cookout during lunch. Cook brats, burgers, and hot dogs with condiments. Have chips, pretzels, soda and other tailgate items. You may also want to set up a volleyball net, Frisbee and some music to set the mood.

**Chili Cook-off:** Participants pay to enter their chili into the contest. Choose judges and determine prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. After judging, employees can pay to sample each chili. Remember to supply cheese, sour cream, crackers, TUMS, etc.

**Walking Taco Sale:** Sell individual bags of corn chips with divided plastic or foam containers filled with taco meat, cheese, sour cream, tomatoes, lettuce, packets of hot sauce, etc. Price accordingly.

**Donut Eating Contest:** Employees raise money for United Way by sponsoring contenders on a per-donut-eaten basis. The winner is determined by either eating the most donuts in a time frame or the first to finish a set number of donuts.

**Soup Line:** Employees sign up to bring their favorite soup or bread. Set up at lunch time and charge participants fees for a bottomless bowl to try one or all! (Bring your own reusable bowl.)

**Green Thumbs:** Herb gardens are easy to establish and the perfect start to any garden. Buy seeds, plant the herbs and sell them to colleagues for a minimal fee.



**Warm Beverages:** To help offset the chilly winter weather, why not host a specialty warm beverage day with flavored hot chocolates and coffees in addition to fun toppings. Each toasty mug is \$1 to be donated to United Way.

**Restaurant Tree:** Donated gift cards from numerous restaurants are hung on a tree. Raffle tickets are given to donors who enter to win one of the gift cards, gift baskets or other prizes offered during the campaign.

**Taste of the World Luncheon:** Employees pay a fee to eat a buffet of ethnic food that their co-workers bring from home, or that is donated by a local restaurant.

**10% of Sales to United Way:** Arrange for a local restaurant to donate 10% of sales to United Way on a designated day.

**Spaghetti Lunch:** Host a spaghetti feed and charge by the bowl.

**Luncheon Buffet:** Have people bring in their favorite dishes for a luncheon buffet and charge a plate fee.

**Mashed Potato Bar:** Make mashed potatoes and sell in plastic martini glasses with a variety of toppings.

**Sake/Sushi Tasting:** Individuals pay to attend an event featuring an assortment of sake and sushi. Provide background information on refreshments to make the tasting interesting.

**Order Up!:** Take orders from your co-workers for take out from their favorite restaurant. Pick up the food and charge a delivery fee benefiting United Way.

**State Fair Pie Tasting:** Invite employees to bake a prize winning pie and let co-workers pay a fee to taste and vote for their favorite.