

HOW-TO RUN A SILENT AUCTION



Why a Silent Auction?

You can raise funds quickly with a properly planned silent auction at your next event. Just follow the following few tips, and you will be on your way to an effective silent auction. Silent auctions allow you to make money for your event without the need for many volunteers.

You display your items in a silent auction, and participants write their bids on a bid sheet. A silent auction usually lasts around two hours, and participants can continue to out-bid each other until the auction is over. At the end of the auction, you collect the sheets and announce the winners, who then pay you for their items.

Some of the steps and responsibilities for your committee include:

- 1.** Request donations from local businesses and volunteers from your organization. Examples of donations are gift certificates, crafted items, jewelry, and event tickets. But can include anything you think your participants would be interested in buying.
- 2.** Create an auction sheet for each item donated. Include a description of the item, starting bid, and bid increment.
- 3.** Create flyers for the event. Include a short explanation of your most popular items and the date, time, and location of the event.
- 4.** Advertise the silent auction. If the auction is for a school or service club, or business, place flyers on bulletin boards and send them home with students.
- 5.** Make sure you have plenty of table space if you have many silent auction items. Display similar donated items grouped. For example, if you get similar items from local businesses, place them on the same table. Each item should get a unique placement and have a pen and a bid sheet. Also, make sure that you recognize who donated the items on the bid sheet.

How do you get donated items?

- It is straightforward to get silent auction items. Generally, a silent auction is an additional fundraiser on top of your main event.
- The easiest way to get items for a silent auction is to send a standard donation request letter to all the businesses or people you think would donate good items.
- Writing a letter saves you time and allows you to talk to more businesses and people than just making phone calls.
- It is good to form a long list of as many prospects as possible. More prospects mean more possible items.
- For large donations, you can offer free tickets to your event. Generally, if someone's donation is worth \$200 or more, you can offer them between 4-8 tickets. Remember, they may also bid on your other silent auction items. So this will help make more funds after all.