

Auction Fundraising Mega Guide



CHOOSING

Live, Silent, Online, Virtual, Hybrid



PLANNING

Auction Items, Event Branding,
Marketing, Social Media,



RUNNING

Website, Donors & Donations,
Bidders & Bidding, Close Out &
Collections



CONCLUDING

Item Distribution, Thank You, Double
the Donation, Bidders to Supporters

Auction Fundraiser Mega Guide

The ultimate guide to Choose→ Plan→ Run→ Conclude an auction fundraiser

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How to Run an Auction Fundraiser

Thinking about, or ready to get started on an auction fundraiser? Here is the Mega Guide to Auction Fundraising. Included are suggestions and questions to help the team raise as much money as possible for the cause.

The guide has 4 major sections:

1. Types of auction fundraisers: live, silent, online, virtual/hybrid
2. Planning the auction fundraiser
3. Running the auction fundraiser
4. Post-auction duties

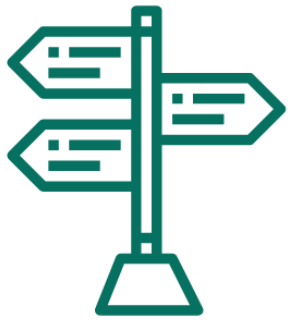
Bonus Content Includes:

Further auction fundraising considerations

Further reading and case studies

Still, trying to figure out if an auction fundraiser is the right fit? To answer this question, here is our expert advice: [Why Run an Auction Fundraiser?](#)





CHOOSING an AUCTION FUNDRAISER

THERE ARE 5 TYPES OF AUCTION FUNDRAISER:
LIVE, SILENT, ONLINE, VIRTUAL, HYBRID

With all auction fundraisers most auction items are donated. How much work will each take and how much help to do you have to accomplish the fundraising tasks.

1. Type of Auction Fundraiser: Live, Silent, Online, Virtual, Hybrid

Event-Based Fundraiser

The top reasons to run a silent & live auction fundraiser instead of an online auction is for the social aspect and the potential to raise more money in a spirited environment. The event-based auction gives the group a perfect venue to show & tell the story. Use photos, videos and real faces with real testimonials on how the funds raised have made an impact. The drawback may be a barrier to entry, meaning the event ticket price and feeling of not belonging may be a factor in getting attendees.

Silent Auction is conducted at a location, each attendee is assigned a bidder number, and retains anonymity. Each auction item has a bid sheet placed in front of the goods and/or a display page. Donors bid silently on bid sheets until a set time. When time is called the bid sheets are collected and the highest bidder is the winner.

Additional income: sponsors, direct donations, raffles.

Live Auction is conducted by an emcee or auctioneer at an event. Live auction tends to be pragmatic for larger ticket items. Multiple bidders will need to have an interest in the auction item up for bid to encourage the back and forth bidding activity. Live auctions do well when kept to no more than one hour.

Additional income: direct donations raffles, raise-a-paddle, fund a need, upsell on event tickets, drinks, tables, desserts.

Online Auction Fundraiser

The top reasons to run an online auction fundraiser instead of an event based auction is both time and access. An online fundraiser can run for any period of time, from hours to days. Full access for bidders to window-shop and eventually bid is wide open as these are web-based and need only a website.

Online auctions can reach a much broader audience. Online auctions add a layer of flexibility for both the auction itself and the participants. Similar to traditional silent auctions, there is a start time, end time, and the bidding process takes place in between but is completely web-based.

Additional income: direct donations, Bid Extension, proxy bidding.

Virtual and Hybrid auctions are a result yet lasting positive outcome of COVID 19. In an effort to maintain safety the online events became live /online /virtual. Virtual events took many forms, each with its own agenda and fundraising components. Now, hybrid events are further changing the landscape and there are even more options. Options for agenda, content, and fundraising. At Auctria the platform can easily support the tickets, sponsors, donations, paddle raise, and auction activity.

Additional income: in the room, out of the room supporters.

As events come back on location there may still be limitations for some individuals to attend. We have learned through the COVID experience that supporters are spread further and wider than those that walk through the door the day or night of an event. No matter what percentage of supporters are in or out of the room, the bidding, donations and show will be the same set-up. So whether it's 80% in the room and 20% out of the room or the opposite there will be the need to pay attention to both audiences and meet their needs for audio, visual, bidding and donating.

[Dual audiences online bidding & donating.](#) When running a show, live auction or paddle raise, no matter the percentage in the room or out of the room, use tools to make it easy to participate.

- Online bidding replaces a paper and pencil silent auction
- All participants can make bids
- All participants are sent outbid notifications
- Bid on a mobile-friendly event website
- Bid using a mobile application
- Donate online

Due to safety protocol you can run the [event practically contactless.](#) Contactless fundraising only means touchless, it doesn't dampen the fun though! When utilizing Auctria contactless features let the bidder, donor, supporter make meaningful donations with ease and peace of mind with health, welfare, and safety as the first priority.

