



United Way of the Central & South  
Okanagan/Similkameen

*Bright Ideas  
For Really Great  
United Way Campaigns*

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*\*\* This guide is available online <http://www.unitedwaycso.com> \*\**

# Bright Ideas For Really Great United Way Campaigns

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# Themes and Creative Fundraising Ideas

*Themes and special events can provide a sometimes-needed boost to your United Way campaign. They can help raise money, build morale, increase awareness, and reward teamwork.*

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## Special Events

Special events can be a fun component of your workplace campaign. They can raise funds, create awareness, motivate, promote team spirit and set the stage for your employee campaign.

Quality is more important than quantity. Select events with a proven track record that involve as many employees as possible and will be cost effective in terms of time and energy.

### Event Timing

If you plan to run a fundraising event, hold it after your employee canvass so that individuals do not feel that the money they are spending on various events replaces their payroll, credit or cash contributions.

If your event is simply intended to create awareness, any time is a good time to hold the event. However, you should consider your campaign strategy and pick a time that is good for both your organization and its campaign.

### Things to think about

Before choosing an event for your campaign -ask yourself the following questions.

- ▶ **What do you hope to accomplish with this event?**  
Do you want to raise money, increase United Way awareness or boost employee morale? Some events are great fund raisers but poor as morale boosters.
- ▶ **Has a similar event been held at your organization before?**  
If so, you should determine how successful it was as a fundraiser, awareness builder and morale booster. If it wasn't successful, was it due to poor planning or a general lack of interest? You can learn from past mistakes and successes.
- ▶ **How much time will you need to organize this event?**  
Consider the time commitment the event you are considering will consume. If it will take a month to plan, organize and execute, you can't expect to hold the event in one week.

If you are the chair of your organization's United Way campaign, you may be too busy planning the employee campaign to run a special event. In this case, recruit someone who is resourceful, creative and able to plan a special event. Encourage

senior management to be visible and participate in the promotion of the event and the actual event.

► **What are your resources?**

Before committing to an event, you need to think about the resources you have on hand. Is there someone on your committee that has helped organize this type of event before? Does a committee member know a local business owner that might donate prizes? Consider the tangible and intangible assets available.

United Way's Speakers' Bureau is a resource you may wish to access for your event. Recipients of services, agency staff and volunteers are available to speak about the positive impact that dollars raised for United Way have on people's lives. It's easy to request a speaker, just call your United Way staff partner or Loaned Representative.

► **What is your budget?**

Plan a budget and stick to it. Depending on the type of special event you are running, there may be very real costs involved.

Include volunteer time, staff time, program supplies, planning, food and facility expenses when determining the full cost of an event.

You can decrease costs by soliciting donations of supplies, services and facilities. If you solicit donations from a source outside of your organization, it is important to clarify to the donor that this donation is above and beyond their normal contribution to the United Way campaign.

If sponsorship is not an option, compare the estimated cost of the event to the amount of money you expect to raise. You need to make sure the event is financially viable if the main objective of the event is to raise funds.

► **Do you have a back-up plan?**

It's always a good idea to come up with some alternate ideas in case an event proves impossible. You may also need a contingency plan if your event is held outdoors and it rains.

## The Top Twelve

*The following events and ideas are the Top Twelve from all 100+ ideas found later in this guide:*

**Agency Tours:** The number one event to raise awareness is Agency Tours. They are one of the most effective and impactful things you can do in your United Way campaign. Employees see firsthand how their contributions are working and renew their enthusiasm for the upcoming campaign. Many companies schedule tours of a variety of agencies so employees can choose which agency(s) to visit. If you are unable to schedule tours for your entire staff, we strongly encourage you and your campaign team of volunteers to tour an agency. Ask a local bus company to donate their services. As an alternative, ask United Way to come in to your workplace and make a presentation.

**Balloon Pop:** Employees donate prizes for this event, which is a variation of a traditional raffle. Before filling a balloon with helium, put a note inside with the name of a prize. Employees pay \$2 to buy a balloon and pop it to find out what prize they won.

**Barbecue:** Advertise well in advance what you will be serving at the barbecue. Have your tickets on sale a week ahead of time so you will have an idea of how many steaks or hamburgers/hotdogs you'll need. You should be able to purchase your meat/buns at a reduced cost based on volume. Visit a wholesale distributor to negotiate a donation of supplies (plastic plates, utensils, etc.). If you are serving a large number of people, have at least 4 to 5 gas barbecues. Encourage senior management to cook. Provide chefs with United Way aprons.

**Be an Everyday Hero:** Employees dress as heroes: Batman, Superman, Spiderman, etc. Examples, serve hero (sub) sandwiches, decorate your floor with Batman silhouettes and give cupcakes to employees that give a donation, or make copies of Wonder Woman's face and substitute the face with a picture of each employee and put at their work station or office. When an employee makes a donation, they receive a flag and a Wonder Woman symbol. *(Check out more "Super Hero" ideas in the Special Events and Fundraising Ideas section.)*

**Casual Day:** Sell Casual Day stickers (available from United Way) allowing employees purchasing them to dress casually on certain days (usually Fridays). Employees purchase stickers for \$2 to \$5 each. As well, designate certain casual days as "Crazy Days" and encourage your employees to show their wild side clothing.

**Employee Raffle:** Ask employees to contribute something special for a raffle prize; homemade pies, lunch with a co-worker, or a weekend stay at a vacation cabin or condo. All prizes donated by vendors. Employees make contributions using a raffle donation form those employees turning in pledge forms early receive three raffle

tickets. Employees turning in pledge forms after the "early" date, but before the campaign's final event, receive one raffle ticket.

**Executive Fantasy Auction:** Executives at your organization create "fantasy" packages, which employees can bid on at a special auction; cooking the winning bidder a special dish, singing at a wedding, party or special event, mowing the winner's lawn, changing the winner's car oil, baby-sitting the winner's children, washing the winner's car, washing the winner's windows, etc.

