

Virtual Events: Ticketing, Auctions, Donations & Best Practices

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Virtual Auctions and Galas

Learning Objectives for today

- Best Practices and for Fundraising Events
- Why engage with “Fund-a-Need?”
- Online Ticketing and Registration
- Review of common platforms for auctions
- Technical re-cap: How to run a virtual event



Virtual Auctions and Galas

- If your congregation relies on galas, auctions, -thons, or dinners for outreach fundraising, **you can and should offer these virtually, in line with your annual schedule**
- Pick a platform that works best with your needs. It will take some investment of time and set-up fees to implement
- **You can integrate these easily into social media** to expand the network of donors



Virtual Auctions and Galas

Why are you running an event?

- Know why you want to hold this event virtually in 2020.
 - 91% of nonprofits that have run virtual events this year have said they did so to **keep members connected**
 - Other reasons include:
 - Raising awareness
 - Attracting new members – invite a friend
 - Oh, and Raising money!

(From Wild Apricot Fundraising)



Virtual Auctions and Galas

Benefits to Running your Annual Event virtually

- Continue the tradition
- They are significantly less expensive to execute
- Raise awareness for the mission
- A much-needed social outlet in periods of isolation



Virtual Auctions and Galas

A few creative ideas

- Make it mission-related
 - **Be clear about what the funds are going for**, if they are different from the general operating budget
 - Invite **representatives of the community** to appear virtually, especially if these are outreach-focused events
 - If using Zoom, **employ the waiting room** so that you can verify attendees have tickets or are a part of your community. When you let them in, announce them. “Here’s Jim and Mark! Everybody say hi!” “Here’s Jenny, looking great in her favorite flannel.” etc.



Virtual Auctions and Galas

A few creative ideas

- Sell tickets for fun / funny events
 - “Trade in your high heels for your fuzzy slippers”
 - “No need to hire a babysitter – bid more on the auction!”
 - “Forgot to order the vegan entrée? It’s in your fridge!”
- Examples
 - \$100 = Ticket for one, Join your friends and have fun!
 - \$190 = Ticket for two + Champagne (champagne is on you)
 - \$250 = Fun for the whole family! (Matching pajamas optional)



Virtual Auctions and Galas

What kind of events might you do?

Talent shows! Everyone can participate from the safety of their own homes. Use online tools in Zoom like **polls and voting** to give everyone a high score and a thumbs up!

Dinners! Choose a menu or options from a local catering company and have members pick up their meals in a bag, eat them together while you watch presentations about the mission or have fun together on Zoom

Craft fairs / Bake sales! Show off your skills, and members use bidding or donation applications to win. Delivery is contact-less

Auctions, silent or live! We'll go over this in detail later



Virtual Auctions and Galas

Best Practices

- Keep it short. When you gather in person, it's easy to fill up a few hours with friends, food, and fashion. Online, respect people's time, **and keep it to two hours at the most!**
- **Make it as much like an in-person gathering as possible**
 - Cue music between slides or parts of the event to signal a change
 - Use Zoom meeting, not webinar, so that people can see each other. **Events are where people see friends.** Use the chat for fun conversation and side talk.
- Special guests and videos should be of beneficiaries or grantees – in their own words (you can coach them)



Fund-a-Need / Text-to-Give

Best Practices

- **Competitive fundraising** is perfectly suited to virtual events
- Fund-a-Need usually happens after an auction. **The goal is 100% participation** from your audience. Start high, work down
- Allows your guests to see who is making a gift, inspires generosity or competition for a good cause
- **Instant gratification** – donors make a gift and can see it add up



Fund-a-Need / Text-to-Give

Most economical solution

- As members of TENS, your congregation gets a big discount to implement **Tithe.ly**'s Text-to-give platform.
- Visit <https://tithe.ly/rp/tens/register> to receive a \$10/transaction discount on text-to-give



Best Ticketing Platform

EventBrite

- This is the best solution to run a virtual event if you are not using an enterprise platform that includes ticketing
- Doesn't include auctions or donations
- Transaction processing included
- Completely integrated with FaceBook, Twitter, Instagram
- Set-up: Free
- All fees are passed onto the donor (5.5% or 7.5%)



Let's Talk about Auctions

- Is this the year for an auction?
 - Do we need more stuff?
 - Do we have ethical or moral feelings about accumulating things with so much uncertainty around us?
- Do you usually ask local businesses to donate?
 - What does that look like in 2020?
 - Idea: How can you help local businesses stay open / rebuild after a devastating year?

Auctions can be vibrant, fun, important fundraising events. This year, it's even more important to keep them mission-focused.



