



Nonprofit Nation Implementation Guide

March 2022, Events: Silent Auction

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Video Transcript

[00:00:00] Hi, and welcome to March's lesson events plan, a silent auction. This month, we are learning the basics of setting up a silent auction. So, what are [00:00:15] auctions? There are three types of auctions, and they are run a little differently. The three types of auctions are live silent and online. So, let's go through the three kinds of. [00:00:30]

[00:00:30] Live auctions are essentially a type of live performance. During a live auction, an auctioneer facilitates the bidding by introducing items and calling out dollar amounts. In order to place a bid, guests must [00:00:45] capture the auctioneer's attention by either using bid paddles or through some other method, because you have a real larger than life auctioneer to run the show.

[00:00:58] Live auctions [00:01:00] tend to be fast, fun, and highly engaging for donors. Plus, the urgency of having to bid on the spot can be a great incentive for attendees to bid more. However, the [00:01:15] structured nature of a live auction can also be a downside because guests will be seated at tables and participating in a live performance.

[00:01:25] Your organization likely won't have as much time [00:01:30] to interact with your donors. Live auctions are commonly paired with silent auctions to give organizations more opportunities to fundraise. Alright, silent auctions are in [00:01:45] person events where items are placed on tables for guests to browse. Traditionally guests will bid by writing an amount on a sheet of paper placed next to the item.

[00:01:57] Mobile bidding software can boost donations by [00:02:00] letting guests bid conveniently from smartphones. Silent auctions are less structured than live auctions, giving organizations, an ideal opportunity to interact with donors in [00:02:15] person because silent auctions are more casual. They're also suitable for many types of audiences and can be adapted to all kinds of settings.

[00:02:29] This [00:02:30] less structured nature can be a double-edged sword. Since you won't have an auctioneer running the show and actively entertaining your guests, it can be harder to engage your participants and move them to bid. [00:02:45] Last, we have online auctions, and they are similar to silent auctions, only digital to host an online auction.

[00:02:55] Your organization would have to set up an online auction [00:03:00] site, using auction software. The site features images and descriptions of each item for participants to browse on their computers, to place a bit. Participants have to register on the site

[00:03:15] by submitting their name and credit card information. Because there's no physical event with an online auction,

[00:03:22] they're much less expensive and easier to plan and everyone can participate [00:03:30] regardless of geography. However, by the same token, it's more difficult to engage them. With an online auction and you won't have the chance to interact with them face to face. That's why online [00:03:45] auctions are commonly held in tandem with silent auctions organizations can open online bidding prior to the actual event to allow more people to bid for longer and thus raise [00:04:00] more.

[00:04:01] All right. This lesson though, is going to focus on the silent auction. So let's dig in. First of all. Everything has a purpose here in nonprofit nations. [00:04:15] So why do we need to silent auctions, silent auctions done right. Can bring in tens of thousands of dollars for an organization. When it's part of a fundraising plan, silent auction [00:04:30] will help with fundraising amount goals and donor acquisition.

[00:04:35] All right. Let's get into the what and how of it. That's why you're here. Right? Let's talk about all the steps to put on a [00:04:45] silent auction. So the very first thing that you're going to do is to determine your budget and goals and in the resources we have sample budget. So that you [00:05:00] don't have to think too hard about that.

[00:05:02] Just take the sample budget and make it your own. Now the goals should be fundraising amount and any other fundraising goal like donor acquisition and donor [00:05:15] retention that fits your organizational goals. They should also. Uh, be written in smart format and we have the smart worksheets in the implementation [00:05:30] guide for you to take a look.

[00:05:32] All right. The next thing you're going to do once you've decided on your budget for this event, you're going to. People. So you're going to recruit a team. Don't do a [00:05:45] silent auction alone. It is way too much work to do by yourself. So you need at least a volunteer committee. The duties of the committee will be to complete all the tasks needed to put on the auction.

[00:05:59] [00:06:00] And to get items for the auction. I find being very clear when you're recruiting that they will be required to get X number of auction items really helps. Um, because it's not a [00:06:15] surprise. People will tell you that was a total surprise. It wasn't. So whenever you're very upfront, they can tell you either, no, I don't want to do.

[00:06:27] Or they can say, okay. And then you can remind them [00:06:30] later. All right, moving on. Once we have recruited our team, we need to set a date and book the venue. You may be able to get donated space or have space already [00:06:45] available, and

that's great. Um, but you may also need to rent space, which means the sooner you book the space, the better.

