

Big List of Campaign Ideas

You won't need a big budget or a major crew of people to create a special moment of fun for your campaign. Most of the ideas contained within the Idea Book are easy and economical to produce. Finally, thank you for your hard work and dedication to your community. Working together, we can all make great things happen for the Big Bend.

Successful Campaigns Have Two Things in Common:
Good planning and wide participation.

Low or No Cost Events

America's Funniest Office Video

Find an employee who can volunteer, and has a good eye, to bring in their video camera to take candid video footage around the office. Schedule a short premiere showing in a conference room to show the video to your co-workers. Sell tickets, soda, and popcorn and donate the proceeds to the United Way Campaign. If the video is a hit, perhaps raffle off a copy or sell duplicates.

Awful Tie or Ugly Earring Contest

All contestants pay \$5 to enter the "best" awful earrings or "best" ugly ties they own, make or borrow. Place voting boxes at various places around the office and charge \$1 per vote. Employees vote as many times as they want for their favorite. Have a final review of all entries offering a last chance to vote at the end of the day. Circulate the names of the entrants the day before the event so employees can anticipate the voting. Offer a photo opportunity with your favorite contestant for \$1.

Baby Picture Match Game

Invite employees to try their luck matching baby and/or pet pictures to pictures of the management. Award the entry with the most right answers. Charge employees \$2 per ballot.

Bakery Cart

Wheel a cart of bagels, doughnuts, danish, coffee and juice through the office, collecting United Way donations in exchange for the goodies.

Balloon Pop

Employees donate prizes for this event—a variation of a traditional raffle. Before filling a balloon with helium, put a note inside with the name of the prize. Employees pay \$1-\$5 to buy a balloon and pop it to find out what prize they've won.

Basketball Shooting Contest

Set up a basketball hoop outdoors and have employees pay a dollar to see who can sink the most free throws. The money goes to the United Way and the winner gets a prize. Consider having a wastebasket version inside.

Best Photo Contest

Employees submit photographs taken at campaign and celebration events. Photos are displayed on a bulletin board and judged by a committee. The best photo receives prizes such as a new camera, free film developing, photo album, camera carrying case and film.

Big Loser

Hold a contest to see who can lose the most weight over a month-long period. Each person pays a set amount for every pound lost or gained.

Bingo

Sell bingo cards for employees to purchase. Get a local store to donate prizes for all winners.

Book, Video, CD, DVD Sale

Employees donate their old books, videos, cassette tapes, CDs and DVDs for an employee sale. Sell paperbacks for \$1, hardbacks for \$2, cassettes and videos \$3 to \$5, and CDs and DVDs \$5 and up.

Boss Cooks for You

Have a special breakfast/lunch at which top managers cook for all donors. Food is one of the best motivational tools to attract a big crowd. Tasty treats almost always bring smiles to those attending your event.

Buck Coupons

Give everyone who attends campaign meetings a buck coupon that can be redeemed in the company cafeteria or company store.

Carnation Trade

Work with local florist to donate flowers that employees buy for \$2 to send to co-workers. As an added incentive, the organization matches each \$2. Try the same event with cookies as a variation, with employees donating the cookies for the event. Interested employees pay \$1 to send a cookie and a note to friends or coworkers in the organization just to say thanks.

Children's Drawing Contest

Give employees "official photographs" of one or two top executives to take home for their children to draw.

Children's Drawing Contest 2

Children draw what "helping others," what "hope" or another theme means to them. Contest is limited to children under 12 who are related to any employee. There is a \$5 entry fee per child. Employees vote for the best drawing by paying \$1 per vote. Give prizes to all participants (work with local fast food eateries to donate a certificate for a free treat). Display winning portraits as a part of the organization's permanent art collection. A variation of this event: Employees submit photography, drawings, paintings, poetry or collages depicting people helping people.

