

Guide to best practices

Planning your campaign

The following pages contain examples of how many local organizations make their United Way campaign fun, effective and meaningful.

Strong CEO support

- Citibank, FSB, hosted a breakfast for its senior vice presidents. It was successful because it was an opportunity to ask every attendee to make/increase their gift. By sharing his own motivation for giving, he gave the campaign a more personal touch.

Building a strong campaign team

- Team leaders at Wachovia Bank, NA participated in United Way's links activity - each person wrote what was important to them on a colorful strip of paper. Then, they linked the strips to form a chain. This was a great way to involve and engage team leaders and help them to understand how United Way's mission is directly tied into what is important to them.
- Macy's runs a statewide campaign led by its corporate offices in Miami, Florida. The ECM for the corporate campaign puts together a team that consists of HR/payroll rep, a marketing rep and community liaison rep. The team works together to develop a strategy for the company to implement its United Way campaign. Then, each team member appoints various staff members in their corporate offices to execute campaign activities. For example, one person chose to implement the communications strategy, another to schedule agency tours, another to coordinate help talks, another to oversee the Leadership asks, another to coordinate special events, etc.

- The Miami-Dade County Public School system raises more money in its annual United Way campaign than any other school district in the United States. Part of this success is an organized, effective, fun training that educates almost 500 ambassadors about fundraising strategies and community resources. Ambassadors have stated that the trainings give them confidence to present to fellow staff members and to support the campaign at their school sites. Here's how it works:
 - *The training is held at an agency that receives program funding from United Way. Ten trainings are scheduled at five locations in Miami-Dade County, ranging from North Miami to Homestead.*
 - *At the trainings, employees receive information to use in their work locations, such as a list of community speaker topics, an ambassador guidelines manual created at the school district's headquarters, and forms and financial procedures to guide them at their worksites.*
 - *Once ambassadors are trained, they are fully equipped to go back to their work location and kick off their campaign by educating their staff and students about the importance of giving as a school system.*

Running your campaign

Educating your fellow employees

- Florida Power & Light Company schedules United Way campaign presentations within its departments. These informational presentations allow United Way to educate employees before the campaign starts.
- Miami-Dade County has a special intranet related to its United Way campaign. This useful tool reaches all employees and educates them about United Way through a did-you-know feature, testimonials, and Loaned Executive experiences. The site also lists upcoming campaign-related events, department fundraisers, Leadership giving information and more. This has helped the County keep its employees informed and increase their participation in the United Way campaign.

Involving your fellow employees

- Each year, LNR holds a much-anticipated event to kick off its United Way campaign. The kickoff is a pep rally where employees get pumped about campaign activities. The program consists of testimonials from staff who share the impact United Way has had on their lives, presentations by United Way staff and CEO, and speakers from United Way impact partner agencies. An agency that receives United Way program funding provides entertainment. After the campaign has officially kicked off, employees get the chance to participate in tours of United Way-funded programs and LNR's trademark prize-patrol raffle.
- City of Miami Beach kicks off the campaign with a United Way Halloween barbecue for all employees, featuring a DJ, delicious food, costumes and a United Way information table.

Involving organized labor

- Including labor unions is one of the keys to Miami-Dade County Public Schools' United Way campaign success. Before the annual United Way campaign begins, labor union leaders and the superintendent come together to endorse the campaign via a letter sent to all school system employees. This letter is effective in communicating United Way's value in our community and the ability of everyone, by working together, to continue to make a positive difference in Miami-Dade.

Implementing successful Leadership campaign practices

- Ocean Bank hosted a cruise for its Leadership level contributors. The president thanked everyone for their involvement with United Way and encouraged Leadership givers to increase their gift.
- Miami-Dade County offers Leadership prospects a special tour with the county manager. Here, the manager stresses the importance of Leadership and invites prospects to join him as a Leadership level contributor.
- Last year, Bank of America kicked off its Leadership campaign with a "Hope in Paradise" event, which featured a tropical theme. Guests enjoyed reggae music, Caribbean foods, and the opportunity to win prizes. The event was well received and enhanced the momentum of Bank of America's overall United Way campaign.

Saying thank you

- Baptist Hospital in Homestead holds a reception for everyone that donates ‘a day of play’. That helped get more participation from those that can’t give at the Leadership level.
- One campaign held a thank you event, including campaign awards. To make the event even more fun, the ECM included a photo booth station where employees could be photographed with their awards. Personal touches like thank you pictures drawn by children for each participant made a nice keepsake. The program also included a performance by children from a United Way-funded program.
- Ocean Bank thanks its Leadership contributors by treating them to an elegant dinner cruise around Miami Beach.

