



THE  
THREE FUNDAMENTALS  
OF

SIGNATURE  
FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS



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# INTRODUCTION.



GoFundraise is one of Australia's leading online fundraising platforms, empowering over 1,000 non-profits and their causes by making online fundraising quick and easy. Through leveraging the internet, social media and mobile, we help charities reach more people and raise more funds while reducing the cost of fundraising.

We have had over 1 million donations on our online platform, with up to 60,000 fundraisers raising money through it at any one time. With so many real life examples and experiences we have developed this white paper to provide charities and non-profits with expert insight into Signature Fundraising and how you can get the best results for your cause.

A successful Signature Fundraising Campaign can raise significant funds for your charity: however, they can also be a high risk and time consuming fundraising strategy. Understanding the pitfalls and ways to minimise risk are essential. This white paper outlines the three fundamental areas to focus on in order to minimise this risk while maximising the opportunity.

## DEFINITION

*A Signature Fundraising Campaign is one that is created, managed and owned by the charity for whom participants fundraise for. These events often become part of an organisation's annual fundraising calendar. Some examples include Australia's Biggest Morning Tea by the Cancer Council and the Leukaemia Foundation's World's Greatest Shave.*

## FITTING INTO

*-THE-*

## FUNDRAISING LANDSCAPE

Fundraising events can be categorised into three 'pillars': DIY, Signature and Third Party. The focus of this paper is Signature events, but for contextual purposes, DIY and Third Party are defined below:

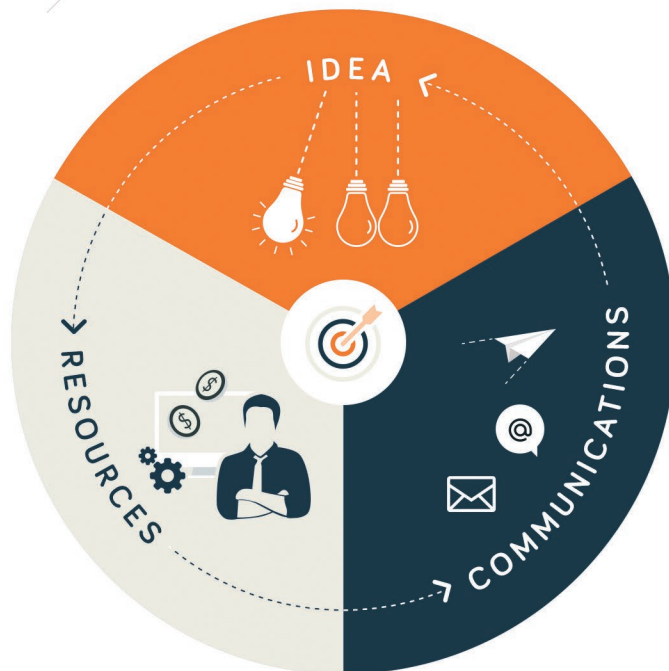
**DIY:** A DIY event is a fundraising event or activity in support of a particular charity that is owned and driven by someone outside of the organisation, most often a fundraiser themselves. DIY fundraisers undertake a variety of activities including runs, swims, morning teas, gala balls, appeals, and activities such as head shaves and moustache growing.

**Third Party:** A Third Party event is an event run by an event organiser. The event is usually 'open charity', meaning fundraisers have the option to select from a wide range of charities to which their efforts will be directed to. Some examples include the Melbourne Marathon, Sydney Running Festival and the City2Surf.

# THE THREE FUNDAMENTALS of SIGNATURE FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS

Through our experience with online fundraising, we have identified three fundamental steps that structure the planning of a successful signature fundraising campaign:

## 1. THE IDEA, 2. RESOURCES, & 3. COMMUNICATIONS.



We've designed this white paper to guide you through these 3 fundamentals. Whilst you don't need an answer to all the points raised, it is best that each of the fundamentals is considered in order for a Signature Fundraising Campaign to be successful.



### BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY

A good idea lays the foundation for a great Signature Campaign. There is a lot of pressure on charities to create Signature Campaigns. Boards and other stakeholders want to see their charity brand 'up in lights' and have an instantly recognisable annual event that they can all support.

So, once you have committed to creating a Signature Fundraising event, it's time to get your thinking caps on. Call on the big thinkers in your organisation and get those creative juices flowing. Whilst there is no formula to a good idea, it should tick the boxes of being unique, easily accessible and fun. Additionally, you should be able to craft a compelling story around the idea. Who would have thought that growing moustaches or throwing iced water over your head was a good idea for raising money?

