

FUNDRAISING BEST PRACTICES MANUAL



Skål International United States of America

The following is a guide to help US Skål Clubs become successful fundraisers. We get it; a smart and effective list of fundraising ideas is hard to come by despite its importance to success. By sharing ideas we can help each other ensure our fundraising goals are achieved. Fundraiser ideas don't have to be stiff. Fun and humor are great ways to connect with people and make money for your cause. Fundraising today is pushing the boundaries and expanding beyond tradition and with a little human creativity you can raise more money for your club.

Why should a club fundraise?

The cost to maintain a local Skål club traditionally goes beyond what annual dues provide. In order to keep the cost of annual dues affordable, fundraising can make the difference in a club being able to attend mandatory annual conferences and the Skål World Congress. During the past few years, there has been a noticeable decrease in the attendance of SIUSA clubs and members at the North American Area Skål Congress (NAASC) and, especially, the Skål International World Congress. The NAASC Congress is a mandatory meeting of SIUSA clubs subject to a \$1,000 assessment for nonattendance. While this can be a significant charge, there are clubs, which have chosen to bear this cost rather than incurring the higher cost to attend. The Fundraising can also enable clubs to offer scholarships to young people studying hospitality and tourism and help subsidize the cost of holding a membership development event.

Suggestions:

1. Get organized – make a list of all the different social groups you are a part of, both online and off: Church, coworkers, classmates, etc. Sometimes support can come from unexpected places. Everyone outside the travel industry looks at our industry as glamorous and wishes they could have the travel opportunities we have available to us. Give it to them by inviting them to participate in your raffles and silent auctions. The Boston Club that earns between \$40,000 and \$70,000 at each Holiday Party for a local charity by inviting non-travel guests who spend a great deal of money vying for attractive travel packages.
2. Pin two clubs of the same size up against one another and have a contact for who could raise the most money from their events.
3. Reach out to clubs that have proven success in fundraising for suggestions and help
4. Establish a goal and be realistic...doesn't have to be huge but a collective goal and vision will help the Board and membership get excited, get involved, and present the effort to employers, community, etc.
5. USE A REAL NUMBER! Anything from \$500 to \$5,000 gives you a starting point.
6. Decide on fundraising activity, define audience for the activity and develop messaging
7. Depending on the size of each club and the executive level of membership, different types of events may make more sense...if you are a smaller club a golf tourney might be a big undertaking! But an online auction or wine auction might be a much better fit!
8. Fundraising can be a dirty word. It connotes sales and hard work, and to some people is gives the impression of begging BUT it's really just hosting a party or event! Don't be afraid to fundraise and remember that it can serve as friend-raising too to improve membership and personal contact bases.

FUNDRAISING EVENT IDEAS

Skål International Chicago – Golf Outing

For many years, Skål Chicago has produced a golf outing/tournament as a break from the standard monthly dinner/lunch meeting. It has also been crafted as a method for raising funds for a number of projects the club has undertaken. They have sponsored student scholarships at the college level in the travel industry; covered the large cost for an annual Valentine Dinner Dance; funded a Christmas package of gloves and scarves for underprivileged children and other worthy projects. Additionally, they have been able to provide resources for the operation of the club where revenues do not cover the costs – hosting visiting Skålleagues, as an example.

However, the main advantage has been the ability to pay for attendance at both the annual congresses – NAASC and the World Congress. Details on the execution of this event are as follows:

- The golf outing is a robust event that follows a typical tournament format
- 10:00am - Registration, Raffle Sales, Golf Tee Gift, Practice Range colleagues
- 10:15am - Putting Tournament
- 10:45am - Private Grilled BBQ lunch and Refreshments. Silent Auction goodies
- 11:45am - Rules & briefing in golf cart
- NOON - Scramble Shotgun Tee-Off! Refreshment Stations provided during golf and locker room facilities provided post-golf
- 5:30pm - **\$1,000,000** Shootout Contest
- 6:00pm - Cocktail Reception
- 7:00pm - Dinner, Awards, and BIG Raffle Prizes
- 2015 Fees: \$135/per person for Golf, Lunch, Reception and Dinner and \$60 per person for the Reception and Dinner
- To minimize the burden on the BOD, Skål Chicago has utilized a low-cost web based management tool called Golf Invite
- Golf Invite is not directly affiliated with Skål, but helped the club reduce the workload and increase time spent on sponsor solicitation

Skål International Memphis – Wine Pull

A wine pull, like the one that Skål Memphis hosts, is a great add-on event option to piggy-back on another event (such as a trivia night or holiday dinner). The format is very simple, low-cost and fun. The formula for success that the Memphis Club is outlined here:

- Members solicit the donation of wine with a minimum value of \$10
- The goal for the event was 100 donated bottles, with all proceeds benefiting the club, and 200 ended up being donated
- Each bottle is wrapped or placed in a bag to mask the label (as a courtesy, red paper/bags for red wine and white for white)
- All bottles are then placed on a wine-rack and tickets are sold at \$10 per “pull” of a bottle
- If a wine-rack is not available or is too small then a table may also be used in place of a wine-rack
- Premium wine donations are encouraged, so the potential pulls can be advertised with an “up to value” of the most expensive bottle
- To create excitement, a gong was sounded every time a premium wine bottle was pulled (a bell, horn or music are other substitutes)