[00:06:55] Yeah. Some things to think about when you're looking [00:07:00] at date and space, uh, will you be serving food and beverages? What kind of beverages will you be serving? Some non-profits will not serve alcohol period. And I understand it. It goes against [00:07:15] their mission. It's not really aligned with their mission. Some nonprofits will serve alcohol.

[00:07:22] What are you going to do? What are the licenses you're going to need to be able to do those things, something to think about. [00:07:30] Will you need entertainment while people bit silent? Auctions are, are very unstructured. Like I told you. And so some non-profits will have like, [00:07:45] um, a DJ or, or an orchestra or.

[00:07:49] Music just playing in the background. Uh, so something to think about, you might want a silent or really silent [00:08:00] auction. You may want to do a, uh, while food's being served. There's a lot to think about. So something that you need to go ahead and figure out now, instead of later, [00:08:15] The next thing is, what will your program be?

[00:08:21] You will certainly want to tell your organization story and maybe a client story at some point during the night. [00:08:30] Now, how will you incorporate those things into your auction that is completely up to you and your organizations? All right. Here is a [00:08:45] sample program for an auction. I'm giving you this and it will be in the implementation guide just for you to, to think through use what you want, discard, what you [00:09:00] want, make this your own, but here's an idea.

[00:09:03] So on the agenda, welcome reception. Uh, look at auction. This is going to be, uh, [00:09:15] before everything gets started. So say your option starts this or your event starts at seven. This may be like from six 30 to seven. This is a good time to put VIP's into. If you have major [00:09:30] donors or, or special people, then, uh, this is a good, uh, thing to do to make them feel special.

[00:09:40] Okay. Have cocktails, appetizers. It's a time to [00:09:45] mingled talk. Uh, you can have jazz or other light background music if you want. Uh, so that's the kind of thing you're looking for. There's really not any entertainment [00:10:00] because you want people to mingle and mix and talk to each other. It can also be a draw for people for VIP people because they get.

[00:10:11] Hobnob with other people that are, that [00:10:15] they may want to hub not with. Um, if you are selling tickets to this, this reception is an added extra, so you'd have to

pay a little bit [00:10:30] more to do this, or, um, this could be something you could give away. Like I said to your, your top, your major dinners or. Your sponsors.

[00:10:41] You can do that too. All right. The [00:10:45] next thing on the agenda is food service. So you're going to serve, uh, a meal, either dinner or lunch, whatever time of day you're doing it. And this is a sit-down service for, for [00:11:00] more formal events. Uh, it's ideal to wait until plates are cleared before starting the program to avoid background.

[00:11:10] The next thing is your welcoming remarks. [00:11:15] Two to three minute, welcome from a key board member MC or a sponsor. This can also be accomplished via a short video. And sometimes that is the best way to accomplish it because with video, you can make sure [00:11:30] it is exactly the time that you want it. The next thing on the agenda is a client testimonial or a mission moment.

[00:11:39] This is where a client shares the impact of your work on his or her [00:11:45] life, uh, personalized in your work. Uh, this can also be a. Partner report speaking, uh, to your effectiveness and the impact of a compelling program or project [00:12:00] either way. This can also be accomplished via a short video. And I like it for that too.

[00:12:08] This helps really helps you keep time. Now we get to our silent [00:12:15] auction. This will be a time when people can get up and go mingle and look, this is a good time to have drinks. Um, if you're doing alcohol [00:12:30] and so have a set time, maybe it's an hour. Maybe it's a couple of hours. It depends. I probably would do it 30 minutes to an hour.

[00:12:41] Most people know what they're going to bid [00:12:45] on. If they're going to bid. So after that time, you're going to have everyone come back to their seats and there's going to be a presentation from an executive [00:13:00] director. This is going to outline the history impact of the organization, share the events, purpose, and fundraising goal, and the overall impact.

[00:13:11] Uh, this fundraiser will make [00:13:15] possible. The next thing you're going to do is you're going to ask pass around donation envelopes and how volunteers poised with mobile devices to collect donations. Um, if [00:13:30] you decide to do that. So, um, really what I'm talking about is like an iPad or a tablet with, uh, a payment, uh, processor on it.

[00:13:44] Where you can [00:13:45] run a card. And so I know clicking pledge has something like that. You can do, uh, there's all kinds of, uh, processors out there that do it. So that's what I'm talking about. [00:14:00] Okay. And last, you're going to announce the results. You're going to thank the audience and let them know how much was raised and what these funds will allow you to accomplish.