**Garage Sale:** Send an email to all employees asking them to donate some of their gently used articles. Set up a booth during your campaign and give co-workers the chance to purchase these items. After all, one man's junk is another's treasure! An interesting twist; at one workplace, employees brought in their used articles and the organizers created little stories about each item and auctioned them off. For example, they claimed that an old Hawaiian shirt was once owned by Elvis. The little stories helped make it more fun and profitable.

**Get out of Jail For a Fee:** Give employees the opportunity to send other staff members to "jail" during their lunch hour or coffee break (or both). Have someone on the campaign team act as warrant officer. The person having someone arrested will go to the warrant officer and purchase a warrant for the arrest of a coworker at a cost of \$2. The warrant officer then advises the prisoner-to-be that there is a warrant for their arrest. The individual may then pay bail to avoid jail time (\$2). If three people purchase a warrant for the same person, the prisoner will have to pay bail three times to stay out of jail (\$6 in this case).

**Halloween Pumpkin Carving Contest:** Plan a Halloween theme and hold a pumpkin-carving contest. Find a local business willing to donate pumpkins for your organization to sell to your employees and charge \$5 to enter and \$1 per vote. Employees buy pumpkins for their families to use in the contest. Award prizes for various categories; best traditional, most creative, best effort by group, best effort by an individual. Throw a party to end your campaign.

**Paper Airplane Contest:** Have a paper airplane contest from an upper floor of your building. Charge \$1 or \$2 per paper airplane (sheets of paper with folding design already printed on it with space for name.). Prizes awarded for longest and straightest flight or, place prizes on floor and plane closest to prize wins it.

**Vacation Day:** Employees "buy" a vacation day - when an employee chooses to participate, their wages from the day's work are deducted from their paycheck. The organization may choose to match the amount deducted, with all proceeds donated to the community. Win-win situation: the organization achieves high participation, the employees get a vacation day, and the community is helped.

# Campaign Themes

*Using a theme for your campaign is a great way to tie your activities together and create a feeling of excitement for supporting United Way. A clever theme can help boost participation.*

*Get creative with some of these great campaign themes!*

- A Million Ways to Care
- Austin Powers
- Be a Champion for Your Community
- Be a Lifesaver
- Be Somebody's Hero
- Big Buck Round Up (Western theme)
- Black Adder
- Bond, James Bond
- Brady Bunch
- Canada's Next Top Model
- Canadian Idol
- Caring Is Our Business
- Caring Works Magic
- Catch the Spirit
- Changing Lives The United Way
- CSI
- Dancing with the Stars
- Deal or No Deal?
- Disney Day for United Way
- Dukes of Hazard
- Dynasty
- Fantasy Island
- Fill the Well of Hope
- For the Kid in Each of Us
- Gilligan's Island
- Give From the Heart and Make a Difference
- Give Where You Live
- Giving Hope
- Miami Vice
- Mission Possible
- Monty Python
- Movie Theme
- Mystery Theme
- Neighbours Helping Neighbours
- Oktoberfest
- Olympics
- Orchestrating a Change
- Our Community Needs Us
- Paint a Brighter Tomorrow
- Partridge Family
- Pitch In & Give
- Play a Starring Role In Your Community
- Put Your Heart into it
- Reaching New Heights
- Reaching the Big Top (Circus Theme)
- Real Heroes Work Here
- SCORE for United Way
- So you think you can dance?
- Soar With Us
- Sports/Game Theme
- Star Trek
- Super Hero
- Survivor
- Teaming Up for Tomorrow
- That 70s Show
- The Apprentice

- Giving is Groovy (70's theme)
- Go For the Gold
- Happy Days
- Harry Potter
- Heart to Heart
- Help Brighten Tomorrow
- Help Build a Better Community
- Helping Everyone... Everyday
- Hollywood (pick an era)
- If I could change the world...
- IMAGINE
- Invest In Your Community
- It Only Takes One...Be the One
- Join the Winning Team
- Let's Make the Difference
- Lord of the Rings
- M\*A\*S\*H\*
- Magnum P.I.
- Make it Happen. Give to United Way
- Make Your Community a Better Place
- The A-Team
- The Dream Team
- The Magic is You
- Trading Spaces
- United in Sharing
- United We All Win
- What the World Needs Now
- Working Wonders Together

## Prizes and Incentives

*Maybe you want to award your donors for their gifts with prizes. You don't need lots of money to inspire people to give. Here are just a few great incentives:*

Airline tickets	Lottery tickets
Amusement park tickets	Lunches, brunches, dinners.
Ask suppliers/customers for prizes	Maid service
Bed & breakfast weekends	Managers wash cars/do your job for a day
Boss for a day	Mid-day movie for two
Award a call in "well" day	Movie tickets
Candy, chocolates, or cookie baskets	Office swap
Car detailing	Open soda & candy machines
Casual Fridays year-round	Paid time-off
Cellular phone with free minutes	Parking spaces
CEO for the day	Pizza party
Cocktails or dinner at the CEO's home	Postage stamps
Computers - new or gently used	Prime parking spaces
Corporate clothing	Round of golf and an afternoon off to play
Day/week off with pay	Shares of company stock
Lunch with the CEO or President	Sleep in late awards
Flowers each month for a year	Tickets for events (sports events, theatre)
Free dinner catering	Two-hour lunches for a day/week
Free hotel stay	United Way giveaway items (t-shirts, etc.)
Free oil changes	Use of company car
Gift certificates	
Hotel reservations	

## Special Events and Fundraising Ideas

*The following special events (in no particular order) are fun ways to build awareness and excitement around your United Way campaign.*

**Be an Everyday Hero/Real Heroes Work Here/ Be Someone's Super Hero:** Break into teams and have each team choose a superhero. Compete for points using some of the activities below (or check out our Sports Related Events section for more ideas!) Keep your teams excited and engaged with daily updates on team standings. Wrap up with a barbecue and announce the winners and the prizes.

