



# Special Event Ideas

As your company’s United Way Campaign Coordinator, you want to make sure this year’s campaign is fresh and fun while also creating awareness about how donations to United Way help the community. Here are some examples of special events and ideas to help you do so.

## Keys To A Successful Event

- Recruit a committee with representatives from all levels and locations in your organization. Planning an event can be time consuming. The more people you involve, the more support you will have.
- Choose an event that is appropriate for your work environment.
- Select a date and location. Consider an easily accessible location.
- Develop a detailed plan and timeline.
- Assign roles and responsibilities: publicity, prizes, decorations, audio/visual, food, volunteers, etc.
- Let United Way know about the event. If a public event, 60 days notice allows sufficient time to help promote.
- If event is prior to or during your workplace campaign, remember to ask attendees to make a gift and turn in their pledge form.
- Report the results to your employees and United Way.
- Send “thank you” notes or make telephone calls to everyone who helped.

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## Special Event Ideas

<b>EDUCATIONAL EVENT IDEAS</b>	
<p><b>Bagging It</b></p> <p>Designate a day as “Brown Bag Day” every month or every other month. Encourage staff to bring their lunches on that day and bring in a speaker to talk about a United Way funded program. After the lunch, post a brief summary of the presentation on your website, print it in your newsletter, or distribute via email.</p>	<p><b>Mystery Hunt</b></p> <p>Clues (sent via e-mail or memo) lead hunters to a United Way agency or co-worker who is connected to an agency. You could have a new hunt each week for a month. This is a great way to educate employees about United Way programs and services.</p>
<p><b>Got Games?</b></p> <p>Educate employees about United Way and its partner programs in a fun way by incorporating a game show theme. Use information from United Way printed materials and our partners’ websites. Play the game(s) at a group meeting, or give everyone the opportunity to play by creating a worksheet or posting questions online.</p>	<p><b>Start Right</b></p> <p>Make United Way part of your new staff orientation. We have packets of information that will help your new employee learn more about United Way in our community. Get your new staff off to a good start and increase participation in your campaign.</p>
<p><b>Literature Drop</b></p> <p>Help your employees learn more about United Way’s impact in the community. Set up a table and make brochures, newsletters and other materials from United Way and our partner programs available. Posters, table tents and note cards are also great for building awareness.</p>	<p><b>Charity Fair</b></p> <p>Speak with your United Way representative to coordinate. Charities will setup tables at the event and offer employees the opportunity to learn more about the work their programs are doing.</p> <p>For added fun, provide each employee with a questionnaire regarding the participating charities. Employees who have correctly completed the questionnaire entered in a prize drawing.</p>

<b>SPECIAL EVENT IDEAS – ALWAYS WINNERS</b>	
<p><b>Casual Day</b></p> <p>Charge employees \$5 to wear whatever they’re comfortable in: jeans, tennis shoes, flip flops, sweats, etc. Variations include: “Silly Hat Day”, “Sport Team Day” or “Ugly Shoe Day”. United Way has “Casual Day” stickers available at no cost.</p>	<p><b>Penny War</b></p> <p>Each department/floor/division has an empty water cooler bottle. Employees drop spare pennies and nickels in the bottles. These coins are counted as positive. Quarters and dollars count as negatives. Employees can “sabotage” another group’s bottle by dropping a quarter into their bottle. At the end of the Campaign, all positive and negative monies are counted, and the group with the most money raised wins a prize.</p>

