10 Auctions that Rocked 2012

BiddingForGood is proud of all our fundraising auction clients and 2012 was no exception.

We helped thousands of schools and non-profits with their auctions and there are a few that really stand out for us.

Many of these organizations are veteran online auctioneers but a few were new to it in 2012 and that makes them very impressive, indeed.

BiddingForGood congratulates these organizations and we sincerely hope you find something to inspire you and your organization as you reach for ever greater success in your fundraising efforts.

Each auction is unique and charted its own course to success, but all implemented one or more of these best practices that made all the difference.

- Great items
- Engaged communities
- Advanced planning
- Well coordinated volunteers
- Inspiring promotion
- Partnered with a media outlet
- Smart use of BiddingForGood technology for organizing, promoting and bidding

Three Schools Made the Top 10 List

...not surprising since schools are frequent and enthusiastic fundraisers!

The John Thomas Dye School
Amazingly, they raised over $200,000, the most of any school auction in 2012. What worked for them? Offering great items at a wide range of price points, recruiting a lot of sponsors, packing the most popular categories with fun or difficult to get items and a range of experiences – not just tickets to the Jay Leno show, but a nice dinner at Morton's and a limo ride. They offered one of a kind experiences for their community by going beyond the premium parking space to offer a carpool “skip the line” pass.
Campbell Hall
A private school in North Hollywood, CA, did an exceptional job with their 2012 fundraiser. Stand out features included dedicated and organized volunteers and a great selection of community-oriented items. Implementing mobile bidding at their gala increased bids and revenue. With a whole category named “Pride and Joy,” Campbell Hall made school pride the center of their auction.

Hillsborough Schools Foundation
This foundation supports all the public schools in their great community in Hillsborough, CA, and has long been one of the most successful school foundations when it comes to fundraising in the country. It's easy to see why when you look at the masterful job they do running an online auction and gala event every year. Thanks to their dedicated community, they were able to sell over $40,000 worth of “Pay to Play” items, which helped the foundation earn over $115,000 in total. “Pay to Play” items are special offers like a family camping trip, a Dads’ Backyard Beer Fest, or a Kids’ Pizza Cooking Party. 87 bidders bought a Girls’ Night Out for $100 each!

Teachers from the elementary, junior and senior high schools volunteered fun outings, tutoring, drum, and drawing lessons. For Instance, the Happy Birthday billboard, one for each month, was a huge sold out hit.

Our favorite teacher item? An Incredibly Boring Day with Mr. Radulovich that sold for $320.

These Media Companies Showed Us the Power of Promotion

WXXI Public Broadcasting
WXXI serves the Rochester, NY, market. In 2012 they had a wildly successful fundraiser grossing over $200,000 with an online only auction. One key to success was promotion, which as a media company is an obvious strategy. They encouraged bidders to register with station giveaways. But, what they also did was offer a huge range of items with winning bids from $5.00 for a gift certificate to $17,000 for a Ford Fiesta Hatchback. They offered a “post-auction auction” where every unsold item had an opening bid of $1.00.
Fox Sports Southwest
Fox Sports pulled out all the fundraising stops to benefit the Wounded Warrior Project. The auction took place during a Texas Rangers baseball game. By using BiddingForGood’s mobile bidding platform, they allowed attendees of the game to bid on their mobile phones. Home viewers could bid over the internet. Fox Sports offered a dog tag with their own logo on one side and the Wounded Warrior Project logo on the other.

Offered as a “buy now” at $25.00, 2,700 dog tags were sold. This is a perfect example of an auction item uniquely themed for the cause and wildly embraced by an audience when it was so easy for them to place a bid. Overall, this four hour auction raised over $200,000.

Corporate Fundraisers Held Online Auctions and Got a Big Payoff

Kimberly Clark
This organization added a new twist to the corporate auction by allowing their employees to bid on Kimberly-Clark products in two online auctions a year.

Who wouldn’t appreciate a chance to stock up on Huggie’s diapers or Kleenex brand facial tissue at a bargain price, all while doing good for the United Way? One of this year’s auctions broke the record for number of bids with 7,800 bids placed in the last hour alone.

United Health Group
This group has used the BiddingForGood auction management system for several years for their company-wide fundraising push for 9 charities they’ve designated as “Giving Partners.” Employees could choose which of the charities they would like to individually donate to.

Vice Presidents throughout the company are responsible for gathering items for the auction, and each set of volunteers are organized and committed. This year, over $160,000 was raised and it’s notable that many items garnered winning bids beyond their face value.
The online auction starts before the Festival and ends after, giving lots of people the opportunity to place their bids on great food and dining items.

Kudos to SOBEWFF for their persistent and inventive use of Facebook, Twitter, their own website, and their media partner’s assets to vigorously promote their auction and event. Of course, it doesn’t hurt to have a week-long festival teeming with opportunities to drive traffic to your auction website either.

Centerstage Professional Theater

Centerstage in Baltimore really nailed it on item categories. As a performing arts organization they capitalized on their community’s love of exciting experiences. In addition, they partnered with The Baltimore Sun, the city’s newspaper to spread the word about the auction and event.

They augmented their travel, dining experiences, sports and theater tickets with a new “Unique Category”. This category included everything from a private viola lesson to dog sitting to window washing. As an arts organization, they offered a bigger arts category than most auctions which really paid off with their arts-oriented patrons. Even without an auction gala event, they raised over $140,000 using BiddingForGood’s online auction management system.
Roaring to Success with Simplicity and Targeting

The New England Warrior Benefit

This organization, working with Rafanelli Events, ran one of the most unique and successful auctions of the year. Pledged to support the five US military special forces units, the entire auction consisted of five commissioned, special hand-crafted and custom-branded DIRICO Motorcycles. Each one was themed to represent a different branch of the United States Military Special Operations Forces.

The value of each motorcycle was $25,000, with every one bringing in nearly their entire value. This organization gets our tip of the hat for how well they understand their donor community and for their creative thinking.

Remember the Five Elements of Inspiring Auctions

- **Items!**
  *The top categories – dining, travel, sports, theatre, event tickets*

- **More Items!**
  *Targeted for your community*

- **Even More Items!**
  *Surprising and fun – buy now, count me in, wide price range*

- **Well organized and experienced volunteers**
  *Plan ahead and keep your community engaged*

- **Innovation**
  *Combining the best of the gala with the best of technology to run and promote their auctions*

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