

FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES

The following seven questions help to analyze fundraising strategies and activities to select those that best meet student, school, and community needs. Use these questions as a guide to brainstorm effective fundraising strategies that will raise the money the school and community require and educate the students about the value of philanthropy.

1. What values provide the basis for why you are raising funds? Fundraising efforts should be focused on why the fundraising needs to be done. The first step is to identify the need, the opportunity, or the problem to be solved. Don't fundraise just to fundraise. There needs to be a reason and a need. Once you have identified the problem and solution, identify the values or concerns that a prospective donor must have to want to give to this cause. Ask volunteers to identify groups in the school and community that have expressed those key concerns and values. The final step in the planning process is selecting fundraising strategies that align with the identified values and that attract potential donors' attention to the need or cause. All of us use our time and money to reinforce what we value. Are your fundraising strategies based on values? Do your volunteers understand the values and the need?

2. What is the cost per dollar raised for this fundraising activity? Efficient fundraising incorporates the cost per dollar raised as part of the fundraiser selection criteria. The math is quite simple: just divide the expected costs by the anticipated revenue. In almost all product sales fundraisers, 50 percent or more of the revenue (sales) goes to provide the product. When you look at the other costs involved, like the cost of making posters, the cost per dollar raised is even higher. In addition, you should factor in how much of the students, parents, PTA organizers, teachers, and advisors time is required even though time is not a direct cost.

3. Does this fundraising strategy give donors options? Does your fundraiser allow donors to give more of their money and/or time if they want to? Consider allowing a donor to determine their own level of support. Donors want to be able to give their help, time, and money according to how much they value your organization, goals, and programs. Make sure donors are free to decide how much and how often they contribute and what their level of involvement will be.

4. If students are involved in the fundraising activity, are they learning about the concept of philanthropy? Does student involvement focus on giving or on getting? Philanthropy has become a compelling force in our economy. Seldom do our students get exposure to or encouragement in careers in philanthropy, even though much of our nation's job growth is in the nonprofit, philanthropic area. Philanthropy is important to our society. The giving of resources such as time and money provides meaning to our lives and service to others. Today's student is tomorrow's donor and member of service clubs, religious groups, and nonprofit boards. If students realize that their school fundraising efforts are practice for the rest of their lives, the more seriously they will take these activities.

5. Does this fundraiser involve incentives or prizes for sales? Sales incentives focus a fundraiser on competition and getting something, rather than on values and giving. Remember to focus on giving.

6. Have you considered the integrity of businesses offering support? Partnering with a local corporation can be a very beneficial fundraising strategy. It demonstrates community support and creates awareness about the school's needs. It is important to evaluate any company with which you consider aligning your school or PTA.

7. How will this fundraiser and the projects and programs it supports benefit the community? School fundraising activities should positively affect the community. Having better schools improves the community, but how do school and PTA projects affect a community? Whenever possible, explain the connections between your project and the world outside the school.

RAISING MONEY

Most PTAs need to raise funds to provide programs and services throughout the year; however, fundraising efforts should not be the primary emphasis for PTAs. Fundraising efforts should be in response to supporting approved PTA work rather than driving the goals of the PTA. To help ensure proper alignment with our purposes, LAPTA recommends that PTAs engage in three programs or service projects for each fundraiser activity hosted.



There are many different methods to raise funds, and PTAs will be approached by numerous external groups that offer products and services. It is important that PTA leaders evaluate these opportunities carefully and consider all legal and community-related implications. When using a fundraising company, protect the PTA by having all information in writing. A contract protects the PTA and the fundraising company. With a contractual agreement, all parties assume responsibility for complying with the terms, but the PTA also begins with a clear understanding of who oversees what. Make sure the contract is clearly an agreement between two organizations, not two individuals. Contracts are only signed by the President with Executive Board approval, and the signer adds their title after their name to show they are signing for the PTA. When reviewing the contract, look for cost and profit percentages, list of approved promotional materials, desired services, dates for delivery and payment, and procedure for handling damaged, unsold, or returned merchandise.

Non-Commercial Policy & Co-Venturing

PTA Bylaws include the requirement to be non-commercial. The name “PTA[®]” is not to be used in conjunction with the commercial activities of other organizations, including the promotion of their goods or services. A PTA does not raise money for other organizations or individuals, no matter how worthy their cause.

Commercial co-venturing is a popular form of fundraising for PTAs. Commonly, a business advertises a cooperative fundraising effort in which a portion of the sales are forwarded to the PTA as a gift. The size of the gift is determined by how successful the business is in selling its product or service. Given PTA’s non-commercial policy, the only appropriate role in such a venture is a passive one. The PTA must refrain from active promotion or marketing of the business’s products or services and do no more than inform members of the agreement. Agreements should be structured in such a way as not to appear as an endorsement of a product or company. If this is not possible, the PTA should not enter into the agreement.