



BEING A CHEERLEADER

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# FUNDRAISING

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For most cheerleading and dance programs, fundraising is not something taken lightly. With coaching fees, uniforms, camps, competitions, etc., cheer and dance can be expensive at times.

Things can easily become overwhelming if you let them. But there are endless fundraising opportunities to raise money throughout the year. Your team will usually participate in those together, but there are quite a few that you can do on your own.

Before we start listing our new money-making strategies, there are a few tips to go over. According to Barb Lewis, veteran fundraiser and loyal supporter of her high school in Lilburn, Georgia, the only way to avoid burnout is to establish clear fundraising goals and set firm deadlines for reaching those goals. "Identify what you need, how much money is required and how long it will take to get it. Otherwise the fundraising activity could be never-ending."

Another tip is to do few fundraisers, and do them well. I'm sure you've heard "less is more" on a number of occasions, and that's also a great approach to fundraising. Always strive for quality over quantity. Companies should be consulting their customers to do only a few fundraisers, but to do them well. If your hard work from one fundraiser didn't pay off exactly how you'd hoped, then by all means, arrange another event to earn more money. Keeping a strict budget will definitely help you in the long run.

It's always a good idea to know what kind of fundraising other groups in your area are doing. You wouldn't want to sell cookies or cookie dough at the same time Girl Scouts are. The last thing any group needs to do is duplicate the efforts of others and bombard the community asking for money. It might even be a good idea to get together with other groups in the community at the beginning of the season and go over what each will do for their major fundraising event. Just be aware that there are some people who might try to take your idea before you have the chance to implement it.

## CALENDARS

The first thing you should do is meet with a local printing company, preferably one with the best deal, and come up with your prices. You should have forms printed out with specific prices for ads that will be placed throughout the calendar in business card, 3/4 page, 1/2 page, and full page sizes. There should also be a minimum each team member must reach (i.e. each person sell \$300 worth of ads). After you sell your ads, you then find someone to take pictures of your team, one for each

month. It's always better to take extra pictures just in case a few don't turn out the way you'd like them to. Once your calendars

are printed, you can sell them around Christmas, at basketball games or other events, for around \$10 each. They make great stocking stuffers!



## COUPON BOOKS

Who doesn't like to save money? With this fundraiser, you'll make money too. Call local businesses, ask them to donate as many coupons as they can spare to your team, and provide them with information as to why you are asking for them. Let the businesses know that your fundraiser will bring them more exposure, although they'll most likely be aware of that already. You should ask both fast food and elegant restaurants, entertainment outlets (i.e. miniature golf parks, skating centers, video rental stores, etc.), and so forth. After collecting the coupons, you can make copies, as long as the businesses have okayed that, laminate them, and put them together as a coupon booklet. Not only can your team raise a great deal of money, but you can also commend yourselves for all the hard work put into this activity.

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## **GIFT CARDS**

Selling gift cards from popular stores and restaurants has become a quick and easy tactic to make money. Several private schools provide this type of fundraiser for students who need to raise money for tuition. Each student makes a profit off every card they sell. This is also a great way to stock up on Christmas and birthday gifts throughout the year.

## **COMMUNITY-WIDE BASKETBALL (OR OTHER SPORT) TOURNAMENT**

There's nothing better to bring a community together than a sporting event. You can either turn it into a huge game or make it a shoot-out type tournament. By charging a fee at the door as well as an entry fee for participants, you could rack up some serious cash. This event has become very common in college Greek systems, and with the amount of money some organizations have made, there's no reason why this activity couldn't help your team raise enough money needed for the year. Your team could also put together a small raffle/auction for door prizes. You could charge for each ticket and try to get the prizes donated to you.

## **SELLING CONCESSIONS AT SPORTING EVENTS**

With all the professional sports teams around the country, including football, basketball, baseball, etc., there are ample opportunities to raise money for your team in an exciting environment. You would have to set it up with the arena at which the event will be held, but with the number of games for each sport, there are thousands of dollars to be made. This is also a fundraising activity that parents can do with their cheerleader or dancer.

