

Fundraising – “...the Allison way...!”

A few hints and tips that I can share with you on what I've learnt on my fundraising journey so far....

- **No idea is a bad idea!**

No matter how much you raise, or how little, every penny counts and your efforts will be recognised and appreciated. If you throw away an idea because you don't think it will raise much, you've thrown away an opportunity. Know your target audience – does your idea appeal to young old, male, female etc...And even if you don't raise much money on this event, you may have raised awareness for the next...

- **Enlist help**

Share your thought(s) with others. Even if it's only the germ of an idea, others may be able to help it grow into something real...Enlist at least one key 'other person' to help you organise, as well as others as you might need to help out at the actual event. Organising in a small group works well and you may get to know new people as a result (I did!). Arrange a meeting to discuss ideas and DELEGATE- it sounds formal but inviting people for coffee or a pint, to meet face-to-face, is worth a lot! And just because you might share the profits – who cares, be selfless – it's all going to Ring20 Research and Support UK!

- **Organise - Plan ahead - Advertise**

Most things take time to come to fruition and often need a lead time to organise. Venues get booked weeks/months ahead, companies take time to respond to letters, tickets need to be sold in advance etc...Diarise when you need to do things and stick to them. Keep records – especially finances! They can get in a right pickle if you don't (and you want your fundraising total to be right!) Advertise your event – if no-one knows about it, they can't take part. Try different mediums: flyers, banners, posters, email.... Social media is great and FREE (this is where the younger generation come in to their own!) – advertise your event on Facebook /Twitter and invite all your family, friends, neighbours, work colleagues etc.

- **Communication**

Good communication is key. Keep people who are involved advised in a timely and effective manner – some people respond to email, whilst others prefer text and some a phone call or letter Let people know what is expected of them: when, why, how, what, who, how much...? All the 'doing' words. Be polite, but firm and specific. ...and if someone requests an action or response from you, do it (it's usually for a good reason!)

- **Stay positive and focused**

Share your passion with others – let them know why you are fundraising and about the cause you are supporting. Don't let a single NO put you off! (You will get them now and again, but don't push your luck: a No means No – try elsewhere...)

- **Be prepared to work hard**

Your efforts will be rewarded☺ There may always be a lot of money to raise, but it is **achievable**. You cannot however, afford to rest on your laurels thinking that there's plenty of time in the future...time goes too fast! Seize opportunities as they arise e.g. special events, birthdays, Christmas, Easter, Mother's/Father's days, Valentines.

- **ALWAYS remember to say THANK YOU!**

It doesn't cost anything, but it goes a long way...!

Some extra thoughts...

Don't be too proud - accept offers of help from family, friends, work colleagues etc...and tap into contacts from work, school, clubs etc... - you may not realise how many contacts you actually have!

Use your skills and utilise your strengths and if you've never tried something before, you can still give it a go. However, as mentioned above the younger generation tend to be pretty clued up when it comes to IT/social media – so use them – it's their thing! And if it's not, then they are often quite practical, with bags of energy e.g. good cake makers, car washers, waiters, bag packers...even fun runners!

Re-use ideas that work well, but don't necessarily repeat something if it's a huge amount of effort for little return. Cake sales can be an easy money spinner, given a big enough audience of hungry people (offices/schools), whereas car washing can be physically exhausting if the logistics aren't right. **TIP: One of my easiest money spinners was an iPad raffle. Pre-purchase an electronic gadget and sell a limited no. of tickets that ensure you get a profit. When you draw the raffle – the winner gets a very nice prize and you get a handsome profit (with limited effort) – worked well in a large office more than once!** Manage your expectations, try your best and if your heart is in the right place, just put any minor mishap down to one of life's experiences. Selling tickets in advance for events and getting money upfront can be useful. It ensures you have sufficient attendees/interest/support and if you have to pay deposits, or for advance items, these don't have to be pre-funded by you. A pay on the day approach is OK too, but a mixture of the two can get confusing!

Approach local businesses for raffle prizes – you may be surprised at how easy this can be and how forthcoming they are with offers of support e.g. local pubs/restaurants for meals, cinemas/bowling for family passes, gyms for free memberships/guest passes, independent local shops for small gifts. **TIP: Large chain organisations tend to be less responsive;** they often support their own nominated charity for the year and/or ask you to write to Head Office when you'll never to hear from anyone again. Similarly, if you are writing to companies, old-fashioned post seems to work best (companies are wary of spoof emails bearing charitable claims!) Always have a pre-prepared letter to backup your request on headed paper – we can help supply you with an example pro-forma.

Corporate sponsorship or 'matched giving' is FREE money – if you work for a reasonably sized company, chances are they will do something to support your fundraising efforts (because it's a tax break for them and awards them good publicity for local community support – WIN, WIN!) but you might need to ask. Sometimes they will support a relative e.g. your child, but sometimes they will only support the employee – so find ways around this – what are you, 'The employee' doing to raise funds?

If your youngster is the one fundraising they are likely to need adult help and support along the way. They will have bags more energy and time (hopefully?) and they should be encouraged for their efforts, however, don't necessarily expect them to be able to negotiate with venues, deal with all the finances or even effectively manage the organisation of an event (particularly those that are under 18). These things take time and practice and even as adults, we are not professional event managers – but then we don't need to be

