



Animal Shelter Fundraising Implementation Plan



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Introduction

With the increase in surrenders and lowered rate of adoptions, many shelters in the United States are struggling to stay afloat and continue their operations. Having the previous knowledge from volunteering in shelters throughout the years, I have had firsthand experience with the issues that most shelters face today including overpopulation of animals, understaffed facilities, and, most importantly, underfunded facilities. Most shelters can provide donation links, but it is never as successful as engaging with the community and putting your shelters name out there will a fundraiser. The concept of shelter fundraising has been around for many decades, yet it is still very common for smaller shelters to not have the knowledge, resources, or time to properly fundraise. By providing shelters with detailed fundraising implementation plans it gives them the opportunity to properly complete different forms of fundraising as well as spare them the time that it takes to create a fully functional and effective fundraiser.



Objectives

My goal was to create a step-by-step implementation plan for the Sterling Animal Shelter in order for them to enhance their fundraising efforts in the future. When researching local shelters in Massachusetts, I came across Sterling animal shelter and realized that they had no current fundraising team as well as no history with fundraising at all. After speaking with their manager and owners, we had agreed on giving me full creative freedom to design a fundraiser from scratch as well as provide them with a new online fundraising site. My intent was to make this as easy as possible for the shelter and therefore I made sure I was responsible for every aspect of the fundraising process while they were able to watch how I did everything. The goal of this fundraiser was for them to take what they learned from how I created and carried out the fundraiser and be able to apply it to future events in conjunction with the implementation plan I provided for them.

The Planning Process

With the end goal of the shelter successfully completing the same fundraiser in the future, I wanted them to be aware of every planning step I took in order to be more involved with the process. Every decision that I made for the event was run by the shelter including location, event style, time and day, as well as website design. After all, I was representing the shelter and wanted them to be as comfortable with possible with every aspect of it. I had also done a full interview with the shelter prior to the fundraiser in order to get a better understanding of their specific needs. The shelter had explained their struggles with not having enough donations for food, toys, bedding, as well as medications that are used for their on site veterinarian. By utilizing this information, I was able to advocate for them better in online promotion for the fundraiser as well as set a more accurate fundraising goal before I began to organize.



How Did I Do It?

In order for me to design and complete the fundraiser from scratch within the span of three months I had to set a number of goals for myself that allowed me to track my progress. I reached out to a family member that has a career based around fundraising and, with her help, was able to formulate a timeline to complete everything under.

I had also utilized several online resources focused around shelter fundraising from people that had successfully completed these types of fundraisers. This was extremely helpful because I was able to get inspiration for a lot of the ideas I produced concerning promotion, organization, and execution the day of. This is how I was able to settle on the idea of doing a fundraiser at a brewery, a place where people could drink, eat, and bring their dog!

After identifying what I wanted in a location, I reached out to specific brewery in town that had everything that I needed called the Milk Room Brewery. They were more than happy to participate in the fundraiser and a date and time were organized with them shortly after.

Now that I had a location set and a guaranteed fundraising event in effect, it was time to reach out to sponsors to donate for our raffle items. I utilized local businesses help in sponsoring so that the event felt more welcoming, and community based. I was able to get 9 sponsors in the span of a month that donated items like gift cards, clothing, and toys.

The final step was to start promotion! By creating an online donation website that doubled as a promotion for the event, we were able to get the word out while also preemptively receiving donations. It gave a donation option for those who were unable to attend in person which increased our overall donations.

The Day of the Event

The big day! After completing all the goals I had set for months of preparation, it was time to see how well our fundraiser would actually do. Me and my volunteer group arrived to our location early to set up our booths as well as organize our raffles. Choosing a booth location is an important aspect of getting the most out of the fundraising so we set up right in front of the entrance so we would be the first thing people saw when they walked in. Our location, the Milk Parlor Brewery, was a dog friendly facility that provided indoor and outdoor space that included live music, a bar, and ample seating. We chose a sunny summer day so there were a lot of people that showed up aside from those that we invited from previous promotion.

We also utilized promotion techniques at our booth in order to get people to come over such as providing water for dogs, giving out free dog treats, and asking the band to give us a shout out in between performances. With all of these techniques combined, we were able to obtain over a hundred visitors to our booth. Some people bought raffle tickets and others just simply donated to the cause. We had also made a previous deal with the Milk Parlor Brewery to donate all of their proceeds they received, from a specific beer they sold that day, to the shelter as well. Overall, we received over \$2,000 dollars in donations!



Above: Our booth at Milk Parlor Brewery including our sign promoting our sponsors

Below: Our raffle table that included 13 raffle baskets!



Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan that I created for the shelter was a concise list of guidelines that gave them a step-by-step guide of everything that I had completed over the period of 3 months. The plans' structure was concise and easy to follow and complete even if you had no prior fundraising experience. I also wanted the plan to be somewhat broad so that it gave the shelter options in the future to change anything based on their circumstances. The implementation plans steps were as follows:

- 1.)Plan a Timeline
- 2.)Make a Budget
- 3.)Organize a Volunteer Group
- 4.)Finding Sponsors for Raffle Items
- 5.)Get the Word Out
- 6.)Fundraising Online
- 7.)The Day of the Event
- 8.)Have Fun!

Each step listed above was followed by an in-depth explanation and guide for the shelter to be able to follow in order while creating their fundraiser. Recommendations for location, volunteers, and sponsors were included by me based on my personal experience in order to give them an idea of where to start for those categories. I was also able to provide them with tips that I picked up through my learning process while creating the fundraiser so they would not have to make the same mistakes I did while doing theirs.

Conclusion

The fundraiser was a success, and we were able to obtain about \$2,000 in donations total including the online donations. The shelter was extremely grateful for the implementation plan that I provided for them and are already planning on having another event next summer utilizing it. After completing this project and helping the shelter with the funding resources they needed I realized how many shelters could also benefit from this process with my help. I am currently still in connection with the Sterling Animal Shelter and already have plans to work with them again this summer as well as other shelters in the area. Animal shelters provide a vital service to our communities but without our help and support they are not able to thrive a provide the animals with the best of quality of life possible. I was able to gain a better sense of gratitude for these shelters through this project and get a better understanding of the struggles that they face on a daily basis and look forward to providing whatever resources I can to them in the future.

Acknowledgements

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Above: Melissa Barber and staff at Sterling Animal Shelter

Contact information

If you would like to learn more about the Sterling Animal Shelter, my experience working with them, or my capstone project as a whole, feel free to reach out to me!

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