Chili Cook-Off Contest

Employees cook their favorite chili recipe and enter it into a cook-off contest. This activity can also add "spice" to a Community Fair. A panel of chili experts selects the Official Chili Champion. Talk to a hotel representative about donating a weekend stay at their hotel for the winner.

Craft & Bake Sales

Employees jump into the holidays by shopping at a craft and bake sale! This popular activity gives everyone a chance to share their hobbies and special talents. All items donated, and sales go to campaign.

Dress Up the Boss

The boss wears a costume voted on by all employees, if the campaign goal is reached. Examples: tutu, animal costume, devil costume, etc. Don't forget the camera. Charge a \$1 to have photos taken with the boss in his or her costume.

Employee Cookbook

Collect and group recipes and helpful household hints into a customized cookbook. Employees create illustrations for the cookbook, including the cover. If possible, print and bind books by a local business, pro bono. This event has been so popular that some organizations have not been able to fill all requests. Plan for an enthusiastic response! You set the price.

Employee Raffle

Ask employees to contribute something special for a raffle prize:

- Homemade pies
- One-day vacation
- Lunch with a co-worker
- Prizes donated by vendors
- Carwash
- Tickets to a special event
- Weekend stay at a beach resort, boat or condominium

Employees make contributions using a raffle donation form. Employees turning in pledge forms early receive three raffle tickets. Employees turning in pledge forms after the "early" date, but before the Campaign's final event, receive one raffle ticket. Employees who make a certain dollar pledge receive two raffle tickets.

Executive Chair Race

Set up a relay course for executives to race through sitting in chairs or riding tricycles. Use a stopwatch to time contestants, with the fastest person winning a prize. Observers donate or wager \$1 on their favorite contestants.

Executive Office

Sell chances to be able to work for one week in a vacant executive office. Outfit the office with bottled water, snacks, etc. Make a sign with the person's name and put it on the door.

Grandma's "Award Winning" Chocolate Cake

Sell your grandma's favorite chocolate cake or other special recipe to interested employees. Tempt them first with little bite sized pieces for samples.

Grease (The Musical)

Have employees cast ballots for which members of the Executive Team should dress up like which characters in the musical Grease (or any other popular movie / play). Have them stand in front of the assembly of employees and let employees pick the best look-alike by loudness of applause. Charge them \$1 per vote, with proceeds going to the United Way Campaign.

Guess How Many

Guess the number of jellybeans, M&Ms, pennies or other items in a jar. Buy chances to guess. Closest guess receives a prize.

Halloween Pumpkin Carving Contest

Plan a Halloween theme and hold a pumpkin carving contest. Find a local business willing to donate pumpkins for your organization to sell to your employees. Employees buy pumpkins for their families, their staff or to use in the pumpkin carving contest. Employees enter carved pumpkins individually or by the group. Charge \$5 to enter and \$1 per vote. Award prizes in various categories. Examples:

- Best traditional pumpkin
- Most creative pumpkin
- Best effort by a group
- Best effort by an individual

Hula-Hoop Contest

Employees compete in teams or as individuals. Have your camera ready!

Movie Trivia Quiz

This quiz can be completed at workstations and returned to an appointed person to tally the scores. You can match the actor/actress with the movie, match the quote with the movie, or combine. The highest score wins a prize. In case of a tie, a drawing will be held. Winners can be announced at a group lunch at the close of the campaign. Employees can buy in for \$1 or \$5 per play.

Just Desserts

Campaign committee furnishes the main lunch dish but sells home-made desserts contributed by employees for \$2 more with proceeds going to United Way.

Kiss the Pig

Employees vote through contributions to executive labeled piggy banks for the boss who must kiss the pig. Have two or more managers in the mix—put the names and pictures of the victims on the box.

Look-Alike Contest

Employees are encouraged to dress up like famous personalities and celebrities. Co-workers pay to vote on the best costume with the contestant receiving the most votes winning a prize. You could also charge \$1 to have your picture taken with the celebrity look-alikes.