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<p><b>Auction or Raffle</b></p> <p>Auction off staff services (i.e., babysitting, oil change, lunch for a week), executive parking spaces, donated merchandise or services. Try conducting the auction over your internet site.</p>	<p><b>Basket Auction/Raffle</b></p> <p>Ask each department in your organization to sponsor, create and fill a theme basket (spa, chocolate, golf, cooking). The baskets are then auctioned or raffled off. The department that has the most tickets at the end also wins a prize.</p>
<p><b>Book, Video, CD, DVD Sale</b></p> <p>Employees donate their old books, videos, cassette tapes, CDs and DVDs for an employee sale. Sell paperbacks for \$1, hardbacks for \$2, cassettes and videos \$3 to \$5, and CDs and DVDs \$5 and up.</p>	<p><b>Car Wash</b></p> <p>Charge employees to have their car washed by management or organize a company-wide car wash.</p>
<p><b>Compliment Event</b></p> <p>Candy, Balloon, Cookie, Cupcake, Compliment or Flower Grams. Pick one of the above and have employees purchase to send to their colleagues. The item is delivered with a card with a special message like: "Thanks for all you do." or "I appreciate you!"</p>	<p><b>ETO (Extra Time Off) Goodie Bags</b></p> <p>Assemble and sell bags of goodies. In each bag include a slip of paper with a message. Some messages include a —Congratulations you won 4 hours of extra time off. ll Some messages say —Sorry, you didn't win extra time off, please play again.</p>
<p><b>Employee Boutique</b></p> <p>Have employees bring in items they don't wear/use anymore – purses, scarves and jewelry. Set it up like a boutique &amp; have store hours. All proceeds go to United Way!</p>	<p><b>Hair-Raiser</b></p> <p>Convince a staff member to shave their facial hair and/or head hair for a good cause. If your campaign reaches its goal, this employee will become a spectacle for all staff to see.</p> <p>Alternately, employees can volunteer to be a part of the hair-raiser and have employees vote for the staff they want to see with a close cut. Set a cost for each vote.</p>
<p><b>Rummage Sale</b></p> <p>Ask employees to donate old items (books, CDs, videos) for a company or department-wide sale. Unsold items may be donated to a local shelter.</p>	<p><b>Ugliest Apparel Contest</b></p> <p>Contestants pay to enter the ugliest tie, earrings, socks, or stockings contest. Take pictures of the participants and have employees 'vote' on the ugliest apparel by contributing a dollar.</p>

### SPECIAL EVENT IDEAS – FOOD, FOOD AND MORE FOOD!

<p><b>Backyard/Parking Lot Bar-B-Q</b></p> <p>Make sure you have plenty of meat and fixings, buns, drinks, paper products and of course a grill! You may also want to set up a volleyball net, Frisbee game &amp; music to set the mood.</p>	<p><b>Bake Sale/Cookie Exchange</b></p> <p>Ask employees to bake their favorite cookies or other goodies. Sell plates of the treats to employees. Charge an additional fee for the recipe.</p>
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<p><b>Candy Cart / Bakery Cart / Slushie Bar</b></p> <p>Wheel a cart through the office in the morning for a breakfast treat, or a cart of coffee &amp; sweet treats in the afternoon.</p>	<p><b>Carnival Day</b></p> <p>Have games, prizes, and don't forget the cotton candy, hot dogs &amp; lemonade shake-ups!</p>
<p><b>Chili Cook-Off</b></p> <p>Employees cook their favorite chili recipe and enter it into a cook-off contest. Charge employees a fee to try the chili. A panel of chili experts can select the Official Chili Champion – be sure to offer a prize to the winner.</p>	<p><b>Drinks &amp; Appetizers</b></p> <p>Host an after-hours and for a \$10 donation, the boss buys the first drink and provides appetizers. Great for small offices.</p>
<p><b>Employee Cookbook</b></p> <p>Encourage employees to donate their favorite recipes to be collected, published and sold in a company cookbook.</p> <p>A variation of this theme is to sell books on golf, gardening, etc. Request employees' children provide illustrations.</p>	<p><b>Executive Chef</b></p> <p>Auction off dinner for two (or more) at the home of an executive.</p>
<p><b>“Good Neighbor” Barbeque</b></p> <p>Join with other companies near your business to have a cookout with games and giveaways.</p>	<p><b>Ice Cream Social</b></p> <p>Provide several flavors of ice cream and all the toppings needed to make a sundae! Offer hot fudge, caramel, strawberry sauce, chopped nuts and whipped cream – don't forget the cherries!</p>
<p><b>Latte Stand and Giving Example</b></p> <p>For more distinguished coffee drinkers, offer a latte-stand during a morning meeting. Remind them how much a cup of gourmet coffee or tea costs. Give examples of what giving up one cup of coffee, one soda or one candy bar a day can do for a person in need. Ask if they can donate that same amount (or more) each week to United Way.</p>	<p><b>Lunch Box Auction</b></p> <p>Have each participating employee pack a special, homemade lunch. Encourage them to get creative and make deluxe sandwiches or wraps. Include delicious treats like decadent brownies or monster chocolate chip cookies. Hold an auction before lunch time, allowing co-workers to bid on the fancy lunches.</p>
<p><b>Midnight Breakfast</b></p> <p>If your organization has a third shift, charge employees for a midnight breakfast served by executives and other day employees.</p>	<p><b>M&amp;M/Jelly Bean Jar</b></p> <p>The famous “guess the number of beans in the jar” cannot be forgotten. Buy a guess for 50 cents. The person who guesses closest to the number in the jar, wins the jar of candy.</p>
<p><b>Nacho Party</b></p> <p>Plan an afternoon to sell nachos or popcorn to interested employees in your breakroom. Employees pay per serving with proceeds going to United Way.</p>	<p><b>Oktoberfest</b></p> <p>Celebrate by barbecuing or making German inspired meal.</p>