Combining auction types is also a possibility. A popular and effective trend is to do a short online pre-bidding event prior to a live & silent event. In this case, use the auction catalog to attract attention, and sell tickets as well as accept pre-bidding online. Close the pre-bidding before the event and any bids that were placed become the starting bid on the silent auction items. If it goes up GREAT, if not you have that previous bid commitment and the item still sells.

Additional income: pre-bidding adds an additional layer of bidding pushing higher.



Mobile bidding can be utilized in both online and in-person auction activities. When choosing a platform for auction consider the mobile bidding options at the same time. Understand the difference between a dedicated mobile application as opposed to a mobile-friendly auction website. A mobile-friendly website attempts to present information on a mobile screen and is dependent upon many device factors. In comparison, a secure mobile application that is explicitly designed to deliver mobile bidding is much more reliable and efficient.

Use mobile bidding:

- For any online auction
- Silent auction where the bidding audience is scattered or over a large area
- Silent auction when the bidding audience is scattered over a longer period of time

Don't use mobile bidding:

- During the time when speakers or presentations are ongoing
- With an audience that discourages mobile distractions
- Without a backup plan such as a kiosk

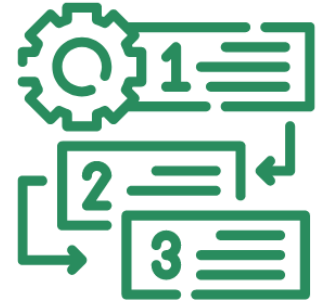
Tips for choosing the right format for auction fundraising:

[Types of Auction Fundraisers: Live, Silent & Online](#)

[Pros & Cons to running Live, Silent, Online Auction Fundraiser](#)

[Mobile Bidding for an Auction Fundraiser: Proven Methods](#)





PLANNING an AUCTION FUNDRAISER

AUCTION FUNDRAISING WORKS BEST WITH DEDICATED TEAM

Teamwork, roles and responsibilities, timelines and checklists, we did the work already here in the mega guide. Use this to jumpstart the kickoff and work efficiently.

2. Planning the Auction

Overall Organization & Timelines & Teamsplan

Planning and a timeline are vital to getting all the work done in a timely fashion. Create a calendar now for all the important dates and times. Set hard dates on: procurement, when the event goes live for marketing, pre-registration dates, ticket dates and if the auction is an online, open and closing bidding dates and times. Included in the planning emails and social media messaging. At this time pre-plan the close-out dates, item distribution and thank you letters.

Auction fundraising works best with a dedicated team. Diverse skills of the volunteers only enhance the outcome of the fundraiser. Consider splitting or combining duties depending upon the number and type of volunteers that step forward.

The auction fundraiser goes much more smoothly when planning and with well defined duties.

Roles may look like this:

- Auction Committee will: establish goals & map out overall process
- Event Team will: coordinate venue, define a theme, & enlist keynote speaker
- Procurement Team will: create [donation request letter](#), secure donations
- Auction Data Team will: establish starting bids, consistent pricing & buy-it-now pricing
- Marketing Team will: promote the event, encourage early bidder registration, and/or proxy bidding, capitalize on public relations and social media

[Building a Digital Plan for Marketing Your Auction Event](#)

Tip: Work backwards from the event date to insure all goals. Map out the entire auction process with timelines then fill in the details.



Tips on planning and running auction fundraiser:

- [Auction Teamwork: Blueprint for Roles and Tasks](#)
- [Timeline & Checklist With an Event- Live & Silent Auction Fundraiser](#)
- [Timeline & Checklist Without an Event- Online Only Auction Fundraiser](#)

Event Planning

Event Coordinator & Operations (if applicable) for silent and/or live. This team puts it all together at the event working across all teams to present a unified event. The key decisions that need to be made are: date, venue, theme, food, entertainment/ music/ DJ, emcee, auctioneer, keynote speaker. Depending on the venue, decide whether it's all inclusive or will you need to hire independently.

Volunteers

Be clear with the auction team regarding roles and responsibilities. Set reasonable goals and distribute duties based upon desires and abilities. Many auction teams depend upon volunteers that donate time out of the goodness in their heart. Just like in any relationship communication is the key to finding and then keeping volunteers happy.

Tips on finding and keeping happy volunteers

- [Finding & Keeping Volunteers](#)
- [Do and Don't Do in Recruiting Volunteers](#)
- [Successful Staff Training through Games and Gamification](#)

Calling in the Professionals

Planner, emcee, auctioneer with a spotter- do you need to call in the professionals? This all depends upon the in-house talent and budget. Sometimes it's ok to spend money to make more money. There are auction fundraising event professionals that can help fill seats at the auction event. Their skills range from planning to full implementation including promotions, filling seats, live bidding spotter and recorder and all the details in between. An emcee can engage an audience in a unique way that a familiar face may not be able to. Sometimes an outsider asking for bids, donations, raffle sales has a positive effect that is different from the same-ole'-same-ole'. A keynote speaker can draw in crowds that also expand the audience and therefore the bids and fundraising.

