

# FUN IDEAS FOR YOUR UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN



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United  
Way



United Way  
of Southeast Mississippi

# FUN CAMPAIGN IDEAS

It's easy to put a little zing in your campaign! You are limited only by your creativity. Even campaigns with little time or budget can be fun for everyone. Here are a few ideas that everyone will love.

## KICKOFF/ SPECIAL EVENTS

**LIGHTS! CAMERA! ACTION!** Have employees dress up as their favorite characters from movies or television shows. Incorporate a game of "guess who." Employees can win prizes for guessing the right character. Use movie plots or famous lines for promotional flyers and e-mails to drum up excitement. Have a raffle drawing for movie tickets, DVDs and gift certificates.

**MARDI GRAS: EVERYONE LOVES A PARTY!** So, why not model your campaign after Mardi Gras, the world's biggest party? Play jazz music and invite people to decorate masks. Have a Cajun accent contest. Hold a parade float contest and ask departments to decorate shoeboxes as floats. Bake or purchase a Mardi Gras cake and offer a prize to whoever gets the baby. Sell bead-o-grams (beads with thoughtful messages attached). Host a Cajun potluck.

**SUPER HERO:** Employees dress as their favorite heroes: Batman, Spiderman, Storm or Wonder Woman. Employees can donate money to "save the day." Prizes will be awarded to heroes who "save the day." Employees can bring in comic books, old movies and books with super heroes and win prizes for the oldest movie, DVD and comic book. Items can also be sold as a fundraiser.

**UNITED WAY GOES HOLLYWOOD:** Use a series of colorful, creative and humorous posters to publicize the campaign and post them all over the office. Create funny slogans with each bake sale like "The Pies of Laura Mars" and "Romancing the Scones." Hold a bowling party with slogans like "Bowl Durham" or "Honey, I Struck the Pins."

**CARNIVAL:** Kick off the event with a carnival-themed party. Employees can participate in traditional carnival games such as the egg/ spoon race, ring toss and ducky race. Provide cotton candy and popcorn to the winners. Have an executive dunking booth. Have a balloon making contest; each employee can make a balloon animal and other employees will vote for their favorite. Invite a facepainter to paint employees' faces with United Way colors and logos.

**THIS IS "THE VOICE" CONTEST:** Employees can conduct a singing contest based off a favorite song, band and/or singer. Employees can form groups and vote for the best singing group. Employees can make a donation to vote for the best singing group. The duo or group that gets the most votes will sing a song of their choice in front of an audience.

**"SHOW YOUR SPIRIT" DAY:** One day during the campaign, encourage employees to show their school spirit by digging into their closets and pulling out their letter jackets, team jerseys and old uniforms. They may also wear their children's jackets and jerseys. On that same day, host your United Way meetings, a potluck or some sort of special event allowing the employees to interact and share.

**TEAM FITNESS CHALLENGE:** Break into teams or have participants compete individually based on numbers. Each participant determines how much weight s/he wants to lose during a determined amount of time. For each pound, s/he puts \$5 into a pot. Each person weighs in. Each day, there could be special lunches planned and motivational quotes posted around the office space in support of everyone's efforts. On the last day, everyone weighs in again. For every pound lost, they receive \$5. All left over money goes to United Way.

# FUN CAMPAIGN IDEAS

## KICKOFF/ SPECIAL EVENTS CONTINUED

**MASCOT CONTEST:** Start the United Way campaign with great energy and enthusiasm by having a mascot contest. Departments or individuals can design a mascot that will be used at your company throughout the year (not just campaign season). Mascots can be on paper, three-dimensional or even life-size! Offer prize to the designer(s) of the chosen mascot.

**COMEDY HOUR:** Ask a local comedian or improv group to donate their services over the lunch hour. Ask employees to buy tickets to attend. Afterward, have a small improv session of your own! Ask employees to bring in their favorite comic strips from newspapers or funny comic books.

**CASINO DAY/NIGHT:** What are the ingredients for a successful Casino Night? A few gaming tables, one bingo table, a snack table, employees and their families. Have local businesses donate prizes for winners.

**BLUE LIGHT SPECIALS:** Host daily or weekly “Blue Light Special” rallies throughout the office. Serve food and have a United Way lead speak on a particular topic.

**REALITY CAMPAIGN:** Get “real” with your employees and conduct your campaign with a theme centered on the reality TV shows that have taken over the world! Hold daily activities with a tie to the numerous reality shows that are out there (i.e. Big Brother picnic, American Idol putt-putt contest or Dancing with the Stars trivia).

