

FUND

FUNDRAISING.COM

THE ULTIMATE FUNDRAISING PLAYBOOK

How schools, teams, churches and community groups plan, launch, and finish a fundraiser that actually hits its goal.

HELPING GROUPS RAISE MONEY SINCE 1992



DIRECT SALE

Product in hand today

ORDER-TAKER

No inventory risk

EASY START

Launch in a day

ONLINE

Share anywhere

1-800-443-5353

We answer the phone.

How to Use This Playbook

Start here. Four routes through the same book.

This playbook is written for people who did not ask to be in charge of fundraising — principals, coaches, parent volunteers, church leaders, club directors, committee members. You already have a job. This is the extra one.

So it is built to be skipped through, not read cover to cover. Find the line below that sounds like your situation and jump straight there. The worksheets are meant to be written on.

1

Need cash quickly

You have weeks, not months. Go to the direct-sale pages and pick something supporters can buy on the spot.

- Money collected the moment the sale happens
- Shortest calendar of any option
- You will need somewhere to keep the product

START AT PAGE 08

2

Want zero inventory risk

Nothing to store, nothing to carry. Collect orders first and deliver once.

- No product arrives until orders are in
- Widest range of items to choose from
- Needs a longer selling window

START AT PAGE 09

3

Supporters are spread out

Family and friends live elsewhere. An online campaign reaches them and removes delivery entirely.

- Anyone can take part from anywhere
- Nothing to deliver or count
- Works best running alongside another program

START AT PAGE 10

4

Not sure yet

Work through the goal-setting worksheet, then the cheat sheet.

- Ten minutes with a pen decides most of it
- The numbers usually pick the program
- Or call us and we will walk it through

START AT PAGE 05

Stuck on the choice?

Tell us your group, your goal, and your deadline. We will tell you what actually fits — in about five minutes.

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What's Inside

Six sections. Read the one you need.

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The 10-Minute Roadmap

The whole campaign on one page.

01**Set the number**

Decide the dollar goal and the date you need it by. Everything else is downstream of these two numbers.

DO THIS FIRST**02****Count your real sellers**

Not the roster — the people who will actually take part. Plan on roughly half.

TEN MINUTES**03****Pick the program**

Match it to your calendar and your storage, not to what sounds appealing. Pages 07 to 12.

ONE CONVERSATION**04****Name four owners**

Lead, money, communications, distribution. Written down, agreed before you announce anything.

BEFORE THE KICKOFF**05****Run the kickoff**

Twenty minutes, everyone in the room, first ask made before anyone leaves. The single highest-leverage moment.

DAY ONE**06****Work the middle**

Two updates a week. Publish progress. Shrink jobs for volunteers who go quiet.

WEEKS TWO TO FOUR**07****Close hard**

Announce the deadline three times. The final seventy-two hours outperform the middle two weeks.

FINAL WEEK**08****Deliver, thank, debrief**

Sort by seller in advance, thank supporters publicly, and write down what you would change while it is fresh.

WITHIN TWO WEEKS

Goal-Setting Worksheet

Write on this page. It is the only one that matters before you start.

OUR GOAL Total we need to raise	BY THIS DATE The money is needed in hand
\$ _____	_____

THE MATH Goal divided by your profit share equals what you need to sell	PER SELLER Divide by the people who will really take part — not the roster.																				
<table><tr><td>GOAL</td><td>÷</td><td>PROFIT SHARE</td><td>=</td><td>TOTAL TO SELL</td></tr><tr><td> </td><td>÷</td><td> </td><td>=</td><td> </td></tr></table>	GOAL	÷	PROFIT SHARE	=	TOTAL TO SELL		÷		=		<table><tr><td>TOTAL TO SELL</td><td>÷</td><td>REAL SELLERS</td><td>=</td><td>EACH SELLS</td></tr><tr><td> </td><td>÷</td><td> </td><td>=</td><td> </td></tr></table>	TOTAL TO SELL	÷	REAL SELLERS	=	EACH SELLS		÷		=	
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CONSERVATIVE Lower participation	REALISTIC Announce this one	STRETCH High engagement
\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

KEY DATES	WEEKLY MILESTONES
	Goal Actual
Kickoff _____	Week 1 _____
Selling starts _____	Week 2 _____
Selling ends _____	Week 3 _____
Delivery day _____	Week 4 _____
Celebration _____	Week 5 _____

Know Your Fundraising Math

Three numbers decide whether you hit your goal.