## **THE NEVER-FAILING CARWASHES AND BAKE SALES**

Carwashes are a great way to have fun in the sun while raising money for your team. Usually held in front of a local bank or in an empty parking lot that's visible and easily accessible from a major road, make sure you have plenty of "extras" holding up posters motioning drivers to get their car washed. Bake sales are a delicious way to make money for your team. Everyone loves to have a nice sugar rush after a long day of school. You can get everyone on your team to bake something and come up with prices for each item.

## **IDEAS FROM OTHER TEAMS**

### ***CHEER CANS***

*At the beginning of the season, we have a pasta party at one of the girls' houses, and everyone brings a coffee can. After we eat, each of us decorate our cans with construction paper, pipe cleaners, little cheerleader print outs and glitter. Then, each girl is in charge of finding a convenience store (gas station, corner store, etc.) where they can put their can. The object of the can is to draw as much attention and change as possible. The girl who raises the most money with her can gets a prize at the end of the season. The cans that raise the most money are usually bright and original, but it's not all in the can. The key is location, location, location. This year we've done it for about 3 weeks and have already raised more than \$500. It's easy and fun! Jonathan Law High School*

### ***FASHION SHOW***

*My squad in Kenora, Ontario, Canada organized a fashion show for a fundraiser one year. Each girl had one or two outfits, and we recruited a couple of guys to help us out. We went to local clothing stores and asked them if they would be interested in letting us model some of their outfits. A couple of girls went to each store and tried on and picked out outfits. We held the fashion show in our school gym and sold tickets at the door. It was packed, we all had a lot of fun doing it, and we made a lot of money. During the fashion show, we raffled off prizes which had been donated by businesses, and we served some snacks and drinks. It went over really well. In the end, all of the work was worth it.*

### ***LEMON SHAKE-UPS***

*We sold lemon shake-ups at our annual All-Sports Kickoff, the Friday night before school starts in August. We asked each parent to donate some of the ingredients (lemons, sugar, ice, and our "secret" ingredient lemonade mix). Hardees donated cups, lids, and straws. We bought a couple of giant lemon squeezers (actually called a potato press) at IKEA and Bed, Bath, and Beyond. We found plastic cups with lids at Dollar General to shake everything in. We put up an awning, made signs, borrowed 6-foot tables from the high school, kept the extra ice in the high school freezer, and made ice runs when needed.*

*The key is getting organized. Cut each lemon into eight pieces, and keep them in a large covered container. Make up the lemonade mix in a huge decanter with a spout. Put the ice in an ice chest, and have the sugar in a large container with a quarter-cup scoop. Have a box for your money and start with at least 20*

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ones, 2 fives, and a ten. Have someone specific taking money because the people making the shake-ups get very sticky.

Have at least 12 plastic glasses with two very-squeezed lemon quarters in each ready to add one quarter cup sugar and ice to the top. Fill with lemonade and put on the top. Hold the top firmly on and shake well for about a minute. Pour into the Hardees cup. Each Lemon Shakeup goes for \$2.00.

We made \$482.00 in four hours. Each parent took an hour shift. We sent the dancers out into the crowd with carriers (like at baseball games) selling shakeups. It was fun, and the most successful fundraiser at our Kickoff!!

### **PEP RALLY/ICE BREAKER**

We had a new football coach this year and decided to host a "parking lot pep rally/ice breaker," for not only the new coach but also the new freshman. We charged \$3.00 to get in and had two dunking booths. All the coaches and principals sat in the booths, and we charged \$3.00 for 3 balls. The kids loved it. We sold concessions and t-shirts. We also provided other games where they could play and win prizes that were included in the entry fee. We raised in \$1100.00 in 3 hours and everyone had a great time. Johnson Central High School, Paintsville, KY

### **POSTER-A-THON**

Every year we hold a poster-a-thon. We spend the night in the high school gym painting all the "run through posters" for football season. We have three types of pledges: flat pledges, hourly pledges, and per poster pledges. We have to paint these anyway, but now we raise money to do it. We have 10 girls on our squad and raised \$1200.00 this year. It is easy, fun and a great team building time. Pierce High School - Arbuckle, CA

### **JOIN THE CLUB!**

We are doing a fundraiser called the "200 Club". We have sent out letters asking 200 people to donate \$20.00. We have been getting great response to this. We can possibly raise \$4000.00 with little cost to us. We live in a small community, maybe schools in larger communities could have the 500 Club. Pierce High School - Arbuckle, CA

### **WHAT'S IN THE BAG?!**

We held a fundraiser one where everybody had to make a picnic lunch. Lunches consisted of such items as peanut butter and

jelly sandwiches, ham sandwiches, spaghetti, etc. People came to bid on each basket. Not only was it fun, we also made \$1,500!!!