Tips on using auction fundraising professionals:

- [Live Auction Success](#)



Auction Items

An auction fundraiser requires auction items that attract bidders. Think of auction items as the goods in a window. The goal is to convert window shoppers into bidders, do so with auction items enticing. Consider the audience for the event when soliciting for auction items. Start with a wish list of donations that your attendees will desire. Ask ALL stakeholders, past donors of goods and services, past events, business partners. You will be surprised what [donations are available through online requests](#) just simply ask. Many businesses feel that the donation is a way to help without a huge time commitment. It makes them feel good too. Ask businesses that you personally frequent.

Include a variety of starting price points for auction items as well as a diverse offering of items that will appeal to a broad range in the audience. Services, goods, family events, restaurants, travel, experiences and [one of a kind keepsakes](#) and collectibles.

It is OK to say no thank you. Accept only donations with a true retail value and can be considered sellable. A 2 for 1, trial coupon or buy-this-get-that are ordinary have little monetary value. It's okay to respectfully decline these (or perhaps take them with the notion of using them as a token of appreciation for volunteers). **DON'T clutter the auction with junk.**

Donation Request Letter

Most businesses will want a formal request when asked for donations. This just means they are looking for something on paper that describes the cause and event specifics. A good [procurement request letter](#) is short, to the point and includes key key information:

- Furnish a brief overview of the cause and how the donation help fund a specific need
- Contact name with email is great but adding a phone number promotes a more personal touch to the request.
- Tax status and ID and relevant numbers are key factors used by a donor in deciding to honor the request (some only give to nonprofits are specific geography or sectors)
- Call to auction, be specific in the date that goods and services need to be collected for participation on the auction fundraiser
- Donation cut-off date is vital to ensure donated items come in and can then be marketed.
- Besides helping the cause generate funds do they get their business name in an Auction Catalog? Online or click through? Make it worth their time and effort.
- Be sure to [thank the donor](#) too!

Donation Request Letters

- [Sample donation request letter for a school](#)
- [Sample donation request letter for a non-education based fundraiser](#)



Finding Auction Items

Finding auction items is a matter of spending the time to ask. Ask everyone. Ask ALL stakeholders. This includes past donors of goods and services, past auction bidders, business partners and sponsors. Many businesses feel that the donation is a way of helping without a huge time commitment. It makes them feel good too. If you have been doing auctions or similar activities in the past, request donations from prior donors. Ask all past bidders. Once bidders have attended an event they are more likely to help again. Ask businesses that you personally frequent. For an even higher success rate ask at a business as you are patronizing. Example-eating out at a restaurant for lunch, during the meal ask to speak to a manager and ask if they are willing to donate, almost always the answer is yes.

Many businesses manage requests through online donation request forms. A simple Google search of NAME OF BUSINESS+DONATION REQUEST should yield results. There are over 600 online donation request pages on our Pinterest boards. Auctria has streamlined donation search to link directly to request pages. Click and request auction items from your computer.

Auctria's [Mega-Donation Pinterest Board](#)

This board links to US and Canadian based businesses that actively donate to auction fundraisers. Connect directly to retail, restaurants, fast-food, manufacturers and services donation request pages.

Auctria's [Mega-Sports Donation Pinterest Board](#)

This board links to US and Canadian based sports related businesses and teams that donate to auction fundraisers. There are links to every NFL, NHL, NBA, NHL team. Links to donation request website pages for major university teams, minor league teams, sporting goods and equipment.

Auctria's [Keepsakes & Priceless Pinterest Board](#)

Keepsakes and one of a kind items, DIY, crafts are personalized. Priceless and unique items for charity fundraisers increase participation, provide marketing tools and increase total collections and money raised. Keepsakes & priceless items work really well for schools, pre-school, church, temple, religious groups in both . These precious and unique items bring general interest to the auction and are large money makers.

Tips on finding auction donations:

- [Procurement Basics](#)
- [Finding Auction Donations](#)
- [Finding In Kind Donations for Auction Fundraising](#)
- [10 Tips to Do and Don't Do in Asking for Donation Items](#)
- [Keepsakes as Auction Items](#)



Consigning

Many companies offer unique goods for consignment such as sports memorabilia, experiences, travel and events. Consignments can be fun and flashy but do your due diligence and read the fine print. Taking consigned goods means the charity agrees to offer at auction an item usually with a minimum, yet sometimes significant, sale price. Collections above the required minimum get donated back to your function. If merchandise does not sell it goes back to the consignment house. A quality consignment company will guide and recommend consignment goods that match the audience you are reaching. Be cautious of high pressure sales-tactics and choose a consignment company that fits your needs.

Finding the right partner and using the items to help market the auction can help reach fundraising goals. The right partner will never pressure, will listen FIRST to your needs then offer suggestions SECOND. Engage with a professional where helping fundraisers is the priority of the business, not an offshoot of a current business trying to find another marketing angle. No risk items should always include a letter of authenticity and matching, tamper-proof holograms are affixed to each letter of authenticity and directly to each item.