■ WHY THIS MATTERS

Every fundraiser comes down to the same arithmetic: how many people sell, how much each one sells, and what share of each sale your group keeps. Change any one of the three and the outcome changes.

Most groups obsess over the third number and ignore the first. That is backwards. Participation is the number you control, and it moves the total further than anything else on this page.

Write the three numbers down before you look at a single product. A goal without arithmetic behind it is a wish, and every group that misses its target discovers the gap in week four rather than week one.

■ ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☒ Start from your goal, not from the product. Divide the goal by your group's profit share to find the total you need to sell.
- ☒ Divide that total by the number of people you realistically expect to sell — not the number on your roster.
- ☒ If the per-seller target looks impossible, the problem is participation, not the product.
- ☒ Set a conservative, a realistic, and a stretch number before you launch. Announce the realistic one.
- ☒ Recount after week one. A campaign that is behind at day seven is almost always behind at day thirty.
- ☒ Recalculate once participation is known — the first estimate is always optimistic.
- ☒ Share the per-seller number with the group. People hit targets they can picture.

IN PRACTICE

Groups consistently overestimate how many families will take part and underestimate how much a motivated seller can move. Plan on roughly half your roster participating. If more show up, you beat your goal early — which is a far better problem than explaining a shortfall in week five.

WATCH OUT FOR

Setting the goal from what you raised last year instead of what you need this year. Last year's total is a data point, not a target.

Choose the Right Program Type

Four paths. Pick the one that matches your calendar, not your cravings.

■ WHY THIS MATTERS

There are four ways to run a product fundraiser, and they differ in one important way: when the money arrives and when the product does.

Everything else is detail.

Direct sale puts product in hand today. Order-taker collects orders now and delivers later. Easy-start and online remove handling and delivery from your plate entirely.

One more filter, and it is the one groups forget: who is going to do the work. A program that suits your calendar but needs four organised volunteers you do not have is the wrong program.

■ ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☒ **Direct sale** — product in hand, money collected on the spot. Fastest cash, requires inventory control.
- ☒ **Order-taker** — collect orders first, deliver later. No inventory risk, longer calendar.
- ☒ **Easy-start** — a short, simple program you can launch with almost no setup.
- ☒ **Online** — supporters order and pay through your own campaign page; nothing to carry or count.
- ☒ Groups running a long season often combine two: an in-hand program early, an online page running the whole time.
- ☒ Count your available volunteers before you count anything else.
- ☒ If you are running two programs at once, launch them together — not one after the other.

IN PRACTICE

The most common planning mistake is choosing a program with a delivery window that lands in the middle of exams, playoffs, or a holiday break. Work backwards from the date your group needs the money and the date your volunteers actually disappear. Then pick the program.

WATCH OUT FOR

Choosing the program first and building the calendar around it. It is always the other way round.

Direct-Sale Programs

Sell products directly for immediate momentum.

■ WHY THIS MATTERS

Direct-sale programs work well when your group wants a straightforward campaign with products supporters can buy right away. Sellers show the item, make the ask, collect payment, and create fast wins.

These programs suit schools, teams, clubs, and youth groups that want a short, focused campaign with easy-to-understand products.

The trade for that speed is handling. Somebody has to receive the product, store it, hand it out, and account for what comes back. Decide who that is before you order, not after it arrives.

■ ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☒ Best when you need a short campaign window and immediate momentum.
- ☒ Supporters can buy right away rather than place an order and wait.
- ☒ Popular examples include chocolate bars, Katydid's, lollipops, Smencils & Smens, and beef jerky.
- ☒ Often promoted with up to 60% profit and free shipping on qualifying orders.
- ☒ Requires clear inventory control and simple money-handling rules.
- ☒ Agree where product will be stored before the order is placed.
- ☒ Set a return date for unsold stock and put it in writing at handout.

IN PRACTICE

A direct-sale campaign is won or lost on inventory control, not on selling. Sign product out to each seller in writing, count what comes back, and settle money the same week the sale ends. Groups that skip this step lose more to unreturned product than they ever lose to a slow week.

WATCH OUT FOR

Handing product to sellers without a signature. It feels awkward for ten seconds and saves an uncomfortable conversation later.

Order-Taker Programs

Collect orders first, deliver later.