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<p><b>Plate Sale</b></p> <p>Host a potluck lunch and have everyone bring a favorite dish or cater in food. Charge for the plates, but the food is free!</p>	<p><b>Salad Luncheon</b></p> <p>The meal is easy to prepare. The salad luncheon, when held in a central location, can be a popular money maker.</p> <p>The luncheon should cost a flat price, perhaps \$5. With the salad, offer donated homemade baked goods, such as cookies, brownies or bread.</p>
<p><b>Tailgate Party</b></p> <p>Create a sports theme to coincide with football season. Hold the party in the parking lot. Serve hot dogs, chips, soda and peanuts. Play a game of flag football or video football with participants donating an entry fee.</p>	<p><b>Taste of the World Luncheon</b></p> <p>Offer a lunch buffet of ethnic foods.</p>
<p><b>Waffle/Pancake Breakfast</b></p> <p>Sell tickets and have people sign up for their choice of pancakes or waffles. Cook breakfast in your company cafeteria and ask executives/management to serve that morning. Don't forget bacon, sausage, butter etc.</p>	

### SPECIAL EVENT IDEAS – FUN & GAMES

<p><b>Bean Bag Tournament</b></p> <p>Entry fee charged for single elimination bean bag tournament, play over lunch hour or break times throughout the campaign. Winner receives bragging rights for the year.</p>	<p><b>B-I-N-G-O</b></p> <p>Sell Bingo cards for a small fee. Send e-mails sporadically throughout the week with one or two Bingo numbers each time. The first person to get Bingo should let everyone know by sending an e-mail to all users, and, of course, he or she will win a donated prize.</p>
<p><b>Golf Outing</b></p> <p>Organize a golf outing for employees. Participants pay an entry fee. Have goofy prizes for highest score, most putts, longest game, etc.</p>	<p><b>Lawn Games</b></p> <p>Have a Volleyball, Croquet, Horseshoes, or Bags Tournament.</p>
<p><b>Marshmallow Driving Range</b></p> <p>Set up your own driving range, but use marshmallows instead of actual golf balls - to make it more manageable. Award prizes for the longest and most accurate drives.</p>	<p><b>Office Miniature Golf</b></p> <p>Provide putters and build a nine-hole course featuring slinkies, staplers, chairs and other creative obstacles. Participants sign up in teams of two, with or without a registration fee.</p>

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<p><b>Office Olympics</b></p> <p>Make up your own “Olympic” games having a team admission fee. Brainstorm new ideas– roll the egg (not hardboiled) with your chin across the finish line without breaking it, relay race handing off a full glass of water on a tray using one hand spilling as little as possible, office chair races, waste basket free throw, paper airplane toss. Use your imagination!</p> <p>Use a stopwatch to time contestants, with the fastest person winning a prize. Observers donate or wager \$1 on their favorite contestants.</p>	<p><b>Office Survivor Game</b></p> <p>Each participant pays \$5 to join and has to do something each day to stay on the island. They have to: bring an item for the silent auction, bring in baked goods for the bake sale or wear a certain color. Winner receives paid time off.</p>
<p><b>Scavenger Hunt</b></p> <p>Employees participate in a scavenger hunt that requires them to find unusual items from around the neighborhood or office building, as well as demonstrate community knowledge. You can place items at specific locations for the hunters. Teams of four pay a group entrance fee you set ahead of time. If each team member has a different job title, automatically award them 10 bonus points. Teams have a set time frame to accumulate as many points as possible. The entire team must be present at the end of the time period. If any member arrives late, assess a penalty of six points per minute, for example. Work with local businesses for gift certificates or other items as rewards for the winning team.</p>	<p><b>Spoon game</b></p> <p>Give a plastic spoon to each staff member to keep with them at all times. Each person is given the name of another staff member, this person then tries to find a time that their assigned person does not have their spoon with them. If caught without their spoon they must give their assigned name to the person who caught them. The last person to have their spoon wins!</p>
<p><b>Talent Show / Lip Sync / Karaoke Contest</b></p> <p>This has the potential for being a BIG fundraiser and a GREAT team builder! Participants pay \$2 to enter and are given a list of songs and a pledge sheet in advance. Participants ask employees to support them by pledging an amount of money. At the event, have a big box of funny hats, feather boas and other costume items available for participants to use. Pass the hat at the party to receive even more pledges.</p>	<p><b>Turkey Flocking Day</b></p> <p>Usually held during Thanksgiving or Christmas to go with the turkey theme. Announce a Turkey Flocking Day to your office. In the days ahead sell “flock insurance” and put up posters around the office of what being “flocked” entails. A nice caption is “don’t let this happen to you” with a photo of an office member’s desk crowded with balloons or the like. On the day of the event randomly choose persons without “flock insurance” to flock. Those who are victims of the turkey flock can pay to have a “Flock Removal Service” remove the birds.</p>
<p><b>Video Game Olympics</b></p> <p>Set up a video game console and hold a tournament. Proceeds from entry fees go to United Way.</p>	<p><b>Trivia Contest</b></p> <p>Employees have the opportunity to answer a daily trivia contest, the first one with the correct answer wins!</p>