Lunch Box Auction

Have each participating employee pack a special, homemade lunch. Encourage them to get creative and make deluxe sandwiches or wraps. Include delicious treats like decadent brownies or monster chocolate chip cookies. Hold an auction before lunch time, allowing co-workers to bid on the fancy fixings

Ornament Raffle

Buy or have donated an artificial tree, which can be stored and used annually. Employees bring in ornaments either purchased or handmade to hang on the tree. Tree may be kept up and ornaments collected for the entire Christmas season. After all ornaments are collected, most valuable ornaments are selected to be raffled first, giving all a fair chance at high valued ornaments (Hallmark Keepsakes, Precious Moments, etc.) Employees purchase chances for the ornament raffle and names are drawn.

Penny Wars

In Penny War, two or more groups (great for departments) compete to win a fundraising competition. Each group has a bucket for collecting coins or dollar bills. The value of any pennies collected by a group count positively toward that group's point total, while the value of other coins or dollar bills are subtracted. Hence, in a competition between Group A and Group B, a contributor who wants Group A to win will place pennies into Group A's bucket and nickel, dimes, quarters, or dollar bills into Group B's bucket.

Puppy Love

Ever hear that pets look like their owners? Test this theory by having employees match a pet picture to its correct owner. Award a prize to the contestant with the most right answers or provide gift certificates to owners who look the most like their pets.

Reach for the Goal

Tie together the title with an Olympic theme. The company wins the gold medal when the campaign goal is reached. Create a poster with a bronze, silver and gold medal goal. The Opening Ceremonies are the kick-off to the campaign, explaining the goal and theme. Symbolically pass the torch from last year's campaign chair to the new chairperson. Hold a mini-Olympics with employees forming teams of three or more. Events include hula-hoop relay, tricycle race, basketball dribble, tug-of-war, 100-yard dash, mile relay, and sack race. Charge an entry fee for teams, offering prizes for the winning team along with souvenir gold medals. Conclude the Olympic campaign with an awards ceremony, awarding Olympic winners as well as all employees for their campaign efforts.

Recycled Goods

Turn in recycled paper, cans, bottles, etc. and exchange them for money for United Way.

Root Beer Float Sales

Seek donations or purchase root beer and vanilla ice cream. Other items needed include straws, spoons, cups, and ice cream scoopers. Have a committee schedule work shifts. This popular event works well during lunch and breaks. Remember a freezer will be needed to store the ice cream if the event is held all day.

Scavenger Hunt

Employees participate in a scavenger hunt that requires them to find unusual items from around the neighborhood or office building, as well as to demonstrate community knowledge. Start out with distributing pledge forms. When associates hand in completed forms they receive the first clue. You can "plant" items with selected employees for others to "discover." Teams of four, by choice, pay a group entrance fee (you set). If each team member has a different job title, automatically award them 10 bonus points. Teams have one hour to accumulate as many points as possible, so keep it challenging, yet possible to complete. The entire team must be present at the end of one hour. If any member arrives late, assess a penalty of six (6) points per minute (or fraction thereof). Work with local businesses for gift certificates or other items as rewards for the winning team.

Silent Auction

Gather gift items and create bid sheets, being certain to provide a minimum bid for each item. This can be done on the internet with all local employees.

Spelling Bee

Hold the event during a staff meeting or over lunch. Contestants pay a \$5 entry fee. Gallery observers place \$1 wagers on their favorite participants. The winner walks away with the coveted "Who Needs Spell Check" award.

Snack & Dessert Cart

Employees donate items; several carts travel around the building in the morning and afternoon and offer treats at a minimal cost. This is a new twist on the traditional bake sale.

Ticket & Gift Certificate Giveaways

Work with merchants, businesses, and concessions for donations of these items. One "large" item can be used for a special drawing. Give free tickets to movies, theater productions, amusement centers and other local attractions for pledge incentives. Give movie passes to every employee who meets the challenge of pledging a certain dollar amount. In addition, enter the names of all employees who turn in a signed pledge form during the first hour following the kick-off into a special drawing.

