



How to create a successful fundraising event

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Typical Fundraising Events

- Gala Balls
- Golf Days
- Fun Runs/Walks
- Cycling challenges
- Swims
- Endurance challenges (Mad Mudder)
- Mega Walks (OXFAM)
- Theatre and/or Musical productions
- Community engagement (Biggest Morning Tea, Girl's night in)
- Sausage Sizzles
- Cakes and baked goods

Excludes peer-to-peer fundraisers such as Movember, Dry July, etc

Understanding the purpose of the event

Is it:

1. Strategic:

- Are you seeking to engage major donors or corporates?
- Are you prepared to break even or make a loss to engage and secure these prospective supporters?
- Is it appropriate to introduce the “ask” at this point or should the “ask” follow at a later date?
- Is it a “thank you” function or a “launch”?

2. Operationally important:

- The event has a specific fundraising target to support operational objectives
- It has to make money (and lots of it)

Strategic Events

- Make sure the event is fit for the purpose - don't invite major donor prospects to a fun run (except for Corporates who are seeking staff engagement in community activities)
- Ensure that the event caters for the prospect and their partner
- Think outside the box and do something “quirky” – Gala Balls are passe
- Create a new “experience” that will be memorable
- Introduce the reason for them being at the event early in the proceedings and then let them enjoy the experience
- Ensure you have appropriate people presenting e.g. patients, experts
- Provide “take-home” collateral with key facts and contact details
- Follow up quickly while the experience is fresh

Opera in the Market



Operational Events

The most important rule is to ensure that the effort maximises to return

- Too many events consume a considerable amount of resources for very little return e.g. Golf days and Gala Balls are good examples
- Where events have a high dependency on sponsorship support to deliver an acceptable return the risk of it not being sustainable increases
- Many organisations seem to get confused about what factors contribute to the success of a fundraising event – it's simple \$
- While it is important to provide a good experience for event participants it's not the main objective – some events managers tend to spend way too much time and money creating great events but forget about the dollars
- Why invest so much time & effort in an event that only accommodates 600 people and delivers \$100K when for the same effort you could hold an event for 5,000 with a return of \$1 million+?

Some examples

Sydney to Wollongong Bike Ride – MS Australia

- 2003 previously marked a “record” year for this event with 7,500 participants who raised \$283,000
- In June 2006 I joined MS Australia as CEO and tasked the Sydney based events team with making the “Gong” ride a \$1 million + event
- Despite protests and “weird” looks the team set about focusing their efforts on fundraising
- The 2006 event delivered \$890,000 net
- 2007 delivered \$1.4 million net
- 2008 delivered \$2.1 million net
- 2009 delivered \$3.1 million net
- 2010 delivered \$3.9 million net
- 2011 delivered \$4.3 million net
- How many gala balls and golf days does it take to deliver \$4.3 million in one day?