Implementing exciting fundraising events

- Federal Reserve of Atlanta’s Miami branch supports United Way year-round through fundraising. This includes selling Valentine’s Day baskets, participating in the Ford Championship at Doral, and holding Mother’s Day and Father’s Day fundraisers, plus book fairs, jewelry fairs and orchid sales.
- AvMed holds a Halloween carnival. Employees decorate and man booths for half a Friday before Halloween. They sell jewelry, frozen drinks, flags, knick-knacks, etc. Last year, one team ran a haunted house and charged \$10. The company bought lunch for everyone. They also had a pumpkin-carving contest.
- Macy’s holds a sale of goods (leftovers from their stores as well as vendor donated items) where staff can purchase items below sale prices and Macy’s even sell tickets for a “pre-sale” for those staff members who want to really get their hands on the goods first.
- Karaoke at The Miami Herald is super-fun; here are the rules:
 - *A department must increase its campaign participation by 10%. Directors of departments that achieve this increase must sing at a special karaoke event. If the director opts out, the “fine” is \$100. The department retaliates by raising an extra \$100 to force the director to sing.*

the director still refuses, he or she must pay \$500 to get out of the performance. One year, the Herald publisher stood onstage at the end of the karaoke event and promised he would contribute an extra \$500 if every single director joined him on stage to sing.

- Miami-Dade County Aviation hosted a bazaar featuring unwanted items from airport employees. With the volume of tourists in the airport, this event raised over \$3,000 during just three days.
- Florida Power & Light Company’s Turkey Point facility held a “pie-in-the-face” event. Employees bid to select management staff to be hit in the face with a pie. One manager was selected with a bid of \$600!
- Macy’s tailors a live auction to top executives and management, but it’s often the staff themselves that put up their own services (taking people out on their boats, lending them their summer homes for a short period of time, time shares, etc.) for auction.
- One year, Assurant spoofed “American Idol” and held “Assurant Idol”. Staff put on shows and the audience voted for the best performer. Staff bought tickets to the spectacle and with their purchase, they were also allowed two tickets to vote for the best act.
- Many campaigns use their company-wide intranet to promote a fundraising auction. Merrill Lynch Miami Americas Complex gathered signed sports memorabilia, and posted them, eBay style, on their intranet. Employees across the U.S. signed on to bid. All the money was credited to the Miami campaign.
- One company has held a Jailathon. This included sending letters to its individual stores asking employees to issue a “warrant” for the “arrest” of their district manager or regional director. Employees had to pay for the warrant, and the “prisoner” was placed into a police-donated paddy wagon. To get out, the “prisoner” had to raise money by

making calls from within their confined space. The “prisoners” weren’t notified in advance about the “warrants” for their “arrest”. When employees came around with handcuffs, they were more than surprised. This company also raises money through bowling tournaments, casual days and silent auctions.

Creative campaign tools

- Add fun to your campaign by implementing a theme that can carry through all campaign activities and events. Successful themes include:
 - TV - format each activity like a popular show. You can use one genre for the entire campaign (“reality” shows, talk shows, cooking shows, etc.), or you can mix it up and base each activity on a different show (one could be a “Survivor”- style competition, another activity could be an “Emeril” imitation, another could be “Desperate Housewives”, etc.).
 - Road trip - format each activity like a different stop on a road trip across the U.S. Each day of your campaign can let employees “explore” an area. For example, in New York, you could have a street market, employees could have to buy “subway” tokens to get around the building, there could be a “Central Park” area for a picnic, etc.
 - Decades - format each campaign day like a stop in a different decade. For example, one day could be the 1950’s, and every employee that wears a 50’s outfit is entered into a drawing for a prize.
 - World tour - for example, in “Italy Days”, as employees enter the building, let them experience Florence by having music playing in the lobby, with a small table with a red and white checkerboard pattern tablecloth, two chairs and flowers in a vase. Assign a male staff member to dress as a waiter and greet everybody as they enter, giving each female a flower from the vase. At lunch, transport participants to Milan, the fashion capital of the world, by serving pizza or pasta (for a fee, or course) and putting on a fashion show showcasing the amazing creations of the actual employees (people would sign up prior to this event to design using pre-planned materials such as a garbage bag, tin foil, gift wrapping ribbon and stick-on rhinestones, etc.). The best design wins a prize.