**SOCK HOP:** Invite employees to a “50s Style” kickoff. Give prizes for most authentic dress. Hang posters that show what 50 cents more per week can do for our community.

**ACADEMY AWARDS NIGHT:** Have employees dress as their favorite celebrities. Create small movie “skits” using your favorite movie. Have employees do impersonations of their favorite celebrities and have a guess who game. Bring in some red carpet and golden rails and have people pretending to take pictures of each celebrity that comes to the kickoff event.

**BON VOYAGE:** With a traveling theme, you can host a bon voyage party as a victory celebration. Everyone who gives through the campaign gets a “passport” into the party. You can pick a destination and have the party set up like the beach, the mountains, camping grounds or any other place you would go on vacation! You can serve wonderful food that you would eat on that vacation. Ask employees to bring in old suitcases and small travel size toiletries to donate to local shelters.

**BEACH BASH:** Have some “fun in the sun,” beach style! Decorate the party like the beach. Bring in sand, beach chairs, palm trees, beach balls, sunglasses and don’t forget the sunscreen! Play beach-themed music and make the office feel like you are on the beach. Employees who donate to the campaign are awarded “lifesaver vests” and hand out lifesaver candies. Tell “lifesavers” they need to wear their vests at the next meetings.

**“50S, 60S, 70S”:** Rock around the clock! Get employees to dress up in their favorite decade. Tell employees to bring old music, clothes, shoes, items to see who has the oldest item. Prizes will be awarded to the oldest item and most creative. Get a restaurant to cater with food and drinks. Have an ice cream sundae eating contest. Have oldies music playing in the background. Show some old movie such as, It’s a Wonderful Life, Wizard of Oz or Gone with the Wind. Hold an Elvis look-alike contest.

# FUN CAMPAIGN IDEAS

## CAMPAIGN THEME IDEAS

- All Stars for United Way
- Give hope a chance
- Capture the spirit
- Caring works wonders
- Share the magic
- Investing in our community

## CAMPAIGN GAMES

**CHILDREN'S DRAWING CONTEST:** Give employees photographs of one or two top executives to take home for their children 12 year old or younger to draw. Charge a \$5 entry fee to vote for the best portraits. Display the winning portraits as part of the organization's permanent art collection. Variations of this event - have children paint depictions of people helping other people. Poems, collages and photography can also be submitted.

**BOOK, MUSIC AND VIDEO SALE:** Have employees donate old books, CDs and videos for a company or department wide sale, with proceeds earmarked for the campaign.

**BACK TO SCHOOL:** Relive the glory years of school (without all the homework). Collect school supplies for a non-profit organization. Hold a spelling bee with managers versus employees or department versus department. Contestants must spell the word correctly or everyone on the team must pay. The winning team receives a prize. Or e-mail campaign pop quizzes to employees with winners receiving a prize. Give away customized lunchboxes. Have employee's kids help decorate flyers and custom printed materials.

**FUNNIEST HOME VIDEO CONTESTS:** Invite employees to create their own "home" or "work" videos. Charge an entry fee at a viewing party. Provide popcorn and candy during the viewing. Award movie tickets for winners of the best video.

**PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES:** Ask employees to wear a crazy pair of shoes and enjoy a wild and crazy lunch. The menu: FOOT-long hot dogs, SHOESTRING potatoes, CORN chips, ARCHway cookies, and SOLE music i.e. "Blue Suede Shoes," "These Boots Were Made for Walking."

**CAMPAIGN 007/DETECTIVE:** Have a 007 and Sherlock Holmes themed party. Have a trivia game with 007 movies. Have an office game during the week of "who done it," give clues are given to employees in the form of riddles from the 007 or Sherlock Holmes movies. Send out emails, announcements at meetings with riddles and have a "scavenger hunt" like game around the office. Have employees get into teams and come up with team names from the any of 007 or Sherlock Holmes books/movies. Employees with the best name or best outfit win prizes. Employees who find the clues at the end of the week win a prize.



# FUN CAMPAIGN IDEAS

## CAMPAIGN GAMES CONTINUED

**CAMPAIGN JINGLE CONTEST:** Employees write jingles for campaign. There is \$5 entry fee and voting fee for the best jingles.

**PUPPY LOVE:** Ever hear that a lot of pets look like their owners and vice-versa? Test this theory by having employees pay for a chance to try their luck at matching a pet picture to its correct owner. Award a prize to the contestant with the most right answers and maybe provide gift certificates to a pet store for the owners who look the most like their pets!

