

Getting (Almost) Everything Donated to Reduce Your Costs to Nearly Zero

Excerpted from
Department of Canadian Heritage
“Guide to Special Events Fundraising”

by Ken Wyman, CFRE

© Her Majesty the Queen as represented by the
Minister of Supply and Services, 1989.
Portions are ©Ken Wyman

In many special events, the charity barely breaks even on the ticket sales. The income results from savings when donors provide free goods and services.

At any type of special event, the best way to increase income is to lower costs by getting in-kind donations.

Experience shows that almost anything you might pay for you can also get for free. Often the contributed item is higher quality than you could afford to pay for. Here are some examples

Examples	Considerations
Wines, especially Canadian	A hall or hotel may charge a “corkage fee” for opening the bottles. That may make it cheaper to buy from them.
Foods	Several restaurants may give one dish each to a gourmet fair. Look for restaurants that are about to open, or are new. Make sure the hall isn't contracted to a caterer.
Printing	Not usually from printers - they are reluctant to give away their livelihood. Instead, look for businesses that own a printing plant of their own. Chain stores or major corporations, for example, have donated printing. So have newspapers, and priority classes in schools. Allow extra time, so the printer can squeeze a free job in between paying clients.

Other free items to pursue: raffle and door prizes, the services of advertising agencies, hotel rooms (especially on weekends) and restaurant dinners. Books, especially last year's coffee table art books, make popular prizes and are easy to get donated.

Businesses will often donate goods for garage sales and bazaars. Retailers and manufacturers will give end-of-line, shop-worn and second-quality merchandise. Some will contribute brand new, high grade products and services as well. Many department stores have reputations for extraordinary generosity.

Keep a sense of perspective. Don't waste precious staff or volunteer time working all day to get \$25 worth of goods donated.

You can give a donor a receipt for goods received, but never for services. Further information on this, contact the Actors' Fund at 1-877-399-8392 or contact@actorsfund.ca.