

Happy Birthday, Tori

A National Birthday Celebration to Benefit RAINN

Fundraising Tips

1. This celebration provides you with opportunity to honor Tori and raise money by a given date. This gives donors an incentive to give, and adds urgency.
2. Events involve a series of deadlines. The deadlines are directed every bit as much toward bringing in the dollars as they are toward making arrangements for the actual event.
3. Create a calendar/timeline of everything you will need to do to make the party a success. As is the case for all fundraising opportunities, careful planning is essential.
 - All plans should be developed in writing – utilizing a calendar.
 - Make a list of your potential guests by category, i.e., contributors interested in Tori; in RAINN; potential sponsors who may be able to cover the cost of the event; people or businesses that can provide in-kind services or products; others who may give outright to RAINN. Start getting names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses together.
4. Figure out what kind of event would be most attractive to your guests to gain maximum attendance and maximum contributions.
5. Determine where to hold your event. The most important is where can you maximize your attendance and contributions. Also decide on the date of your party. It can be on August 22 (Tori's birthday), or anytime between August 8 and September 5.
6. Take a look at list of people you plan to invite. How much can they afford to donate? This is how you should set your ticket price. You don't want to ask for too much (which might scare people off), but you also don't want to ask for too little. It's ok to have several prices— for instance, you might want to have a regular price, and a lower rate for students.

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7. Multiply the number of attendees you expect by the contribution asked to determine your anticipated revenue.
8. By now you should have established: Date, type of event, prospective groups of contributors, location, ticket price, estimated receipts.
9. After you have developed a complete timeline of your event--
 - You want to sell as many tickets as possible. You may not be able to do it alone. You may want to organize a committee to sell, or you may want to get co-host(s). Selling tickets is an organizational exercise: divide up responsibilities and make sure that ticket-sellers follow through.
 - Keep your costs down. When you plan your event, ask yourself a simple question as you determine what each of your costs will be: Can I do it a cheaper way without reducing the number of tickets we sell? Perhaps you can find someone/some organization to donate in-kind services or products for which you would otherwise have to pay. Or you could have a potluck support, or rely on your guests to supply the drinks. Selling tickets and keeping costs down should be your standard theme.

Event Timeline

STEP ONE:

Identify the location of your party as soon as possible. If it will be somewhere outside your home (a restaurant, club, etc.), make all the necessary arrangements with the venue. These arrangements should include the cost of the venue rental, if any, times allowed for the event, liability, etc. Finalize venue.

STEP TWO:

Develop your prospect lists.
Send out your invitations by mail and email. You can use the enclosed sample flier, or make your own invitation. If you are mailing

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Fliers or invites, make sure the reply portion has your return address on it. Keep good lists.

In addition to people who can buy tickets, identify people who can sell tickets. It's hard to sell a hundred tickets, but most people find it easy to sell 5 or 10. Get your friends and family to commit to selling a batch to help you out.

STEP THREE:

Finalize arrangements. Decide on food, drinks, music, theme, raffles, etc. You may want to develop and work from a budget at this point. This may be the time to think about a program for the evening, i.e. who welcomes, who thanks guests for contributions, thanks volunteers, etc. Decide on how the evening will go, i.e. music, food, prizes, etc. Make sure you have volunteers who will be supervising each item. This is the time to assign responsibilities/duties to your volunteers for the event.

STEP FOUR:

Make phone follow-up calls. Some people will procrastinate and not return the reply form. Others will ignore the mailing, but will give money if you ask them personally. So it is important to start your follow-up calls about a week after you mail the invitations. Make sure they received it (and be prepared to email or fax them a copy if they didn't).

Ask them for a specific commitment. Will you buy two tickets? Will you sell five tickets? Figure out what you want from them in advance and ask for it. If you have co-hosts selling tickets, follow-up with them regularly to make sure their sales are going ok. Divide this responsibility and keep accurate records.

STEP FIVE:

If event is not at your home/apt., talk with event's location representative, caterers, and any other vendor you will be using for the event, if any. Make sure they are on your track and on schedule for preparations.

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STEP SIX:

Alert the media. Your party is one of more than 100 taking place around the world. That makes it interesting and somewhat newsworthy. While NBC won't show up with a camera crew, your local station might, as might local radio and newspaper reporters. Community and weekly newspapers in particular will likely be willing to write something. Try to get them to write a piece before the party—it could help you sell tickets. Then try to get them to do a follow-up piece the day after the party. Let them know if there's something particularly newsworthy about your party—a prominent local band is coming, or the mayor plans to stop by, say.

We'll send you a sample press release closer to the event. But the best way to get coverage is to just pick up the phone. Call your local reporters and tell them what's going on. Because there is a local angle for an international event, and it is all for a good cause, they'll likely be interested in what you have to say.

STEP SEVEN:

Make sure your rsvp's are kept in up-to-date order. Keep making those follow-up phone calls yourself and use your friends/volunteers and have them report accurately back to you.

Phone calls should stress what contributions will be used for. We'll send you some examples in a couple weeks.

DAY OF EVENT:

Last-minute preparations:

Be at venue early (if it's not at your residence).

Go over evening procedure with your volunteers and their responsibilities. They need clear instructions as to their duties.

Assign a "chief" volunteer as a trouble-shooter, who can step in anywhere if something needs handling.

Have check-in system at door, i.e. Door volunteers will need to take checks, capture names and addresses and phone numbers, and take credit card information.

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Make sure your vendors know what you expect of them.
Anticipate needs and special arrangements. For example, is there a ramp for the handicapped.
Go over the program with the host/emcee.
Check the music (stereo, speakers, PA system).
If any press are attending, have someone assigned to handle them.
You may want to have someone take photos.

FOLLOW-UP

Checks, pledges, credit card info needs to be sent to RAINN offices immediately after event. Address:
Happy Birthday, Tori
RAINN
635-B Pennsylvania Ave., SE
Washington, D.C. 20003.
1-800-656-4673, extension three

You may want to do thank-you notes to any in-kind contributions, to sponsors, and to volunteers who have helped you. We will send thank you notes to all donors.

Please supply any press coverage you may have on your event to the RAINN office.

You may also want to do a short written report about the event. We'll show these and press clips to Tori.

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