Consider hosting an event or two in the first part of your campaign to raise awareness about your campaign, bring people together, generate excitement, and remind your colleagues that giving back to the community is fun!

A few tips:

- Host FUNdraising events at the start of your campaign, using them as opportunities to educate your colleagues know about your campaign and your goals.
- Ask senior leadership to participate—or at least endorse the event.
- Spread the word, and aim for the highest possible participation.
- Don’t expect to make much money. FUNdraising events are all about awareness and fun, and should be followed up with face-to-face asks for gifts through payroll deduction, which are always the largest source of donations.

Here a few ideas to SPARK your imagination:

**Buy a Boa:** Bring in brightly colored feather boas for employees to wear. 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 the boa. The boa must be worn at least 10 minutes prior to choosing another lucky boa wearer.

**Casual Day for United Way:** Employees pay to not wear “normal” work attire. Get as casual as needed: jeans, tennis shoes, sports apparel, hats, slippers, etc. Contact your United Way development officer for stickers that say “Casual Day for United Way” and distribute to participating employees.

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

**Bingo:** Purchase Bingo cards and distribute to employees. Every day, email a Bingo number to all participants. The first one to reply with “BINGO” wins. The Bingo game continues until all prizes are distributed. Be sure to include a link to your giving page and a fun fact about United Way in every email (we can provide the facts)!

**Balloon Pop Surprise:** Put a prize note in each balloon (soda, jeans day, gift card, candy bar, sports ticket, United Way swag, thank you card, etc.) Be sure to have one big prize. Be sure to publish a list of prizes in advance. Participants pay to pop balloons for prizes.

**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.

**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.
Employee Cookbook: Collect employee recipes and helpful household hints into a customized cookbook. Ask children of employees to create illustrations for the cookbook, including the cover. Print and bind books, and charge for each copy. Plan for an enthusiastic response!

Children's Drawing Contest
Employees are given 'official photographs' of one or two top executives to take home for their children to draw. Contest is limited to children under 12 who are related to any employee in the organization. Employees can vote for the best drawing by paying a nominal fee. Prizes or certificates will be given to all participants. Count all votes and announce the winners at the campaign’s final event. A variation could have children draw a picture of what United Way means to them.

Jail & Bail Day
Charge people to throw someone in “jail,” then lock ‘em up and throw away the key... at least until s/he raises enough bail money to “Get out of Jail.” Designate an area to represent the jail. Designate certain employees to be the “deputies” to take employees to jail. Allow jailed employees make calls to their colleagues asking for bail money, but make sure they make use of their time by stuffing United Way pledge forms in payroll envelopes.

Ugly Lamp Month
Use any white elephant (an ugly lamp works great) to offer the opportunity to purchase points to move the item to someone’s workspace or keep it out of your work area. Calculate and move daily, weekly, etc. Wherever it ends up at the end of the time period, it must stay for one month, or until the next campaign.

COMPANY SPOTLIGHT
Regional Water Authority
Silent Auction
RWA raised over $3,700 last year through a very popular silent auction and a series of raffles. Employees revealed secret skills like woodcarving, and there was a fierce battle for coveted covered parking in the winter months. In the final days of the auction, the lunchroom saw a flurry of activity, as employees stopped in several times a day to ensure they had the winning bid.

COMPANY SPOTLIGHT
IT Department, Yale University
Kilt Challenge
Russell Sharp, Executive Director of the Office of the CIO, promised to wear his kilt for a day if his colleagues collectively donated $250. They crushed that goal, raising over $1,000, and Russell donned his kilt for an entire week.

Ways to Embarrass/Engage Your Boss(es)
Executive Butler/Maid: Executives donate an hour to serve lunch to employees. Have employees pay to enter. Or have employees bid on being personally treated to lunch or another treat, hand-delivered by the CEO.

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 a tie, too. Employees cut off an inch of their favorite executive’s tie each time they give to the community. Prizes go to the shortest tie, the ugliest tie, etc.

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

Executive Car Wash: Members of your leadership team wash employees cars - or open it up to the general public, venue permitting.

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 a night on the roof in a tent. Plan a cookout, so everyone can watch the boss on the roof.

‘American 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.
COMPANY SPOTLIGHT
NEU Specialty Engineered Materials, LLC
(PolyOne Co)

Company FUN Day
NEU employees participated in an afternoon of fun and team building, including a bean bag toss and an ice cream social, all in support of our community and United Way!

Have you ever considered volunteering as a group? United Way would be happy to coordinate an opportunity for you to have fun bonding with your team while giving back!

**Cook-offs/Food Wars:** (Chili, cookie, best recipe) Who doesn’t like to share what they cook best, and who wouldn’t love to sample it? Choose one type of food and have participants prepare it “their” way, or do a potluck cookout have staff surprise each other with a dish of their choice. Charge money to eat and vote. Then have a small prize (or a plaque, certificate or ribbon) for the winner(s). Post results (with photo if possible) on bulletin boards, in your company newsletter, etc.

**Ugly Tie/Earring Contest**
All contestants pay a nominal fee to enter the best awful earrings or ugly ties they own (or borrow). Choose a day that the voting will take place. Place voting boxes at various places around the office and allow employees to vote on the winner with cash donations.