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<b>SPECIAL EVENT IDEAS – GET THE BOSS INVOLVED</b>	
<p><b>Dress up the Boss</b></p> <p>Boss wears a costume voted on by all employees if the campaign goal is reached. Examples: tutu, animal costume, devil costume, etc.</p>	<p><b>Duct Tape Your Boss to the Wall</b></p> <p>Sell a yard of duct tape for a fee and have employees tape the boss to a wall or door. Contributions can be collected for guesses on how long the boss will stick to the wall once the stool they have been standing on is taken away.</p>
<p><b>Dunk Tank</b></p> <p>Managers volunteer to sit in a dunk tank and employees buy chances to dunk them.</p>	<p><b>Executive Auction</b></p> <p>Get the Executive staff to donate half a day to United Way. Auction each executive off to the employees.</p> <p>The executive must take over the employee's job for half a day.</p>
<p><b>Executive Tricycle Race</b></p> <p>Employees can bid to see who they'd like to see race tricycles in the parking lot. Make it even more fun and add obstacles.</p>	<p><b>Kiss the Pig</b></p> <p>Voting with their money, employees vote which executive staff will have to kiss a pig.</p>
<p><b>Put Your Best Shoe Forward</b></p> <p>Line up senior managers and/or other employees for some unique mug shots - shoes only! Hold a contest before your campaign kicks off to see if employees can figure out who's who.</p>	<p><b>Where in the County is Your CEO</b></p> <p>Have the company CEO or President visit five different United Way agencies and get their picture taken doing something at the agency. When taking the picture, be sure not to have the agency name showing (can show part of the agency name as a clue if needed). Post one photo each day with clues as to where the CEO/President is. Employees will guess where their CEO/President is. All correct answers are entered into a drawing.</p>
<p><b>Whipped Cream Pie in the Face</b></p> <p>Host a whipped cream throwing contest. Use sponges covered or pie tins filled with whipped cream and try to hit a target. Get management to be the targets and have employees pay to play.</p>	