Theme Lunches

Add fun to campaign week by hosting a theme lunch such as 50s, 60s, 70s, or 80s, holiday themes, TV shows, sports, Renaissance, etc.

Traveling Trophy

Companies with multiple locations have found that using a traveling trophy generates friendly competition and is a great sign of pride for the location. Trophies may be used for any number of contests including location with the highest participation, raising the most special event dollars, etc.

Trivial Pursuit Match

Create a pool around the winning team and give all employees who bet on the winners a prize. Questions can be about general topics, or test folks on their company knowledge and culture. Hold the challenge during a staff meeting and give the event a game show flavor by having participants use bicycle horns to signal they want to answer.

Tricycle Races

Create teams with three to four riders. Teams are named and publicized in advance, allowing employees to make pledges or bets on the winning team. Team members ride large tricycles (rent or arrange to borrow from a cooperating store) through a pre-determined course through the office. Possibilities include: through hallways, lunch/break rooms, around cubicles, chairs, and in and out of offices. Have course marked with signs or tape on the floor. The race is designed as a relay. Team members may pass off a flag, pinwheel, teddy bear or similar item to their succeeding team member. Remember to take pictures for the company bulletin board or newsletter!

Tug-of-War

Have an interdepartmental competition. Each team pays a fee for entry with the winning team winning a prize.

Turkey Flocking Day

Usually held during Thanksgiving or Christmas to go with the turkey theme. Announce a Turkey Flocking Day to your office. In the days ahead sell "flock insurance" and put up posters around the office of what being "flocked" entails. A nice caption is "don't let this happen to you" with a photo of an office member's desk crowded with balloons or the like. On the day of the event randomly choose persons

without “flock insurance” to flock. Those who are victims of the turkey flock can pay to have a “Flock Removal Service” remove the birds.

Wall of Fame

Put pictures on a wall recognizing employees who have been contributing to the United Way Campaign for the most consecutive years.

White Elephant Sale

Employees donate unique “white elephant” gifts that others can buy at affordable prices. This is especially popular at carnivals.

Wild West

Employees dress in cowboy/cowgirl attire. Works well with a BBQ or chili cook-off.

Wine Drawing

Offer employees a chance to win an assortment of specially selected wines from a number of different wineries. Sell tickets for \$1 each or 6 for \$5 (such a deal). Display the wines in an employee common area to entice wine lovers. This is an opportunity to involve local merchants as donors.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Remember when planning special events, please stress that the support of the activities is in addition to the individual campaign pledge.

Backyard/Parking Lot Bar-B-Q

Determine costs of setup. Set a sale price for the Bar-B-Q. Pre-sell tickets to the event. The event may also be set up as a potluck picnic with everyone bringing a dish to share. Items that need to be purchased include: paper products, meat and fixings, buns, beverages, grill, lawn chairs, tables and it should be set up outside. You may wish to include a volleyball net, Frisbee, music, etc. as time and space allow.

Gasparilla!

For those who always wanted to be a pirate, this event will be a lot of fun. Decorate meeting room or lunchroom with cut-out palm trees, starfish, waves, etc. Bring in shells and fishnets to add to the decor. Bring in a chest with a key for a treasure chest. Fill it with secret prizes. Or, make a treasure chest out of a large cardboard box with gold and silver foil pasted on the outside. Employees purchase a key (either real or cut-out cardboard keys) from a volunteer dressed in a pirate costume. Cutout keys are numbered and the winner of the treasure chest is determined by a drawing. Real keys are tried in the lock, the winner being the person with the actual chest key. Make a treasure map and mount it on the wall. The display shows the progress toward campaign goal with a pirate ship crossing an ocean, in search of desert islands, with an “X” to mark the spot (goal).