■ WHY THIS MATTERS

Order-taker programs let sellers collect orders on a form or online, then deliver once the full order arrives. Your group carries no inventory and no upfront risk.

This is the right structure for premium items, larger catalogs, and any group that cannot store or transport product during the selling window.

The longer calendar is the hidden cost. Orders come in over weeks, the shipment arrives later, and delivery is later still. Groups that need money quickly should not choose this structure, however attractive the products are.

■ ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☒ Best when you want zero inventory risk and a wider product range.
- ☒ Common selling points include up to 60% profit, free shipping on qualifying orders, and no money up front.
- ☒ Collect payment with the order, not on delivery day. This single rule prevents most collection problems.
- ☒ Set an internal order deadline several days before the real one so late forms still make the count.
- ☒ Sort orders by seller before delivery day, not on it.
- ☒ Work backwards from the date you need the money, not forwards from today.
- ☒ Keep one master order list. Loose forms are how orders go missing.

IN PRACTICE

The riskiest moment in an order-taker campaign is delivery day. Every unpaid order is a phone call someone has to make later, and those calls rarely get made. Collecting payment at the time of the order turns delivery day into a handoff instead of a collection problem.

WATCH OUT FOR

Announcing a delivery date to families before you have one confirmed. Promise a window, not a day.

Easy-Start & Online Fundraising

Reach the people who do not live nearby.

■ WHY THIS MATTERS

An online campaign gives every family a link to share. Supporters order and pay directly, and in many programs the product ships to them — nothing to carry, count, or deliver.

The real advantage is reach. Grandparents, former families, and friends two provinces or states away can take part, and they often spend more than the neighbour down the street.

Online works best as a second channel rather than the only one. The families who will order in person are not the same families who will share a link, and running both captures both.

■ ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☒ Set up your campaign page before the kickoff, not after it.
- ☒ Give every family the same one-line message to forward. Most people will not write their own.
- ☒ Ask each seller for five contacts outside your town. That is where online earns its keep.
- ☒ Run the online page alongside an in-hand or order-taker program — not instead of it.
- ☒ Post a progress update twice a week. Momentum is visible or it is invisible.
- ☒ Test the link yourself on a phone before you send it to anyone.
- ☒ Name one person to own posting updates. Shared responsibility means nobody posts.

IN PRACTICE

Online campaigns fail quietly. There is no box of unsold product to remind anyone, so a page that nobody shares just sits there. Assign one person to post updates on a fixed schedule and the same campaign will outperform a neglected one many times over.

WATCH OUT FOR

Launching the page and assuming it will spread. Nothing spreads unless somebody pushes it on a schedule.

Program-Fit Cheat Sheet

Find your situation on the left. Read across.

IF THIS IS YOU	START WITH	BECAUSE
You need money within a few weeks	Direct sale	Product is in hand and paid for on the spot.
You have no place to store product	Order-taker or online	Nothing arrives until orders are in.
Your supporters live out of town	Online	A link travels further than a form.
Your group is young (K–5)	Direct sale, low price point	Simple to explain, easy to carry.
Your group is older (6–12)	Order-taker or online	Students can own a target and a page.
You have a long season ahead	Order-taker plus an online page	One earns now, one runs throughout.
You are short on volunteers	Online or easy-start	Least handling, fewest moving parts.
It is a gift-giving season	Order-taker — premium items	Supporters are already shopping.
You have run the same thing three years	Switch categories, not suppliers	Fatigue is real. A new category resets it.

IN PRACTICE

Almost nobody picks the wrong product. Plenty of groups pick the wrong **structure** — an order-taker campaign with a delivery date in exam week, or a direct sale with nowhere to store the boxes. Get the structure right and most reasonable products will work.

Product Comparison Matrix

Six proven categories, side by side.

	Chocolate Bars	Popcorn	Cookie Dough	Candles	Smencils & Smens	Beef Jerky
						
TYPICAL PROGRAM	In-hand direct sale	Traditional order-taking or online	Pre-order program	Online program	In-hand direct sale	In-hand direct sale
BEST FOR	All grade levels and communities	All ages; high impulse appeal	Younger students and families	Teens, adults, and gift buyers	Elementary students and schools	Older students, adults, and sports teams
PROFIT POTENTIAL	●●●●● Good	●●●●● Very Good	●●●●● Very Good	●●●●● Excellent	●●●●● Good	●●●●● Excellent
DELIVERY STYLE	Students deliver in person	Students deliver in person	Frozen — delivered in person	Delivered to your group	Students deliver in person	Delivered to your group
WHY IT WORKS	Trusted classic Easy to sell Great repeat buyers	High demand snack Large variety Strong margins	Families love it High-quality product Perfect for freezers	Popular gift item Premium perceived value Easy to store	Fun and appealing Low price point Easy for students	Unique and high demand Premium quality Great for adults
RECOMMENDED SEASON	Fall – Spring (Year round)	Fall – Spring (Year round)	Fall – Winter (Holidays)	Fall – Winter (Holiday season)	Fall – Spring (Year round)	Spring – Fall (Events)