MS Sydney to the Gong Bike Ride



MS Sydney to the Gong Bike Ride



**In 4 years
this team
went from
10 riders
raising
\$8,000 to
the highest
fundraising
team with
\$287,000**

MS Sydney to the Gong Bike Ride



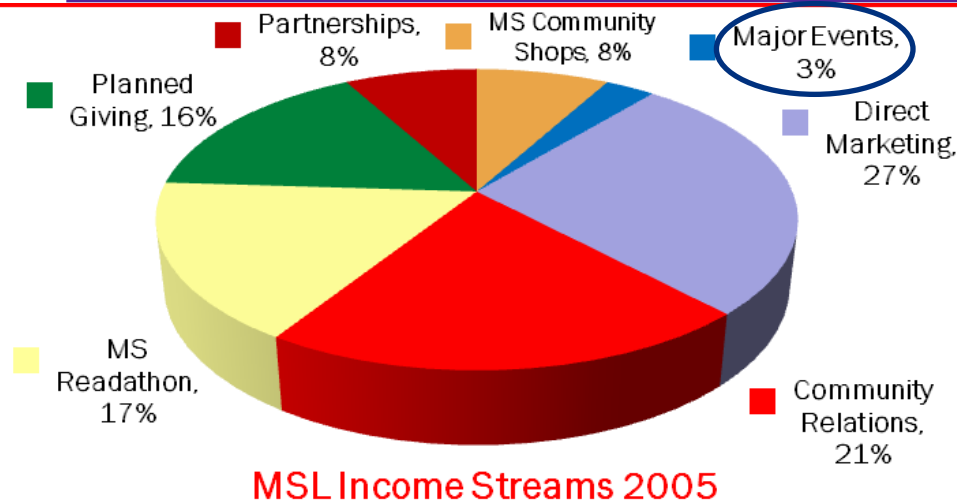
Some examples

Albert Park Walk and Run – MS Australia

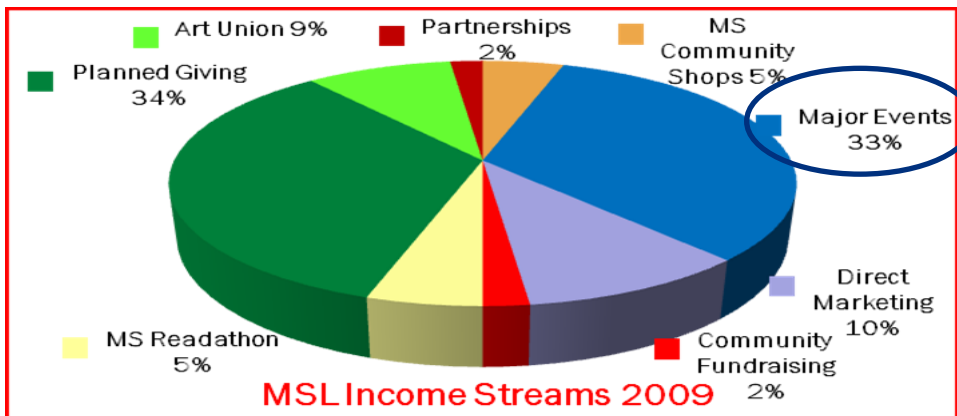
- In June 2006 (2 weeks on the job) I participated in the MS Walk & Run at Albert Park
- There were 300 participants and the event raised \$17,000
- Following a meeting with the Melbourne based events team (same weird looks) they set about changing their focus
- The 2013 event (same date, same venue) delivered

\$1,059,701 net

What was the effect for MS Australia?

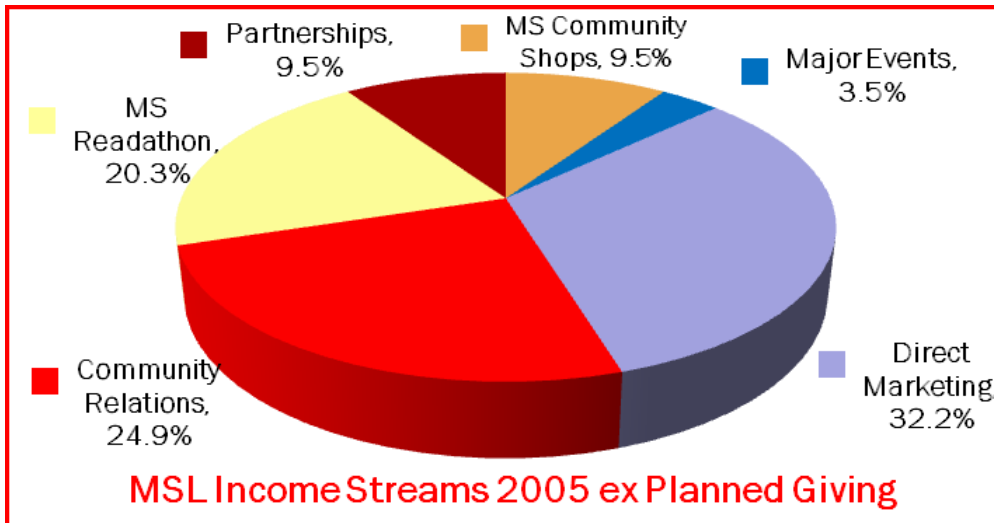


- In 2005 Major Events represented 3% of revenue with a cost to income ratio of 90:10

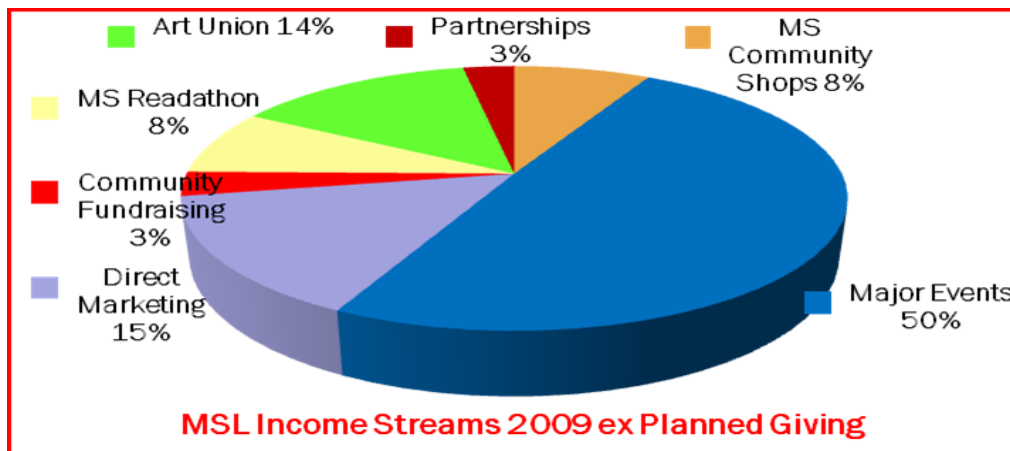


- In 2009 Major Events represented 33% of revenue with a cost to income ratio of 4:96

What was the effect for MS Australia?



