

FUNDRAISING SPECIAL EVENTS

Special events are a great way to build camaraderie, generate enthusiasm and most importantly, raise money for RPAC. Although often quite time-consuming in the planning department, when done correctly they will provide a large sum of money in a very short period of time. Special events always take more time and planning than you originally think they will. Don't forget that the One-Third Rule may be in play. Always run event ideas by your Government Affairs Director, your legal counsel or Association Executive.

A signature special event may become the highlight of your fundraising program - something to build up to over the course of the year. You may also use an event as a tribute to your major investors through selective seating, private receptions, or by having a portion of the program in their honor.

The definition of "special event" is limited only by your imagination. Examples are listed below. These are just suggestions. You can bend, not break, the rules to fit your needs. Some events work well in some sections of the country and some do not. Likewise, some events may be better suited for a large board rather than a small one, and vice versa.

Auctions – you can have a regular auction or a silent auction. The One-Third Rule must be observed when dealing with auctions. Auction items may be purchased or donated by members. You will need to remind your members that they are not attending the event to find a bargain but to invest in RPAC. Make sure that you have items priced at all levels. Ask some of your larger donors to make their investment during the auction. REALTORS® love competition; it will help your sales if some friendly competition gets started. If you have high ticket items, give a call to NAR's RPAC staff. They can suggest ways to make your auction more effective.

Barbecues – you can have a contest to see who makes the best barbecue (or pie or soup or whatever). You can have judges from local restaurants. The entry fee to be in the contest and to attend the contest would be an RPAC investment. Remember, the contestants and the attendees must be members of the association and their families.

Bad Car Day – sometimes you just want to hit something. What if the association bought a junker and set it up in the association parking lot and offered you three swings with a sledgehammer for a \$50 RPAC investment? What a great way to get rid of some of that stress! Make a party out of it. Serve popcorn, soda, or whatever works in your part of the country.

Bowling – yes, it is making a comeback. Have you seen some of the new lanes that are being built? With all of that neon they scream fun. Have a family bowling night. Have contests for the best score, most gutter balls, biggest improvement over the night. Have a competition for the kids. Have firms and individuals issue challenges to each other. You can make up the rules and have fun with it.

Carnivals – some boards and states have put on carnivals with great success. You can have a dunking booth with your brokers, association staff or leadership sitting in the booth. You can also have a pie throwing contest. Of course the pies are whipped cream in a lightweight aluminum shell. I will bet you have many members who would pay for the chance to throw a pie at one of their agents, in fun of course. Admission into the carnival would be an investment to RPAC. Special "games" at the carnival would also be an investment.

Chili Cook-Offs – this is a great way to have "teams" issue challenges to other teams. The teams could be firms, committees, your BOD. The entry into the contest would be the RPAC investment. Members would also pay an entry fee to attend the event. Have judges from local restaurants, or if you have foodies in the board, they could judge.

Dance Contests – so you think you can dance? Many of your members dance very well and would love to show off their skills. You can have a contest with judges and different dance categories. Have an entry fee and a fee to attend that will be the RPAC investment. You can make this as elaborate or as simple as your committee wants. Think of your board members and what they tend to enjoy and support.

Duck Races – it does involve those little yellow floating ducks. The board that held this event held it during their local board outing at a local water park. The outing was scheduled after the season was over so they had the park to themselves for their event. Members of the association purchased the ducks from the board office in advance. Some members decorated their ducks, some did not. They floated the ducks down the lazy river section of the water park. The RPAC investment was the entry fee for the race. The first duck to cross the finish line was the winner. They also did an event just for the kids since this was a family outing. Small prizes were awarded. You don't need a water park to make this work. Many boards have meetings or cookouts at local parks. If that park has a creek or a water feature you can always designate a starting point and a finish line for your duck race.

Dinner or Lunch – You have to eat. Why not do so as you make your investment to RPAC? Here is a fun idea. Have the RPAC committee sell tickets for a price that will cover the meal part of the dinner or lunch. The committee members will also be the wait staff. Make sure that you advertise that the event is for RPAC. When members sit down for the meal they find that they do not have napkins, flatware, a drink, salt, pepper, etc. That is where the RPAC investment starts. The wait staff (committee members) will offer to get the flatware, a glass, ice cubes, salt, etc. for an investment to RPAC. Depending upon how well they know the member, they can charge what they want. They may be able to “sell” many different items to each investor. At the end of the meal each diner is presented with the “bill” that is the RPAC investment.

Golf Tournaments – these can be tricky; refer to the handout on the One-Third Rule for more details. If you find the rules and regulations too cumbersome to have a RPAC tournament and your board holds a non-RPAC tournament you can always have several holes designated as RPAC holes and sell Mulligans at those holes. Make sure that only members can purchase the Mulligan and advertise the fact that those holes will be for an investment to RPAC.