IN PRACTICE

Groups that repeat the same category three years running see participation soften — not because the product got worse, but because supporters stopped being surprised. Rotating between two categories keeps the ask fresh without giving up what already works.

Still deciding between two? Tell us your group and your deadline — we will tell you which one fits, and which one does not.

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Schools & PTAs

Trips, activities, equipment, and the gaps the budget does not cover.

■ WHY THIS MATTERS

School campaigns live or die on two things: how clearly the ask is explained to parents, and how easy you make it for a busy family to say yes in under a minute.

Elementary campaigns run through parents and reward simple, visual, low-price items. Middle and high school campaigns work when students own the goal themselves and can see progress.

Two things quietly decide a school campaign: whether the office staff know what is happening, and whether teachers were told before the students were. Both are ten-minute conversations that prevent weeks of friction.

■ ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☒ Send one clear note home before the kickoff, not on the same day.
- ☒ Name the specific thing the money buys. "The band trip" outsells "school funds" every time.
- ☒ For younger grades, keep the price point low and the item easy to explain.
- ☒ For older grades, publish a leaderboard by class or homeroom.
- ☒ Give teachers a two-sentence script. They are the ones who will be asked.
- ☒ Brief the office and the teachers before the announcement goes home.
- ☒ Give one named contact for questions — not a general email address.

IN PRACTICE

Principals and PTA leads are working through a full plate before your fundraiser ever comes up. The campaigns that succeed in schools are the ones that arrive as a finished package — dates, letter, script, and a single point of contact — not as a set of decisions someone still has to make.

WATCH OUT FOR

Launching in the same week as picture day, report cards, or a book fair. Check the school calendar before you pick dates.

Sports Teams

Uniforms, travel, tournaments, equipment, and fees.

■ WHY THIS MATTERS

Sports campaigns have a built-in advantage: the group already meets regularly, already has a roster, and already knows what it is raising for. Use all three.

The constraint is the calendar. Practices, tournaments, and travel eat the selling window, so short and structured beats long and loose.

Team campaigns close faster than any other group because the deadline is real and everyone sees each other twice a week. Use that. A short, visible, competitive window beats a long polite one.

■ ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☒ Launch at a practice where everyone is already present. Never by email alone.
- ☒ Tie the goal to something the athletes want — the trip, the tournament, the new jerseys.
- ☒ Run the campaign inside a fixed window that avoids playoffs and travel weekends.
- ☒ Use team-versus-team or line-versus-line competition. It works on every age group.
- ☒ Parents in the stands are your best distribution channel. Give them something to hand out.
- ☒ Post the running total somewhere the team passes every practice.
- ☒ Ask each athlete for five contacts outside the club before day three.

IN PRACTICE

Coaches are the most effective fundraiser leaders in this business and the least available. Ask a coach to run a campaign and it stalls. Ask a coach to announce it once at practice, and hand the running of it to two parents, and it works.

WATCH OUT FOR

Letting the campaign run past the end of the season. Once the last game is played, participation collapses regardless of the deadline.

Churches, Clubs & Community Groups

Mission trips, camps, outreach, scouts, band, cheer, dance, and rescue.

■ WHY THIS MATTERS

These groups have the strongest built-in supporter base of anyone who fundraises, and the loosest structure. The membership is willing; the organization is usually informal.

Success comes from putting a light framework around an audience that is already inclined to help.

These groups have the widest age range of any audience, which is an advantage if the program suits it. Choose something a grandparent and a teenager would both be comfortable selling.

■ ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☒ Announce it once from the front, then follow up in the group chat. Both are needed.
- ☒ Give a named person responsibility for the count. "The committee" is not a person.
- ☒ Choose items that suit a gathering — giftable, shareable, easy to carry home.
- ☒ Set a visible target and mark progress somewhere everyone passes.
- ☒ Thank supporters publicly the week after it closes, not months later.
- ☒ Pick a single announcement moment when the most people are present.
- ☒ Put the deadline in every written communication, not just the first one.