[00:14:14] Did you [00:14:15] notice something we are thanking? We were, we are telling impact at every, uh, every opportunity this helps to put in their minds that they are doing good, [00:14:30] that they're helping. And so they will bit, this will also be the time when you are going to live. Uh, or, or let people [00:14:45] know that they can go to a certain spot to look and see if they are winning bit.

[00:14:52] And then the night's concluded. All right, moving on. Now that we've kind of got an idea of [00:15:00] what we're doing now, it's time to decide on sponsorships and this should be about six months out from your. Sponsorships are an important part of an event. My rule of [00:15:15] thumb is that sponsorships should pay for at least in part the expenses of the event.

[00:15:23] This allows a hundred percent of the proceeds from the event itself to go to the organization. [00:15:30] So a template is in the resources section to help you get started on your. Uh, sponsorship, uh, packet. So, [00:15:45] uh, you may be wondering, what do you offer sponsors? Where can you put their logos? What, what do you need to do?

[00:15:57] Well, some places [00:16:00] to have sponsors that I have learned over the years, that work really well are these three places. The bid sheets, it logo in a corner either top or bottom. It really doesn't matter on every [00:16:15] single bid sheet can be very effective. Um, especially if the, the sponsor has donated an item. Um, this is really cool [00:16:30] to put the sponsor.

[00:16:33] Uh, logo on their particular item. Sometimes you can get them to sponsor an entire category, and that works to [00:16:45] banners and signs. Think of creative ways to put out a banner or a sign. So find places to hang banners. Insides, directional signs will logos works [00:17:00] too. I have eaten. Made flyers before and put them in the bathrooms.

[00:17:07] That's what we wanted. Okay. Now at six months [00:17:15] out after you've gotten your sponsorship packet done, and you're starting to work on your sponsors, you're also going to start working on your auction items. Begin this sooner rather than later, many [00:17:30] companies need. To go through their donation process and as an added bonus and the resources for this lesson, you have a list of companies [00:17:45] that give to silent auctions.

[00:17:47] It is a huge list. And so take advantage of that. All right now, we're going, we're about two months out and we are [00:18:00] going to promote the auction. You're going to start by getting your event page set up and it should give all the details of the event and you should be able to sell tickets. This is something else that I [00:18:15] recommend.

[00:18:15] If you're have an event, either sell tables, so six people at a table or. Sell tickets to the event. This just helps, um, [00:18:30] commit people and bring them in. It will also help cover some food costs if you need it too. All right, let's see. Uh, and give box and give butter are two [00:18:45] great platforms to check into for events, especially for tickets next.

[00:18:53] I'm going to give you some oxygen tips. These are some things that I have learned along the way, [00:19:00] um, have bid sheets and these bid sheets are, are just, they can be like, uh, a half of a sheet of an eight and a half by 11 is what I normally did. You'll have the [00:19:15] name of the item, a description of the item.

[00:19:18] Don't put a value. Uh, a suggested value or, or any kind of value on it. It will cap your, [00:19:30] uh, bids if you do so. And then once you do is you have your bid number and the bid amount, sometimes it's, um, the bid, [00:19:45] the bid number, and then the person signs. But if you have bid cards, then you would just need the bid card number.

[00:19:55] So that's what you're going to do. I would also recommend a [00:20:00] minimum bid and an increment bid. So, um, put on your bid sheets, something like a minimum of \$5 and \$5 month. [00:20:15] And you bid in five, \$5 increments. This helps because what happens is there's a lot of people that will start the bid at a dollar, which isn't helpful.

[00:20:27] And then somebody will [00:20:30] want an item and they'll just bid a dollar more at the very end and it's like, seriously. Um, so if you say, well, you've got to bid \$5 more than. [00:20:45] Makes it a little bit more worth your while, because just think about it. If you had an item that had a dollar bid and then someone else wanted it and it was like, they bid 50 cent.

[00:20:58] So it went for a dollar 50, [00:21:00] but it's worth \$30 that, um, it just doesn't feel good. So do that with bedsheets. Something else I learned and that's categories.

[00:21:15] I think I've mentioned categories earlier, but for this categories, put your auction items into categories and use the categories when setting up the items in your [00:21:30] auction.

[00:21:30] So have different spaces designated for different categories. So maybe you have. And a gift basket category because you have several gift baskets. You have, maybe [00:21:45] you have a home goods category or all about your car category. So use the different categories to attract people's attention and to get [00:22:00] interest because this, what this is going to do is help people quickly find items that most interest them.

