

2017 Food from the Bar Fundraising Ideas and Tips

Look to your firm culture and to your in-house resources for ideas. If your folks like games, poker night or a trivia contest might be a good activity. A firm full of foodies might auction a meal or cooking lesson. Maybe you have an artist in-house who would create work for auction or sale.

How to monetize is always a challenge. Sales and entry fees are obvious, but think about premiums for early admission or front row seating or other special treatment.

Advance scrip sales can be effective to get donations early in the campaign while the motivation is fresh. Sell FFTB Bucks in the first week to use over the course of the campaign.

If you are working with a committee, avoid burn-out by assigning or encouraging each member to adopt one project to see through to completion. Then, one and done. Their remaining responsibility is to be supportive and promote participation.

What to do? Here are some ideas for products and activities that have worked in previous campaigns

1. Sell Things

- Lemonade or smoothies, cookies & Milk, etc. - Make refreshments in-house or ask a vendor to donate a portion of sales.
- Bake sales – Besides just selling baked sweets, try these spins:
 - Make it a cupcake-baking contest. The first-place cupcakes are then priced at \$10 each, second- and third-place at \$7.50 each, all others \$5 each. Works with cookies, too.
 - Auction or raffle whole cakes or batches of baked goods made-to-order by a renowned office baker for a future date (bidders can secure a wonderful dessert for a dinner party next month).
 - Include savory items (bread, quiche, soup, popcorn, trail mix) in your bake sale, too.
- Daily or weekly treat stations - cookies, candies or other snacks can be positioned at traffic points with donation cans.
 - Enlist one or more people per floor if you can. Mix it up so you get the peanut butter-lovers as well as the chocoholics.
 - Home-grown fruit goes well, too.
 - At Munger, a certain sweet-toothed partner puts \$100 in the treat can early on so he can indulge all month long in the cookies and candies that are staged for sale near his office.
- Fruit snacks – need a break from rich sweets? Picture a fruit-tray like a cigarette-tray of old. What if the “vendor” was a partner or executive in a fruit hat?
- Jeans Days. Contributors buy the privilege of wearing jeans on designated days.
- “Thanks-a-Latte”
 - Sell thank-you notes to accompany a latte to be delivered (or sell a thank-you note with a coupon redeemable for coffee or other drink).
 - Make the coffees in-house or hire a barista (negotiate with the barista for one paid hour and one donated hour).

- People will appreciate the opportunity to thank co-workers and friends. Bosses may treat departments or teams.
- If your FFTB committee members are game to deliver the beverages and cards it's all the more fun and appreciated (stimulating sales and building awareness).
- Craft and art items (duct tape wallets, candles, Mother's Day cards, jewelry, knitted items)
 - Have a craft fair or feature items in lounges or other community areas.
 - Make a catalog on your office's virtual bulletin board.
- Rummage sale – second hand goods can be useful or campy, or get rid of the old couches, computers, etc. from the firm. At one firm, the old too-big couch no partner wanted in their office – it went to a new associate for his new apartment and a donation to the food bank!
- Poem store - poems on-the-spot for a donation. The donor names the topic. No in-house poet? Identify another hidden talent in your office who would like to make a unique contribution.
- Campaign Meals - feature the culinary (or shopping) skills in your office (another opportunity for people to treat co-workers or staff members).
 - Breakfast Club (breakfast burritos, fruit, sweet rolls)
 - Chili Lunch (bowl of chili, cornbread, green salad)
 - Taco plates (tacos, beans and rice)

2. Auction Opportunities

Look for items that have low or no actual cost but great intrinsic value.

Live auctions can generate super-competitive bidding. And you can double the impact if you offer a [surprise] duplicate to the runner up bidder.

“Advertise” your silent auction (where appropriate) to a wider audience via social media. Take bids in tiered rounds submitted via email.

- Paid days off – and it doesn't have to be a full day, ½ days work too!
- Office swap for a day (when the partner with the snazzy office is away, a lucky bidder gets to use their office). Or maybe they can use one of the visiting window offices for a day or a week.
- Premium office parking (donated by the firm, building or parking manager for a day, week or a month)
- Donated services and creations of co-workers (a horseback riding or skate-boarding lesson, a home-cooked gourmet dinner, a musical serenade, a drawing or a photograph, home tech service, scrapbooking of pictures, etc.)
- Firm tickets to sports or other events – and they can be a date and team determined at a later date
- Auction the right to wear jeans for a month
- Auction off the right to choose a partner to wear an ugly tie all day in the office
- “Selfie” with the person of your choice at the firm/office
- Lunch with a partner or principal
 - A partner might take a group of three to a client's restaurant. Friends can form a bidding block.
 - Even a relaxed, catered lunch with a partner could be special for staff members that would otherwise not have an opportunity to chat.
- Celebrity autographed items
Exploit your connections! For instance, the FFTB committee might buy an “inexpensive”

guitar to be inscribed by the celebrity guitarist who happens to be someone's brother-in-law or client.

- Timeshares are popular.
- Specialty items that relate to your firm or a client
One firm found rubber ducks made to resemble an admired client – a small investment reaped hundreds of dollars at auction. Hint – don't flood the market! And make it a live auction for real competition.
- "Bring Your Pet to Work" day
- Pub crawl or taco tour with your office connoisseur
- Wines donated from those in the office with notable cellars
- Firm "Fast Pass" – the holder gets to cut in line at firm luncheons. Make a FFTB Fast Pass badge (like a back stage pass on a lanyard) and don't forget to date it.

3. Raffles

Many of the items listed above work well as raffle prizes.

