

Event 101 for Fundraisers: **Putting Your Mission Into Action**

Jeff Shuck
President and CEO
Event 360, Inc.
jeff@event360.com
www.event360.com



A familiar story?

Your Board Chair calls you on a cold day in January.

“I’ve been thinking that we should do a fundraising event for Mother’s Day,” she says. “The weather will be beautiful, and we can have it over in the park by the lake. Something really classy and fun.”

She says it might be a way to jump-start the summer capital campaign. “Plus, we can get some great PR, and maybe attract a few younger people for the mailing list.”

Within twenty minutes, you have inherited a new project.

What's wrong with this picture?

Your Board Chair calls you on a cold day in **January**.

“I've been thinking that we should do a **fundraising event** for **Mother's Day**,” she says. “The weather will be beautiful, and we can have it over in the **park by the lake**. Something really **classy and fun**.”

She says it might be a way to **jump-start the summer capital campaign**. “Plus, we can get some **great PR**, and maybe **attract a few younger people for the mailing list**.”

Within twenty minutes, you have **inherited** a new project.

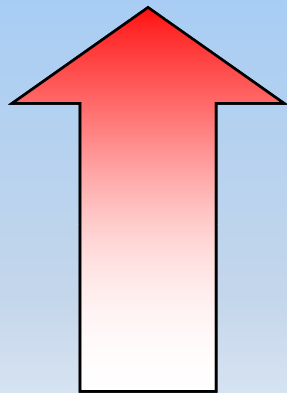
The old event paradigm

- Opportunistic
- Built for incremental revenue
- Reliant on volunteers and committees
- Taps into existing audiences
- “Friend-raisers”
- Draining, hectic, under-performing

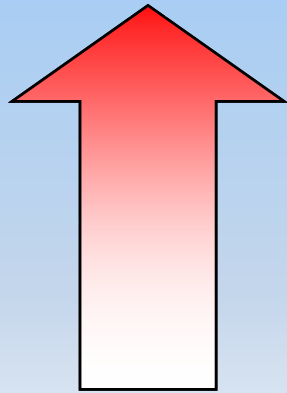
The new event paradigm

- Strategic
- Part of a holistic development effort
- Distinct events for distinct goals
- Targets audiences, existing and new
- Combines staff, volunteer, and professional resources
- Successful, engaging, enriching

The old event paradigm



The new event paradigm



- Bequests
- Recognition Events
- Capital Campaigns
- Launch Events
- Major Gifts
- Targeted Events
- Annual Giving
- Volume Events

Key take-away #1

Events are a **development** function.

The landscape has changed

- Number of charities rising quickly – and each has a good cause
- Giving as a proportion of GDP is flat
- More media outlets – and more messages – than ever
- Internet fundraising initiatives are being to transform giving
- Largest, wealthiest organizations are becoming even larger and wealthier
- Pace of change continues to accelerate

Key take-away #2

In the new fundraising world, you cannot assume people will know – or care – about who you are.

You must reach out and interact with people. You **must** have an experiential component to your development efforts.

Successful events are planned that way

- The seeds of success are sown well before your event begins
- Establishing a results-driven process upfront is critical
- Managing the event and evaluating it afterwards are easier if the initial steps are done correctly

Key take-away #3

Events are a **means to an end.**

Six steps to a better event

1. Clarify your mission
2. Identify your needs
3. Define your goal
4. Assess your resources
5. Decide upon your scope
6. Set your budget and date

One: Clarify your mission

- What do you do?
- Who do you serve?
- Why is it important?
- What is your vision for a better world?
- How do you achieve it?

Two: Identify your needs

- What problem are you trying to solve?
- Do you need an event to solve it?
- Why?
- How does an event fit with your other programs and initiatives?

Three: Define your goal

- Articulate, in measurable terms, what you are trying to accomplish
- This usually means either raising money or awareness
- Set a goal that is measurable and outline how you will measure it

Metrics affect outcomes

- Possible money metrics:
 - Gross raised
 - Net raised
 - Rate of return
 - Average donation per attendees
- Possible awareness metrics:
 - Number of names collected
 - Number of media impressions
 - Increase in brand recognition

**These are
all different
events!**

Key take-away #4

Set the goal first.

Do not work on the budget until you have a goal!

Do not work on the scope until you have a goal!

Key take-away #5

Remember the *Rule of One*:

You can only have one top priority.

Four: Assess your resources

- What do you have at your disposal?
- What is over-tapped? Under-tapped?
- Decide who will plan and execute the event **before** you set the scope
- Remember the only way to “make” more time is to add people or limit the scope

Brand

Money

Time

Volunteer network

Staff

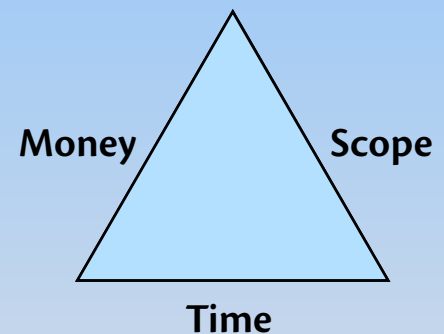
Vendor relationships

Existing awareness

Media partners

Five: Decide upon your scope

- Separate must-haves from nice-to-haves
- Only look at scope after you have articulated your needs, set your goal, and looked at your resources
- Otherwise, you risk getting attached to something that does not address your needs, cannot be measured, or cannot be implemented
- Remember, the event is a means to an end, not the end itself



Six: Set your budget and date

- The budget and date are based on your goal and desired scope
- **Do not set the budget and date first!**
- If you cannot hit the goal within your budget, you must either limit the scope or change the goal
- Plan for a time and budget contingency

Key take-away #6

Set the budget and date **after** you have identified your needs and set your goal.

Summary

- Fundraising events should be integrated into your overall development efforts
- Events are a means to an end, not an end in and of themselves
- Set your goal before you set your budget and date
- Remember you can only have one top priority
- Be clear about your metrics – different metrics produce different outcomes
- Events are transitory, mission is permanent!

Event 101 for Fundraisers: **Putting Your Mission Into Action**

Jeff Shuck
President and CEO
Event 360, Inc.
jeff@event360.com
www.event360.com

