You want to run a successful fundraiser with little effort and maximum participation. Does such a thing exist? There’s no secret formula when it comes to school fundraising, but there are some key things you can do to ensure the best outcome, and have fun in the process!

1 Start with the End in Mind

There are oodles of fundraising options out there – product sales, special events, collections, loyalty programs, and more. To determine what might work best for your school, start with the obvious question: “How much money do we need to raise?” At the same time, assess your volunteer power and what your school community is likely to support. Consider the best mix of fundraisers, both background or passive (e.g. box top collection) and active (e.g. auctions).

Once your decision is made, it’s important to go deeper and ask yourself .... and your fundraising vendor, if applicable:

How can we achieve the best possible results?

-or-

What are the keys for a successful fundraising outcome?

Based on the answer, focus your efforts to produce the results you desire.

For a SilverGraphics Fundraiser, artwork is fundamental to a positive outcome. Projects guided by art teachers/docents, using vibrant colors and large images reproduce best on SilverGraphics products. The subject matter can make a big difference too. For example, self portraits are very popular, translating to higher parent participation. Taking time to consult with your art teacher, sharing SilverGraphics art guidelines with him/her, and reviewing your schedule all set the stage for a successful fundraiser. If you know the success criteria up front, your volunteer time will be spent wisely.
**Consult your District Calendar:** The timing of your fundraiser can make a big difference. Review your school calendar during the planning phase of your fundraiser. Most school districts publish a one-page calendar, complete with test dates, parent-teacher conferences, and school holidays. If you don’t have one, print it out right from your district website. Then, use a highlighter to mark every PTA event: back-to-school, book fair, pancake breakfast, etc. This becomes your tool around which you should plan your fundraising schedule, ensuring it doesn’t conflict with other events or school vacations.

## 2 Involve your Stakeholders

parents • PTA leaders • teachers • school/office staff

It’s clear that you need to get parents excited about your fundraiser. But who else do you want on your side? PTA leaders, classroom and art teachers, school staff, and room parents could all help you get the word out. If you are running a catalog fundraiser, teachers need to be aware of their role in distributing and collecting orders. The main office should know how to field questions from parents, and who to contact when UPS packages arrive. An email or note to all parties will go a long way. While you’re at it, invite everyone to join the fun!

*With SilverGraphics Fundraiser,* everyone can participate. Parents, students and their siblings can all submit art. The same is true for teachers and their children. Maybe the school secretary wants to order product with his/her grandchild’s art. Getting your stakeholders involved will benefit your fundraiser.
3 Broadcast 3 to 7 times

Research proves messages are more effective when repeated. Marketing experts agree that people need to hear your message 3 to 7 times before they’ll take action. It's more important than ever to use all the channels you can to reach out to busy parents, catching them whenever and however they tune in. If that sounds daunting, remember there are many tools at your disposal, and with a bit of tweaking, you can use the same copy for each. Ask your vendors what marketing support they provide like complimentary announcement flyers, display posters, graphics, and social media copy.

Images can go a long way to help you communicate your message, so don’t forget to use them to advertize your fundraiser.

“There can be no words without pictures.”

-Aristotle

7 ways to broadcast your fundraiser

- Distribute ANNOUNCEMENT FLYERS in student backpacks.
- Schedule FACEBOOK POSTS to encourage participation.
- Mount POSTERS in high-traffic areas at your school.
- Use TWITTER to communicate ordering deadlines.
- Set up a DISPLAY TABLE at school events.
- Post a downloadable file of your ORDER FORM on your website.
- Send EMAIL REMINDERS and updates.

For example, SilverGraphics provides complimentary announcement flyers, posters, product samples and downloadable images, ready for you to add to your newsletter and social media.
Communicate Impact

Year after year, and sometimes multiple times a year, parents reach into their pockets to purchase school supplies, fund field trips, sponsor a school dance, pay PTO dues, etc. Fundraisers can feel like yet another solicitation, but they don’t have to. **People are more willing to give when they know where their money is going.**

Instead of an “ask,” offer a “tell.”

Tell parents what their participation means. What will your fundraising proceeds be used for? Will they go toward art supplies, help fund a playground expansion, or be used for a new technology? Be as specific as you can, as in, “We’re raising money to buy much-needed paint brushes, acrylics, a drying rack, and a pottery wheel.” But don’t stop there. Share why this is significant . . . “so that every student has the chance to develop his/her creative potential.” Before, during, and after the fundraiser, emphasize the reason behind it so that parents are inspired to take part.

With **SilverGraphics Art Fundraiser**, you can even go one step further since the fundraiser itself has intrinsic value; that is, students engage in a creative process as part of the fundraiser. Parents then have the opportunity to preserve, display, and enjoy their children’s artwork. Student art does not go from the classroom, to the backpack, to the storage bin. Instead, it is shared on a coffee mug, a book tote, a canvas print, and so on. That’s priceless.
A stellar school fundraiser will fall flat without inspired volunteers, yet parent involvement is a big challenge for many PTOs. Emphasize how much fun it is to be involved in your parent group and how much you do for students. Impart the message that not everyone needs to commit to a board position. Coordinating one activity is valued and appreciated. Encourage teamwork and collaboration. It’s much more fun to work together toward a common goal, don’t you agree? Having a fundraising buddy means more than sharing responsibility. It means capitalizing on each other’s strengths. Pairing a seasoned volunteer with a newcomer is ideal, ensuring a smooth running campaign and setting the groundwork for the following year. When one partner mentors a new volunteer this year, then next year’s fundraiser will run more smoothly with experienced committee members.

If volunteers are having fun, kids and parents will want to join in.
That means good things for your FUNdraiser!

It’s also important to mix in some fun to combat burnout. Encourage volunteers to be creative in the way they implement your fundraiser. For example, put on your art smock and grab a paint brush as you host a table at back-to-school night, promoting your SilverGraphics Art Fundraiser.

The next time you run a school fundraiser, keep these 5 tips in mind and watch sales soar!