We also held another that was called mystery bag. We all brought in a brown bag and filled with stuff. Some bags only had one thing and others had 6-7 things. We raised \$1,000!!!

### **A RIDE AROUND TOWN**

The Spring Creek Middle School team sold tickets for a limousine ride where ONE LUCKY PERSON got to ride in a limousine with three friends of their choice. The limo took the winner and three friends out to a restaurant for dinner. All expenses were paid for. We sold the tickets for one dollar each, and we were able to raise over \$1200!

### **HELPING THE ENVIRONMENT**

Our squad in Oregon went around different neighborhoods and collected aluminum cans and plastic bottles. We then took the recyclables to the nearest grocery store and turned in all of the cans and bottles for money (only some states do this). Each girl was able to collect around \$200.00!

### **CALENDARS**

Last year our squad sold a calendar at Christmas time (for the following year). People would pay \$1.00 to have their birthday or an anniversary added to the calendar. We had 12 members on the squad, so a different girl's picture was put on each month. Then on the front we had a group shot. It was a great success. We made about \$800.00, and we had fun doing it.

### **ATTENTION CHOCOLATE LOVERS!**

At Lewis Central High School in Council Bluffs, Iowa, the night the girls show their parents what they've learned from cheerleading camp, we also hold a Chocolate Auction.

Each cheerleader is required to make a basket (usually with a theme) that must include some sort of chocolate inside it. Then the parents bid on the baskets until the highest bid wins. The baskets usually go for \$30-\$80 each. We make about \$700-\$900 on the auction. Its a great way to get the parents into it and a wonderful fundraiser.

### **COOKBOOK**

We made a cookbook! Cheer Stars all-stars got their parents to donate recipes and had them all bound by a local office store. We

sold the books for \$6 and only had to pay to have them bound and photocopied! Everyone loves personal recipes. We even put our team info in it to advertise ourselves. You can get businesses to buy an ad and in return it cuts down your cost = more money!!!!

### **HOTDOG!**

Our squad did a great fundraiser that raised a bunch of money. We went to Kroger and Publix and had hotdog sales in the front entrance. Each person paid about \$5.00 for the hotdog and about \$2.00 for a drink or cookies or chips. We stayed in the parking lot and cheered to draw attention. But we made different words to our cheers. Like instead of Cheer! What are u waiting for, waiting for, get up off your feet, and shake it to the beat, we yelled, Eat! what are u waiting for, waiting for, get up off your feet, and buy a hotdog now. We also made signs in the parking lot. We did this for a whole day and managed to raise \$600!!!

### **KICK-A-THON**

At West Catholic High School in Grand Rapids, MI we have a great way to raise money, entertain the crowd, and get ready for competition every year. We are a traditional pom team so our kick line has to wow the crowds. We hold a Kick-a-Thon.

We start training in the beginning of the year and slowly increase to 2 minutes of solid kicks. The day of the event, we hold our Kick-a-Thon right in the gym during half-time and kick!! The only kicks that count are at least shoulder high. We go back to the supporters that made a pledge and collect for either a straight pledge or pledge-per-kick. Not only do we raise money but we have a great height on our kicks for state competition!!!

### **THREE IS BETTER THAN ONE!**

1. We sell the 'official' school shirt each year. No other organization is allowed to sell any type of school shirt, and this helps us a lot. We try to be inventive with the yearly slogans and have been able to find some of our biggest selling slogans by looking at all of the great shirts at summer camps. This squad of 12 has never made less than \$500 on this sale.

