

Special Event Ideas

*Remember it's best to do special events AFTER the pledge cards have been turned in.

Guitar Hero contest

Find out who among your group is the next big rock star! Set up a TV and console in the lunch room or board room. Have staff pay for the chance to compete.

Casual Day

Sell casual day stickers entitling the employee to dress casually on a pre-determined day. Stickers can be purchased for a nominal fee. Determine in your organization what is meant by "casual" to avoid confusion. In some organizations it may mean "business casual" which does not include jeans, sandals, etc. Monitor who is entitled to be dressed casually so the employees' donations truly entitle them a privilege that those not buying stickers do not have. You may want to post a flier explaining the casual day to visitors.

Late Fee

Charge a small "late meeting fee" with donations going to United Way or "cell phone rings in meeting fee".

A Stroke of Genius

Advertise well in advance for foursomes to sign-up and charge a flat entry fee per foursome. Make sure you include the fact that the event is BYOP– Bring Your Own Putter. Set up the mini-putt game throughout the hallways, offices, elevators, etc... Be creative and construct water (bucket) traps and sand (popcorn) traps. Lowest score wins!

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.

Tennis Ball Racing

This is a different twist to "duck racing." Obtain tennis balls and write consecutive numbers on them with matching numbered cards. Sell the balls and have participant's fill-in the cards. Find a hilly area; build a "funnel" at the end of the hill. On "race day," put the balls in a large scoop such as front-end loader; drop them and the first ball that gets to the bottom wins. You can have 2nd and 3rd (or more) prizes.

Email Bingo (Bing-E!)

Send a mass email to employees that Bing-E cards are for sale. After selling the desired amount of cards, sporadically (through emails) call-out numbers. First email user to win must send a mass email or use the phone intercom system, calling "Bing-E".

Children's Drawing Contest

Employees are given "official photographs" of one or two top executives to take home for their children to draw. Contest is limited to children under 12 who are related to any employee in the organization. Employees can vote for the best drawing by paying a nominal fee. Prizes will be given to all participants (try getting a local fast food restaurant to donate a certificate for a free lunch). Count all votes and announce the winners at the campaign's final event. A variation of the contest would be to have

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children draw a picture relating to a theme creating greater awareness of United Way.

Company Olympics

Teams participate in Olympic events such as wastepaper basketball free throws, balance a Styrofoam cup on a serving tray while navigating an obstacle course, make a paper airplane and fly it the longest distance, make the longest paper clip chain in one minute or staple, fold and stuff letters into envelopes in one minute. Teams pay to participate, and the company buys prizes or lunch for the winning team.

Creative Tie Contest

Divide up into different teams within the office. Each team should use its creative talent to “design” a tie. Put the ties on display for a few days or the duration of the campaign. Put a container with each tie. The tie with the most money wins. Designate someone within the company to model the winning tie and wear it for the entire day wherever he or she goes.

Executive Receptionist

Put together a board with head shot pictures of company executives. Place an envelope under each picture for “votes.” The executive who receives the most contributions of money in their envelope wins the honor of being “receptionist for the day.” As the time draws near to the end of the “voting” period, you may see large contributions being made to ensure a certain executive wins!

Let’s Make Deal

Go around the office and ask random United Way-related questions (Name two agencies that help older people,” “Which United Way partner agency is close to our office?”). Each time someone gets the answer right, give him or her a prize on the spot. Ask your CEO to go with you to hand out the prizes.

Hats Off to United Way

Designate a day as “Hat Day” and ask employees to wear their favorite hat to work. Award prizes for silliest hat, biggest hat, hat that most represents your company, etc.

Contests

How many jelly beans in the jar? Or another counting contest.

Jail and Bail

Designate an area to represent the jail or if you have a talented maintenance department ask them to construct one. Charge people to put someone in jail and also charge to get them out.

Penny Wars

Divide into teams, obtain large jars (ask area water cooler companies for a donation; they usually have lots of jars that are intact but are no longer watertight), and have the teams decorate them. Put pennies in your jars to increase the score and sabotage others by adding silver coins and dollar bills, which decrease the score.

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Silent Auction

Ask vendors to donate items, ask employees to donate handmade items or services (ie: steam cleaning carpets, lawn care, etc.), solicit gift certificates from local restaurants, etc. Put the items on display in a prominent area of the company. At a designated time, close the bidding. Then let the employees know of the highest bid and continue the auction with one hour left to outbid it to win.

Take a Day off United Way

Employees “buy” a vacation day. When employees choose to participate, their wages from the day’s work are deducted from their paycheck. The organization may choose to match the amount deducted, with all proceeds donated to the campaign. This is a win-win situation: the organization achieves high participation, the employees get a vacation day and the community is helped.

A Taste of Chocolate

Employees make their favorite chocolate recipes, and tastes are offered to those who pay admission to the event. Create a booklet to include recipes of the entries to be sold for a small fee. Designate a panel of judges to award a prize for the best chocolate recipe.

Ticket Giveaways

Free tickets for movies, theater productions, amusement centers and other local attractions can be a pledge incentive.

Encourage employees to pledge \$2 per week by giving two movie passes to every employee who meets the challenge.

Ugly Lamp Month

Use an ugly lamp to get people wanting to remove it from their desk or pay to send it to someone else’s desk. Wherever it ends up at the end of the pre-determined time period, it must stay for one month or until the next campaign.

Mini Indy 500

Rent or borrow remote-controlled cars and set up an “Indy 500” race. Use office supplies to make the track more interesting. Teams can be sponsored to compete. Spectators can place bets on their favorite team or car.

Paper Airplane Toss

Create a target of plastic or use masking tape directly on the floor. Sell special paper to contestants for creating their planes. Choose a runway decorated with Christmas lights an appropriate distance from the target for launching the planes. The person whose plane lands closest to the target wins a prize. Appoint an “Air Traffic Controller” for the event. Launch airplanes over a balcony in your building to the lower levels. Use different colors to represent each flight, if you wish.

Baby Picture Contest

Employees bring in a baby picture of themselves and staff guesses who is who. Charge an entry fee for employees to submit their guesses. The person with the most correct answers wins a prize.

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Basket Auction

Ask each department at your organization to create a theme basket (spa day, chocolate, golf, cooking). They are then auctioned off. This event has been very successful at several area companies and is a great way for folks to show off their creativity and caring.

Incentives and Prizes Possibilities

- Bonus vacation days
- Gift certificates donated by local merchants
- Golf lessons
- Mugs, t-shirts, key chains, etc., with company logo
- Sleep-in: Award/accept bids on a "Sleep-in" package – Start your day an hour later with pay, blankets, Starbucks and mug.
- One share of company stock
- Movie passes or lottery tickets
- Traveling trophy for department with the highest participation or percentage increase
- Casual days
- Department pizza party
- Candy
- Prime parking spaces

- Day off to volunteer
- Cafeteria coupons
- Free Trip somewhere

Themes

- Be a superhero
- Building a brighter future
- Caring Works Magic
- Doing Good Today for Great Tomorrows
- Give...Wholeheartedly
- Giving is Good News
- I Give at the Office
- Imagine What We Can Do...Together
- Join the Winning Team
- Let's Make the Difference
- Make a Change for the Better

Use any of the following starting points to create a theme:

- A movie
- A TV show
- Sports
- Summer or fall holiday
- The 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, or 1980s