- When Bequest Income is excluded Major Events increased from 3.5% to 50% of revenue



- This drove the overall cost to income ratio from 32:68 to 9:91

Some examples

Scrubs Run and Walk – St Vincent's Hospital

- In March 2013 St Vincent's conducted the inaugural Scrubs Run and Walk along the Yarra Boulevard at Burnley
- We had little time to plan the event and there was no marketing budget
- We obtained all of the T shirts for free as well as a mascot Dr Ted
- Graphic design was provided pro-bono and venue usage fees and permit fees were waived
- There were 1200 participants and the event raised \$253,000
- On the same day we competed against "Walk against Melanoma" (\$39,000 raised) and the Epworth Hospital's Fun Run (results unknown)
- Due to the success of the inaugural event the 2014 Scrubs Run has a "marketing budget" and we anticipate 3,500 – 5,000 participants with a net fundraising result of \$500,000 +



St Vincent's Scrubs Run and Walk



St Vincent's Scrubs Run and Walk

Collateral and Merchandise



JOIN OUR TEAM



**Sunday
3 March
2013
3pm - 7pm**

**ST VINCENT'S
SCRUBS RUN**

The heaps-of-fun run!

Yarra Boulevard, Richmond
Meet at Burnley Park/Circus Lawn, Swan Street

scrubsrn.gofundraise.com.au

Our team is raising funds for St Vincent's Hospital by participating in the St Vincent's Scrubs Run. With your help, we hope to fundraise \$

Join our team and join the fun run!

- 1 Visit scrubsrn.gofundraise.com.au
- 2 Search for
- 3 Click Join Team
- 4 Personalise your own fundraising page... and start fundraising!

Common mistakes to avoid

- Promoting events to running cycling clubs will bring you registrations but not fundraisers – these groups are only interested in participating in an organised event and to achieve a personal best time
- Don't provide prizes for the fastest times – award prizes to the highest fundraisers and best dressed teams
- Don't rely on your “brand” to drive fundraising – tell the participants what their money will be used for – be specific
- Don't rely on the “tools” to drive fundraising
- Don't put yourself in a position where you have a high dependency on corporate sponsors – treat these relationships as a “bonus” because they are “never forever”
- Don't forget to have a contingency plan to mitigate risks such as inclement weather, guest speaker/performer is unwell, traffic issues

Other things to consider

- If your organisation supports a specific cause (e.g. breast cancer) your task is much easier
- If your organisation provides a broad range of services (e.g. Hospital) then your task is much more difficult

For the latter:

- You need to identify a specific purpose for the event e.g. breakthrough research, new equipment that will change lives
- Identify an “Ambassador” who will be the event spokesperson (needs to be a patient/client who will or has benefited from your work) – desirably female under 40 years old
- Arm the fundraisers with as much information as possible to make it easy for them to tell “your story” (key facts) and tell them what you want them to do

Setting expectations

- Inform participants that their registration fee is used to cover the cost of conducting the event – it is not a donation
- Tell them why they need to fundraise – the purpose
- Tell them what the target is in dollar terms
- Tell them what different amounts of money will “buy”
- Tell them what to expect on the day but don’t oversell it

Driving fundraising activity

- Provide fundraisers with the tools to make it easy – emails templates, key facts, images, quick links to social network platforms, etc
- Keep them updated via email and social networks
- Feature a range of fundraisers talking about their experience on the website, Facebook and e-newsletters
- Call team captains to encourage them and to provide support (particularly if they are from a corporate team)
- Call fundraisers who are approaching or have exceeded their target and assist them in changing their fundraising page (also feature them)
- Call people who have not begun fundraising and let them know how easy it is - \$20.00 from 10 friends

Closing comments

- By now you will appreciate that I am a strong advocate for large scale events as a key fundraising activity
- It is obvious that the major event space is crowded but the public (and corporates) still have an insatiable appetite for these types of community activities
- What other activity provides your organisation with such a strong positive cash flow? The “Gong” ride puts \$4 million in the bank before the event.
- It’s much nicer counting the money than chasing invoices that can lead to bad debt
- Large scale public events provide significant exposure for your organisation and are attractive to Corporates
- They also create a wonderful culture in your organisation through staff participation (volunteering, fundraising, participating)

Questions?

Thank you