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Q: What type of events can be conducted during a major capital campaign?

A: Events are time consuming and expensive to conduct, especially given the staff time devoted to such activities. Thus, especially during a capital campaign, care should be taken that only those events with a high return on investment (staff costs included, should be undertaken).

Regularly recurring institutional events should continue to be conducted (i.e., Homecoming, golf tournaments, Hall of Fame dinners, alumni chapter annual events, etc.) but every effort should be made to have alumni volunteers do the bulk of work associated with these events. If the Advancement Office staff is pulled into these events for substantial amounts of time, the Campaign will suffer. Key to having these events contribute to the Campaign is scheduling high wealth prospect meetings on the day before, the day of and day after these events.

The type of non-annual events that should be sought after are major donor hosted private receptions in their homes, where they engage their friends to be a part of supporting the institution. These events are powerful ways to extend the reach of the Campaign to non-alumni who want to help because of their relationship to the donor. The attendees may be family or friends who have attended other colleges and universities or business associates who simply want to honor the successful and influential host. Thus, every meeting with a donor prospect should include a query as to whether the individual would be willing to host such an event.

Celebrity alumni will often offer to perform or appear at a fundraising event to generate funds for the Campaign. When the celebrity is a high profile performer, the institution should produce an event that will generate at least $1 million after expenses. The following conditions should apply:

- The event should be held in a major metropolitan area to maximize access to corporate charity budgets and greater numbers of high wealth individuals who will pay for higher priced tables. Benefits such as a backstage meeting and photo session for the table buyer and guests with the celebrity performer should be attached to the highest priced tables.
- Tables at the event should be $10,000 to $50,000 each dependent on location and benefits to the table buyer. Individual tickets should be sold at no less than $1,000 each.Corporate sponsors can be sought with the corporate sponsors' guests attending a pre-event cocktail party

at which the institution's President, the Athletic Director, one or two high visibility head coaches and the celebrity make remarks and photos are taken. The corporate sponsors are offered the opportunity to present their sponsorship checks as part of the program.

- A third party event manager should be hired to produce the event, from issuing invitations, to receiving reservations, producing the musical or other events for the evening, etc. A million dollar event with a celebrity performer demands the highest level of professional management.
- The institution needs to begin planning for such an event by obtaining the event date from the performer and hiring the party/stage show producer one year in advance. A local committee of alumni would be designated to work with the event producer and a staff member from the Advancement Office would be the ideal liaison that ensures good communication with the alumni committee.

Major donors who have already pledged to the Campaign should be allowed to present their checks as part of the program or their gifts should be announced. These donors would be given the opportunity to participate in a photo session with the celebrity even if they do not buy a table at the required level.

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