Hawaiian Luau

Have a mini luau, charging a fee for the fare. Serve ham, pineapple upside-down cake and other Hawaiian fare. Give prizes to employees wearing the most outrageous Hawaiian attire. Hold a limbo contest with participants paying \$1 to enter, giving a prize to the winner. Play Hawaiian music in the background.

International Food Day

Employees team together to create taste treats from around the world. Employees decorate their own booths/tables and dress in appropriate costumes. Hold the event over the lunch hour, allowing employees to purchase tickets redeemable for food at the booths. A panel of "celebrity" judges awards prizes.

Potpourri Luncheon

Participating employees bring a hot dish, appetizer, salad, side, dessert, etc. to be shared. Paper products are also needed for this event. There is no sign up for this event. Items brought in are completely random. Employees pay \$5 to fill their plate and sample everything in the room. If your company has their own cookbook, the theme could be A Potpourri of Company Recipes. Participants must make a dish out of the employee cookbook.

Tailgate Party

Create a sports theme for your campaign to coincide with football season. Back a truck into the employee lounge area, if possible; lower the tailgate and sell football fare: hot dogs, soft drinks, chips, peanuts, etc. Prerecord a game on audio or video, or a commercial "best of" or "bloopers" and play during the event to create atmosphere. Play a game of tag or video football with participants donating an entrance fee with observers waging bets.

MAJOR EVENTS

Auction Hotline

Set up a special voice mailbox with weekly messages announcing auction items. Highlight the items, including their face value in a flyer. Employees call the hotline to record their bids. Update the recorded message daily, announcing the highest bids received to date. Each Friday, announce auction results for the week and next week's item. Ask employees to donate items or services for the auction.

Bowl-A-Thon

Employees pay a \$2 entrance fee (plus lane charges) to participate in this event. Give each participant a Pledge Form in advance to use when asking for their support. Encourage fan support, fun and enthusiasm.

Casino Night

What are the ingredients for a successful Casino Night?

- A few Blackjack tables
- A Roulette wheel
- A Poker table or two
- One bingo table
- Food & sodas.

Invite employees and their families. Local businesses can donate prizes and items for winners. Many party rental stores have gaming tables that give casino night a real Vegas- like experience.

CEO Carwash

Employees donate \$5 to have their car washed at high noon by the “boss” in business clothing. Charge extra for special services like cleaning the interior or polishing the rims. Charge for pictures of the employees and the boss washing their cars.

Community Fairs

Nonprofit organizations set up information booths at your work site. Everyone loves a carnival! Try a carnival theme with free hot dogs, soda and popcorn. Employees try their luck at games like ring toss and the fish pond. Include entertainment and displays from youth projects. Publicize well! Strong leadership sets the pace. Ask your leaders to send a memo or e-mail emphasizing the importance of learning about our community. Don't leave without your passport! Nonprofit organization representatives provide employees with information to complete questions on the Passport. Enter all completed Passports into a grand prize drawing. Talk to local travel agent about donating a trip.

Blue Light Specials

Hold daily/weekly “Blue Light Special” rallies throughout your employee giving time. Different divisions, departments or project areas host each “Special”. Serve pastries and juice. A nonprofit organization representative speaks for community services which your employees support and have interest in. Schedule entertainment by a youth or elderly group. Organize prizes and games.

Executive Fantasy Auction

Executives at your office might have some hidden talents that could be offered up as a “fantasy” package. Offers can include gourmet meal preparation or a weekend offer to use someone's vacation property.

- Cooking the winning bidder dinner
- Singing at a wedding or party
- Mowing the winner's lawn
- Changing the winner's motor oil
- Babysitting the winner's children
- Washing the winner's car
- Washing the winner's windows
- Taking the winner on a fishing trip

Flashback Carnival

Invite employees to an old-fashioned carnival, complete with cake walks, bake sale, bubble blowing and 50-cent hotdogs. Hold a hula-hoop contest and hoop-shoot to really give it that flashback flavor. Set up a dunk tank with all your dunkable executives (charge \$3 for three balls). Throw pies at all your favorite executives behind the “eight ball.” Charge participants a fee to enter the contests.