After choosing highly appealing, take the time to use photos and detailed descriptions to attract potential bidders. Promote these alluring and desirable items with save the date notices and in pre-sales communications. Items that include a photograph of the celebrity signing the item captivates interest and broadens the bidder base. If including these items attract more bidders than YES, include consigned items.

Remember: the more bidders, the higher the bids, the more funds raised.

Tips on consignment for auction Items:

- [No Risk Auction Items](#)
- Auctria's favorite [consignment partners](#)



Marketing, Branding & Promoting the Auction Fundraiser

Marketing & Branding the Auction Fundraiser

Think of yourself as a marketer. Branding is the chief goal of marketers to define purpose, create brand connection, establish consistency and engage stakeholder involvement. Purpose, brand connection to the donor & bidder, brand message, brand consistency and stakeholder engagement are the basis for brand awareness. These marketing principles apply to branding the auction fundraiser.

Branding the auction fundraiser is important for long term development of a successful brand to achieve target fundraising goals. Create or use a recognizable logo consistently on all communications regarding auction fundraising. Letters, newsletter, donation request letter, website, handouts, banners, and any general communications. Here is how a middle school in Florida [branded the auction fundraiser](#) and now it is a marquee event for the community.

Promoting the Auction Fundraiser

Promoting the auction fundraiser in advance increases awareness but it also increases procurement of auction items. Promoting is more than just the basics of date, time and location.

- Charity or group name with a recognizable logo
- website to access all the details
- DO include pictures of last year's events, or how past donations helped the cause
- Use graphics to garner attention
- Use video in social media to draw in awareness
- answer the question: what's in it for me as a donor or bidder?
- "call to action" such as: Register as a bidder now, Purchase your event ticket today, Support the cause with a donation right now

Tips on promoting and branding the auction fundraiser

- [Promote, Promote, Promote and then promote some more!](#)
- [Spread the Word: 4 Marketing Tips for Community Fundraisers](#)

Online Auction Website Presence

Every auction fundraiser event needs an online presence. This starts with a dedicated website that is clearly branded with the name of the cause and the auction event. During the pre-event stage use the website to provide pertinent information to potential donors, bidders, sponsors and volunteers. Include dates, times and appropriate contacts for each part of the auction fundraiser.

[SEO: The Online Auctioneer's Most Valuable Tool](#)



Social Media

Start the social promotion early, the earlier the better. Publicize and send out 'Save-the-Date' multiple times, on multiple apps, on multiple days and times of the day- night- and weekends. Social media threads can move swiftly and posts can quickly be buried. It's ok to resend and resend, just add a new tidbit each time, change the image, add a message from sponsors, add video of how the fundraiser will help the cause. The purpose is to create excitement engagement but this is different for many people who communicate in a variety of tones. [Optimize the social media](#) activities with engaging content, updated banners and images and email integration that match the auction fundraiser branding.

When images are included in a social media post the impressions can soar. This happens because more people engage, like, share with an image and caption than with text only. Videos can increase the impression rates even higher, this is because the impressions are increased by the internal algorithms of the social media platforms- these platforms LOVE to push up and prioritize videos. Even more priority is given to live videos, try a few ahead of the auction fundraiser to bring awareness to the event, to the auction items or to the honorary guests or keynote speaker. Get creative, report live from the future venue and encourage ticket purchases. The images do not have to be professional, and true to your story. Videos don't need high tech editing or are long in length, just an honest view of the cause letting supporters peer in the window for a few moments in time.

Social media tips for auction fundraising

- [Snapchat Geofilters for auction events](#)
- [Must do Facebook video and promotion](#)
- [Ways To Promote Online Auctions On Social Media](#)

Boosting Attendance & Sponsorship

Sponsorship is another 2 fold-purpose for auction fundraising. The sponsorship brings in additional revenue and in addition sponsors are now vested in the success of the event as well. Sponsors lend additional voice and audience to the auction. Sponsors will get promotion at the auction event and online. Sponsors can lend voice and additional impact to their stakeholders showing goodwill to the community. Any additional exposure to the event helps further the marketing message for the event. Also important is that the sponsor can promote their giving and show their commitment to philanthropy.

Tips on boosting attendance and selling sponsorships:

[Strategies Boost Attendance](#)

[5 Tips for Selling Tickets and Filling Seats](#)

[Sponsorships for Auction– They make money](#)



Themed Fundraiser Events and Golf Events

Theming the auction fundraiser or pairing with an event or golf tournament can yield higher participation and donations.

Themed auction fundraisers make more money. There are so many ordinary fundraising events. How do we get people to show up? This is a common question we receive at Auctria. Auctions that are themed can be money magnets! People that are having fun spend more time and money at auction fundraisers.

Fun and local auction themes do well in gaining attention and news. These auctions combine local flair with philanthropy to stand out from the crowded field of fundraising:

[Christmas Tree Auction Is Dazzling Event for Boys & Girls Club of Oakhurst](#)

[Mango season's first tray sold for \\$22,000 at Brisbane Markets](#)

[Headed to the Scrap Heap, Fundraising Sign Auction 'just snowballed'](#)

[Power or the Purse- Happiness is a New Handbag](#)

[Tips for a Themed Fundraiser Event](#)

Golfing and fundraising are perfect partners. The audience is ideal, the setting is fitting and the logistics are optimal. Golfers inherently have some pocket money to spend, especially for a great cause. In a relaxed and comfortable setting, amongst friends and peers golfers easily become donors.