**BABY/PET PICTURE MATCH GAME:** Invite employees to try their luck at matching baby or pet pictures of management. Charge employees to vote and award the entry with the most right answers with a fun prize.

**BALLOON-O-GRAMS:** Employees pay to have messages tied to helium balloons delivered to co-workers with compliments or encouraging words. Charge \$1, \$2, or \$5 per balloon.

**BALLOON POP:** Have businesses donate prizes. Before filling a balloon with helium, put a note inside some of the balloons with the name of a prize. In other balloons, put a note with a campaign fact. Have employees purchase and pop the balloons.

**CAR WASH:** One of the more popular events. Employees pay to get their cars washed in the parking lot during the work day.

**PENNY WARS:** Get your departments to compete against one another in the spirit of United Way. Each department is given a jar or some other container. The object is to have the most money in your jar. Pennies are added to the total and silver coins (the nickels, dimes and quarters) are subtracted from the total. One department can sabotage other departments by putting their silver into their jars. A department will retaliate by putting more pennies in their jar and putting silver in the other department's jars. This will go on throughout a designated number of days. The jars should be kept in a central location where they can be monitored by a neutral party, most likely the campaign coordinator. At the end of the designated time, the neutral party will total the jars and the department with the highest total receives a prize or incentive.

**COOKBOOK SALES:** Have employees donate recipes and put them together in a cookbook. Give away samples of food while selling the cookbooks.

**DRESS DOWN OR UP DAYS:** Employees pay to wear casual clothes on a specific work day during the campaign period. Each employee that participates gets a Dress Down Days button or sticker. Variations include "Silly Hat Day", "Sport Team Day" or "Ugly Shoes Day".

**FLOWER POWER:** Have a local florist donate flowers. Sell the flowers at the office to employees. Another great idea is to sell flower bulbs. Contact a wholesale distributor for bulk quantities and sell per flower or bulb.

**A GHOULISHLY GOOD TIME:** Many companies choose to tie their campaign in with Halloween. Have a Halloween party, create a haunted house and have a pumpkin carving or costume contest with entry fees for each.

**HEALTH AND GIVING EVENT:** Have each department host a health event such as yoga class, stress reduction workshop or nutrition and personal trainer consultation. Charge employees to attend each event.

**KARAOKE CLUB:** Employees pay to have a fellow employee sing. That employee must sing or pay a fee not to sing.

# FUN CAMPAIGN IDEAS

## CAMPAIGN GAMES CONTINUED

**MATCH THE BABY FACE CONTEST:** Employees bring photos of themselves as babies. Other employees buy ballots listing the photos by number and guess which baby is who. The employee who correctly identifies the most babies wins a prize.

**MYSTERY PACKAGE:** Employees bring a gift in a brown bag to be sold or auctioned during lunch hour or at the lunch auction sight unseen. The gift should not cost more than a few dollars and can be something interesting, humorous and/or useful.

**QUIZ:** Make up a quiz based on campaign facts. Award prize(s) to employees with the most correct answers. This is a fun, challenging way to increase knowledge about the campaign and work United Way is doing in our community.

**THANK YOU, THANK YOU, AND THANK YOU:** Have a breakfast, lunch, or dinner to thank your employees for participating in the campaign. Give out thank you tickets to people who participated. Other contributors could pay for their meal with proceeds going to the campaign.

**TREASURE HUNT:** Sell daily clues to a mystery location where a treasure is hidden. The first employee to guess the location wins the treasure.

**VACATION DAY:** This is probably the most effective and appreciated event. Have employees “buy” vacation day by contributing a day’s wages to the campaign.

## TASTY TREATS

Whether you transform your campaign into a Hawaiian luau, African safari or the Australian Outback, employees are sure to have a wild and crazy time! Encourage staff and volunteers to dress the part and really participate in all the fun activities. Host a lunch with theme-related food!

**TAILGATE PARTY:** Create a sports theme to coincide with football season. Hold the party in the parking lot. Serve hot dogs, chips, soda and peanuts. Play a game of flag football or video football with participants donating an entry fee.

**HAVE A “GOOD NEIGHBOR” BARBEQUE:** Join with other companies near your business to have a cookout with games and giveaways.

**BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS:** Decorate with athletic gear, flags and banners. Company departments become teams. Campaign progress is marked by moving teams across a playing field poster towards goal. Campaign chair or CEO “coach” gives a pep talk at a kickoff “Breakfast of Champions” where Wheaties is served.