Free Virtual Auction Platforms

ebay for Charity

- You must first register your church or ministry with ebay for charity. Verification takes 1-3 business days (allow for more in COVID)
- Free to use
- Payment integrated through PayPal
- Allows for direct selling and community selling – users can post their own items to sell, benefiting your ministry



Mid-Tier Virtual Auction Platforms

BenefitEvents

- Works with many back-end systems
- Payment processing included
- Mobile bidding is integrated
- Easy to procure and track items
- Does not include ticketing
- Set-up: \$500
- Fee: 8% up to \$25,000, 5% thereafter



Mid-Tier Virtual Auction Platforms

Auctria

- Straightforward auction and bidding process
- Payment processing included
- Mobile bidding is integrated
- Check-out / payment is easy
- Does not include ticketing
- Set-up: \$199 - \$399, depending on number of auctions
- Fee: 0.5% on credit card transactions



Mid-Tier Virtual Auction Platforms

BiddingForGood

- Fully integrated on website and mobile platforms
- Connected to your network – through promotion, but also to a national network if you make the items visible
- Sponsorship Portal
- Does not include ticketing
- Set-up: \$249
- Fees: Depending on volume, they take a percentage to handle processing fees



Enterprise Tier: Virtual Auction Platforms

ClickBid

- Really easy bidding process – one click and you're in
- Fund-a-need (competitive donations) is supported
- Robust reporting
- Set-up: \$795 with add-on tools
- Ticking can be added for \$200 more
- No transaction fees



Enterprise Tier: Virtual Auction Platforms

OneCause

- One stop shop for all events: ticketing, sponsorships, auction
- Bidding is fast – a great back-end engineering doesn't have any lags
- Robust reporting
- Set-up: Very expensive, but all inclusive. Costs depend on the organization size, but start around \$1250 annually
- No transaction fees



How to run an event, step by step

Step one

Set the date, pick the theme, get out the information!

- If you have a committee for this, recruit them and set them to task in your usual timeline
- **Take the same care** that you would take usually for this.
 - Develop a logo
 - Make a video
 - Create the collateral for virtual or electronic delivery



How to run an event, step by step

Step two

Review and select your technology

- Ticketing and Promotion: Eventbrite or other
- Auction software
- Donation or Text to Give software
- Make sure your technology interfaces with your accounting software. **You are responsible for issuing tax receipts**
 - Ask your diocesan finance department for help on the tax-deductibility of items. In most cases the total donation is tax deductible.



How to run an event, step by step

Step three

Ticket Sales

- EventBrite is a great solution for ticket sales. It is free and completely integrated with social media and most websites and email systems
- **Promote your event** on your Facebook page, Twitter feed, or Instagram feed
- If you are doing an auction, feature items on social media that will be auctioned – **build the hype**



How to run an event, step by step

Step four

Running your event

- Gather on your conference platform, **have fun** as people arrive
- **Set a waiting room** so that you can admit people who have purchased tickets or who are known to your community
- Keep the addresses or speeches to **ten minutes or less**, especially if there are multiple speakers
 - If it is appropriate, include voices from the recipients or beneficiaries of your outreach
- If you have produced an inspirational video, show it
- If using Zoom, **keep the chat function open** so guests can talk with each other – remember, people come to events in part to see their friends



How to run an event, step by step

Step five

Running your auction

- Take **good photos** of your items and write interesting / catchy descriptions
- Create your auction using the technology with your selected platform, setting minimum prices and bid minimums (e.g. \$200 opening, with \$20 increments)
- **Make it interactive** – you're on a web conference. Have fun. Bark up the expensive items. Use humor to increase bidding.



How to run an event, step by step

Step six

Fund-a-need / Text-to-give

- After a fun and successful auction, there may still be some money left to collect!
- Set-up a Text-to-give campaign
 - Some of the platforms reviewed above have integrated text to give
 - You can always use Tithe.ly and get a discount because you're a TENS member
- Be energetic! **Be confident! Don't be shy!** Ask for those gifts - it's all going to a good cause!



How to run an event, step by step

Step seven

End with gratitude

- As you finish your event, make sure your program director, clergy, or other folks **acknowledge everyone** for being there, for their donations, and for their hard work.
- Make sure your donors know that **nearly 100% of their funds will go to mission**. With a virtual event, there was very little overhead!
- Give them **next steps or ways to continue to connect** to your mission and ministry



To run a gala and auction virtually for *virtually no cost:*

1. Sell tickets through Eventbrite
2. Promote on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram
3. Use Zoom to bring people together
4. Use Tithe.ly to collect extra donations or text-to-give campaigns
5. Use ebay for Charity to run your auction

The tools are easy to implement and easy to operate, and best of all, they're free or very low cost.



Your Questions or Comments



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