Skål International Boston – Holiday Party

Skål Boston has a legendary Holiday Party that is the club’s largest fund raiser of the year. Traditionally the club raises **\$40,000 to \$70,000** at this event. This is how we accomplish our success year after year:

- Select a local charity to support each year. (Project Bread, Soldiers Legacy Fund, Children’s Hospital, Women’s Lunch Place, Doug Flute Fund, to name a few.)
- The event chairperson reaches out to members, hotels, airlines, tourist attractions, restaurants, sports teams for donations of items that we use for a large silent auction, raffle and live auction
- Reach out to hotels that have airline crews staying with them as they usually get a number of free tickets as part of the crew deal. Combine with hotel stays to create very special travel packages
- Hoteliers have had success reaching out to colleagues in different cities around the world for free night stays
- Urge members to bring guests that are typically not in the travel industry, who do not have access to special travel packages and they traditionally spend a great deal of money at the event
- Sell raffle tickets for \$5 each. Most people purchase a minimum of \$25 - \$50 worth of tickets, many spend much more
- The silent auction typically offers over 50 items from hotel packages, sporting events, sporting memorabilia, and special events like a cocktail party for 25 at the Abigail Adams room at the Boston Tea Party museum or dinner for 20 at Cheers Pub. 20 – 25 raffle items. Typically, 20 – 25 raffle items are donated from hotel stays, dinner cruise tickets, gift baskets, to restaurant gift cards that are also provided. Also, 5 to 6 large live auction items that are usually trips which include special features and air for two are offered. Usually including a 6 night Italian vacation package, a 6 night package to castle hotels in Ireland and Caribbean vacations. This event is very successful and sells out yearly with 290 people in attendance (room max number allowed) and a wait list of others

Skål International Tampa Bay – Annual Hospitality Hobnob

Skål Tampa Bay have created a fun and interactive fundraising event to allow attendees to network with well-known & connected executives in the hospitality and tourism industry (current Skål members). This event encourages strong non-member participation which has proven to be the backbone of successful fundraising in Skål. Here is how Tampa Bay has successfully run this program in years past:

- The inaugural Hobnob reached 10,000 people via email/mail invitations resulting in 120 attendees (70% non-members)
- The concept for the Hobnob is to have a rotating theme each year to keep people coming back
- One example theme would be the Miniature-Golf Tournament, which is structured just like a traditional golf tournament
- This tournament encompassed a \$10,000 putting contest, hole sponsorships, donated F&B at each hole and a silent auction
- Tables manned by Skål members featured information on Skål membership as well as the chosen charities for the event
- This event resulted in great exposure for Skål (11 new members) with mentions in the Tampa Business Journal, TV & radio stations
- The themes are very versatile and other ideas include a black-tie gala, summer pool party, beach blanket bingo or sunset cruise

Skål International Fort Worth – The Great Hat Box Drawing

Each month, Skål Fort Worth sells options on a hat box with mystery contents. This is a great way to raise money on an on-going basis with and has proven successful at the Fort Worth club for many years. Here is how it works:

- Members and guests may purchase a chance to win the contents of the hat box at \$10 per option
- Contents have included: Dom Pérignon Champagne, Ruth's Chris Gift Cards, an iPod and even a weekend in the UK!
- The contents of the box are donated by the member who won last month's drawing
- If a *guest* wins the hat box then one of the members steps-up and cover next month's hat box
- More than one hat box may be raffled per event and each hat box could have a different value (i.e. \$10 regular / \$20 premium)

Skål International Atlanta – Traditional Live & Silent Auctions

A successful Skål Club Auction will be fun and result in a significant amount of money being raised to support the club's annual budget, scholarships and chosen charities. A large number of clubs utilize auctions for their fundraising efforts, thus a special section dedicated to running a successful auction has been organized below with notes a step-by-step formula from the Atlanta Club:

- Create excitement – Send out Save-the-Date notices and post incoming donations on the Club's website
- Select a committee of helpers; A group generating donations; a group planning the meeting details and group promoting the event
- Take advantage of your non-profit status - Provide Tax ID # accordingly
- Attract a large and wealthy group of bidders – friends of members
- Make sure you promote the charity or scholarship you are contributing to, as this is what justifies a lot of the donations

Things that any fund-raising auction must do to ensure success:

- **Ability to accept Credit Cards/Checks:** Make sure to have a live payment system available. This allows smooth check-in & Checkout for guests. Their bid number (FANS) becomes their ticket to everything.
- **Free alcohol:** Unless you're raising money for AA, make sure the alcohol flows freely. No tip jars. You want your guests to have a great time, and you should put no impediments in their way. Make sure there no lines for drinks. Beer and wine are fine, but make sure that you offer good variants of both.
- **Reserve seats:** Chances are you or someone you work with knows everyone coming to the auction. Spend the time to select their seats. You can help them all have a great time (and bid more!), by sitting them with people that they'll like. Have 'Reserved Table' signs to place close to the auctioneer for groups wanting to sit together.
- **Silent Auction:** The biggest issue with charity auctions is scale. No matter how many people you have at the event, you cannot 'live auction' too many items without boring your guests. Everything else that has been donated should go to the silent auction. The silent auction enables you to split off the items that are less valuable, saving the compelling & expensive items for the live auction. Having 80-100 items all in a live auction, can extend the auction time too long.
- Split the silent auction items into multiple groups. "Close" each section one at a time (maybe split by 10-15 minutes). Announce each closing 5 min, 2 min, 30 sec and 5 sec before it closes. This gives bidders a chance to make several last minute bids (the thrill of victory!), and increases your chances of getting multiple bids on the items.

- Make a master list of all the items, who donated them, how much they are worth, and who solicited/acquired the item. If you are going to do this again next year, it is nice to have the same people go to the same businesses each year for solicitation due to the existing relationship.
- Print bidding sheets. Write the name of the item, a short description of the item, how much it is worth, and who donated it. (This gives them a bit of advertising as a thank you for donating.) Include a minimum bid (generally 20% of the retail value) and minimum bid increase increments.
- Recruit volunteers. You will need: volunteers to help set up; judges to monitor and close tables at the appointed time and make sure minimum bid and minimum increase requirements were met; a “bank” crew to organize bid sheets (especially of multiple winners) and collect money from winning bids; and a clean-up crew.
- Start setting up early; a day before the event. You’ll need extra time not only to set up but to allow for any mistakes.
- Have judges monitor the tables to make sure bid sheets are staying in place and people are following the minimum bid and minimum increase rules. People will probably have questions about some items, so try to prepare the judges to answer them.

For Live Auctions:

- **Use a *real* Auctioneer:** Make sure they have experience with charity auctions. They know how to pace the sales, encourage competitive bidding, when to skip an item and how to make the event enjoyable. They tend to cost a bit (\$200-\$300), but it will pay dividends. Assign floor walkers to assist the auctioneer (2-3). Include the auctioneer (and spouse) in the food count. Often the Auctioneer becomes a part of the SKÅL extended family and discounts their fees year over year.
- **Sell the items:** Pitch each item. SKÅL Atlanta usually produces a colored bidding brochure advertising the brands and providing the descriptions of the items to be auctioned. There are also last minute deals and ‘auctioneer specials.’
- **Item selection:** Your guests are impulse shoppers at this point. Things that give the impression of exclusivity (can’t get this anywhere else), and are local (don’t have to travel that far) perform really well. If it involves a lot of planning (international travel), it will likely be underbid. Know your audience and make sure the items appeal to them.
- **Analyze the data:** You know what every guest bid on, you know how much they bid, you know the items that made the most, and you know the items that were in the highest demand. This is a treasure trove of information, and can yield tremendous profits down the road. Assign two helpers to record the bid information and provide the floor walkers a ticket to give to the winning bidder.

More things that you need to consider for your SKÅL Auction:

- **Good food/finger foods:** Full dinner buffets are too distracting and insular. Plate service is more expensive and time consuming. Mix and mingle buffet serving is a nice compromise.
- **Sell Door-Prize Tickets:** Instead of the normal 50/50 ticket sales that are held at each SKÅL meeting for raising money, select 5-10 items or donations to be selected by ticket numbers. Make sure the guests know that money raised from this activity is going directly to a particular charity fund.

Things to be avoided:

- **Speeches:** Limit speeches to things that: Inspire, delightfully inform, or just make people laugh. Keep them short. Put ‘thank yous’, and other ‘announcements’ into the auction pamphlet.

Other Fundraising ideas include:

- **Wine Tasting** – utilize donated (or discounted) wine and have contests for an additional fee like blind wine guessing etc.
- **5K Walk/Run** – these work best in tandem with another philanthropic cause you are supporting
- **Skål T-Shirts** (via crowdsourced sites like www.TeeSpring.com to eliminate financial risk and reduce time commitment)
- **Industry Workshop** – have executive members donate their time to host an industry workshop geared towards sharing tips on their area of expertise to various hospitality professionals, students and members. GMs of hotels can be of dual service by both participating on the workshop panel and by signing up their team members for the event
- **Online Auction** – this is a great option for smaller clubs or to reach contacts outside of your immediate geographic area
- **50/50 Raffle** – an effective alternative to the Hat Box fundraiser to raise consistent income stream for ad hoc incidentals
- **Trivia Night** – casual, low-cost, themed events (Mardi Gras, Hollywood, Broadway, Western, Pop Culture etc.). Each member is encouraged to purchase a table (between \$90 and \$150 per table) and two MCs work best (local celeb if avail)
- **Flower Sale** – simple and effective. Limit choices, choose a single pick-up location and get a discount of at least 30%
- **Co-op Garage Sale** – Host in a gymnasium or church, charge a \$5 entrance fee and donate anything leftover to Goodwill