- ▶ First team to reach 100% participation (all pledge cards handed in)
- ▶ Early bird draw prize (team member who gets drawn wins bonus points for team)
- ▶ Best costume
- ▶ Bobbing for apples
- ▶ Basketball/bean bag toss
- ▶ Cake decorating contest
- ▶ Egg & spoon race
- ▶ Obstacle Course (Make it challenging! Do the course with an egg & spoon or a tricycle!)
- ▶ Three-legged race
- ▶ Potato sack race
- ▶ Pin the "S" on Superman
- ▶ Tricycle race
- ▶ United Way Pursuit
- ▶ Balloon Relay - This fast-paced race lets winners go out with a real bang. Before the start, each team assembles in single file with the first player in each line holding a balloon. When the whistle blows, each lead player passes the balloon between her legs to the next person in line. Each recipient, in turn, passes the balloon overhead to the teammate directly behind her. The balloon is passed alternately between players' legs and over players' heads all the way down the line. When the last person receives the balloon, he or she races to the front of the line and the balloon pass resumes. The relay continues in this fashion until one of the original players regains position at the front of her line and pops the team balloon.

Here are some popular super heroes to help name your teams: Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, Flash, Hawkgirl, Mr. Fantastic, Invisible Woman, The Thing, The Human Torch, Cat Woman, Spiderman, The Incredible Hulk, Aquaman, Captain Marvel, Supergirl, Hawkman, Thor, The Punisher, DareDevil, Elektra, Professor X, Cyclops, Wolverine, Storm, Rogue, Jean Grey a.k.a. Marvel Girl/Phoenix, etc.

**United Way Pursuit:** Based on Trivial Pursuit, this can be modified for either format. As a stand-alone, companies feature information on different United Way agencies / services on bulletin boards or in other prominent locations. Employees called at

random are asked a question about information posted that day or week. If they answer correctly, they win a small prize. As a part of an event, teams who have studied the literature can be set up for a match to see who knows the most. Questions should be formulated based on questions most likely to be raised by contributors during the campaign. Or design a game board on the floor. Players walk from square to square trying to fill up their pie with tokens by correctly answering questions. Pie wedges can be traded for prizes of the same color. Use your imagination to create a version that suits your company.

**Carnival and Talent Show:** Hold a carnival and talent show to kick off your United Way campaign. As a part of the program, have a group of executives perform songs, with written lyrics to fit United Way. An executive dunking booth is part of the carnival games, giving employees the chance to dunk their favorite executive. Employees can participate in traditional carnival games such as the egg/spoon race, ring toss and ducky races. The finale event is the Mr. or Mrs. United Way Pageant where divisions nominate a contestant to compete in the pageant. Each pageant contestant must educate the audience about one United Way grantee during the talent competition and the audience votes by placing money in large water jugs.

**Battle of the Sexes:** It's the men against the women in the company to see which one gets the highest percent participation. At the kick-off meeting, have a short game show in which 2 men and 2 women "volunteer" to be contestants. Women have to answer questions about topics that men know a lot about, and vice versa.

**Casual Day:** Sell Casual Day tickets (or "I'm Dressed this way for United Way" stickers available from United Way) to employees for designated dress down days. Designate certain casual days as "Crazy Days" and encourage employees to show their wild side. For instance: Tuesday - Crazy Hat Day, Wednesday - Outrageous Socks Day, Thursday - Sports Team Day, etc.

**Best Shoes Contest:** Line up senior management 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, then have them vote for the "Best Shoes" at the company kickoff.

**Crazy Tie Day:** The committee rounds up ugly ties at garage sales and secondhand stores. Employees pay \$1 to wear the ties that day, with proceeds going to United Way.

**United Way Trivia:** A United Way agency is featured each day for a week in a well-traveled area. With the display, a question about the agency is posted. Employees who turn in ballots with the correct answers are entered in a drawing.

**On a Clear Day:** Company, executives and committee members wash every car windows in the parking lot and attach a balloon with a flyer explaining that they want everyone to have a 'clear" picture of what United Way does for the community.

**Put Your Best Foot Forward:** Employees are asked to wear a crazy pair of shoes and enjoy a wild and crazy lunch. Menu to feature FOOT-long hot dogs, SHOESTRING potatoes, CORN chips and SOFT SHOE drinks. What better music to accompany the event than "sole" music -"Blue Suede Shoes," "These Boots are Made for Walking," etc. Thank you cards to employees can be tied with a shoelace, and read, "Thanks for helping us tie-up our United Way drive by putting yourself in the 'shoes' of those less fortunate than ourselves."

**Scavenger Hunt:** Adaptation of another familiar game. This is always fun. Ask participants to look for items beginning with the letters U-N-I-T -E-D W-A-Y. Provide prizes.

**Tune into the Community:** Music is a great way to get everyone moving to the United Way beat. Hold a karaoke kick-off party. Have participants and volunteers dress up as their favorite musicians. Sell employees' old CDs. Hold a musical talent show. Organize a sock hop. Raffle off stereos or CDs.

**'Canadian Idol' Contest:** Employees can conduct an Idol/contest, based on the hit TV show American Idol. Employees make a donation to vote for the management-singing group of their choice. The duo or group that attracts the most will sing a song of their choice in front of an audience.

**United Way Goes Hollywood:** Use a series of colorful, creative and humorous posters to publicize the campaign. Hold a bake sale with slogans like "The Pies of Laura Mars" and "Romancing the Scones". Hold a bowling party with slogans like "Bowl Durham" or "Honey, I Struck the Pins."

**Be a lifesaver:** Have some fun, beach style! Sand, sunglasses, beach balls and The Beach Boys music make your office feel like you are on the beach. Employees who donate are awarded life preserver vests to wear at the next meeting and lifesaver candies in their offices.