**Baby Photos/Pet Photos to match up with employees**
People love to guess, and to be right about their answer! Ask staff to bring in childhood or baby photos, and ask staff to guess who’s who. The person with the most correct answers wins a prize, and the announcement could be at an event to promote the campaign. Another option is to have folks bring in pictures of their pets and staff has to guess who belongs to whom.

**Barbecue or Picnic**
Burgers, hot dogs, anything tastes better grilled! Staff could bring accompaniments like salads, chips, desserts, beverages, etc. A company-wide barbecue is a great opportunity to boost staff morale, and could be planned in conjunction with a United Way rally.

**Battle of the Blenders**
It can be healthy; it can be creative, as long as it’s yummy and refreshing. Make it a challenge– come up with categories – most creative, most delicious, guess the secret ingredient (tell all of them but one), etc. You can offer samples for a fee and have tasters vote, or have folks pay per glass.

**Office Carnival**
Beanbag toss, pie eating contests, three legged races, and more. Charge to participate in activities. Additional activities could include a “hoop-shoot”, hula-hoop contest, ring toss, pie throwing, bubble blowing, cakewalks, bake sale, hot dogs.

**Dollar Wars**
Do this by department or sites. Coins represent positive amounts, while paper money is “negative” deducted from the amount. In this case, sabotage is acceptable. The team with the most money at the end wins (after figuring the positives vs. the negatives), but all money collected goes to United Way.

**Compliment-o-grams**
Make up special forms and sell them to employees as an anonymous way to give a compliment to someone in the office. The delivery person is sworn to secrecy. Charge for each compliment.

**Raffles & Auctions**
Any type of raffle or auction will work, but knowing your co-workers are the contributors will net you the greatest profits. Gift certificates, tickets, lottery tree, foods, homemade articles, services such as massage, lawn care, etc. Themed gift baskets look lovely and draw substantial bids. Baked goods, candy, popcorn, (any food will do), cookbooks, coupon books, craft items, miscellaneous donated items, or books of recipes, jokes, gardening tips, etc. compiled by employees. Reach out to community and places you frequent for additional donations. For silent auctions, have bid sheets for each item noting the donor, value, minimum bid, and bid increments. 50-50 raffles are also popular, where the proceeds from ticket sales are split 50-50 between the winner and United Way.

**Need some United Way swag or signage to add some oomph to your event?**
Just ask your United Way representative.
INCENTIVES THAT WORK

Certificates allowing employees to:
• Come in late/Sleep-in
• Have an extended lunch
• Leave Early

Extra Day Vacation: Use as a prize or raffle/auction off a day or 1/2 day of vacation. Or allow any employee who desires to “Donate a Day to United Way” by giving the equivalent of one day’s salary to United Way in exchange for a day off.

Company/agency items: Pens, pencils, mugs, t-shirts, sweatshirts, etc.

Dinner for two: Make it fun, make it romantic, make it and deliver it, or make it a night of fine dining, with appetizers, entrée and dessert all at different restaurants.

Donated Items or Services: Plants, flowers, manicure/pedicures, limousine service, electronics (TV/DVD player, etc.), movies, oil changes, etc.

Dress Down Day: This is usually a hit with staff. Participants dress in jeans if permitted, or dress more casual than normally allowed for a laidback, enjoyable atmosphere in the workplace.

Flowers/Plants: always make people feel good. Local florists/grocery stores can be very accommodating with donations.

Gift certificates or tickets to restaurants, movies, plays, amusement parts, museums, sporting events, grocery stores, gas cards, etc.

United Way Scavenger Hunt
Have teams of employees visit United Way impact partners, taking crazy pictures or assembling clues in the hunt for a big prize or bragging rights!

RESERVED PARKING
Quinnipiac University’s President raffled off his premium parking spot. The highest bidder was a parent, who paid $5K as a gift to her son; that sum was invested in our community.

Parking Spots: Are there some parking spots staff would love to call their own, even on a limited time basis? Get management’s okay, and raffle them off to the highest bidder or offer as prizes. It’s a great “Zero budget” item.

Party for the department (ice cream, pizza, etc.) Food is the name of the game, but can be combined with other fun activities to make it a real celebration.

Swap jobs with your supervisor: Have you ever wished your supervisor could really know what it’s like to walk in your shoes? Wish you could kick back in the corner office and take extended lunch breaks? Now’s your chance!

United Way items: ask your United Way representative. There are always items available, but they may vary from year to year.

Weekend getaways: ask staff, family or friends who own a vacation spot/time share, etc., to see if they’d be willing to offer it for a limited time. Work out details/wishes of the donor early on and publish as many specifics as possible (dates available, bring your own linens, grill available for use, transportation not included, etc.) before the bidding process begins.

NEED MORE IDEAS OR HELP PLANNING A FUN-DRAISING EVENT?
Contact your United Way representative—we’re happy to assist!

Company Spotlight
HR Department, Yale University

United Wii Bowl
HR Employees showed off their bowling prowess without even leaving the office. Some staff even wore professional bowling shoes!