

TIPS FOR PLANNING EVENTS & ENGAGING EMPLOYEES

UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN

We know that for some companies, the most important part of the United Way campaign is the fundraising goal amount. Did you know that for donors, the most important part is the experience (yes, virtual counts)? Studies found that **56% of donors are more likely to give after attending an event, in-person or virtual.** So, what are you waiting for? Let's plan some (virtual and in-person) events that will get your employees excited and help you reach your campaign goal!

WHAT'S IN THIS GUIDE:

- [Virtual Event Software](#)
- [Event Planning](#)
- [Campaign Kickoff](#)
- [Campaign Special Events](#)
- [Last-minute Tips & Tricks](#)

Virtual Event Software

Luckily, there are many different options for software to use to run a successful virtual event! We've done the work for you and picked our favorites.

Zoom Meetings

Hosts will need to create a Zoom account. **Note:** There is a paid option that allows for longer meetings and more attendees.

- Free accounts allow up to 100 attendees; paid add-on options allow for more attendees
- Free accounts have a time limit of 40 minutes; paid has no limit
- Attendees do not need to have software downloaded
- Attendees can "register" to attend through the software and hosts can track registrations and attendance
- Attendees can see each other
- Allows for real-time interactions among host and attendees
- Host can manage muting attendees
- Screen share capabilities

[How-to instructions](#)

Microsoft Teams

Your organization will need a Microsoft Teams account. You can host events in a variety of ways:

For smaller events and more interaction: Teams Meetings

- Recommended for events of 20 or less
- Attendees do not have to have software downloaded
- Attendees can see each other
- Allows for real-time interactions among host and attendees
- Organizer has the option to mute all attendees when program starts
- Screen share capabilities

[How-to instructions](#)

For larger events with limited interaction: Teams Live Event

- Host up to 10,000 attendees
- Attendees do not see each other
- Does not allow for real-time interactions among host and attendees
- Q&A chat box available for attendees to ask questions after presentation
- Organizer/Moderator and multiple presenter options
- Screen share capabilities

[How-to instructions](#)

Eventbrite Registration

Eventbrite is an easy event registration management platform.

- Create a page with description, date, time, and graphics
- Ability to collect information about your attendees
- Can be set to private to allow those with a link access

[How-to instructions](#)

- Email capabilities. **Pro tip:** There is a pre-written email set to remind attendees of the event 48 hours in advance; this email can be edited to fit the language of your organization or removed entirely. For virtual events, there are 30-minute and 10-minute reminder emails.

EVENT PLANNING

Here's your ultimate checklist to use when planning events this year.

1. Decide the event details:
 - A large meeting or a series of smaller meetings?
 - Who is speaking?
 - Duration?
 - Visuals?
 - Interactive elements? (Ex. play a video, host a game)
 - Incentives?
 - In-person or virtual? Hybrid?
2. Include a company representative, an agency speaker, a United Way representative or an employee willing to share a personal testimonial about United Way. **Pro tip:** Studies show that people are more likely to give when they hear, or see, how their friends give.
3. Determine what software to use, if virtual or hybrid.
 - What is the goal of the event?
 - Do you want interaction between the host and the attendee?
 - What software features do you need?
4. Create a way to track attendees. **Note:** Depending on the software you choose, you can see who has signed up and who you need to follow up with. See our Virtual Event Software section above for more information.
5. Invite attendees. **Pro tip:** Have fun with it! Add a picture (or a meme) and get them interested.
6. If allowed, you can still put up signs and posters around the office encouraging your coworkers to join the virtual event.
7. For virtual and hybrid: Practice using the software. Use the software to practice starting the event, going through the program with speakers so they know how it will transition to them or how they can share their screen, practice hosting a Q&A for attendees, etc.
8. Send a reminder with details on the in-person event or how to log in to a virtual event.

CAMPAIGN KICKOFF

You can still hold an engaging and inspiring (even virtual) kickoff to motivate your employees to support your United Way campaign.

- Ask the CEO or another top executive to speak at the kickoff and show employees the leadership team supports campaign.
- Have a representative of United Way or a United Way agency speak about the impact of your company's support. You can request an agency speaker or someone who has been helped by United Way on our Campaign HQ website. **Did you know?** By understanding who United Way helps, the agencies we support, and the causes we align with, your employees will be able to better connect with the campaign.
- If possible, make part of the kickoff interactive and fun. Ideas could include running a poll, showing a video, playing a game, having a giveaway or incentive for those who make their gift at the event or hosting a Q&A.
- If the event is virtual, record the event and share a link with employees who were unable to attend.

CAMPAIGN KICKOFF IDEAS

P.S. These can be done virtually or in-person!