**Book, Music and Video Sale:** Have employees donate old books, CDs and videos for a company or department wide sale, with proceeds earmarked for United Way.

**Comedy Hour:** Ask a local comedian or improv group to donate their services over the lunch hour. Have employees buy tickets to attend.

**Sock Hop:** Invite employees to kickoff-"Fifties Style." Give prizes for most authentic dress. Hang posters that tell what "fifty cents more per week can do for our community."

**Academy Awards Night:** Have employees dress as their favorite celebrities. Create video movie "skits" using your favorite movies with a United Way twist.

**Bon Voyage:** With a traveling theme, you can host a "bon voyage" party as a victory celebration. Everyone who gives through United Way gets a "passport" to get into the party. Top contributors will be put into a drawing to win a prize, possibly donated from a travel agency or cruise line.

**Baby/Pet Picture Match Game:** Invite employees to try their luck at matching baby or pet pictures to pictures of employees. Charge employees to vote and award a fun prize to the entrant with the most right answers.

**Trivial Pursuit/Chess/Scrabble Contest:** 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.

**Whose Legs Are Those?** Line up co-workers for mug shots of their legs in Bermuda shorts, legs only. Encourage employees to pay a small fee (\$1) to guess whose legs belong to which co-workers.

**United Way Jingle Contest:** Employees write jingles for United Way. There is \$5 entry fee and voting fee for the best jingles.

**In Hot Pursuit Of Cool Millions:** Campaigners dress up as spies wearing trench coats and carrying magnifying glasses. Pass out United Way informative messages in code and offer a prize for the employees who can decode the messages.

**Puppy Love:** Have you ever heard that a lot of pets look like their owners and vice-versa? Test this theory by having employees pay for a chance to try their luck at matching a pet picture to its correct owner. Award a prize to the contestant with the most right answers and maybe provide gift certificates to a pet store for the owners who look the most like their pets!

**Auction Hotline:** Set up a special voice mailbox with weekly messages announcing auction items. Outline the items, including their face value, in a flyer. Update the recorded message daily, announcing the highest bids received to date. Each Friday announce auction results for the week and next week's items.

**Balloon Pop:** Employees donate prizes for this event, which is a variation of a traditional raffle. Before filling a balloon with helium, put a note inside with the name of a prize. Employees pay \$1 or \$2 to buy a balloon and pop it to find out what prize they won.

**Bingo:** Sell bingo cards for employees to purchase. Have management call bingo numbers. Get a local store to donate prizes for all winners.

**A Dollar an Inch Contest:** Executives participate in an all-day competition to end the day with the shortest tie. Employees cut an inch off their favorite executive's tie

each time they give to the community. Give prizes for the shortest tie, the ugliest tie, etc.

**Blue Light Special Raffles:** Hold daily/weekly "Blue Light Special" rallies throughout your employee giving time. Different divisions, departments, or project areas host each "Special". Serve pastries and juice. A non-profit representative speaks about community services which your employees support and have interest.

**Bowl-a- Thon:** Employees pay a fee to participate in the event. Have the team do costume contest. Encourage departmental challenges.

**Casino Night:** What are the ingredients for a successful Casino Night? A few blackjack tables, bingo game, a beanbag toss, a bushel of sandwiches and soda. Invite employees and their families Local businesses can donate prizes for winners.

**Children's Drawing Contest:** Give employees "official photographs" of one or two top executives to take home for their children to draw. Or, children draw what "helping others" means to them. Or, what another theme means to them. Contest is limited to children under 12 who are related to any employee. Employees vote for the best drawing by paying \$1 per vote. Give prizes for all participants. Display winning portraits as part of the organization's permanent art collection. A variation of this event is employees submit photography, drawings, paintings, poetry or collages depicting people helping people.

**Employee Raffle:** Ask employees to contribute something special for a raffle prize; homemade pies, lunch with a co-worker, or a weekend stay at a vacation cabin or condo. Prizes donated by vendors. Employees make contributions using a raffle donation form. Those employees turning in pledge forms early receive three raffle tickets. Employees turning in pledge forms after the "early" date, but before the campaign's final event, receive one raffle ticket.

**Cruise for Donors:** Organize a local cruise for a fundraising event/dinner dance. Use a nautical/pirate theme for decorations and invitations.

**Employee Guessing Events:** Employees guess the organization's grand total given to the community, the per capita gift of the organization, community need questions (How many homeless people live in our community?) the amount of candy in the jar, etc.

**Flashback Carnival:** Invite employees to an old-fashioned carnival, complete with cakewalks; bake sale, bubble blowing and 50-cent hot dogs. Hold a hula-hoop contest to really give it that flashback flavor and charge participants a fee to enter the contest. Set up dunk tank with all your favorite "dunkable" executives. Charge \$3 for three balls.

**Executive Fantasy Auction:** Executives at your organization create "fantasy" packages, which employees can bid on at a special auction; Cooking the winning bidder a special dish, singing at a wedding, party or special event, mowing the winner's lawn, changing the winner's car oil, baby-sitting the winner's children, washing the winner's car, washing the winner's windows.

**Laugh Olympics:** Employees complete in crazy "athletic" events for silly prizes. Participants donate a \$5 fee to enter. Observers wager bets on their favorite entrants.

**Karaoke Party:** This has the potential for being BIG fund-raiser 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, bags, and other costume items available to dress up in. Pass that hat at the party for even more pledges. A variation on this activity is "Executive Karaoke" Employees pay money for executives to get up and sing the song of their choice. Videotape the event and sell the copies.

**Ugly Tie or Ugly Earring Contest:** Contestants pay \$5 to enter the most awful earrings or ugly ties they own (or can make or borrow). Have a parade of all the contestants, offering a last chance to vote at the end of the day. Circulate the names of the entrants the day before the event so employees can anticipate the voting. Bring a Polaroid/digital camera and charge for photos taken of employees with their favorite contestants.