If you have fundraisers doing DIY events don't overlook these campaigns when you're brainstorming for your Signature Campaign: these activities are already proven to be things that your supporters are ready and willing to commit to. Look towards your community fundraising pages for some inspiration, to find a seed that you can grow into your Signature Campaign.

## AUDIENCE PROFILE

Having an audience profile is another way in which you can brainstorm your fundraising activity. Like the importance of having a primary call to action, it's vital that you clearly identify your target market and do not try and appeal to everyone. Having an audience profile will also help target your communications.

Filling in the diagram to the right will help you determine your audience profile.



## AUDIENCE PROFILE

Age .....

Gender .....

Hobbies .....

Demographic .....

Fundraising profile .....



*Beware of the curse of the 'do anything' approach. Over the past three years, we've seen a rapid rise of events where the charity allows the participant to 'do anything' to raise money. It's important to remember that although your supporters are passionate and dedicated to your charity, they also are usually very busy and don't have time to create a fundraising concept. These events sometimes lack the inspiration and camaraderie that comes from participating in a community of fundraisers. So, do the thinking for your fundraisers, and come up with a good idea!*

## TYPES OF EVENTS

Signature Fundraising Campaigns generally fall into one of the 5 categories below. Often, the most successful signature events have a strong connection between the event and the cause, so this connection is beneficial, but not necessarily a requirement of a successful campaign.

Did you know that the most successful Signature Fundraising events are sporting events followed by challenge events?



1

### HOSTED

BBQ  
Cake Bake  
Morning tea  
Movie night

2

### TICKETED

Gala ball  
Dinners  
Comedy night

3

### APPEALS

Disaster  
In Memory  
Capital campaign  
Christmas appeal

4

### SPORTING

Cycling  
Swimming  
Running  
Cricket

5

### CHALLENGE

Head shave  
Fasting  
Moustache growing



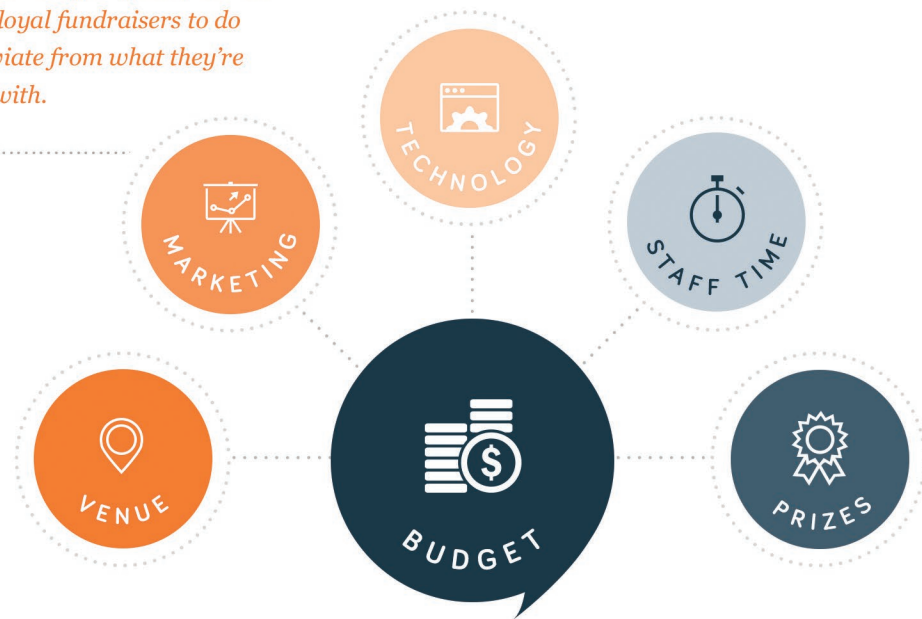
*A temptation when creating a Signature event is asking your supporters and participants to do many things. To avoid this, decide what the primary message should be for your event and don't stray far from it. Identify what the main thing you want your supporters to do for your event is and focus on that. If it's creating a fundraising page then make that the primary call to action.*

*If you're looking to grow your event, asking users to do more can detract from the message that made your event successful in the first place. For example, if your charity's running event is going well, attract more runners – don't ask loyal fundraisers to do different activities that deviate from what they're comfortable and familiar with.*

## FUNDRAISING GOALS

First, creating a fundraising page must be mandatory to participation in your event. Events that have compulsory fundraising raise more money.