[Pairing Auction Fundraiser with a Golf Tournament](#)

[\[webinar playback\] Golf Tournament & Fundraising](#)





RUNNING an AUCTION FUNDRAISER

STREAMLINE THE ENTIRE AUCTION TO MANAGE DONORS AND DONATIONS, ITEMS AND PRICING, BIDDERS AND SPONSORS.

Get the team and the auction organized with a specialized auction program that can handle all the auction operations from the first donation to the last receipt and all the bidding in between. Running auction fundraisers with paper, pencil and spreadsheets is a recipe for disaster.

3. Running the Auction

Get the team and the auction organized with a specialized auction program that can handle all the auction operations from the first donation to the last receipt and all the bidding in between. Running auction fundraisers with paper, pencil, and spreadsheets is a recipe for disaster. Streamline the entire auction to manage donors and donations, items and pricing, bidders and bidders.

A Single Auction Management Program

A web-based program is always current.

- Procurement: track the entire process from donor contact → items → auction offering
- Bidder Automation: centralize the bidding process from registration → bid offerings → closeout
- Organize Printed Materials: bid sheet, display pages, gift certificates, auction catalog can all be templated for simple print-and-use
- Close-Out: collect payments, donations, ticket & product sales, print or email receipts efficiently

'We at Auctria believe that easy to use but powerful & flexible tools should be available to all groups to meet and exceed their auction fundraising goals. Auctria is a user-friendly, practical website for running silent, live, or online fundraising auctions.'



Dedicated Website

A dedicated website is a necessity for auction fundraising. A good-looking website exudes legitimacy and credibility. Donors want to see a well-thought-out fundraising auction that is straightforward and simple to navigate. An auction website can be accessed 24 hours a day to help promote the mission. Engage visitors to register, bid and donate, engage & share on social media.

Auctria provides each auction event with its own exclusive website. Use the website to create a professional and online presence prior to the event. Promote the auction to help with procurement. Showcase an online catalog for marketing, pre-bidding, or a full online auction. Website templates make it straightforward to create an awesome-looking website.

This is why a website is necessary to elevate the auction fundraiser:

- Website is specific and individual to each event
- Easy to share and connect with your donors and bidders.
- Creating an online presence at the beginning of the auction planning process lends credibility to the event
- Procurement is boosted when donors see their business is appreciated and promoted online
- Website templates make it quick to set up and personalize with different web elements

[Nonprofit Websites: 5 Ways to Make the Most of Yours](#)

Auction Logistics: Donors, Bidders & Items

Managing Donors

When auction items are received from a donor in person, thank them graciously. When an item is received by mail or email send a quick note circling back that the item was received. In that correspondence include a link to their donated item and ask donors to share with their audience. Manage the donor name, logo, contact information both internally but also promote it externally. Do so with a donor page on the website, in social media messaging, emails, and paper auction catalog. Donors love to see their name and contribution to the cause celebrated. With a dedicated website, it is easy to accommodate direct links to the donor's website to increase goodwill and the chance of the donor helping spread the message.

[What Is Donor Segmentation And Why Is It Important?](#)



Managing Bidders

Bidders are central to the auction fundraiser. There should be no limits on the number of bidders that can register. Ideally, bidders can purchase auction event tickets and also register themselves online to streamline the day of the check-in process at the silent & live auction event. Any task that can be automated will reduce the chance of human error.

Managing & Pricing Auction Items

First, let's define auction items:

- Silent Items: sold via a paper bid sheet at your event
- Live Items: included in a live auction, there is no bid sheet produced
- Online Items: sold fully online

[Link to auction item concepts](#)

Inventory and track all silent, live, and online auction items as they are received from a donor. REcord name of the donor, retail value, and any exclusions, authenticity, or documentation that is important to account for. Collect any images or donor logos that can help market the auction time come auction time.

Pricing Auction Items can be streamlined when using an auction program. Remember, almost all auction items are donated so any income is considered profit; fundamentally the higher the final bid the greater the philanthropy. Here are some industry standards on pricing auction items:

- [Pricing for Bids](#)
- [Apply a Pricing Policy](#)
- [Describing & Marketing Auction Items](#)

Pricing Strategy should be established on a more global basis to ensure consistency.

Pricing auction items is not a perfect science, in fact, it can be quite tricky. Justify pricing by including lots of photos and lively descriptions. The key is finding the sweet spot that will initiate interest and bid donations up and up.

Pricing Ordinary Goods & Services

The general rule of thumb for pricing for ordinary goods and services is START the bidding at about 40-50% of the retail, then divide the remaining value by 5 to engage a typical back and forth bidding exchange.

