



O n l i n e A u c t i o n s : A - Z O v e r v i e w

Everyone is familiar with the traditional auction event: the live Gala with silent and live auction bidding. This is the jumping off point for an expansion and renewal of this tradition via online (Internet) registration, cataloging, bidding, and event information management, thus providing nonprofit organizations and common interest groups with:

- **New Fundraising Opportunities**
- **New Friendraising and Development Opportunities**
- **Enhanced Interactions with your Website**
- **New Marketing and Promotional Opportunities for Meetings, Trade Shows, and Conferences**
- **Special Programs for the Arts**
- **Innovations in Workplace Giving**

NEW FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES

Traditional auctions are once a year affairs for obvious logistical reasons. The audience is limited to those who are able to attend the event. Along with new online tools, there is a new paradigm: **Always On Fundraising**. An online auction platform provides infrastructure that is available 365/24/7 for any fundraising opportunity, spontaneous or planned; large or small; private or public.

What are some of these possibilities?

I. Extend the timeline and expand the audience for your traditional live event. (Note: All the below auction scenarios are “by invitation” only. Invitation can be extended to general public.)

- A. Online catalog, no online bidding (*Preview Only*). Build enthusiasm for your event. You might decide to save the expense of a printed catalog or focus your print efforts on a sponsored journal. Using the online catalog event attendees can create and print their own “Favorites” list, a personal catalog to bring to the event as a bidding guide.
- B. You can have absentee or pre-bidding on all or selected auction items, including a **BuyNow** option for any item. Minimum bids at the event are based on the highest online bid.
- C. Offer all, or selected, silent auction items for final bidding online prior to event night. Decrease event chaos, expand participation to supporters who cannot attend the Gala event, as well as friends and family and, at your discretion, the general public.
- D. Have a discrete online event as a lead up to your live event. Expand marketing and visibility opportunities and offer online registration and ticketing.

E. Continue online sale of unsold items, post event.
Increase sell through.

II. Create new, online-only events of any size and at any time of year.

Celebrate holidays and special occasions. Develop an active **In-Kind** donation program to open new funding sources. An auction is a mechanism for converting in-kind donations into unrestricted program monies. Create a member-to-member exchange for ongoing sale of goods and services that may be unwanted, excess, or unusable as scheduled (opera or theater or sports event tickets).

A. Monthly mini auctions.

B. Unique online events.

C. Spontaneous single item auctions.

D. Community Exchange.

III. Develop new sponsorship opportunities.

A. Year round opportunities for web sponsorships via online auction catalog and intro pages.

NEW FRIENDRAISING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Internet has introduced new tools to the fundraising game. Attracting people to your website is the key to familiarizing them with your mission and with event, donation, membership, and volunteer opportunities. Most important, the web of relationships that can be established and maintained via email updates and newsletters are critical to building a successful fundraising environment.

Where do online auctions fit into this scenario?

I. Develop your email list.

- A. The #1 priority for online fundraising. The auction program supplies you with the contact information for all registered bidders, whether or not they bid or win. Visitors to the auction pages can be invited to sign up for newsletters and email whether or not they register for the auction. A successful email list and a successful auction go hand in hand and mutually reinforce each other.

II. Increase frequency of contact with your website.

- A. An online auction, whether one or one hundred items, is an event. A chance to catch people's attention and have them visit your website. An excuse for an email to current members. A story for the local papers and radio or TV.

III. Cultivate relationships with local merchants.

A. The web offers new real estate for sponsorship opportunities. In addition to income it means a higher degree of interaction between your organization and local merchants. These are people whose support you want throughout the year. That support can extend beyond sponsorships and donations into vibrant and ongoing involvement.

IV. Membership has its privileges!

A. Membership organizations can create online bidding opportunities that are open exclusively to members (or to a subset of special supporters). Enhance the benefits of membership.

ENHANCED INTERACTIONS WITH YOUR WEBSITE

A successful (i.e. comprehensive and pro-active) Internet strategy is an obligation today. As more and more people come to rely on the Internet for their first encounter with your organization, and to meet their ongoing need for information, your ability to drive traffic to your website becomes a critical measure of this success.

How does your online auction capability contribute to this effort?

I. Drive traffic to your website via invitation to online auction events.

- A. Promote donation opportunities.
- B. Promote/Market Event Registration
- C. Encourage volunteers.
- D. Promote activities and classes.
- E. Share issues of relevance to your mission.
- F. Sign-up newsletter recipients.

II. Capture email contact information from prospective members and program participants.

III. Upsell sponsorship opportunities.

IV. Enhance community support via greater visibility for your activities. Your organization can be a major source of news and community affairs.

NEW MARKETING AND PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEETINGS, TRADE SHOWS,

ASSOCIATIONS, AND CONFERENCES

An auction is a network. It takes place within a network, and helps to build, expand and sustain that network. An auction can provide promotional opportunities between network members as well as between the network and the audience/clients that network serves.

It is often the case that a trade show or convention will adopt a cause in the host city and make it the beneficiary of a charitable gift – a valued gesture of goodwill and appreciation.

The online auction platform can help achieve these goals:

I. Association Promotion.

- A. Associations can create auction events on behalf of individual members. These events can promote member services to other members, or they can be opened to the association's clients as a marketing opportunity. They can occur with any size or frequency.

II. Conference/Meeting/Trade Show Promotion

- A. A benefit auction conjoined to a conference can generate enormous goodwill along with enthusiasm about the event from prospective attendees. Event exhibitors (and non-exhibitors, if desired) are requested to donate one instance of their product or service (or suitable credit) to an auction event that will benefit a host city charity. The auction would be open for a period of time sufficient to make it an integral part of event marketing and vendor promotion, and can end at the conference via use of the complimentary Internet hubs and personal computers.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR THE ARTS

For organizations with a special commitment to the arts, the cataloging and e-commerce capabilities of the online auction software allows you to offer unique support to local artists and arts programs.

I. Create an ongoing online gallery and marketplace opportunity for local artists. Create regular auctions on behalf of your organization.

- A. Year round exhibition and sales opportunity can be combined with periodic auction option.
- B. Easily updated and maintained by your staff.
- C. Combine with physical exhibitions to increase audience and participation.
- D. Provide essential visibility resource to local artists.
Enhance auction donations from participating artists.

Innovations in Workplace Giving

It's time to re-invigorate the traditions of workplace giving. What better way than a private online auction for employees, their family, and friends. A completely new revenue stream from employee donations, corporate assets and local merchants. Build enthusiasm, excitement and friendly competition throughout the workplace for the duration of workplace campaign.

I. Create an "Intra-Office" fundraising auction.

An online auction can be easily integrated into the workplace giving campaign to build enthusiasm and revenue and to reach out to friends and family. Primary donation opportunities:

- A. Individual employees donate their hobbies, passions, avocations, or just plain "time" to the auction pool. Personal assets such as vacation home weekends or rare wines are valued contributions.
- B. Executives also donate personal assets and avocations, as well as contributing corporate perks such as sky box seats at the local sports stadium.
- C. Local merchants who serve the employee community such as restaurants, dry-cleaners, bookstores will be resources.
- D. Corporate vendors (where appropriate) can be approached for product samples to auction.