Karaoke Nights

This is a new approach to RPAC fundraising which complements traditional direct solicitation methods. The emphasis is on fun. It is possible that every REALTOR® and affiliate has a secret wish to grab the spotlight and for one moment act out a star fantasy on stage. Here's their chance!

A team of six volunteers is needed. The association office donates the event space. Affiliates are asked to sponsor \$100 cash each to cover food (catered) and decorations. One affiliate will sponsor the Karaoke set-up, complete with a master of ceremonies (estimated cost \$350).

Promotion includes a flyer, telephone calls, newsletter article and e-mail mass messaging. The flyer is designed with a response mechanism so that early registrants (who pay a lower rate) may send in their money or call the association office with their credit card number. If someone wants to make reservations but not pay in advance, their call guarantees them a lower rate and their name is kept on a list at the door. Walk-up attendees pay a higher rate (in this case: \$8.00 in advance; \$10.00 at the door). There are no tickets sold; only a reservation list is used. All calls go directly to one person at the association office.

The event is scheduled for a Friday night (7:00 p.m. until?). Entry fee includes a dinner buffet, free beer and wine. Shooters are available for an additional donation. Karaoke performances will be judged for best singer and performance by audience participation. The Master of Ceremonies works the crowd along with the RPAC Chairman.

On the night of the event, 2 volunteers will work the door, 2 will be available inside and one acts as supervisor. This event is planned for 80-150 guests. Everyone attending is guaranteed to have fun!

P.S. If you really want to boost donations and get participation moving, charge people \$1.00 to get up on stage themselves and \$5.00 to get someone else up to sing!

Jail & Bail

1. Equipment needed:
 - a. Portable "Jail" that can be set up in the association parking lot (some civic organizations, fundraising groups or schools have portable jails)
 - b. Tents – large enough to cover jail and/or refreshment stand (good source to borrow a tent - local funeral home)
 - c. Chairs, tables, extension cords, fans (if warm weather) – sufficient for spectators viewing proceedings
 - d. Police uniforms – purchase on-line or rent from costume shop
 - e. Refreshments – (depending on time of day) soft drinks, beer, wine, snacks, etc.
Suggestion: Set up a hot dog stand if a mid-day program. Refreshments can even be prepared and sold to raise money. Could be manned by the RPAC committee members.
2. People needed:
 - a. Jailers – 3 to 4 (depending on size of association and number of detainees)
 - b. Judge – should be someone with good sense of humor, dressed as a Judge
 - c. Bailiff – member assigned to maintain order
 - d. Policemen – 2 per car, REALTORS®, male or female, dressed in uniform
 - e. Prisoners – 10 to 15 (depending on association size). Prisoners are usually brokers, sales managers, Board of Director members, association staff, Top Agents, etc. who "volunteer" to be arrested.
3. Set bail for each prisoner – amount of bail is based on size of company and what the committee feels the prisoner is capable of raising.
4. Schedule staggered pick-ups. Each arrestee should know an approximate time when they will be arrested and where it will take place.
5. Each prisoner should be handcuffed and led to police car by policemen (REALTORS®) and remain cuffed until brought to jail. Be sure each prisoner brings his/her cell phone, but do not allow them to bring money.
6. Have Judge read the arrest warrant when the arrestee gets to jail. Charges need to be humorous. Court-appointed "Attorney" may be used (Association Attorney).
7. Prisoners have to call from the jail to get people to pay their bail. They can call their agents, affiliates, other REALTORS®, etc. to bring money to the jail. The idea is to have lots of REALTORS® come by and create a fun party atmosphere. Try to get Million Dollar Club members who have not contributed \$99 to do so.
8. Another twist is to allow people to pay to KEEP prisoners in jail.

Ms. RPAC Contests – if you have a fun-loving association, this can be a huge money maker. Shaking a money maker is involved. The Ms. RPAC contestants are men, dressed as women. If you can get fun-loving brokers, affiliates, or favorite association staff to participate, you will draw larger crowds. Also, try to get at least one contestant from each of your larger firms. The contestants fill out an information form listing their weight, height, likes and dislikes, and any special talents they may have. The purpose of this is to be as funny and outrageous as possible. The Master of Ceremonies will be reading about the contestant as they walk the runway and into the crowd, so you want to make sure you have an MC that is good on his or her feet. Each contestant is dressed to the nines. They can be dressed up in evening gowns, as a cheerleader, the Statue of Liberty, a German beer maid, whatever they can imagine. They are trying to win this contest and raise money for RPAC. In order to do so, they have to raise the most money from the crowd. Each contestant carries a "purse" and the contestant that raises the most money is crowned Ms. RPAC. Remember to hand out pre-printed envelopes for attendees to put their investment into when they give their contribution to the contestants as they walk into the crowd. Also, have plenty of the envelopes at each table. That way you know who gave the money, how much they gave and all the information you need to make this legal. Liquor is involved, so things tend to get a little crazy and you don't want money flying everywhere. After all the contestants have made their walk down the runway and into the crowd and

filled their purses with RPAC investments, the money is counted and the winner is crowned. Don't forget the crown and don't forget the photographer! You can have photos taken of the contestants, have a calendar made and sell the calendar to association members for an RPAC investment after the event.