IN PRACTICE

Groups with a strong community base often skip the structure entirely because the goodwill feels like enough. It is not. The same congregation that would gladly support the campaign will forget it exists without one person whose job is to remind them.

WATCH OUT FOR

Assuming the goodwill will carry it. Willing supporters still need to be asked, told the deadline, and reminded once.

Build Your Team & Run the Kickoff

Assign the roles before you announce the fundraiser.

■ WHY THIS MATTERS

Almost every stalled campaign traces back to the same cause: one person was doing all of it. Four named roles, agreed before launch, prevents that.

The kickoff is not an announcement. It is the single highest-leverage twenty minutes of the entire campaign, and it should be run to an agenda.

Four roles does not mean four meetings. It means that when something goes wrong — and something will — everybody already knows whose problem it is. That is the entire benefit, and it is worth ten minutes.

■ THE FOUR ROLES

☒ **Lead** — owns the goal, the calendar, and the final count.

☒ **Money** — one person, one ledger, one place the money lives.

☒ **Communications** — sends every message on a fixed schedule.

☒ **Distribution** — owns materials, product, and delivery day.

☒ Kickoff agenda: why we are raising, the number, the dates, how to sell, and the first ask before anyone leaves.

☒ Write the four names down and share them with the whole group.

☒ Agree who covers each role if that person is away for a week.

IN PRACTICE

Whatever share of your group attends the kickoff is roughly the share that will participate. That makes attendance — not enthusiasm, not the product — the number worth fighting for. Hold it where people already are, and never make it optional.

WATCH OUT FOR

One enthusiastic person taking all four roles. It works until week three, and then it does not.

Your 6-Week Timeline

The rhythm that works for most groups.

WEEK 0

Set up

- ☒ Goal, dates and roles locked
- ☒ Parent letter sent
- ☒ Program confirmed
- ☒ Online page built

WEEK 1

Kickoff & first push

- ☒ Kickoff held with everyone present
- ☒ Materials distributed
- ☒ First ask made in the room
- ☒ Link shared by every family

WEEK 2

Momentum

- ☒ First progress update posted
- ☒ Check in with quiet sellers
- ☒ Easy sales are done — expect a dip
- ☒ Second share push

WEEK 3

The middle

- ☒ Halfway update with a real number
- ☒ Add a short-term incentive
- ☒ Shrink jobs for anyone who stalled
- ☒ Confirm delivery logistics

WEEK 4

Close the sale

- ☒ Announce deadline three days out
- ☒ Announce the morning of
- ☒ Announce again one day out
- ☒ Internal deadline for late forms

WEEK 5

Deliver & thank

- ☒ Check shipment the day it arrives
- ☒ Deliver and reconcile money
- ☒ Sort by seller in advance
- ☒ Thank supporters publicly

IN PRACTICE

Week three is where campaigns quietly die. The easy sales are gone, the deadline still feels distant, and nobody has said anything for ten days. A single honest update with a real number — how far along, how far to go — restarts more campaigns than any incentive.

The Seller Script

Give people words they will actually say out loud.

YOU — THE ASK

Hi — I'm [name] and I'm raising money for [group] so we can [reason]. Would you like to support us?

Name, group, reason, ask. Four parts, one breath. Reason beats price every time.

THEM — "WHAT IS IT?"

They are interested. Do not oversell — answer and hand it over.

YOU — THE ANSWER

It's [product]. Most people take [typical]. Which would you like?

"Which would you like" assumes yes. "Would you like one" invites no.

THEM — "MAYBE LATER."

Almost always means no. Do not push — make it easy to come back.

YOU — THE GRACEFUL EXIT

No problem at all. We're selling until [date] — here's our link if you change your mind. Thanks for listening.

Leaving warmly is how you get the second sale, and the one next year.

IN PRACTICE

Most sellers are not shy about the product. They are shy about the pause after the ask. Practise the script twice at the kickoff, out loud, in pairs — including the pause. Groups that rehearse it once outperform groups that just hand out the sheet.

Parent Communication Templates

Five messages. Fill the blanks, send, done.