**Rose Event:** Local florists donate roses or carnations that employees buy for \$2 to send to fellow coworkers. As an added incentive, the organization matches each \$2 donation. Try the same event with cookies, as a variation, with employees donating the cookies to the event. Sell the cookies for \$1 to send to friends or co-workers in the organization just to say thanks.

**Ticket Giveaway/Gift Certificates:** Give free tickets to movies, theater productions, amusement centers and other local attractions for pledge incentives. Give movie passes to every employee who meets the challenge of pledging a certain dollar amount. Enter the names of all employees who turn in a signed pledge form during the first hour following the kick-off into a special drawing.

**Exotic Locales:** Whether you transform your campaign into a Hawaiian luau, African safari or the Australian outback, employees are sure to have a wild time. Encourage staff and volunteers to dress the part of the chosen location. Host a lunch with theme-related food. Organize a scavenger hunt or hula-hoop contest.

**Historical Eras:** Go back in time to the Wild West, Psychedelic Sixties, Roaring Twenties or Renaissance. Have staff dress up in clothing from your chosen era and decorate your office. Transform an office into a jail cell, round up executives who have to post "bail" for their release.

**Lights! Camera! Action!** Have employees dress up as their favorite characters from movies or TV shows. Act out a plot that involves United Way. Incorporate movie plots or famous lines into flyers and e-mails. Raffle off movie tickets, TVs and video gift certificates.

**Volunteer Day:** Employees who give at or above a certain level are rewarded with eight hours they can use volunteering in the community any way they wish.

**Vacation Day:** Employees "buy" a vacation day. When an employee chooses to participate, their wages from a day's work are deducted from their paycheck. The organization may choose to match the amount deducted, with all proceeds donated to the community. Win-win situation: the organization achieves high participation, the employees get a vacation day, and the community is helped.

**Greeting Card Sales:** Have your Creative Department design various greeting cards (Congratulations, Birthday, Thank you, Anniversary, and personalized) and sell them with proceeds benefiting United Way. Have a contest between different departments to see which can sell the most! Give prizes on Kickoff Day.

**Shave the Boss:** Have the CEO challenge his staff, "if we make our goal, you can shave my head (or legs!)" and bring an antique barber chair into the office. Employees take turns shaving as customers look on. An alternative could be to shave off his mustache or beard.

**Paycheque "Pocket Change":** For a period of time, employees donate any change above an even dollar from their paychecks.

**Spelling Bee:** Organize a spelling bee with participants paying an entry fee. Have other employees pay to place bets on the winner. Award the winners with a special incentive.

**Coin War:** Set up large, empty bottles for each department or floor in the cafeteria. Have employees drop their spare change into the bottle. Coins are positive, while paper money is negative. Employees can sabotage other bottles by dropping paper money into them. The department with the most money in their bottle wins, with the money going to United Way.

**Good Clean Fun:** Arrange to have the CEO or top executives wash cars. Schedule the car wash over lunch hours to maximize employee participation. Hold the car wash in the company parking lot where employees can have their cars washed by company executives at a charge of \$5. Advertise well in advance with posters and memos.

**The Ups and Downs of Having Fun:** Get management's approval to charge a toll for all those using the company's elevator on a particular day, have an employee collect a toll from every patron using the elevator. Give each toll payer a United Way sticker/pin to wear to avoid being charged on his/her return trip up or down.

**A Colourful Event:** Encourage everyone to wear red on a specified day. Have a designated "red spotter" awarding prizes and/or penalties. Tie into a raffle for those wearing red and have a red prize.

**Makes Cents:** Advertise a penny collection competition between departments. Identify a drop location for rolled pennies. Award prizes to those departments collecting the most pennies (per capita), then exchange pennies for bills at a local bank.

**Games (Carnival Style):** Set up old-fashioned carnival games such as a ring toss, fishpond and balloon dart throw. Prior to the carnival, ask staff to donate old stuffed animals as prizes. Award these prizes to those that do well at the "games of skill".

**Garage Sale:** Send an email to all employees asking them to donate some of their gently used articles. Then set up a booth during your campaign and give co-workers the chance to purchase these items. After all, one man's junk is another's treasure. An interesting twist; At one United Way, employees brought in their used articles and the organizers created little stories about each item and auctioned them off. For example, they claimed that an old Hawaiian shirt was once owned by Elvis. The little stories helped make it more fun and profitable.

**Get out of Jail For a Fee:** Give employees the opportunity to send other staff members to "jail" during their lunch hour or coffee break (or both). Have someone on the campaign team act as warrant officer. The person having someone arrested will go to the warrant officer and purchase a warrant for the arrest of a coworker at a cost of \$2. The warrant officer then advises the prisoner-to-be that there is a warrant for their arrest. The individual may then pay bail to avoid jail time (\$2). If three people purchase a warrant for the same person, the prisoner will have to pay bail three times to stay out of jail (\$6 in this case).

**Loonie 50/50 Draw:** Stick double-sided tape to the floor in a high traffic area. Have volunteers encourage passer-bys to stick Loonie to the tape. Award each participant with a draw ticket for each Loonie they place on the tape. At the end of the day, draw a winner. Then award 50% of the loonies to the winner and donate the remainder to the United Way campaign.

**Brown Bag Information Sessions:** Invite employees to bring their lunch and listen to an agency speaker discuss a relevant topic or how they help people in your community.

**Decorate Your Office Door:** Employees vote on the most creative door decorations to win prizes. You can organize this contest around a theme or holiday for example, Halloween, Thanksgiving or Christmas.

**Who knows the nose:** Take a side picture of employees' noses, post the pictures and employees pay to guess whose nose is who's for prizes.

**Whipped Cream Sponge Throwing Contest:** Employees buy a chance to throw a sponge, at a management person or fellow employee, topped up with whipping cream.