Example pricing for ordinary goods and services:

Yummy Restaurant donates a \$100 gift certificate.

Starting bid should be $\$100 / 2 = \40 - $\$50$ Increments should be $\$50 / 5 = \10



Auctria built-in tools

Auctria has a built-in all-auction pricing policy that saves time and by setting the starting bid, minimum bid increment, and 'buy it now' price for your silent auction items making this part of the process quick and easy.

Pricing Unique or High Value Goods & Services

Unique goods and services or those that have a high value can be speculative. Start too high and risk no bids, start too low and close at an undervalued price. START the bidding at about 40%-60% of a realistic retail value, then divide the remaining value in bite-sized chunks to quickly elevate the donation. High-Value items do well at live auctions too. Live auction permits impromptu modifications. If the starting bid gets no activity the auctioneer can immediately lower the starting bid and adjust accordingly.

Example pricing high value:

A vacation package is donated with a retail value of \$3000 Starting bid should be \$1200-\$1800 range Increments should be \$75-\$200 range

Pricing Keepsakes & Priceless Auction Items

Tailor items that are one-of-a-kind keepsakes or local and priceless experiences. Exclusive auction items will garner interest to the overall event as well as the auction item itself. Keep in mind the past buying practices for starting bids.

- Do create the image of exclusivity.
- Do create lots of details in the description.
- Do create in the description how bidding on this auction item will delight the buyer.
- Don't be apprehensive to start a bit higher on these too.
- Don't start the bidding at last year's final sale price either- leave room for the bidding process to start and flush out.

Keepsakes are high emotional-value which can equal high monetary value

Keepsakes: Consider with a keepsake is 'valuable' to only a subset of the audience i.e. Mrs. Smith Classroom parents. If this is the case, start the bidding on the higher end, but with smaller increments to draw bidders into the action and remain captivated. To capitalize on the [rarity of the item the description](#) should be detailed and play up the sentimentality. If there are multiple types of keepsakes i.e. school projects try to be consistent with the starting bid and let the market forces dictate the natural flow of bidding.

Example pricing for simple projects:

Each class created a coveted group art project.

Starting bid should be consistent: perhaps \$25-\$30

Increments should also be consistent, perhaps \$5-\$10



Example pricing more complicated projects:

Class created a photo book that was created and printed costing \$30. Starting bid should consider at least cost for raw materials +25-50% or more. Increments should be 20% of starting value. Starting bid should be \$37-\$45 Increments should be: \$8-\$9

Priceless Auction Items

Priceless items are those that truly do not have a retail value but do have a utility or emotional value. For instance upfront reserved parking, front row at an event, or an opportunity that is out of the ordinary like Principal helper for the day. The priceless opening bid can be in the higher range. The bid increments should also be a bit larger in relation to the general goods. The total number of bidders for priceless items tends to be lower so make each bid increment count.

Example pricing for priceless items:

Reserved Up Front Parking or seating to an event

Starting Bid: \$50

Bidding Increments: \$20

Bids Sheets & Recording Bids

It is imperative to use a system like Auctria that allows for systematic management of bidding, sales and payment functions including:

- record a bid for an item
- enter a purchase of an item
- record a cash donation
- include payment with a bid, purchase, or donation

Bid sheets need to be clean and easy to use. Bid Sheets can be one of the most cumbersome parts of preparing for a silent auction fundraiser. Building a bid sheet is as personal as building an ice cream sundae. So many choices for ice cream, sauces, toppings, whip, and a cherry too. Auction fundraisers have personal preferences for bid sheets. Single, double, triple column; Bid increments bid pre-filled or blank. Will the bidder bid by name or number? Will email be required?

Most important, the final presentation of bid sheets needs to look clean, professional and consistent. Custom bid sheets are easy with Auctria. If you want to create and modify your individual bid sheets, create an Explorer Account and try for as long as you want. Load a few items then use the bid sheet portion of the program to print. Bid sheets are already formatted with lots of simple choices to make the bid sheet creation and printing process straightforward. Additional options are available to [customize bid sheets](#) with [custom stationery](#) adding any



branding or text desired. [Creating Elegant Bid Sheets](#) with Auctria takes the hassle out of bid sheets.

Bid Sheets need to match the pricing strategy. Bid Sheets need to include: auction item name, auction item number, next bid increment and any combination of bidder name, bidder number, bidder email.

Final Auction Fundraising Preparations

Final set-up of the auction should include a dry-run of all systems and people in advance. Do double checks of your [timeline & checklist](#).