Then, set fundraising goals for each participant type (registrant, fundraiser, fundraising teams, and corporate teams). From our experience, assisting people to set goals encourages them to fundraise beyond what they thought they were capable and increases the overall total raised.



## PLANNING

### *Test run*

Businesses often 'prototype' a product to see if demand exists. Do the same with your fundraising event. Use your existing online fundraising software to create a team page and get fundraisers to join this team. This way you can test your idea and campaign before committing to a full roll out.



## Timeline

Give yourself plenty of time. We recommend starting to plan 9-12 months from your event date. Launch your online campaign as soon as you can. If you are running an event every year, try to open it as soon as possible after the previous year has finished. Below is a sample planning timeline for an event held in October.



Once you have tested your fundraising event, you can plan and start thinking about the bigger picture. When planning your budget, here are a few tips:

- ★ *Focus your budget on areas that are going to give you the biggest fundraising return. This is usually your Peer-to-Peer fundraising and not registrations or merchandise sales.*
- ★ *Invest in the first year. Most good fundraising solutions will have a 'duplicate' feature, so if you invest now, you'll save time and resources in the years to come.*

## PEOPLE

### Project Lead

Make sure you can complete this sentence: Our project leader is "\_\_\_\_\_".

## LEADERSHIP

*is the capacity to translate vision into reality*



WARREN BENNIS

Ensure that you have a single project leader. One of the main pitfalls we see in Signature events is that they are often run by committees, and lack a clear leader and decision maker. Successful campaigns have a senior manager that has the authority to make decisions and delegate tasks as required.

## Roles and Responsibilities

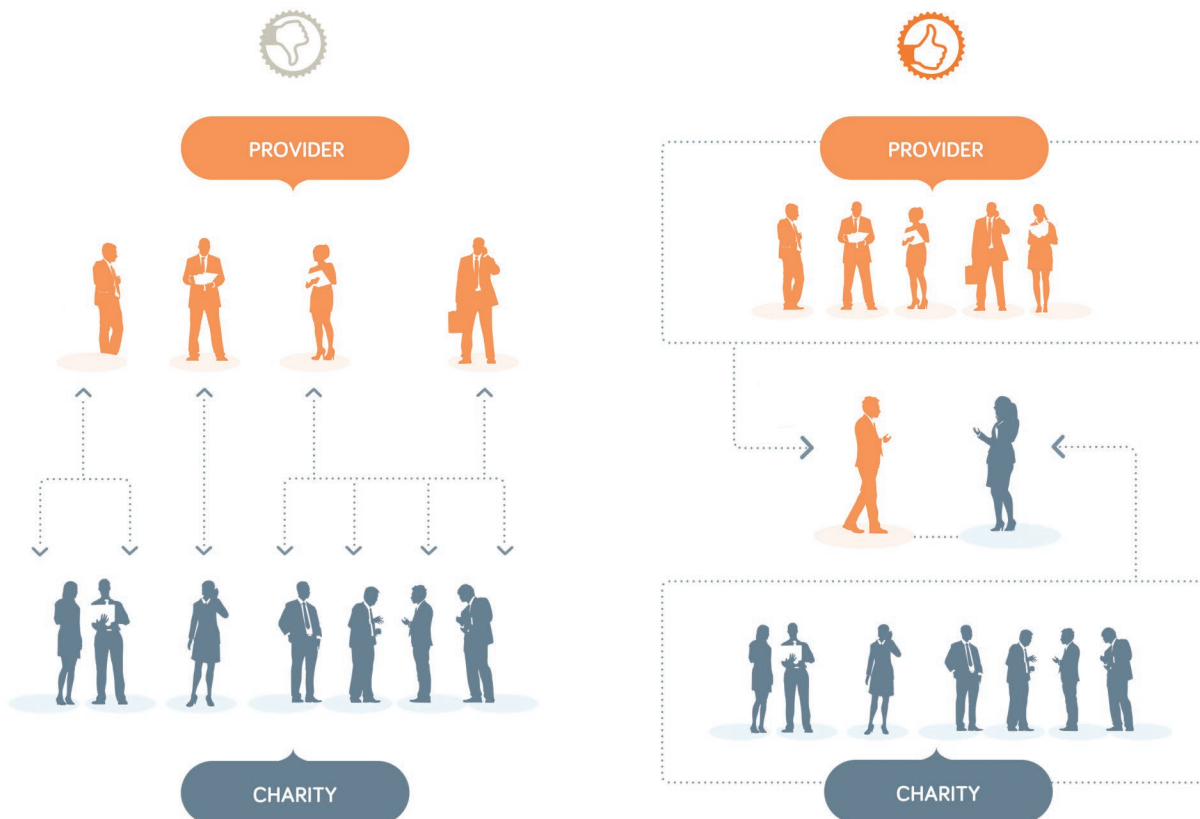
Make sure that you clearly identify the roles and responsibilities for each staff member or volunteer on the event team.