**Team Weight Loss:** Develop teams (4-10 people) of employees willing to lose pounds for profits. Each team member pays a fee to enter the competition. At the start date, all team members weigh-in and record their starting weight. Pick an end date for the final weigh-in. The team that together loses the most pounds wins a prize for all team members.

**Baby Pool:** Have employees pay a \$2 fee to guess the day, weight and sex of a baby due and the closest correct guess wins half the pool with the campaign getting the other half.

**Toonie Toss:** Get a small wading pool filled with water. Place a dinner plate in the center. The object of this game is to toss a Toonie onto the plate to win a prize. The difficulty level can be adjusted by increasing/decreasing the distance between the plate and the Toonie tosser.

**Auction off a Friend:** Ask a friend if they would be willing to auction off their services. Employees buy raffle tickets for a chance to win those services.

**Silent Auction:** Ask each department to pitch in to sponsor a theme basket (golf, chocolates, spa day), and then hold a silent auction to give the baskets away. Or hold a silent auction for talents and services donated by employees: car detailer, golf lessons, personal training, etc.

**Top Ten:** Have a contest among employees to name the top ten reasons for giving to United Way. Publish the winner's reasons in your next company newsletter or post on the bulletin board.

**Team Chia Pet Contest:** Employees divide into teams. Each team is given a Chia Pet, which they care for. The Chia's hair may be cut, primped and styled. Prizes awarded for fullest growth, longest single sprout, and most original.

**Tupperware@ Fund Raising:** Find a Tupperware representative and organize a party at your workplace with 15%-25% of sales going towards your campaign.

**Tennis Ball Racing:** This is a different twist to "duck racing." Obtain tennis balls and write consecutive numbers on them with matching numbered cards. Sell the balls and have participant's fill-in the cards. Find a hilly area; build a "funnel" at the end of the hill. On "race day," put the balls in a large scoop such as front-end loader; drop them and the first ball that gets to the bottom wins. You can have 2nd and 3rd (or more) prizes.

**Chocolate drop:** When distributing the pledge card, reminder or thank you include a chocolate.

**Sleep-in:** Award/accept bids on a "Sleep-in" package - blankets/Starbucks and mug, etc.

**Dress for Success:** United Way committees give people the chance to "buy votes" to see which of their management would have to dress up in outlandish costumes (ballet dancer, belly dancer, bumblebee, fairy godmother, etc.)

**Family Feud:** To be played at employees briefings. Participants have to guess the most popular answer to questions in relation to United Way -educating your employees in a fun way.

**Executive Chair or Tricycle Race:** Set up relay course for executives to go through sitting in chairs or riding tricycles. Use a stopwatch to time contestants, with the best time winning a prize. Observers wager \$5.00 on their favorite contestants.

**Employee Guessing Events:** Employees guess; the per capita gift of the organization, community needs questions, or the amount of candy in the jar.

**Newly-Hired Game Show:** A spoof on the classic Newlywed Game. In a test of personalities and relationships, new employees are paired with veterans for a question and answer period. Audience members bid on the "couple" they believed to have the most potential for a strong and lasting working relationship. Commercial breaks created by employees to encourage giving.

**Carnation/Flower Sales:** Send flowers to fellow employees for \$2 each. Pay another \$2 to find out who sent it to you.

**Auction Hotline (2 weeks):** Set up a special voice mailbox with daily messages announcing auction items. Outline the items, including their face value, in a flyer. Update the recorded message daily, announcing the highest bids received to date. Each Friday announce auction results for the week and next week's items.

**Win the CEO/President's Parking Spot:** Raffle the use of his/her parking spot for a week.

**Rent-a-boss:** Employees bid on services provided by management or supervisors.

**Paper Clip Sculptures:** Find out who's a budding artist and display and judge creations.

**Something-a-Thon:** Walk-a-thon, dance-a-thon, skip-a-thon and other "marathons" are popular events. Have participants collect pledges for your event based on the number of hours danced, miles walked, etc...

**Survivor:** Create tribes (teams) to compete throughout your campaign for prizes. Hold luxury challenges every day where groups compete mentally or physically for a treat such as Coke, candy, or raffle ticket. Some suggestions for luxury challenge include the following: United Way quiz, office mini-putt game, Canadian trivia game, and scavenger hunt.

**Turkey Feathers:** This event can be tied into Thanksgiving theme and can be modified for almost any theme. Have employees purchase paper feathers for a dollar. Then have employees tape the feathers on to a drawn "naked" turkey. As the campaign progresses they can see the turkey become "dressed."

**Pirates of the Carribean:** Some ideas for this theme include:

- Treasure Hunt - with maps cut up and different sections given if you achieve certain goals
- Pin the Patch on the Pirate - a blindfold game for little prizes
- Giving gold chocolate coins along with the pledge sheets
- Pirate costume/name/song contest

**Shoot the Suit:** Protective wear is suggested for this game! Set up an obstacle course or 'gauntlet' that volunteer or 'selected' employees must run through while be targetted by paintball guns or water balloons, etc. Use early bird pledges, general pledges and /or leadership pledges can get free shots.

## Food Related Events

**Barbecue:** Advertise well in advance what you will be serving at the barbecue. Have your tickets on sale a week ahead of time so you will have an idea of how many steaks or hamburgers/hotdogs you'll need. You should be able to purchase your meat/buns at a reduced cost based on volume. Visit a wholesale distributor to negotiate a donation of supplies (plastic plates, utensils, etc.). If you are serving a large number of people, have at least 4 to 5 gas barbecues. Encourage top executives to cook. Provide chefs with United Way aprons and a chef hat.

**Good Neighbor Barbecue:** Join with other nearby companies to have a cookout with games and giveaways. Ask a speaker from a United Way non-profit partner to make a presentation, or invite families who use the services area non-profit partners to the barbecue.

