

How to source auction and raffle prizes

Holding an auction or raffle at your event is a great way of generating big funds with minimal costs. Here are our top tips for sourcing tempting prizes that will encourage your guests to dig deep and give generously!

Be strategic

- Start asking for items early to ensure you leave yourself enough time before your event, but keep in mind any prizes with expiry dates.
- Don't buy prizes – persuade people to donate them. This will maximise the amount of money that comes directly to the charity.
- Contact local businesses and independent firms close to your home, they are more likely to support you than larger national organisations.
- Research the businesses you are approaching and what you would ideally like from them.
- Think about who your guests are and what kind of prizes would appeal to them.
- Make sure you have a variety of prizes that will appeal to everyone in the room.
- Think about the value of your prizes and how much you hope to raise. If you're running a raffle consider how much to charge for tickets and how many you will need to sell. If you're auctioning off the prizes think about what you hope to sell them for and make sure you brief the auctioneer accordingly.
- Don't have too many prizes – quality is more important than quantity!

Use your networks

- Think about whether there is anyone you know who has useful connections to local businesses you want to approach.
- Signed memorabilia is always popular – do you know anyone who has connections to celebrities, sports figures or artists? Just let us know if you are planning on making any of these kind of approaches.

Think creatively

- Don't just look for items – think outside the box and ask for services. For example, a personal training session or a cookery lesson.
- Group smaller items together to make one package prize. For example, dinner for two and theatre tickets could be grouped together to make a more appealing and valuable prize.
- Create a donation voucher to take into businesses and ask them to fill it in. This makes it quick and easy for them to donate a prize or a service.
- If you're planning an auction, try to source a couple of unique items that will attract interest and encourage your guests to bid high.



Making approaches

- Have a clear message about what you are fundraising for and why. Try to be emotive and explain how their donation will help you to reach your goal.
- Make sure you explain what you can offer them in return for their donation. For example, a 'thank you' in the programme and exposure to potential new clients in the audience.
- If you plan to make initial approaches through email, make it personal and try to find a named contact. Always follow up with a phone call.

Terms and Conditions

- Agree on any terms and conditions with the donor. Establish whether there are any restrictions and agree on an expiry date, for example, within 12 months. Make sure your guests are fully aware of any terms and conditions.
- Make sure you know what the prizes you've been given are worth so you can make the most of the donation.

After the day

- Send a thank you card or letter to anyone who has donated prizes telling them how much you raised and how that will help the charity.

Keep it safe and legal

- Please check our fundraising guidelines for everything you need to know to keep it safe and legal: www.gosh.org/guidelines
- Please also see the Gambling Commission website www.gamblingcommission.gov for guidelines and advice on holding raffles.
- Please note that if you are an organisation and are using our name and/or logo in your fundraising then there may be VAT and tax implications for your organisation. If you think this may be the case we would recommend that you confirm this with the HMRC or your accountants.