Auctria System Checks

- [Credit card connection](#)
- [Test payment connection](#)
- [Starting bids & bid increments](#)
- [Setting sales tax](#)
- [Manage expenses](#)

Event Ticket Preparations

- [Using E-tickets](#)
- [Tickets during check-in](#)

Prepare & Print Documents

- [Catalog](#)
- [Stationery & Statements](#)
- [Bid Sheets](#)
- [Gift Certificates](#)

People & System Checks

Final set-up of the auction should include a dry-run of all systems and people in advance. Test systems, wifi, printers on location. We recommend testing and training all auction personnel in advance of the auction taking place. Train for these tasks:

- [Bidders- adding, finding, checking in](#)
- [Record a bid](#)
- [Record a purchase](#)
- [Record a donation](#)
- [Auction Wrap-up & closeout](#)

Promoting & Marketing

- [Promote, Promote, Promote](#) and then promote some more
- Use social media presence to the fullest extent with photos & videos
- Link directly from the auction website to emails



Skyrocket the Auction Income

When bidders are having fun the bids rise and the donations flow. A fun environment maximizes donations and can bump the bottom line. Income boosting strategies are creative ways to get donors to give if they don't want to participate in the traditional auction item bidding.

[12 more ways to increase revenue.](#) Consider adding a few of these:

- [For Sale Items](#): items that you are selling for a fixed price and may have a limited quantity available for purchase. Most commonly used **For Sale Items** are auction tickets, etc.
- Donation Items: projects that bidders can donate to but which they don't actually win
- [Raffle Items](#): prizes for a raffle or similar event that are awarded to a bidder without a cost
- [Themed Auctions](#): attract and draw in the bidders with a fun or unique theme
- [Fund-a-Need](#): this is simply a request for a direct donation to a fund a specific need, bidders can bid to donate in any monetary denomination, or at levels for different recognition
- VIP Tickets: standard ticket sales are great, VIP tickets can be an upsell for special seating and access
- [Sponsorship](#): sponsorship payments increase revenue multiple times over, make them feel special so next year's support is automatic.

Tips to make more money during the auction fundraiser:

[Skyrocket Auction Fundraiser Income](#)

[Raffles Heighten Auction Income](#)





CONCLUDING an AUCTION FUNDRAISER

THE END IS JUST THE BEGINNING OF THE RELATIONSHIP.

If the auction met or exceeded goals - great! If the auction fell short of goals - don't be discouraged, every dollar raised is one more than you had the day before. Auction fundraisers may take a few years to gain momentum and grow year over year. Use the event Fundraiser to turn event goers into long term supporters

4. Post Auction

After the auction fundraiser has concluded it's time to take a deep breath and appreciate the work that was accomplished. Here are the final tasks for wrap-up and also to encourage and boost long term support from sponsors, donors, bidders and volunteers:

1. Distribution of Auction Items & Paper Trail
2. Report Auction Proceeds
3. Thank Everyone
4. Donation Matching
5. Encourage Social Media Engagement
6. Bidders Into Benefactors
7. Get Organized
8. Save the Date for the Next Event
9. Request Feedback

Follow these [post-auction duties and formula](#) for continued support to the next event and the cause.

Matching gifts are a type of corporate giving program that essentially doubles an employee's contribution to a qualifying nonprofit organization. Once a donor makes a contribution, at your charity auction, on a donation page, or during another type of event, they must submit paperwork to their employer's HR department. If the donation and your nonprofit are eligible for a matching gift, your organization will receive a check from your donor's employer. Most matching gift programs will double an employee's charitable contribution, but some offer matches at a 3:1 ratio, tripling the original donation!

Always ask to [Double the Donation](#)



Being Nice & Giving Thanks

Just a friendly reminder to be nice! This includes thanking everyone. Thank everyone publicly and privately. Thank volunteers, bidders and donors. Thank them with letters. Thank them in a public forum on website and social media with photos and videos. Sincere thank you letters to each and every donor and bidder are a necessity.

...not only is the right thing a thank you is respectful and continues to show appreciation.

Professionally acknowledge the philanthropy in a timely fashion, it is customary to send out thank you notice within two weeks of the event closing.

Be nice to donors. Donors have provided the auction fundraiser with goods to auction off at their expense. They don't have to donate, but they chose to do so. Being nice to donors means they might help promote the event and donate again.

Be very nice to the donors.

Be nice to volunteers. Volunteers have provided time and effort away from their day to help. Acknowledge the smallest efforts as well as the team and chairpersons. It takes all types of people to run an auction fundraiser and any advocacy should be appreciated.

Be very nice to the volunteers.

Be nice to sponsors. Sponsors are supporting an auction fundraiser for two reasons, 1) they have a personal or business connection to the cause and; 2) they want to be seen supporting the cause. Make proper recognition of sponsors.

Be very nice to the sponsors.

Be nice to bidders. Bidders make up the action part of the fundraiser. Smiles on bidders' faces come from having fun and being appreciated. Bidders are ones that have opened their minds and wallets to the fundraising event.

Be very nice to the bidders.

Tips on writing thank you letters

[Thank you letter writing](#)

[Thank you letter: bidder](#)

[Thank you letter: volunteer](#)

[Thank you letter: donor](#)



Continuing the Relationship

Auction fundraising is engaging and fun. There is great potential to bring more bidders and donors to support the cause long term. Using the auction platform as an opportunity for bidders to become better acquainted with the cause is just the beginning of the relationship. This is a perfect opportunity to convert bidders and donors to long term supporters.

