

Fundraisings in Islamic Organizations

Success is from Allah Only

Keeping in mind that the money is an Amana (Trust), and does not belong to any individuals of [or within] the organization. People have eyes, brains, and think for themselves...Some question, directly or indirectly, why money was spent the way it was. Be prepared to answer them, and if not them, then Allah.

Always keep in mind the overall goal of the organization and the goal(s) of the particular Fundraiser.

You can always have "FUN" Fundraisers: ie: Golfing, Sports tournaments, bake sales, etc

Goal

- What is the MAIN purpose of the event?
 - To raise funds, educate people about the organization, etc
- How much is expected to be raised
 - Set realistic goals and expectations

Planning

- Budgeting and keeping things within that budget
- Setting timelines and deadlines for various things to be done
- Setting venue for event
- Picking speakers and finding out who is available and can bring the best success to event
- Meetings for planning and updates
 - When they will be held and who will attend
 - Who will conduct, who will take notes, who will email notes/action items
 - Setting up Committees with "Leads"
 - Leads responsible for updating fundraising team on their committee
- Who are the target audience?
 - Community Members or anyone from the greater area, country, etc
- What to expect at event
 - Day before
 - Make a checklist to make everything is ready
 - During event
 - Outline of event (AKA Schedule of event)
 - When to expect guests, when to start, time slot for speeches, number of speeches/presentations, buffer times, etc
 - Post event
 - To overview what happened right, what happened wrong, what areas can be improved on
 - Send thank you emails to donors and all those invited
 - Send reminders to fulfill pledges
 - Send "report" of event to donors to keep them engaged on funds raised
 - This could help the people fulfill pledges
- Will there be prizes/giveaways?
 - If yes, what type, when will attendees know about it
 - IT IS NEVER GOOD TO HAVE FAMILY MEMBERS OF ORGANIZERS WIN PRIZES

Event meetings

- Make sure key members are present in ALL meetings
 - If key members cannot be available on location, get them on conference call/Skype/Google hangout, etc
- Take meeting minutes and make action items to make sure you are following the timeline as expected
- Meeting minutes should be emailed to all those involved in the fundraiser so if they miss a meeting, they know what is going on so future meetings are not redundant/repetitive just trying to catch everyone up on last meeting.
- Keep committees informed and be informed on their progress during the week, not at the meeting only
- Keep meetings short and too the point with input where it is critical

Budgeting, the number 1 most important aspect

- Keeps costs to where things should be and cuts down on unnecessary spending
- Include costs for:
 - Location/Banquet Hall
 - Food
 - Print material (includes all flyers, tickets, pledges, ads, etc)
 - Other marketing costs (TV/Newspaper ads, Facebook, Twitter, Websites, etc)
 - Speaker fees
 - Audio/Video setup
 - Decorations
 - Kids entertainment,
 - Other small nitty gritty items.
- Should keep about 10% more in budget for "unseen" expenses that could arrive.
- Have MULTIPLE quotes for everything and chose the best one (not necessarily the cheapest)
- Try to have sponsors for the event if possible. Sponsors could be Muslim or Non Muslim
- If giving away prizes, try to have sponsors for those too
 - No need to overspend on prizes/giveaways if they don't bring too much benefit to event

Venue

- Have various places in mind (depends on type of fundraiser)
- List pros/cons and costs associated with each location and date
- Pick something practical for the organization and for purpose of the event

Committees, with "Leads"

- Leads should be responsible individuals and those who have a specialty/know-how of the work they are being assigned.
- Should have teams who know what to do
- Committee members should hold separate meetings and lead should inform full fundraiser committee on their progress
- Should be able to work independently but with supervision of overall event lead
- Committees should include
 - Food
 - Marketing
 - Event Day personal
 - Event Planning/Presentations

Speaker

- Always get the best you can, keeping within the budget of course.
- Should be proper for the venue: Don't bring in big name for small location or vice versa
- Same goes with picking an MC for the event

Audience:

- Who is target audience? Regular members of the community or members from outside the community.
- How many people to expect?
 - Base this off the ticket sales but do not rely on the ticket sales as the exact number
- Mixed seating or separation of women and men
 - If separation, keep dividers at full length if possible, not half way or partial
 - From observations, women usually like their privacy and prefer to sit behind the separation/dividers and not in front where they can be seen from the other side.