Events & Activities

- Host a United Way **Watch Party** at a **Lunch & Learn or Town Hall meeting**. Highlight the United Way video, United Way safety net nonprofit videos, and more.
- Combine your kickoff event with some **special event activities**, like online bingo or attendance raffles.
- **Engage United Way Safety Net nonprofit partners** in your kickoff by having an agency representative or someone they've helped speak at your event or host a virtual tour with an agency to see how they help the community. **Pro tip:** Find a nonprofit that matches your company's culture.
- Challenge employees to **express themselves artistically**. Decorate doors, create sidewalk chalk, whatever it is – have them share what they created and “pay to vote” (donate).
- Have a **costume competition** and “pay to vote” (donate).
- Host virtual nonprofit **speakers' series**. Customize a series of nonprofit speakers to fit the needs of the company's campaign plan.

Incentives

- **Individual participation**
 - Anyone who attends a rally is entered to win a prize.
 - Anyone who donates at certain levels is entered into a drawing (vacation time, Aquarium/Ferris Wheel/Zip line passes, gift cards to local restaurants offering carry out, etc.).
 - Send restaurant gift cards or food delivery options to participants to enjoy during if you're hosting a virtual kickoff session.
 - Encourage people who have never donated before.
 - Solicit in-kind donations from neighboring businesses, vendors, employees, etc.

- **Organizational participation**
 - If the company achieves a certain percent of participation or overall company goal is reached – everyone wins! An extra day of vacation time, free pizza lunch, a jeans day, etc. **Pro tip:** Several million-dollar companies found that the most successful incentives were days off and networking opportunities with leadership, i.e. the CEO hosting a lunch for givers at a certain level.
 - Special prizes for the department with the highest participation rate.
- **Timely participation**
 - Anyone who contributes by a certain time is eligible. **Pro tip:** Show a visual thermometer to showcase how much is raised.
 - Anyone who submits their online pledge during the rally is entered to win a prize.
 - Anyone who submits their online pledge during the first week is eligible for a prize.
- **Increase your gift**
 - Anyone who increases by a certain amount or percentage is eligible (Ex. Anyone who increases their pledge by 3% receives (Three)– Sign-off at 3 p.m. passes).
- **Gift level**
 - Anyone who gives \$250 or more is entered into a special drawing.
 - Leadership donors (\$1,000 or more) are invited to a special reception.

More examples of incentives and giveaways:

No cost or low-cost incentives:

- Vacation time
- ‘Sign off at 3 p.m.’ coupons
- Drive-in movie gift cards
- ‘Coffee talk’ with the CEO
- Car wash gift card/Car detailing
- Door Dash/Grub Hub/Uber Eats gift certificates
- Membership to a book club
- Union Station - Ferris Wheel Tickets/Aquarium Tickets Reservations/Zip Line tickets
- Virtual singing telegram from the CEO (contest winner)

Mid-cost to high-cost incentives:

- Dinner with the CEO
- Webcam giveaway
- Amazon Prime Membership/gift card
- Membership to a wine club
- Vacation getaways
- Saint Louis Zoo/Grants Farm/Botanical Gardens memberships
- Virtual meet and greet with a professional sports figure from St. Louis

CAMPAIGN SPECIAL EVENTS

Special events could be considered the “life of the party” to your company’s United Way campaign. Here are some ideas for you to think about when brainstorming with your team. **P.S. All of these activities and games can be done virtually!**

ACTIVITIES

- Online auctions and raffles.
- “Spirit” days. Whether working from home or in the office, hosting a spirit week or selecting days with specific themes to dress up can make campaign interesting and fun. Have employees post pictures of themselves in their costumes on your company intranet or your social channels. The costume with the most “Likes” could be the “winner.”
- Walks/runs.
- Talent shows, dance parties and entertainment events. Have employees purchase a ticket to receive the link. **Bonus:** If you do a talent show, have employees “vote” for the winning act with \$1 for every vote.
- Virtual classes (cooking, photography, painting, etc.).
- Online speaker series with United Way partner nonprofits or someone helped by United Way.
- Jeans day/at-home attire passes to wear to work (for companies that are back in office).
- Book exchange.
- Peer-to-peer fundraising challenge.
- Virtual Concerts/Meet and Greets with the Band after the concert.
- Virtual agency tour.
- Volunteering. **Did you know** United Way’s Volunteer Center has DIY volunteer opportunities that you can do from your home? Visit STLVolunteer.org to find a virtual opportunity that fits your company’s culture! **In the office?** For an extra cost, look into using our Service2Go Site-led option with safety precautions and social distancing guidelines.

GAMES

- Bingo, Scattegories, Jeopardy, and Trivia. **Bonus:** Have one of the rounds include questions about United Way!
- Sports and video games tournament
- Penny jar war. **How?** Collect loose change in jars – winner that collects the most change gets to nominate the leader of choice to provide a virtual singing telegram/TikTok
- Scavenger hunts
- Pumpkin carving contest
- Drawing challenges

LAST-MINUTE TIPS & TRICKS

Share your success.

Remember to share photos, information and details of your events on social media and tag United Way of Greater St. Louis!

- Facebook: [United Way of Greater St. Louis](#)
- Twitter: [@UnitedWaySTL](#)
- Instagram: [@Unitedwaystl](#)
- LinkedIn: [United Way of Greater St. Louis](#)
- TikTok: [@unitedwaystl](#)
- Hashtags to use: #HelpingHere #UniteWithUs