Sell tickets but also award tickets for participation in other fundraising and volunteer activities. Give tickets to encourage participation (example – one ticket for five pounds of food brought in or five tickets for volunteering at the food bank, etc.)

Host a closing raffle event where you can pull the tickets and sell a snack (lemonade and popcorn, etc.) for the last minute push for donations.

Friends and family can buy tickets, too.

4. Issue Fun Challenges!

- Encourage or organize competition between departments, practice groups, or floors for the most volunteer shifts or donations. A department head may offer to match contributions by staff members.
- A fitness-minded partner or your wellness committee might want to offset all the indulgent food-related activities by offering a FFTB donation based on swimming, running or cycling. (\$1 per lap or mile or \$10 per hour peddling)
- Team jersey swap - how much would your office Dodgers fans pay to see an ardent Giants fan wear Dodger jersey? And vice versa!
- A partner who dislikes jeans day may propose a "Formal Friday" challenge and donate for "Formal Attire" on a jeans Friday - say \$10 per person in formal attire, with a \$20 premium for tiaras.
- Have a department head pay for jeans day for the department
- Kentucky Derby Hat Day – do you have a donor who will contribute for those who wear stylish or funny hats on the Friday before the running of the Kentucky Derby?
- Matching challenges - If you have a big donor, ask that person to make it a matching challenge to encourage others to participate.
Keep this challenge peer to peer with partners challenging partners; associates challenging associates. Staff members might challenge one another, too. Works with volunteer shifts - meet me at the Food Bank on Saturday?

5. Organize Creative Fundraising / Awareness-Building Group Activities!

Firm-sponsored events raise awareness and you can promote planned FFTB activities there. Don't forget to motivate giving by describing the need in our community and the function of the Food Bank. Take advantage of the Food Bank's videos and information pages.

- Host a kick-off event (for a charge or not)
 - Lunch or happy hour
 - movie afternoon with popcorn and candy (raffling off the candy, etc.)
 - Include live or silent auction or raffle
 - State the firm's goals for the campaign (chart progress, too)
- Powerwalks – one day a week, a fitness-minded partner/staff member leads a refreshing 20-minute walk or stair stomp in the neighborhood. Make it a series.
- Lunch-time office yoga
Got a yoga instructor on staff? If not, hire one and split the proceeds. The instructor may donate their time for a good cause and the marketing opportunity. Fifteen-minute chair massage might entice, too.
- Wine-tasting hosted by an office collector or two.
Charge an entry fee based on the number of wines sampled. This doesn't have to be a firm-wide affair. If the tasting is designed for a group of 16, it becomes a pricier ticket and may be more cost effective.
- Food Bank bingo
It's BINGO...with food icons! Or just plain bingo with proceeds going to FFTB. You can do it over a lunch hour. Make it a series.
- Potluck Lunch – Bring a dish or donate to FFTB to eat
 - Organize dishes in advance.
 - Sell tickets in advance, too.
 - Give your lunch a theme – Around the World or Cinco de Mayo or Asian Sampler.
- Food prep competition
Think...chili cook-off...margarita blend-off...salsa challenge... dip challenge, etc. Charge an entry fee for samplers or sell the creations with a premium for the first place winner.
- Karaoke
 - Cover charge to attend.
 - How large a donation pool will it take to get a reluctant participant to sing or get a persistent singer to hand over the mic?
- Poker or Trivia or Wii Night
- Bowling party, golf or tennis outing, ping-pong or badminton tournament
- Office Olympics
Team events might include mail-cart races, coffee-cup relays, paperclip field goals.
- Donut-hole eating competition
- "Pie the Partner"
Who gets to "throw" the pie and who will take it in the face"?

6. Make the Little Things Count and Keep the Campaign in the Office Consciousness

- Food Bank posters and coin cans for spare change should be on display around the office.

- Kid-created coin cans or posters
 FFTB is an opportunity for parents to teach children about charitable giving. Decorate an oatmeal cylinder, shoe box or other container with FFTB slogans and food photos or drawings to make an eye-catching device to collect spare change and small bills. Likewise, handmade posters can keep the campaign in everyone’s consciousness and charm everyone in the office. These can be done on 'Bring Your Child To Work Day' Be sure to give each child-creator an achievement certificate or other reward.
- Display collected food or use lunch boxes for food donations. Food bins are available from the Food Bank. They can be customized too.
- Give special acknowledgement to previous donors to FFTB campaigns to encourage giving again
- Collect recipes for a firm cookbook
 - Ask your potluck, cook-off and bake sale folks to give up their best recipes.
 - Print your book in-house and spiral-bind it or distribute it via PDF.
- Incentive Fundraising
- Create buttons or tags or desk displays to identify participants: “I gave to FFTB” or “Ask me about FFTB” or “I volunteered”.
- Remind big donors of previous generosity with handmade thank-you notes or treats.
- Display a meter or graph to chart progress.
- Build a food donation “pyramid” or other display that will get attention.

7. Look for Partners in Your Community or Neighborhood

- CPK and other vendors like to support the good causes their customers care about. Ask the local manager to donate a portion of their sales to FFTB. Set dates and create FFTB coupons. You could choose a lunch day and use this as a kickoff event for your firm.
- Local retail establishments might donate a gift card or basket for an auction or raffle.
- Encourage co-counsel and opposing counsel to participate, enhance camaraderie or feed a rivalry.
- Look for co-counsel or clients at FFTB activities and connect.
- Legal Vendors are always looking for ways to connect with firm attorneys and personnel, so you can host an expo and charge a vendor for a donation to FFTB and line your halls with vendor tables and little give aways.

REMEMBER – Submit your best ideas for the Most Creative Fundraising award!