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<b>Special Event Ideas – Miscellaneous Ideas &amp; Games</b>	
<p><b>Awful Tie or Ugly Earring Contest</b></p> <p>All contestants pay \$5 to enter the “best” awful earrings or “best” ugly ties they own, make or borrow. Place voting boxes at various places around the office and charge \$1 per vote. Employees vote as many times as they want for their favorite. Offer a photo opportunity with your favorite contestant for \$1.</p>	<p><b>Balloon Pop</b></p> <p>Ask employees/area businesses to donate prizes. Put names of prizes inside balloons. Charge employees to buy a balloon and pop it to find out what prize they’ve won.</p>
<p><b>Board Game Contest</b></p> <p>Recruit employees to play a chosen board game. Create a pool around the winning team or allow employees to move/acquire a game piece for every returned pledge card.</p>	<p><b>Duck Pond</b></p> <p>Employees pay a buck to pick a duck. List the prize on the bottom of the duck, they win that prize.</p>
<p><b>Get Your Goat</b></p> <p>Sell time-shares to employees to have something —stinkyll put in someone’s office/workspace. That person than pays to have it removed and placed in someone’s space.</p>	<p><b>Golf Balls “Fore” Sale</b></p> <p>Collect old golf balls, after a clean and shine sell them by the dozen.</p>
<p><b>Guessing Game</b></p> <p>Fill a jar with any items you having around the office and people pay a fee to guess – take a photo and email/text to off-site staff.</p>	<p><b>Healthy Activities</b></p> <p>Each department in your organization hosts a special event to raise money for United Way and improve the health of employees at the same time. Yoga classes, brown bag lunch workshops, stress reduction classes, etc.</p>
<p><b>Kids Coloring Contest</b></p> <p>A colorful way to get everyone’s children involved is to have children color a United Way logo or have them make a picture that shows giving or sharing. These pieces of art are great to use on thank you cards, t-shirts or bookmarks. Sponsor a contest and give a prize to the top three artists.</p>	<p><b>Lights! Camera! Action!</b></p> <p>Have employees dress up as their favorite characters from movies or television shows. Incorporate a game of “guess who.” Employees can win prizes for guessing the right character. Use movie plots or famous lines for promotional flyers and e-mails to drum up excitement. Have a raffle drawing for movie tickets, DVDs and gift certificates.</p>
<p><b>Mini Massage</b></p> <p>Find a massage therapist who is willing to donate their time. Charge employees for a 15-minute chair massage.</p>	<p><b>Movie Night</b></p> <p>Fire up the big screen and popcorn maker and invite employees and families in for a movie.</p>
<p><b>Paper Horse Race</b></p> <p>Employees purchase a paper horse and each day they receive one draw and the horse moves based on the draw. Employees can purchase redraws. Limit</p>	<p><b>Pay to Park</b></p> <p>Charge people to park in your parking lot during a concert or a big game; donate the proceeds to United Way.</p>



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redraws to one per day to make game last longer.	
<p><b>Pick and Egg, Any Egg</b></p> <p>Fill plastic eggs with prizes or cash, charge for the opportunity to play.</p>	<p><b>Picture Match Game</b></p> <p>Invite employees to try their luck at matching high school pictures, pet pictures or celebrity pictures to executives. Charge employees to vote and award the entry with the most right answers a fun prize.</p>
<p><b>Plant Sale</b></p> <p>Employees can dig up and donate plants from their year, or bring in new plants to sell to other employees.</p>	<p><b>Poker Walk</b></p> <p>Employees walk to 5 stations, all at once or one stop per day, picking up a card at each location. Best poker hand wins.</p>
<p><b>Pumpkin Carving or Decorating Contest</b></p> <p>Form teams to carve or decorate pumpkins, Display in a prominent location and have people vote for their favorite.</p>	<p><b>“Show Your Spirit” Day</b></p> <p>One day during the campaign, encourage employees to show their school spirit by digging into their closets and pulling out their letter jackets, team jerseys and old uniforms. They may also wear their children’s jackets and jerseys. On that same day, host your United Way meetings, a potluck or some sort of special event allowing the employees to interact and share.</p>
<p><b>Team Fitness Challenge</b></p> <p>Break into teams or have participants compete individually based on numbers. Each participant determines how much weight s/he wants to lose during a determined amount of time. For each pound, s/he puts \$5 into a pot. Each person weighs in. Each day, there could be special lunches planned and motivational quotes posted around the office space in support of everyone’s efforts. On the last day, everyone weighs in again. For every pound lost, they receive \$5. All left over money goes to United Way.</p>	<p><b>United Way “Well Wishers”</b></p> <p>A wishing well could be constructed in your company’s lobby where people could drop their spare change. The change from the wishing well would be tallied and go towards the united Way campaign, proving that a little change can make a lot of sense. A variation on this theme could be to collect household items and canned goods for donation to a local food pantry.</p>
<p><b>Who Is It?</b></p> <p>Gather baby pictures of co-workers. Have a contest to see who can correctly name the most co-workers. Contestants pay a fee to take part. Give an award for the most correct matches.</p>	<p><b>Whose ? is that?</b></p> <p>Collect photos from employees with a particular subject matter. Have all the employees guess to see if they can match the items with the employee. You can use tattoos, pets, children, baby photos, garden, garage...etc.</p>
<p><b>10% of Sales</b></p> <p>Do you operate or work closely with a local eating establishment? If so designate a day where 10% of the sales go to United Way. Up the ante by having your CEO work at the restaurant for the day (or over the lunch period) and promote it throughout the office.</p>	



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