SEND 3–4 DAYS AHEAD BEFORE THE KICKOFF

Hi everyone — on **[date]** [group] is starting a fundraiser to [reason]. Our goal is **[goal]**. It runs **[start]** to **[end]**. Everything you need comes home that day. Thanks in advance — it makes a real difference.

SEND THE MORNING OF LAUNCH DAY

It's here! [group]'s fundraiser starts today and runs until **[end]**. Your child is bringing home everything they need. The fastest way to help: share the link with five people who don't live nearby.

SEND AT THE HALFWAY POINT MID-CAMPAIGN NUDGE

We're **[percent]** of the way to our goal with **[days]** days left. If you haven't had a chance yet, this is a great week to jump in. Every order counts.

SEND 24 HOURS BEFORE CLOSE FINAL CALL

Last call — orders close **[end]**. We need **[gap]** more to hit our goal. If you've been meaning to, today is the day.

SEND WITHIN ONE WEEK OF CLOSING THANK YOU

We did it — [group] raised **[total]**. Thank you. Because of you we can [reason]. Delivery is **[delivery]**.

Social, Text & Group-Chat Templates

Copy, paste, fill in the blanks.

GROUP CHAT — LAUNCH

[group] fundraiser starts today! We're raising for [reason]. If you can, order or share — both help. Link below.

GROUP CHAT — MIDWAY

Halfway there. [gap] to go and [days] days left. Sharing takes ten seconds and honestly helps more than you'd think.

TEXT TO FAMILY OUT OF TOWN

Hi! [name] is fundraising for [group] this month. Everything ships straight to you — here's the link if you'd like to support.

SOCIAL POST — PROGRESS

[percent] of the way to our goal. Thank you to everyone who's ordered so far. [days] days left.

SOCIAL POST — FINAL CALL

Last day! Orders close tonight. We're [gap] away from the goal.

IN PRACTICE

Nine out of ten supporters will forward a message someone else wrote and will never write their own. Give every family the exact words, in a form they can copy in one tap, and your reach multiplies without anyone doing extra work.

Money, Orders & Delivery Day

Protect the trust you spent the whole campaign earning.

■ WHY THIS MATTERS

Nothing damages a group faster than a money problem, and money problems are almost never theft. They are missing records, mixed-up envelopes, and orders no one wrote down.

Delivery day is the same story. It goes smoothly when it has been sorted in advance and badly when it is being sorted on the spot.

Reconcile as you go, not at the end. A campaign counted once at the close will always have a discrepancy somebody has to chase; a campaign counted weekly almost never does.

■ ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☒ One person handles money. One ledger. Two people count anything large.
- ☒ Money goes to the same place the same day it is collected. Never home in a bag.
- ☒ Every order gets a name, a contact number, and a total — no exceptions, no shorthand.
- ☒ Sort by seller before delivery day. Sorting on the day is where errors happen.
- ☒ Check the shipment against the order the day it arrives, not the morning you hand it out.
- ☒ Count and record weekly, not just at the end.
- ☒ Keep a written note of anything unusual on the day it happens.

IN PRACTICE

If a shipment arrives wrong — short, damaged, or mixed up — call the same day. Almost every problem in this business is fixable when it is caught early and expensive when it is caught late. That is what the phone number at the bottom of this page is for.

WATCH OUT FOR

Storing collected money at somebody's home "just until Monday." It is the single most common source of a problem nobody intended.

Troubleshooting & The Final Push

Fix the stall, then finish hard.

■ WHY THIS MATTERS

Most campaigns hit the same wall in the same place: somewhere around the middle, when the easy sales are done and the deadline still feels far away.

The last seventy-two hours are worth more than the middle two weeks. Groups that plan a real close routinely add a meaningful share of their total in the final days.

Almost every stall is a communication problem wearing a costume. Before changing the product, the incentive, or the deadline, check whether anyone has actually been told anything in the last ten days.

■ COMMON STALLS, AND THE FIX

- ✓ **Low participation?** The ask was unclear or the kickoff was thin. Re-announce with a specific number.
- ✓ **Started strong, then flat?** Normal. Publish a progress update and name a short-term push.
- ✓ **Volunteers gone quiet?** Shrink the job. Ask for one specific task with one deadline.
- ✓ **Final 72 hours:** announce the deadline three times — three days out, one day out, and morning of.
- ✓ Tell people exactly how close you are. "We need forty more" outperforms "keep selling."
- ✓ Before changing anything, send one clear update and wait forty-eight hours.
- ✓ If a seller has done nothing, ask for one order — not for effort.