**WINE TASTING:** Hold a wine tasting and select five wines to be rated. All employees and their guests are given rating sheets. Special drawings are also held for contributors to the Campaign throughout the week. The larger the contribution, the more chances for prizes.

**WAFFLE/PANCAKE BREAKFAST:** Sell tickets and have people sign up for their choice of pancakes or waffles. Cook breakfast in your company cafeteria and ask executives/management to serve that morning. Don’t forget bacon, sausage, butter etc.

# FUN CAMPAIGN IDEAS

## TASTY TREATS CONTINUED

**SALAD LUNCHEON:** The meal is easy to prepare. The salad luncheon, when held in a central location, can be a popular money maker. The luncheon should cost a flat price, perhaps \$5. With the salad, offer donated homemade baked goods, such as cookies, brownies or bread.

**ICE CREAM SOCIAL:** Set up an ice cream bar with a variety of favorite toppings. Charge employees by the scoop or toppings! Award a prize or announce who ordered the most scoops!

**LUNCH BOX AUCTION:** Have employees create gourmet lunches to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Give prizes for the most creative, nutritious, elegant or humorous meals.

**A TASTE OF (YOUR COMPANY NAME HERE):** Invite local restaurants to set up their best dishes for employees to sample and purchase to raise funds for your campaign.

**INTERNATIONAL FOOD DAY:** Employees team together to create tasty treats from around the world. Employees decorate their own booths and dress in costumes. Hold the event at lunch, allowing employees to purchase tickets redeemable for food at the booths. Have a panel of “celebrity” judges award prizes. Let employees give a little history about the food they have chosen and prepared, employees can give the ingredients, what time of day this meal is served and during what season.

**POTLUCK LUNCH:** This is a great money maker. Have everyone bring a dish for lunch and charge a small fee to eat.

**OCTOBER FEST:** Celebrate by barbecuing or making German inspired meal.

**M&M/JELLY BEAN JAR:** The famous “guess the number of beans in the jar” cannot be forgotten. Buy a guess for 50 cents. The person who guesses closest to the number in the jar, wins the jar of candy.

**BAKE SALES:** Ask employees to bring their favorite cakes, cookies or breads. Even a small office can raise a lot of money with minimal effort. Sell per item or by the dozen.

**CANDY BAR/POPCORN SALE:** Purchase or make your product and sell to your staff throughout the campaign week.

**CHILI COOK-OFF CONTEST:** Ask employees to cook a favorite chili recipe and enter it into a cook-off contest. Invite employees to pay \$5 for lunch. Have a panel of nominated chili experts to select the official chili champion.

# FUN CAMPAIGN IDEAS

## SPORTS RELATED GAMES

For all kinds of office athletes, sporting events and competition are great ways to raise money and build stronger teams within the company!

**AEROBIC-A-THON:** Employees get pledges for the length of time participating. Set this up during a lunch hour or after work in the employee lunchroom.

**BIKE-A-THON:** Charge an entry fee. Participants collect pledges for the number of miles they ride.

**BOWLING TOURNAMENT:** Get a bowling alley to reduce normal fees. Charge participants the regular price with proceeds going to United Way. Participants can get pledges for the number of pins knocked over.

**EXECUTIVE CHAIR RACE:** Set up a relay course for executives to go through. The executives are either sitting in a chair or on tricycles. Let observers “bet” on their favorite contestants.

**GOLF TOURNAMENT OR PUTT-PUTT CONTESTS:** Work with a nearby golf course to get reduced rates. Charge players the regular price with proceeds going to United Way. Humorous prizes can be handed out later at a potluck dinner (i.e. shortest drive, highest score, etc.) Set up a miniature golf course within your office, lobby, or work area. Charge each player to play and award a prize to the player with the lowest score.

**OFFICE OLYMPICS:** Set up an obstacle course in the lunchroom, several offices, several floors of offices or outside. One station can be for typing a couple of paragraphs, another station for filing, another for photocopying, etc. The contestants pay an entry fee and the winner gets a prize.

**PING PONG-A-THON:** Charge an entry fee and have team elimination. Reward winning team with a prize.

**SLAM DUNK OR BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT:** Charge a fee to compete and provide a prize for the winner.

**SUPER HOOP:** Have an organized basketball tournament with employee teams. Charge admission to the game or collect pledges for baskets scored. Give away prizes at half-time. Get a local radio station to emcee.