**Bake Sale:** Arrange for employees to donate baked goods. Advertise well in advance with posters, memos and bulletins. Have volunteer employees available to help set up, serve and clean up afterwards.

**Pancake Breakfast:** Create awareness of the breakfast in the community by distributing flyers to the neighbouring houses. Employees are asked to sell breakfast tickets to family members. Negotiate with your cafeteria or a wholesale distributor for a donation of supplies or a discount. Advertise well in advance in the community, especially if there is a school or other workplaces near by, with posters, flyers and letters. Approach the CEO and senior management to serve breakfast.

**Chili Lunch:** Negotiate with staff members or a wholesale distributor for a donation of supplies or a discount. Advertise well in advance with posters, memos and bulletins. Sell tickets in advance to help make the luncheon run smoothly. Prepare chili, rolls, and salads in advance. Set up early in the morning simmering chili on slow cookers. Approach your department heads and company president to do the serving.

**Pot Luck Lunch with Cookbook:** Ask each staff member to contribute a dish for the potluck luncheon. Encourage them to bring in the recipe for their dish. Organize the recipes later to create a staff cookbook. Sell the cookbooks later to raise money for United Way.

**Hawaiian Luau:** Have a mini Luau. Serve ham, pineapple upside-down cake and other Hawaiian fare. Give prizes to employees wearing the most outrageous Hawaiian outfit.

**Grandmas "Heart Attack" Chocolate Cake:** Sell your grandma's favorite chocolate cake recipe to interested employees. Tempt them first with little bite-sized pieces for samples.

**International Food Day:** Employees team together to create taste treats from around the world. Employees decorate their own booths and dress in costumes. Hold the event over the lunch hour, allowing employees to purchase tickets redeemable for food at the booths. A panel of "celebrity" judges award prizes.

**Lunch Auction:** Different departments donate lunches to auction every day for a week. Use your organizations intercom system, or other employee communication system to tempt your co-workers.

**Wine Drawing:** Offer employees a chance to win an assortment of specially selected wines from a number of different wineries. Sell tickets for \$1 00 each or 6 for \$5.00. Display the wines in an employee common area to entice wine lovers.

**Chili Lunch Cook Off:** Invite employees to bring in a batch of their best chili. Then have coworkers judge each chili based on taste, texture and fire value. Then offer dishes of chili for a price to all employees for lunch. The Cook off Champ is the recipe that sells the most bowls. Give packs of Roloids or Tums to all employees at the end of the event.

**Coffee Cart:** Arrange for volunteers to bring a coffee and snack cart throughout the office one day. You should advertise in advance. Solicit donations of coffee and snacks from suppliers or ask co-workers to contribute baked goods. If you do have to purchase items, make sure you sell them at a profit. While selling coffee and snacks, distribute United Way campaign information.

**Polished Apple:** Have volunteers deliver a polished apple to each staff member to remind them that their United Way campaign is kicking off! For those not at their desks, leave the apple on a coaster.

**Just Desserts:** The campaign committee furnishes the main dish but sells the desserts for \$1 or more, with the proceeds going to United Way.

**Flipping Over Flapjacks:** Have senior management serve breakfast, lunch or refreshments to employees at a United Way event. For breakfast, executives can be early birds the morning of your campaign kickoff, and serve a great pancake breakfast to the employees.

**Tailgate party:** Create a sports theme to coincide with hockey season. Hold the party in the parking lot. Serve hot dogs, chips, soda and peanuts.

**Breakfast of Champions:** Decorate with athletic gear, flags and banners. Company departments become teams, campaign progress is marked by moving teams across a playing field poster towards goal, campaign chair or CEO "coach" gives a pep talk at a kickoff "Breakfast of Champions" where *Wheaties* are served.

**Wine tasting:** Hold a wine tasting and select five wines to be rated. All employees and their spouses/guests in attendance are given rating sheets. Special drawings are also held for contributors to the United Way Campaign, throughout the week. The larger the contribution, the more chances for prizes.

**Waffle/Pancake breakfast:** Sell tickets and have people sign-up for their choice of pancakes or waffles. Cook breakfast in your company cafeteria. Don't forget bacon, sausage, butter etc. Each department can donate an item. The proceeds will go to United Way.

**Ice-Cream Social:** Offer employees the opportunity to build their own sundae. Have a selection of ice cream available as well as different types of toppings. Make sure there are plenty of volunteers to supervise, assist and clean up.

**Employee Cookbook:** Collect and group recipes and household hints into a customized cookbook. Have employees' children create illustrations for the cover and categories. Print books in-house or by a local business, pro bono.

**Harvest Festival:** Employees bring their products (plants, fruits, vegetables, bouquets of flowers) from their home gardens to the office on the day of the event. Other employees purchase the goods with proceeds benefiting the campaign. You can also raffle off the goods by selling chances for each item, or by silent auction.

**Chicken Wing Eating Contest:** For an event like this, there are usually 4-7 teams, consisting of one male and one female. Teams raise pledges, per wing or a flat rate. Find a venue for this event that sells wings and see if they'll sponsor the event.

**Progressive Breakfast:** Have each department bring a breakfast food item. Employees rotate throughout the office to sample each department's contribution.

**Nacho Party:** Plan an afternoon to sell nachos or popcorn to interested employees. Employees pay \$2 for each serving with all proceeds going to the community.

## Sports Related Events

**Paper Airplane Contest:** Have a paper airplane contest from an upper floor of your building. Charge \$1 or \$2 per paper airplane (sheets of paper with folding design already printed on it with space for name). Prizes awarded for longest and straightest flight or, as an alternative, place prizes on floor and plane closest to prize wins it.

**Putt-putt Contest:** Design and set up your own wacky miniature golf course within your office, lobby or work area. Charge each person to play and award a prize to the player with the lowest score. Flag each hole with a fact about United Way.