Polar Plunges – it has been mentioned that some dedicated members will do just about anything to promote RPAC. Jumping into a cold body of water in the winter is just about as dedicated as you can get. The REALTORS® in Delaware are a hardy bunch. They do this event every year in late February or early March. Members pay and pay well to see their colleagues take a plunge into the Atlantic Ocean while they are warm and dry with a drink in their hand cheering them on. I am sure other associations do this event and we would love to hear from you.

Tastings – you can hold tastings for wine, beer, bourbon, scotch or tequila. Contact National RPAC staff for a complete “how to” document.

Tennis Tournaments – this will follow the same rules as a Golf Tournament.

Trivia Contests – a fun evening for your members and an easy RPAC fundraiser. Have teams from local firms compete against each other for bragging rights. Dinner can be as simple (pizza & soda) or as fancy as you want.

Water Pistol Duels – if your association has an outdoor event planned, purchase some water pistols of all sizes and have your members purchase the water pistols as an investment in RPAC in order to duel. The larger the investment they make, the larger the pistol they receive. You can make up the rules, if you want rules.

Wii Contests – there are a variety of games you can use for this event (bowling, trivia, darts, etc.). Play whatever your members enjoy!

ADDITIONAL FUNDRAISING IDEAS

[These are not events, but fun things you can do to promote RPAC.]

RPAC Banks – get a supply of plastic banks made up. They can be in the shape of a house, a bag of money, a pig, or whatever you want. They come in many shapes and sizes and are cheap and reusable. The best way to do this activity is to go to one firm at a time. Of course, it will depend upon how many banks you have. Label each bank with the name of the member and put the bank on their desk. Determine how long the bank will be with that member (2 weeks is usually the rule of thumb). Ask the member to toss their spare change into the bank. At the end of the two weeks, pick up the banks, count the money and credit that money to the individual. Change the label on the bank and go to the next firm and repeat. You may not get a great deal of money, but it brings awareness about RPAC to everyone in the office and it will increase your participation. One board had the logo “RPAC makes Cents” put onto the bank. Make sure everyone knows that the change they put into the bank is an investment in RPAC.

Velvet Ropes – we all hate to wait in line. If you have a bar at any of your association events, purchase or rent the velvet ropes and stands. Have that line dedicated for RPAC investors. You may want to put a limit on it, such as only members who have invested \$99 or above can use the roped-off line. Instruct the bartender to wait on the members who walk up to the roped-off area first. Not only will this get peoples' attention, but you may increase your RPAC collections during the event.

Parking Signs – they don't cost a great deal of money, but your members will get the point. At your association office, have a parking space with a sign close to the door dedicated to members who are at the \$250 RPAC level and above. You want to give your top investors first class treatment.

Bad Tie Contest – everyone gets “bad” ties at sometime in their life. Have a contest for the person who shows up at the meeting or event with the worst tie. Men and women can both participate. Have judges and fun prizes. The RPAC investment is the entry into the contest.

Colored Balloons – you need a strong leader to pull this off. At an association meeting, hand out colored balloons as your members enter. The balloons must be tied to the back of the member's chair during the meeting. If the member is an RPAC investor of \$250 or above they receive a gold balloon; a blue balloon for \$99-\$249; a red balloon for \$50-\$98; a white balloon for \$5-\$50. If they do not invest in RPAC they receive a black balloon or no balloon at all. Of course, you have the RPAC committee selling balloons for an RPAC investment before the meeting. You can change the colors to make it work for you. It makes a statement for RPAC and lets your members know RPAC is a priority for the association.

Pink Flamingos – yes, the tacky, plastic ones. You will need to let your brokers know in advance that this is happening. What if you went to your office and the front lawn was covered with pink flamingos? There is a ransom note stating that the flamingos will stay until your firm raises X amount of dollars for RPAC or has X amount of participation. You would work fast to get those flamingos off of your lawn and onto another company's lawn, right? There is a spin-off on this idea that substitutes old commodes for the flamingos. We won't go there.