We have identified some roles below that are required with most events, but your event may have different role requirements.



## Project Management

Just as your event needs an identifiable leader, when developing your event website you need a single point of contact to liaise with your developers. Below you can see an illustration of the number one reason we see event builds fail. Find the single point of contact that represents your organisation throughout the development of your website







## TECHNOLOGY

The use of technology is integral to numerous areas of an event. Ensure that you identify the various options that can work towards making your campaign a success and who is driving them internally.

Now, more importantly than ever you need to think beyond the desktop. 50% of Fundraisers and Donors are engaging from a mobile or tablet device. Thinking of the user's journey across networks, channels and platforms will help you design the best possible experience.

The above diagram shows areas where technology is commonly used in a signature fundraising event.

## Community resources

One of the main challenges faced by most charities is a lack of resources. For a signature event, this can hinder the success of the campaign and, in turn, the amount of money raised. However, charities can combat this by tapping into community resources – a resource that is commonly underutilised.

There are five main community resources that charities can leverage. It's important that you have a strategy to leverage each of these resources in your signature fundraising campaign.

1. **CORPORATE PARTNERS**
2. **AMBASSADORS**
3. **EVENT SPONSORS**
4. **MEDIA PARTNERS**
5. **VOLUNTEERS**

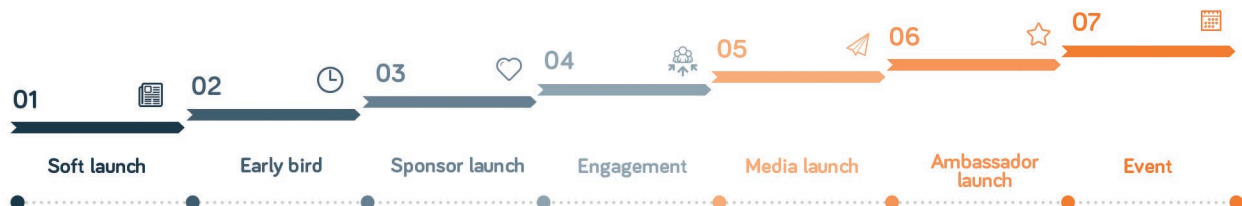
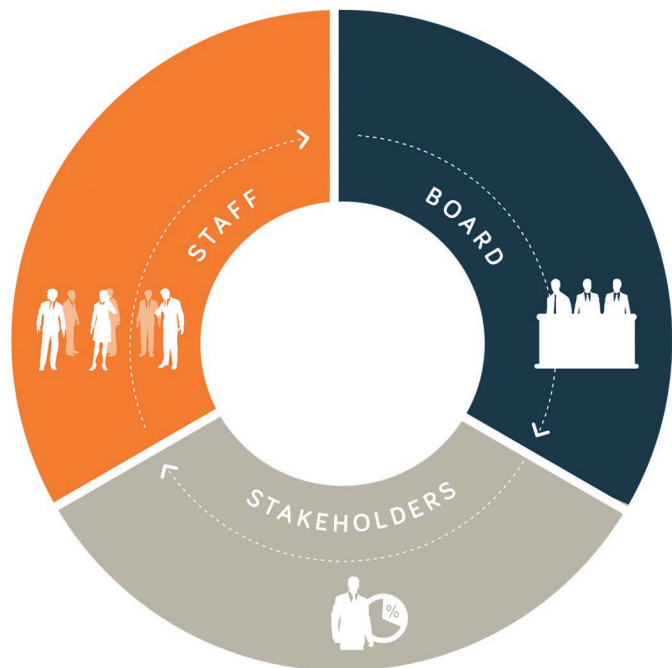
# 3 COMMUNICATIONS

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

When we look at communication, we often focus on external media and promotion. It's important to remember that internal communications are equally as important to maximise efficiency, boost morale and ultimately make your event successful. When looking at the big picture, often it is your relationship with these internal connections that help build and grow the event for you. Some of these key internal relationships include:

### *Event promotion*

A media and communications strategy will need to be developed to ensure that your event reaches enough people to deliver the registration goal. Each campaign has a different budget and this will drive the media channels that are chosen. The media schedule should tie into your event timeline and other important milestones, such as ambassador involvement.