**Executive Chair Race:** Set up a relay course for executives to go through, either sitting in a chair or on tricycles. Let observers bet on their favorite contestant.

**Strike up the Fun:** Start the project early by contacting a bowling alley with the idea of a Tournament and advertise well in advance. Hand out sponsorship forms and have an entry fee for each bowler, arrange 50/50 draws, trophies or prizes for best team, and best and worst score, etc.

**Fun at the Races:** Build a large display of a racetrack representing each department. Enter either department heads or canvassers into the horserace. Set up the racetrack in a strategic area where there is high visibility. Horses advance on the track as dollars and/or participation rates increase in each department. Award prizes to those departments that make dollars and participation goals. Give prizes to individual department heads or canvassers, and/or entire departments (i.e., department lunch, or a donut day).

**The Fun of Friendly Competition:** Schedule noon hour events each day of the week. Schedule fun events like; a paper airplane throwing contest, shooting crumpled paper into wastebaskets, an obstacle race (an added twist is to push top executives sitting in chairs around a course of pylons), a briefcase toss. Encourage departments to enter employees in each event. Hold finals in the main lobby where employees can cheer on their co-workers and encourage inter-departmental competition.

**Catch Football Fever:** Organize a tailgate party. Sell football fare from a truck in the parking lot "tailgate" style Offer hot-dogs, popcorn, peanuts, soft drinks and other goodies. Organize a tag football game, with participants donating an entrance fee and spectators wagering on the outcome.

**International Olympics:** Celebrate diversity by transforming departments into various countries with decor and dress to match. Organize an international potluck luncheon where employees bring their favorite ethnic dishes. Host a mini-Olympics tournament. Invite United Way speakers to talk about various cultures throughout the Lower Mainland. Showcase music from around the world.

**Mini-Indy 500:** Rent or borrow remote controlled cars and set up an "Indy 500" race. Use office supplies to make the track more interesting. Teams can be sponsored to compete. Spectators can place bets on the winner.

**Playing the field:** Use baseball, basketball, football, and golf or hockey themes. Teams of employees advance around bases or down the field. Include sports-related competitions and prizes for participants.

**Miniature Golf:** Build a nine-hole course featuring ramps, water and sand around the office. The lowest score will take home a tacky golfing sport coat. Interested twosomes return an entry form, bring a putter the day to the event, and pay an appropriate entry fee.

**Bocce Ball Tournament:** Not positioned as a major fundraising event but used to generate awareness and interest in the campaign.

## Holiday Theme Events

**Holidays:** Tying your campaign to a holiday (i.e. Labor Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, etc.) is an easy way to make United Way relevant to employees. Get them involved in a project such as a pumpkin carving contest, Thanksgiving potluck luncheon or executive auction (employees bid on executives to swap job responsibilities for an hour or half a day). Hold a Halloween costume contest.

**Halloween Pumpkin Carving Contest:** Plan a Halloween theme and hold a pumpkin-carving contest. Find a local business willing to donate pumpkins for your organization to sell to your employees. Employees buy pumpkins for their families to use in the contest. Charge \$5 to enter and \$1 per vote. Award prizes for various categories; best traditional, most creative, best effort by group, best effort by an individual. Throw a party to end your campaign.

**Trick or Treat:** Appeal to your employees' sweet tooth. Take advantage of Halloween and bring a "treat" for those who participate in the campaign. Display an apothecary jar filled with candy corn in the lunchroom for employees to guess the number of pieces in the jar. The winner receives the jar of candy corn.

**Séance:** Fake séances can be a fun component of your employee campaign, especially if you have a Halloween theme. Hold séances in a meeting room for groups of 12. A 13<sup>th</sup> person, someone from your committee, should be the medium. Play spooky noises in the background to set the mood. The medium should pretend to communicate with people like Elvis, James Dean or Marilyn Monroe. Don't forget to inject plenty of humour into the performance.

**Christmas Cookie Sale:** Call bakeries for cookie bids. Determine the cost and selling price. (Charge \$1 or more per dozen above the cost.) Make sure the bakery provides you with packages in dozens. Have a sign-up sheet to take pre-orders. Selling hints: they make great gifts, saves time from baking and buying at the store. Order, then have committee pick-up cookies in the morning and deliver treats to work.

**Ornament Raffle:** Buy or have donated an artificial tree. Employees bring in ornaments, either purchased or handmade to hang on tree. Raffle them off or hold a silent auction for each ornament.

**Door Decorating Contest:** Employees can have fun decorating their departments for Halloween while they funds. Votes for the best decorations could be cast for \$1 per vote. The decorators of the winning space could receive a special prize.

# Special Events Checklist

*NOTE: All or any part of this checklist may be used as required. It is suggested that the whole checklist be reviewed prior to the commencement of planning the event.*

NAME OF EVENT \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF EVENT: \_\_\_\_\_

	General	Who?	Date
	Select suitable event		
	Complies with policy of organization		
	Cleared with full committee		
	Coordinator appointed		
	Assignments explicit and inclusive		

	Date, Time and Location	Who?	Date
	Date set far enough ahead?		
	Date most suitable?		
	No conflict with other events?		
	Important guests available?		
	Other factors		

	Time	Who?	Date
	Time set for beginning and end of event		
	All activities time-sequenced		

	Location	Who?	Date
	Location selected		
	Restrictions		
	Parking		
	Access		
	Size		

	Programs/Speeches	Who?	Date
	Time available for speeches determined		
	List of speakers prepared		
	Length of individual speeches determined		
	Proposed speakers contacted and briefed on event		
	Alternate speakers selected		
	Advance copies of speeches perused (if required)		
	Sufficient copies of speeches prepared to meet needs, including: Advance copies for distribution to news media Copies for Master of Ceremony Copies for other speakers to prevent duplication		
	Appropriate persons selected to introduce speakers		
	Speaker's stage/stand/podium/sound requirements confirmed		