Tips for converting bidders into supporters:

[#1 Way to Engage Donors and Inspire Bigger Giving](#)

[5 Strategies to Convert Event Attendees into Annual Fund Donors](#)

[How to Turn Bidders Into Donors](#)

[4 key strategies for nonprofits to keep supporters engaged](#)

#GivingTuesday

#GivingTuesday is a global day of giving fueled by the power of social media and collaboration. Mark your calendar for the Tuesday following Thanksgiving, this date is known worldwide now a givingtuesday. [Giving Tuesday](#) is a movement that any group can participate in- just run a fundraiser on this exact day and

When: 1st Tuesday after Thanksgiving

Where: global

What: one common purpose, to celebrate and encourage giving

How: any charity can capitalize on Giving Tuesday with a bit of planning and promotion

Current Auctria customers your charity can efficiently capitalize on this day of giving.

Get set-up now, and be ready for the GivingTuesday spotlight to brighten your charity. Your own past supporters are the most likely to give future donations.

More tips for #GivingTuesday:

[GivingTuesday.org](#)

[GivingTuesday with Auctria](#)

[Pinterest: Auctria #GivingTuesday Board](#)





BONUS AND DOUBLE BONUS

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Further Auction Fundraising Consideration.
The best of the best shared their stories.

Bonus Reading: Further Auction Fundraising Considerations

Live Auction Consideration

Live auctions are an entertaining and interactive way to increase donor participation and increase overall donations. The energy created by the live auction can carry philanthropy to great heights. Live auction success is reliant upon bidders bidding against each other stimulating bids and pushing the final sale price upward. An entertaining, cheerful & lively, and engaging personality, emcee or auctioneer should be chosen with these considerations. In addition to the live auctioneer, a spotter will need to be ready to record final bids and bidder numbers.

Don't just furnish the auctioneer with a handout and hope for the best. Describe the mission of the charity and how it will help, heal, educate, research, and advocate overall good. Provide clear direction on auction items including details of each item and a bidding strategy for starting price and increments.

[Live Auction Success- Includes 10 Questions to Ask the Auctioneer](#)

Online Auction Fundraiser Considerations

Online auction fundraisers can reach a much broader audience. Online auctions add a layer of flexibility for both the auction itself and the participants. Similar to traditional silent auctions, there is a start time, end time, and the bidding process takes place in between but completely web based.

Incorporate an online auction into an event-based auction to accelerate the fundraising activity. Using multiple auction types can also lead to success. An ONLINE auction can be an appetizer to an upcoming event.



Online auctions add a layer of flexibility for both the auction itself and the participants. Similar to traditional silent auctions, there is a start time, end time, and the bidding process takes place in between but is completely web-based.

[How To Make An Online Auction Entertaining](#)

Unique features of online auction fundraiser:

Bid Extension and proxy bidding are tools that extend the time and flexibility of online auctions. These fundraising features exclusive to online auctions can substantially increase final fundraising dollars.

Proxy bidding accelerates the bidding so more bids go higher, faster. The greater the number of bids, the higher the auction fundraiser proceeds. Proxy bidding allows bidders to set the highest price they are willing to pay for an auction item without having to “baby-sit” their bidding. When offering proxy bidding auction fundraising administrators have found that auction items do go for higher prices.

[Learn more about proxy bidding for auction fundraisers](#)

Bid Extension. Have you ever participated in an online auction and as the bidding is closing there is a surge in activity? The winner is the one that got that very last bid in at the instant before the auction closes. The winning bidder is super happy but how much higher could the bids have gone? These bidders are termed ‘snipers’ and the answer: an ‘Bid Extension’ feature that will extend the auction time to allow for additional time and push the fundraising proceeds even higher.

[Learn more about Bid Extension bidding for auction fundraisers](#)

Pros and cons of online auction:

- PRO-online auction increases the number of bidders simply by sharing the auction website
- PRO- online auction allows donors to bid from the comfort of their own location bidders can live and be anywhere there is internet access
- PRO-online auction website can offer detailed descriptions of auction items and many photos bidding and rebidding can be instantaneous proxy bidding is
- PRO-easily be managed buy-it-now can be added to the auction can be open for any timeframe extend the auction time from a few hours to days if need be
- PRO-no need for the additional workload or planning and marketing an actual event. No need to sell tickets for an event that may compete with the pocketbook of bidding on auction items
- CON-social backdrop to the event goes away
- CON-donations need to be delivered or shipped after the event has concluded.



Double Bonus: Further Reading

Join Auctria on Facebook and Twitter to connect with other auction fundraising teams or just to follow along with auction & philanthropy news and fresh ideas. Auctria is pleased to have been the tool used for over 45k auction fundraisers. Each fundraising group is unique yet there are still plenty that are similar. [Get social with us.](#)

The best of the best shared their stories, click for inspiration.

[With Dedication & Conviction: Crushing Goals](#)

[Evolution of an Auction Fundraiser: from carnival to gala to online](#)

[Data Retention & Transition is Critical](#)

[Donations Make the Auction](#)

[Power of Audience](#)

[Branding the Auction](#)