Committees and their responsibilities

Event Planning/Presentations

- Plan what and who (number of volunteers/staff) will be needed on day of event
- Work with other committees
 - Marketing
 - Event day personal
 - Food
- Set start time and schedule for event
 - Talk to all committee members and inform them when they are needed at event
 - Set realistic time frames for event (Specially what time event is expected to start)
 - Muslim community is almost always 1 hour late
 - Make sure to know the prayer times of the day, people sometimes like to come after praying (if event is not being held in a Masjid)
 - Set time for prayer and have space before hand
- Set number of presentations and talk to presenters/speakers
 - Keep “buffer” times between speeches in case speakers/presenters go over
 - Remind speakers if they go over on their time limit
- Inform guest speakers on what to talk about and purpose of event
 - Also have MC that is informed of speakers and presenters and doesn't “read” cards at on the stage
- Have clear and easy data for people to stay informed
 - Don't make presentations too detailed (too much information at once), but at the same time have enough info to get message across
 - Make presentation informative and engaging, not boring (put some jokes in the presentation)
 - Present the information in a timely manner and don't make it too long.
 - People have small attention spans, specially if food is being delayed
- Set fundraising time limit
 - Don't keep going over and over too much, push it just enough but don't overdo it
 - Don't hold people “hostage” to reach your goal

Marketing

- Use email services
 - Send out emails once a week as reminder and about 2 to 3 times for the week before and the week of the event.
 - Use email services of different masjids and organizations if possible
- Use Social Networks
- Use Ads in Muslim publications and other media
- Use “Traditional” Flyers
 - Place flyers in different locations
 - Masjids
 - Grocery Stores
 - Restaurants
 - Etc
 - Pass out flyers at different masjids after Jummah if possible
- Have sponsors promote your event if possible

Food

- Cater to your full audience and do not make food too spicy or too bland
- Have dishes from all ethnic groups to have the audience feel inclusive
- Get multiple quotes from different vendors
- Ask Banquet hall or place of fundraiser what they will provide and what you have to bring
 - If food provided from banquet hall, work with them on what you want
 - Ask if outside dishes can be brought

Event day Personal (Volunteers or otherwise)

- Audio Video setup
 - Number of people
 - Number of Cameras/Camcorders needed
 - Number of Projectors/Screens needed
 - Hire or volunteer?
- Decorations
 - Will banquet hall personal take care of this or Organization will have to do the work?
 - Table decorations
 - Hall decorations
 - Stage decorations
 - Etc
 - If organization is responsible for decorations, get multiple quotes from different decorators or do it your self. But keep in mind to keep costs under control
 - What to decorate?
 - Banquet Hall
 - Registration table
 - Guest tables
 - Etc
 - Also decide if you want to place pledge forms, organization literature, etc on the tables
- Registration
 - Electronic or manual
 - Preprinted name tags or generic name tags
 - Ticketing system to know who registered
 - Have enough people/computers/printers for fast registration
 - Try not to have a line, this is not a convention and people don't like lines
 - Decide if one registration for everyone or women and men registration tables are separate
 - Have sisters at registration tables or provide them with their own registration table for "sisters only" registrations
 - Know when to be ready with setup and have arrangements before hand
 - Looking to "figure things out" at the event is unprofessional
 - Pre-check everything before event if possible (or at least 1 hour before)
 - If volunteers are young, train them well or give them "easy" jobs at the table (ie: Giving/making name tag if its not printed)
- People to welcome guests
- Etc

Have other committees if needed and make "Leads" and follow similar procedures on what is expected of committee etc

Post Event

- Send "Personalized Thank You" letters to your big donors and sponsors.
- Send Thank You letters/emails to all other donors
- Get feedback from anyone you could that can help improve the event in the future and keep those in your notes to look back when the event comes back around again the following year

NOTES:

Add something about ticket sales and someone lead to follow up with staff/volunteers on number of ticket sales – This is very important to know how many people to make arrangements for