**TEAM SPORTS COMPETITIONS:** Form teams between departments, divisions, branches or regions and get pledges for goals scored, baskets made, etc. Provide refreshment stands.

**TENNIS OR RACQUETBALL TOURNAMENTS:** Charge admissions and an entry fee to participants. The winner gets a prize.

**MINI-INDY 500:** Rent or borrow remote controlled cars and set up an “Indy 500” race. Use office supplies to make the track more interesting. Teams can be sponsored to compete. Spectators can place bets on the winner.



# FUN CAMPAIGN IDEAS

## SPORTS RELATED GAMES CONTINUED

**SUMO MANIA:** Call a local company and rent the Sumo Wrestling package. Have teams pay to play.

**PLAYING THE FIELD:** Use baseball, basketball, football, golf or hockey themes. Teams of employees advance around bases or down the field. Include sports-related competitions and prizes for participants.

## BOOTHS/SHOPS/SALES

**BAG AND BASKET BOOTH:** Sell baskets, handbags, gift boxes, tote bags, shopping bags, knitting bags, coin purses, cosmetic cases, hampers-everything used to hold and carry articles.

**GADGET BOOTH:** Sell cooking gadgets and equipment, for indoor, outdoor cooking enthusiasts - grills, forks, spoons, knives, spatulas, can openers, potato scrapers, garlic presses, lemon squeezers, wooden bowls, trays, salt & pepper shakers, chef's hats, aprons, gloves, etc.

**THE GAME EXCHANGE BOOTH:** Ask employees to contribute new or used toys and games, bringing them to a designated drop-off site. Price to sell, but whatever does not get sold can be donated to a children's agency.

**GLASS AND CHINA BOOTH:** Featuring all sorts of china and glassware - cups and saucers, goblets, cocktail glasses, trays, pitchers, plates, tea and coffee pots, vases, salt and pepper shakers, candy dishes and casseroles. This is a great time to move those "never used" or "can't stand" pieces that you love to hate.

**JEWELRY BOOTH:** Sell jewelry from employees and outside sources. Many people can also make or repair jewelry to sell. Don't forget the opportunities of making jewelry boxes. This is a great way to show off fashion talents of many employees.

**PET CORNER:** This booth features everything for family pets. It may be limited to dogs and cats, or expanded to include gifts and other articles for birds, fish and other pets. Such items may include: dark towels to clean pets, carrying cases, collars, tiny ribbon bows, brushes, toy balls, scratching posts, bells for birds, ornaments for fish bowls, Christmas stockings of toys and goodies. Another fun activity could be a dog wash outside, charging a nominal fee per dog. Have fun!

**PLANT OR FLOWER BOOTH:** Volunteers who wish to participate bring a house plant, cut flowers or cutting of a plant. Committee sets prices and puts the plants on displays.

**WHITE ELEPHANT BOOTH:** One person's junk is another person's treasure. What a great way to clean out that closet.

# FUN CAMPAIGN IDEAS

## OTHER FUN CAMPAIGN IDEAS

- Sell raffle tickets for \$1 - Have fun prizes for employees to win!
- Sell casual day coupons. Let employees wear buttons that say, "I paid to dress this way for United Way."
- Obtain a life-size cutout of a celebrity. Sell picture-taking opportunities for \$1 each.
- Hold a silent auction. Use incentive gifts, or have employees bring crafts, baked goods or other items to sell.

## INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION

- Time Off From Work
- Tickets to Games/Movies
- Company T-Shirts
- Flowers Each Month
- Casual Day
- Grocery Certificates
- Hotel Getaways
- "Leave Work Early" Passes
- Reserved/Covered Parking
- Dinner for Two
- Sleep-In Passes
- Tickets to local events
- Gift Certificates (spa, gas station, grocery store, Amazon, etc)
- Trophy for Department with Highest Participation

**REMEMBER THE BASICS** – While you and your team are planning the fun, don't forget to incorporate the basics into your ideas.

**EDUCATE, DON'T PRESSURE** – An educated donor continues to give.

**INVITE A SPEAKER** – Call United Way speakers to coordinate.

**PUBLICIZE YOUR CAMPAIGN** – Use posters, brochures, banners and emails to communicate!

**TAKE AN AGENCY TOUR** – This is a great way to motivate contributors and a good way for them to see agencies in their local community.

**THANK** your contributors and your campaign team – send out thank you notes to people that pledge, donate and volunteer.