

CHOOSING A FUND



FUNDRAISER

IN PERFECT HARMONY WITH YOUR CHORAL GROUP

By Stephanie Kinturi



Have your fundraisers struck
a sour note with your choral group?

Most choirs rely on outside funding and fundraisers as a means to cover costs for new music, activities and materials that often are in excess of their budgets. Given this reality, the importance of choosing the RIGHT fundraiser is paramount. But where does one start? A quick google search under “product fundraisers” will serve up over 49,700,000 results. With so many choices, how can you be sure to find a fundraiser that will help you reach your goals?

INTRODUCTION - First steps in choosing a Fundraiser

First and foremost, it is important that you choose a fundraising company whose reputation and values are closely in alignment with those of your group. You will want to ask the fundraising company’s representative

the following questions, and record those answers either for yourself—so you can compare companies later—or for your other booster officers. That way you can gather all of the facts to make an informative decision.

First, ask the company representative if references can be provided. Some companies already publish reviews of their company online, but you can also search other sites looking for reviews or reports. If at all possible, read reviews and testimonials from groups who have used this company before.

Find out exactly how long has the fundraising company been in business. Obviously, you will want to choose a company that is financially stable and has been in business for a number of years.

You will want to attempt to determine if the fundraising company cares about your goals and if they will partner with you in the fundraising process. Sometimes, this is about making sure fundraising objectives and company ideals are in alignment with those of your music program.

Next, you will determine if the sales representatives are knowledgeable, passionate and dedicated to helping your group achieve their funding goals. You will want to know if the company can provide historical data for the average sales and profits for other choral groups like yours who have used

this fundraiser previously. Most companies with solid track records have easy access to these types of examples.

EXPOSITION - Gathering the FACTS

Next, you will want to ensure that you have all the facts and relevant details that will help you decide which fundraising company to partner with that will deliver the best result.

In terms of gathering numerical data, first determine the profit margins/ratios for any fundraising products. You will want to outline precisely how the fundraising product will be sold—including determining if online sales are an option. To motivate your students, you will find out if the company offers any incentives or prize programs or if that is something you would need to attend to on your own. You will also learn if there is a minimum sales requirement.

As with any big decisions, there are caveats. You want to know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, if there are any hidden costs in the program and if an up-front deposit is required. You need to learn if you will be responsible for collecting sales tax on orders. If so, you need to ensure that you can put a process in place to track this carefully. You also need to know if there are multiple payment options available and determine

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how easily those payment options are implemented.

Along these same lines, you can find out the ways the fundraising company plans to support you in the fundraising process. You should ask if customer service is available by phone and email. You should also find out if the fundraising program can be tailored to fit your group. Be sure to learn if product samples could be provided for your kick-off event.

DEVELOPMENT - Evaluate the fundraising product

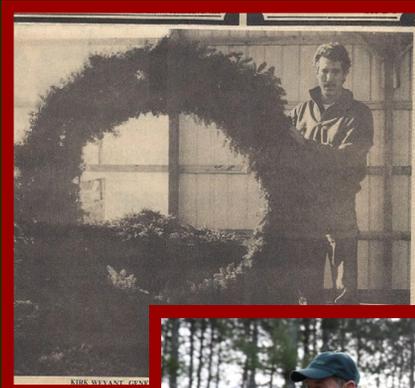
Choosing a desirable and high quality product that will sell is equally as important as partnering with the right fundraising company.

First, ask yourself if the fundraising product is of high quality and in demand. You may want to also ask yourself if the product is made in the USA, as that is becoming more important to many consumers. You want to ask about the shelf life of the product as well.

For logistics, you want to determine if the fundraising product is easy to distribute and deliver. Learn if there are any special handling requirements (refrigeration). Also, you will need to take careful note of variations in fundraising programs.



Photo by Victoria Schwarzl for Show Choir Canada



← 1986 Kirk shows off a handmade wreath *Call us today! 888-934-5999*

Kirk Weyant, of Three Rivers Wreath & Plant Company has been producing high quality balsam wreaths for over 30 years. His family owned business is located in scenic New England where hand crafted wreaths, swags & garland are made with the freshest evergreens, picked daily and cold stored to preserve freshness. Over the years Three Rivers has worked with scouting organizations, school groups, churches, choral groups and non-profits, offering a high quality fundraising product at an affordable price!



Evergreen wreaths are a New England tradition and as a fundraising product recall the nostalgia of a simpler time. They celebrate the season in a universal way and can be enjoyed for weeks or even months on end. Best of all, balsam greens are a completely renewable resource! Fund-raise a little differently this year and see how easy raising money with Three Rivers Wreath & Plant Company can be!

2014 →
Kirk distributes
wreaths at a
fundraising
event

Happy Holidays!



Avoid being off key by choosing a high quality fundraising product backed by a fundraising company who will support you in reaching your funding goals.

For instance, you need to determine if the fundraising product is offered year round or is it seasonal like flowers and citrus.

You want to learn the specifics of how orders will be fulfilled and what the process will be if items are back-ordered or out of stock. You'll also want to know the policy on damaged or missing product and be certain you can share that information clearly.

FINALE - Set goals and manage expectations

Proper goal setting is the final step that will insure the success of your fundraiser and this begins with knowledge of your abilities and expectations.

Though it may seem an obvious question, always begin by asking yourself why you are fundraising. You'll want to outline specifically how the money will be spent. You should also determine at this point if any profits can be divided by individual sellers.

You need to set your specific fundraising goal for both total sales and profits. As part of this managing and planning, you'll need to consider the number of sellers in your group. You'll also determine how many items each participant will need to sell in order to reach your goal.

In terms of speed, you need to decide how quickly does your group need to raise money, and you should also make sure everyone involved is aware of the timetable you are functioning under. Are there any time limitations that would impact the fundraising campaign? If so, make sure to delineate those carefully with your other booster members and even with your students.

Next, consider what other resources could be required for you and your group to reach your goals. If you need help with marketing, decide who would be most useful in providing assistance. Do you need help with social

media? Perhaps you need assistance with preparing take-home letters or even sending emails. These skill sets are common among your volunteers; they just need to know the part they should play and your guidelines for how best to do it.

Finally, ask yourself if you have enough committed volunteer support to help you distribute the product when it arrives. Once you have determined how long it takes for product orders to be fulfilled, taking into account any quick ship options, have a system in place that will immediately be able to handle those incoming orders.

PERFECT HARMONY - Strike up the chorus

Avoid being off key by choosing a high quality fundraising product backed by a fundraising company who will support you in reaching your funding goals. Sign up to fundraise with the confident knowledge that you have chosen a fundraiser that is in perfect harmony with your group. And don't forget to have fun during this process. Your hard work and attitude will lead your group to a successful fundraising event! Celebrate your success!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Stephanie Kinturi is the Marketing and Social Media Manager at Fun Pasta Fundraising. She focuses on educating fundraising leaders and helping them reach their goals! Learn more by visiting www.funpastafundraising.com

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