

## Marketing Your Candle Fundraiser

I have been receiving many questions regarding fundraising, so I know it's getting close to that time of year, if it hasn't already started for some of you. So, here are a few simple ways to help you market your fundraiser program to possibly get the order.

### 1) POLISH THAT PACKET

Your information/promotional packet defines your business as "serious and professional", and many times, is the first opportunity you get to market your fundraiser plan. It needs to be complete and should include everything from a cover letter, samples of the forms the prospective group will be using, and descriptions of the fragrances they will be selling. Adding photos of the candles they will be selling is another way to complete the package.

### 2) ALL QUESTIONS ANSWERED - NO QUESTIONS ASKED

Once you have your promotional packet together, give it to a friend or relative for review. Have them pretend to be the prospective customer. Does your packet answer all their questions they have about your program? Will the prospect understand your shipping policy? Do they understand that if the order isn't turned in by November, you can't guarantee delivery before Christmas? Are you clear on everything they need to know about doing business with you?

### 3) SAMPLE SCENTS

This is a subject that has raised many questions. Full size samples are too expensive to send out, and fragrance chips, don't get the job done. Sending fragrance chips may allow them to sample the scent, but the prospect still may want to see the jars they will be selling. So where is the happy medium?

I really can only tell you, from experience, what worked for me. When a fundraiser customer asked for samples, we would send them one jar of each of the fragrances they would be selling. It was our policy that they pre-paid the "fundraiser cost" for the sample candles. When the fundraiser order was turned in to be filled, we deducted the sample candles from the total. For example, if the total for Vanilla was 25 jars, and we sent 1 full size Vanilla sample, we would fill and ship 24 jars. You may choose to cover the cost of shipping for the sample candles, charge the customer for it, or deduct that amount from the total shipping cost of the order.

### 4) SPECIAL LIMITED TIME OFFERS

This is a great marketing technique to generate more orders, and works just as well with fundraisers. The ABC High School Volleyball Team is planning to do a fundraiser, but hasn't set a date yet. If you are offering to pay half of the shipping cost on all fundraisers started by October 2nd, you're giving ABC an incentive to do their fundraiser 'NOW', and with 'YOU'!

### 5) TESTIMONIALS ARE KEY

You know you have a great product - you know the quality of the scent throw and burn time - and you know ABC High School could profit greatly by using your product for their fundraiser. Past clients and customers telling them your product is worth getting, carries more weight than if you were to say it yourself. Anytime you receive letters of praise, post them in your place of business, or get permission and copy them to use in your promotional packet.

### 6) SHOW YOUR ENTHUSIASM

Be genuinely caring and willing to help your customers. Bend over backwards to offer assistance and make their experience with your company a great one. One that they would be eager to do again in the future! And be sincere about it; if you are not, they're going to know. Simply put, let them know that your customers are the life of your business, and you appreciate each and every one!

### 7) MAKE AN APPEARANCE

Email correspondence is good, a phone call is better, but a face to face appearance can make the sale. If you are marketing to a local prospect set up an appointment, bring full size samples, and go over, in person, the promo pack you sent them. Your prospect will see first hand who he or she is

doing business with, and the enthusiasm you have for your product.

#### 8) GO ABOVE AND BEYOND THEIR EXPECTATIONS

Always try to give 'more' than you say you will. I always told my clients to allow 3-6 weeks for the delivery of their fundraiser product. This was stated in our promotional packet, and verified during phone calls. We always shipped the order out on week two. If you promise to send samples by Friday, mail it ahead of time so they are received by Wednesday. You get the idea. Add value, and you'll get them talking, and sending praise in the form of testimonials.

#### 9) DON'T FORGET THE FOLLOW UP - AND THE FOLLOW UP!

Actually, there are about 6 follow-ups during the entire fundraiser process with your client, but that is an article in itself. For now, I'm going to touch on the first and last, since they have to do with the area of marketing.

'THE FOLLOW UP' - ABC High School has inquired about your fundraising program. You mailed out an informational packet a week ago. What now? Are you going to sit back and wait for the order? NO! You're going to contact the person who inquired, ask if they received the packet, and ask if they have any questions regarding your program. This is a great time to go over any special promotions you are offering, and to inform them of any deadlines you may have in place (re: If the order isn't turned in by November 10, you can't guarantee delivery before Christmas).

'AND THE FOLLOW UP' - ABC High School has made the decision to use you for their fundraising needs. They have requested the samples, the order forms, and set a date to turn in the order. The order has been turned in, and you filled it and shipped it a week ago. Job complete? NO! The final follow up is vital for future orders.

One simple phone call asking if the order arrived, asking if there were any broken jars, and thanking them for choosing you, is the key to getting ABC High School to use you next year. As a matter of fact, ABC High School may not wait until next year. The volleyball team may only do one fundraiser a year, but what about the track team, or band? I would often receive calls from different groups in the same school, inquiring about doing a fundraiser, because one teacher recommended our program to another!

And one quick note, before you make that 'final' follow up call, you should call and let the group leader know the order was shipped and will be arriving soon. I hope the tips above help add to the success of your fundraising program.

#### About the Author

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