

TOP 10 PITFALLS AT A BENEFIT AUCTION

GAVELO AUCTIONS

Regardless of any speed bumps or hiccups at a fundraising auction, the remarkable thing is that they always make money. For most organizations they are a reliable and consistent source of profits, raise awareness for crucial programs and causes, and promote goodwill among their various stakeholders.

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Not having the live and silent auctions in the same room.

Transitioning a large audience from one space to the next takes time and creates logistical challenges for guests and hosts. If possible try to have everything in one space to keep the event on track.

9

Poor item display and not using PowerPoint slides or video to spotlight items during the live auction.

Sell the sizzle, not the steak! Present items in pleasing displays using appropriate props, decor, changes in elevation and be sure to support the event with slides, videos and multi-media information to enhance the guest experience.

8

Poor lighting.

Make sure the room is appropriate for the needs of the event. If it is time for fundraising, slightly brighter lighting is more conducive to raising money than a dimly lit room. Make sure that guests can see silent items and the stage and the host and auctioneer can see the guests during the live auction.

7

Using small or no bid numbers.

Help make the most of your fundraiser by including bid numbers that can be read from anywhere in the room. Double-sided bid cards ensure that no matter how much fun guests are having the number can be read.

6

Not enough room for guests to circulate around silent auction tables.

Crowded cocktail hour space impedes access to silent auction tables and reduces the events ability to generate revenue from the silent auction.

5

Starting the live auction too late or not on time.

Value your guests' time and start on time and keep the event moving along. Start too late and risk watching supporters and their money literally walk out the door.

4

Featuring buffet food service during the live program.

Buffet food service is the least guest-friendly dining experience for attendees and it adds significant time delays to the start of the live program. Time guests spend in line for food is time they aren't supporting your cause. Consider plated or family-style food service to increase available fundraising time which should more than cover the incremental additional cost of these services.

3

Not conducting a Raise the Paddle to support the cause or organization.

Help event attendees help your organization by providing a chance for them to make a direct financial gift. A first-person testimonial prior to Raise the Paddle, via video or brief live in-person remarks, is the most effective way to realize Raise the Paddle success.

2

Use of Insufficient Sound or House Sound System.

One of the most common mistakes. If guests cannot hear the auctioneer clearly the event will lose far more than it costs to hire a professional A/V supplier. Note: it is important to create surround sound, rather than a wall of sound that a band or DJ would use. Spoken word auction sound is different from a band, DJ or luncheon remarks through house speakers and is crucial to maximum fundraising.

1

Not investing in a dynamic, professional fundraising auctioneer.

According to the National Auctioneers Association, a professional fundraising auctioneer can generate 30-50% more revenue than an event host, actor/actress, emcee, radio/TV personality or well-intended volunteer. The professional fundraising auctioneer supplies pre-event consultation, helps clients establish a road map for success and delivers dynamic performances that hit the fundraising mark.