[00:22:08] Another tip, if you can get, um, uh, [00:22:15] some sort of sheet to people beforehand, or even as they come in the door that lists everything that you have available, uh, for the auction that will help people quickly go through and [00:22:30] mark the items that they really want to go see and bid on. So, um, that's another good thing to think.

[00:22:38] Now gift cards. We always got so many gift [00:22:45] cards, but gift cards are tricky since people don't usually bit over the face value of the card. You've got a \$25 gift card. You're not going to get \$30 for it. People just aren't [00:23:00] going to bid over the 25. So here's some ways to use gift card. To increase the value of other items.

[00:23:11] So use them as part of gift [00:23:15] baskets, it will increase the value of the basket and give an extra. So if you have, let's say a carwash basket and you've got some, uh, got a bucket and some carwash [00:23:30] stuff and a card to a carwash in it. It automatically increases the value, the perceived value of the basket.[00:23:45]

[00:23:45] And you're going to get more than \$25 for that, that card. Now, another fun thing that I really like is to use it as an incentive power. [00:24:00] Um, you can name it, whatever you want, but this is my favorite way to use gift cards. So, um, if you had an auction the previous year, you can get an average bid price per item category.[00:24:15]

[00:24:15] Another reason why categories work really well. Um, so. You, um, simply add up the total bids for all items per category, divide the [00:24:30] total by the total number of items in the category. So, as an example, I have 20 items in the gift basket category. I add up the total bids of the 20 items and get \$1,500 [00:24:45] divide, \$1,500 by 20.

[00:24:48] The number of. And you get \$75. So the average bid price for the gift basket category is \$75. Now [00:25:00] I'm a bid sheets and in the place \$75 would be the bid because if you now have a minimum bid and you're in \$5 increments, you can figure out which space is the \$75 [00:25:15] mark. Now you're going to highlight. That space.

[00:25:21] And you're going to let people know that anyone who bids in that space at any point, you don't have to go in order. [00:25:30] Whoever puts their bid in that \$75 space and gets entered into the power-play drawing for a gift card. They get entered into [00:25:45] a \$25 gift card drawing just for saying, they're kind of, they're going to bid 75.

[00:25:52] All right. So this helps increase the bid amount of the category items. So think about it. If [00:26:00] someone is in a category and there's not a lot of bids, they may really want whatever the, uh, \$25 gift card is for that category. They may go ahead and put down the bid in [00:26:15] that, um, that power play. So maybe for that particular category, um, a \$25 gift card is 25.

[00:26:25] The \$25 gift card space is \$25 bid [00:26:30] who wouldn't do that. You're still getting the \$25 gift card. Right? So that's one of my favorite things too. All right. The last thing you're going to do after the auction, [00:26:45] you're going to thank contributors and you're going to track your performance. So thank your sponsors by sending a thank you note a handwritten thank you note, and some pictures from the event, tell [00:27:00] them how their donation contributed to a successful event.

[00:27:06] If they actually. Uh, donated something for the auction. [00:27:15] If you can get a picture of the person who, uh, got the item, that's even cooler thing to send to them. All right. The next thing is, make sure you put your final bids [00:27:30] into a spreadsheet, so you can total bids for each category and see what did, what.

[00:27:37] And what you need to change up next year. This also gives you the power play numbers for next year. [00:27:45] Okay. That is all for this lesson. Download the implementation guide and check out all the resources for this lesson. There are a lot of resources. All right, till next month, have a [00:28:00] great one.

Resources

[Smart Goals Worksheet](#)

[Budget Template 1](#)

[Budget Template 2](#)

[Fundraising Auction Donation Sources](#)

Worksheet

SMART Goal Worksheet

Initial Goal (Write the goal you have in mind):

1. Specific (What do you want to accomplish? Who needs to be included? When do you want to do this? Why is this a goal?)

2. Measurable (How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met your goal?):

3. Achievable (Do you have the skills required to achieve the goal? If not, can you obtain them? What is the motivation for this goal? Is the amount of effort required on par with what the goal will achieve?):

4. Relevant (Why am I setting this goal now? Is it aligned with overall objectives?):

5. Time-bound (What's the deadline and is it realistic?):

S.M.A.R.T. Goal (Review what you have written, and craft a new goal statement based on what the answers to the questions above have revealed):