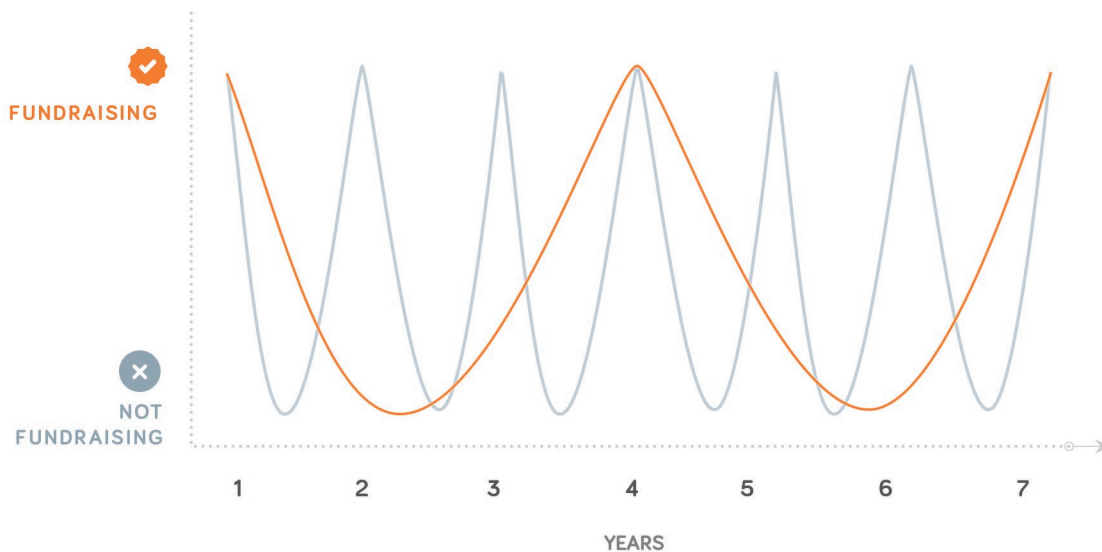
## FUNDRAISER ENGAGEMENT

### *Turning registrants into active Fundraisers*

Many organisations talk of ‘Fundraiser burnout’ or ‘Fundraiser fatigue’ but here at GoFundraise our data shows that an inclination of a person to fundraise or not can be better described as their ‘fundraising cycle’. The ‘fundraising cycle’ relates to the length of time between a person fundraising between each event, and each person’s fundraising cycle is different.

Take the time to understand your fundraisers’ fundraising cycles, and see if you can identify a ‘Fundraising Champion’.

A ‘Fundraising Champion’ is defined as someone who not only fundraises annually, but also encourages others to get involved too. Remember, they might not start off as a Fundraising Champion – with the help of your communications, you can ‘train’ and inspire them to go the extra mile by roping in additional Fundraisers who otherwise would not have considered participating in your event. Make sure that you identify and reach out to these Fundraising Champions each time they fundraise for you to both thank and motivate them.



### *Fundraising engagement*

Engaging with your Fundraisers at every step along the way will help keep them motivated, inspired and reminded of the reasons why they chose to raise funds for your cause. Depending on the size of your event, working with an engagement calendar and making contact at key milestones along the way will improve your fundraising results. Setting your Fundraiser engagement schedule out prior to undertaking the event implementation will help you focus on creating relevant content and delivering communications in a timely manner across the lifecycle of your event.

## CONCLUSION

Without a doubt having a successful Signature Fundraising Campaign in your yearly calendar can add significant revenue to your bottom line and if done well can build your brand awareness and reputation of your organisation. They can become a reliable source of income and can empower your organisation to grow. They don't always need to be complex, so keep them simple and start small.

»»» *Our take home messages are:* «««

- ★ *Be creative and innovative in the idea stage. Dare to try and don't be afraid to fail.*
- ★ *Test an idea with your closest supporters, staff and board members first. If you can't get their involvement, take this as a warning sign that the campaign might not be quite right.*
- ★ *Ensure you have a fundraising target, a plan and allow yourself plenty of time. Have contingency plans in place in case for circumstances beyond your control.*
- ★ *Give it time: make sure you don't rush the implementation and engagement of Fundraisers.*
- ★ *Aim to build excitement over the duration of your engagement.*
- ★ *Encourage corporate and other organisations to get involved where possible.*

To discuss a GoFundraise product, service or tailored solution, please call 1300 889 272 or email [education@gofundraise.com.au](mailto:education@gofundraise.com.au)