Karaoke Party

This has the potential of being a BIG fund raiser and a GREAT team builder! Participants pay \$2 to enter and are given a list of songs and a pledge sheet in advance. Participants ask employees to support them by pledging an amount of money. At the event, have a big box of funny hats, boas and other costume items available for participants to use. Pass the hat at the party to receive even more pledges! NOTE: A variation of this activity is “Executive Karaoke”. Employees pay money for executives to get up and sing the song of their choice. Videotape the event and sell copies as well.

Employee Incentives

What Can Incentives Do For My Campaign?

- Increase enthusiasm and participation
- Increase average gift
- Encourage employees to pledge promptly
- Encourage attendance at campaign meetings

A note about Incentives and Prizes: Token incentives or prizes are more effective than expensive items. Many people may react negatively to the idea of a lavish “reward” for giving to United Way. It can seem inconsistent with the spirit of United Way so use your best judgment. A good place to start is with your vendors for incentives. Your vendors may be able to provide gifts or loan merchandise. It is a great way for a company’s vendors to show how much their business is appreciated while it spreads awareness of United Way.

Ideas for Incentives

- Parking Place
- Afternoon off of work
- Lunch with the boss (out of office and the boss pays)
- Movie/game/play tickets
- Snooze day (allowed to come in late)
- Golf with the boss
- Car washed by boss or co-worker
- Leave one hour early/come in one hour late
- Office redecorated or cleaned
- Trading spaces. Employee wins a day in a bigger office.
- Gas and car wash gift certificates
- Jeans on Fridays
- Company promotional items

A Dollar-An-Inch Contest

Executives participate in an all-day competition to end the day with the shortest tie. Employees cut an inch off their favorite executive’s tie each time they give to the community. Employees can donate \$1 per inch. Give prizes for the shortest tie, the ugliest tie, etc.

Buttons

Give all who donate a button stating, “I Gave to United Way.”

Casual Days

Sell Casual Day Badges allowing employees to dress casual on certain days. Employees purchase badges for \$5 each through payroll deduction or cash donation.

The badges carry an expiration date, depending on the amount donated. Designate certain casual days as “Crazy Days” and encourage your employees to show their wild side: Tuesday—Stupid Hat Day. Wednesday— Outrageous Socks Day. Thursday— Sports Team Day.

Departmental Competition

The department with the best participation (most pledge cards returned) is rewarded with a pizza party, wash or lunch with the CEO.

Pledge Incentive

This event requires the consent of your CEO and Human Resources Department. Every employee who meets the challenge of pledging a certain dollar amount has their name entered into a drawing for a paid "vacation day." In addition, they can get an additional entry if they turn in a signed pledge form during the first hour following the kick-off into a special drawing.

Thank You's

Thank employees: in newsletters and e-mail; with a special brunch or dinner payroll stuffer message; give personalized letters from the President at staff meetings with thank you mugs. Host a United Way agency representative at a staff meeting who brings personal thank you greetings with thank you cards attached with heart pins (for "opening their hearts" or "having hearts of gold"); personal phone calls made by the President or board members; thank you posters that include the names of all donors (consider posting in public places); an announcement on the local cable television station; newspaper ads that recognize all donors by name; and thank you flyers on cars.

Vacation Days

This event requires the consent of your CEO and Human Resources Department.

Many Coordinators say this event easily guarantees almost 100% participation.

Employees "buy" a vacation day.

When an employee chooses to participate, their wages from a day's work are deducted from their paycheck. The organization may choose to match the amount deducted, with all proceeds donated to the campaign. Everyone wins through the implementation of this activity. The organization achieves high participation, the employees gets a "day off" and the community benefits.