2. We kick off our annual 'Avon' sale the day of tryouts each year. I choose this date because all of the girls are really 'pumped up' and eager to sell. It is easy because your Avon rep does all of the hard work, and we are paid 40% of the total sales. We average \$1500 each year.

3. One of our favorite things we do each year is our 'Luminary Walk'. We sell luminaries "In Memory" and "In Honor" of anyone special to our customers. They sell for three dollars each and we

light them during a special community gathering. The past two years, we have been so profitable on our other fundraisers that we were able to donate the \$700 profit to a local cancer victim.

### **CHEER-A-THON**

One great fundraiser our school came up with is a Cheer-A-Thon. We go to our local football stadium and cheer as long as we can. We have local companies and families sponsor us for so much money an hour (approximately \$20 per hour.) Last year we had girls there for 25 hours! If you stop cheering, you have to drop out. Everybody loves this and they come support us.

### **ROCK-A-THON**

Here's a great idea for a fundraiser that my squad did called a Rock-a-Thon. We asked a local church if they would be willing to let us use one of their sanctuaries and a TV. Each girl brought her own rocking chair and we rocked the night away! We got pledges from businesses and friends pledge money per hour of solid rocking. We rocked all night eating pizza, pop-corn, and watching good movies!

### **BASKET OF CHEER**

A really great fundraising idea that makes a lot of money is to raffle off a "basket of cheer." Have each cheerleader buy or ask for donations of five or more items that have to do with your school's mascot. This can be anything such as figurines, t-shirts, license plates, magnets, stuffed animals, and season tickets for the next sport's season. Then place the items in a large decorative basket and wrap it with plastic and top it with a large bow. Hold a raffle for the basket charging three to five dollars per ticket. You are sure to make a lot of money!

### **CAR WASH**



We made a pledge sheet for each girl, who asked 30 people each to make a five cent pledge. We then set a goal to wash 100 cars. After the car wash (which was completely free) the girls collected

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*five dollars from each person on their pledge list. So each girl made \$150.00! There are no products to pedal, and instead of making a couple hundred dollars, our squad raised over \$4,000.! Not bad for a day's work!*

### **PENNY DRIVE**

*Our squad got every homeroom class to bring in their loose change every morning. We would go around collecting it for about a month. Then, whichever class brought in the most money, we would give them a pizza or sundae party (they loved getting out of class for a party). Our squad raised about \$1,600 with this fundraiser!*

### **GARAGE SALE**

*Our squad usually does a garage sale. Each girl gathers items she is willing to sell and asks neighbors and friends to donate items. Then we get together the night before to price and set up. The next day you have the garage sale. We also sold cookies and sodas. We made a little over \$900, plus we got to go shopping in each other's wardrobes!*

### **PIG KISS**

*Our squad is doing a fundraiser where each girl has a jar that no one can see into. We placed a picture of each girl above their jar in the lunchroom. We left the jars there for two weeks, and the object was to fill the jar of the cheerleader who you would most like to see kiss a pig. So at the end of two weeks we counted up the money \$500, and the lucky girl had to kiss a pig in front of the whole school at a homeroom assembly. It was a fun fundraiser, and it didn't cost us anything! Bishop Blanchet High School in Seattle, Washington*

## **ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING**

### **The essential element of fundraising is to have a goal.**

That goal could be something like: "To send each cheerleader to camp without parental expense," "To run a completely free cheerleading program," or "To send the team to competition."

### **The second essential element is a highly motivated group of parents.**

For raising large sums of money, they are crucial. Get the support of your parents from day one. Let them know that the more cooperative they are in fundraising, the less money will come out of their pockets!

### **A third element that helps make raising large amounts easier is a cheerleading team's involvement in the community.**

Involve your team in as many things as you can: United Way, American Cancer Society, "Just Say No" Drug Prevention programs, anything that will get their name on the public's lips and teach them about community involvement. Then when you solicit advertising or are asking for a donation or selling a product, you have won half the battle. You're well known and you have established your commitment to the community who will in turn support you!

- How ready is your squad for an emergency? Do have an emergency plan that you practice on a regular basis? If not, this is a guide to help you get started!