IN PRACTICE

The volunteer who disappears in October is not a character flaw; it is a predictable feature of every season. Build the campaign so it survives losing two people halfway through, and you will never have to rescue it.

WATCH OUT FOR

Extending the deadline. It teaches everyone that the next deadline is not real either, and it rarely recovers more than it costs.

Your Year-Round Calendar

Stop starting from zero every September.

■ WHY THIS MATTERS

Groups that plan two campaigns a year raise more than groups that scramble for one, and they spend less time doing it. The second campaign is always easier than the first.

The work you do this season — the seller list, the supporter contacts, the lessons — is the asset. Write it down while it is fresh, not next August.

Two moderate campaigns a year beat one enormous one, and they are easier to staff. Supporters tolerate being asked twice with months in between far better than being asked for twice as much once.

■ ACTION CHECKLIST

- ☒ **Fall** is the strongest season for most groups. Gift-friendly items and a natural deadline.
- ☒ **Winter** suits online and ship-to-home programs when weather makes delivery unpredictable.
- ☒ **Spring** is the least contested season and the easiest to book — and almost nobody books it early.
- ☒ **Summer** is planning season. Set dates and roles while people are reachable.
- ☒ Hold a thirty-minute debrief within two weeks of every campaign closing. Write down what you would change.
- ☒ Book the next campaign's dates before this one is fully closed out.
- ☒ Keep the seller list and supporter contacts somewhere the next organiser can find them.

IN PRACTICE

The best dates in spring get taken in December, while everyone else is still finishing fall. A group that books its spring campaign before the winter break gets the calendar it wants instead of the one that is left.

WATCH OUT FOR

Losing the records when the volunteer changes. Everything you learned this season lives in one person's head unless somebody writes it down.

Program-Fit Worksheet

Fill this in before you call. It saves everyone twenty minutes.

Our group is	School / PTA Sports team Church / youth Club / community
Number of people who will actually sell	
Amount we need to raise	
Date we need it by	
What the money is for	
Can we store product?	Yes No A little
Do our supporters live nearby?	Mostly local Mixed Spread out
Have we run a fundraiser before?	First time Yes — what we sold:
Dates that will not work for us	
Who is the single point of contact?	

Now call us and read it out.

We have helped groups like yours since 1992. Tell us what is on this page and we will tell you what fits — including when the answer is “not us.”

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Launch Checklist

Your one-page preflight. Print it, tick it.

TWO WEEKS OUT

- ☐ Goal and deadline agreed
- ☐ Program chosen and confirmed
- ☐ Four roles assigned by name
- ☐ Kickoff date and location set
- ☐ Parent letter drafted
- ☐ Calendar conflicts checked

DURING THE CAMPAIGN

- ☐ Money in one place, one ledger
- ☐ Progress posted twice a week
- ☐ Halfway update sent
- ☐ Quiet volunteers given a smaller job
- ☐ Internal deadline set before the real one
- ☐ Deadline announced three times

KICKOFF WEEK

- ☐ Materials counted and sorted
- ☐ Online campaign page live
- ☐ Seller script practised out loud
- ☐ Pre-kickoff message sent
- ☐ Progress board or tracker ready
- ☐ First ask made before anyone leaves

CLOSING OUT

- ☐ Orders sorted by seller in advance
- ☐ Shipment checked the day it arrives
- ☐ Delivery day staffed and scheduled
- ☐ Supporters thanked publicly
- ☐ Thirty-minute debrief held
- ☐ Next campaign dates booked

IN PRACTICE

The line most often skipped is the last one. Groups that book their next dates before the current campaign is fully closed out never spend another August starting from zero.

Thank you for the work you already do.

Fundraising is rarely anybody's actual job. It lands on top of coaching, teaching, leading, and parenting — and it still has to work. If this playbook made the next step more obvious, it did what it was meant to do.



Ready to plan your next fundraiser?

CALL US

1-800-443-5353

OR START ONLINE

fundraising.com

Tell us your group, your goal, and your deadline. We will tell you what fits — in about five minutes.

PROGRAMS THAT FIT

We match the program to your group, your calendar, and your storage.

REAL PEOPLE

You get a person who knows your account, not a queue.

ONLINE OR IN HAND

Run it yourself online, or let us set the whole thing up.

SINCE 1992

Three decades of fundraising seasons, and the lessons from all of them.