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Top 10 Steps To Reaching AND SURPASSING Your Cheerleading Fundraising Goal!

Pound-for-pound, cheerleaders are known industry-wide as one of the best fundraising groups in the country. While they may be small in numbers, they more than make up for it in spirit, enthusiasm, and sheer motivation. So, what makes a successful cheerleading fundraiser, you ask? Below are the Top 10 Steps every cheerleading team should follow to ensure that their next cheerleading fundraiser will be their most profitable one yet:

10. Choose The Right Product – It all starts with choosing the right cheerleading fundraiser. Make sure to do your homework and research as many cheerleading fundraisers as you can. Compare profit margin, turnaround time, and be sure to ask what fundraisers they recommend specifically for a cheerleading team. Above all, choose a product that requires as little energy on your team's part as possible. Certain fundraising programs can consume a lot of your team's precious time and can be a logistical nightmare. Fundraising cards like Pizza Cards, Fundraising Discount Cards and Scratch Cards might be a good way to go. They typically offer at least 80% profit, have super quick turnaround times and are as hassle-free as cheerleading fundraising gets.

9. Create A Game Plan - Once you've chosen your cheerleading fundraiser, it's time to come up with a fundraising game plan. Right off the bat, you'll need to determine how much money your team needs to raise. Be sure not to underestimate your goal, because the last thing you want is to get to the end of your fundraiser and realize you don't have enough money for your cheerleading tournament or uniforms. Once you've come up with a fundraising goal, divide that by the number of cheerleaders on your team. This will be the amount each cheerleader needs to raise.

Next, figure out a timeline for your fundraiser. Three weeks is generally a good amount of time for a cheerleading fundraiser. It's long enough to allow your group and it's short enough to create a sense of urgency. Lastly, each cheerleader should create a list of 30 or more potential donors. This list should contain names of friends, neighbors, and family members. The goal will be to get at least half of the list to donate to your cause.

Remember, the more work you put in up front, the less energy you'll waste in the long run.

8. **Nail The Pitch** – Okay. You've purchased your fundraising cards. You've set the goal for your fundraiser. You've mobilized the troops. You're ready to start raising money. Or are you? Not so fast. You just might be overlooking one crucial step that may determine whether you meet your fundraising goal or fall short. And that step is simply...

...NAIL THE PITCH. It's key to make sure everyone involved with your cheerleading fundraiser knows what your raising money for and is able to effectively convey it. One simple way to do this is to create a "pitch sheet" that describes your fundraiser, no longer than a paragraph in length – you don't want to bore the potential donor, you want to inform them. Distribute this pitch sheet to everyone involved in the fundraiser, but make sure they only use it as a reference because nobody wants to listen to someone read directly from a piece of paper.

People are more likely to give, if they can sympathize with your cause. And the only way for them to sympathize with your cause is if they understand your cause. That's where you come in. Be clear, be concise, be prepared... NAIL THE PITCH!

7. **Kick It Off In Style** – One thing cheerleaders are definitely masters at is getting people excited and motivated. Use that same spirit and exuberance when putting on your Kick Off Rally. This will be the time to distribute your fundraising product or brochures if you're using a brochure fundraiser. It's important to let everyone know you're overall fundraising goal as well as the goal for each individual cheerleader and supporter.

This will also be the time and place to relay any pertinent logistical information to your supporters, including important dates, method of donation collection, and specific fundraising events. You'll also want to get everyone's email address so you can keep the group up-to-speed as the fundraiser unfolds. The goal is for everyone to leave the rally fired up and with a clear understanding of the game plan.

6. **Cheer Loud And Cheer Often** – Be creative; come up with a cheer about your fundraiser, including what your team is raising money for and how much you're trying to raise. Not only will this be a fun exercise for your cheerleaders, but it will bring the team and its supporters closer together. You can create and practice the cheer as part of your Kick Off Rally. Once you've perfected the cheer, be sure to perform it at every given opportunity – at games, at pep rallies and even door-to-door!

5. **Dress For Success** – One tactic a lot of cheerleading teams use when trying to sell fundraising products is wearing their cheerleading outfits when approaching potential donors. This works because it instantly conveys what kind of group is and almost always brings a smile to the face of the person they're approaching. That and it shows that team is working together towards one goal - Go team!

4. **Game Time** – When selling any fundraising product, it helps to be in areas that get a lot of foot traffic. Now this is not exactly a novel fundraising idea. Organizations like the Girl Scouts of America have been hip to this fundraising strategy for years, even decades. The premise behind it is actually quite simple; more people equals more money. Obviously, a perfect location to sell your cheerleading fundraising products is at a school event like a game or a pep rally. Setting up a booth next to the ticket counter at the big ball game is always a winning idea. Be sure to make it known that the fundraising products are for sale with colorful signage and possibly even an announcement or two over the PA system.

3. **Motivation** - Motivating your team might just be the single most important task when it comes to a successful cheerleading fundraiser. Luckily, cheerleaders are naturally more motivated than most fundraisers, but it doesn't hurt to throw in a prize incentive. Rewarding the top sellers creates a sense of friendly competition, which always leads to higher sales. It's smart when calculating your fundraising goal to set aside some of the money to purchase a prize or two. Obviously, the better the prizes, the more motivated the team is going to be to sell the products. These days, items like iPods, iTunes gift cards, and movie tickets are big hits with teenagers. It's always nice if everyone receives a prize for participating, with the best prizes going to the top sellers.

It also helps motivation to keep a running tally - a scoreboard of sorts - somewhere that is visible to the entire team so that they always know where they stand. You can even place the scoreboard in the cafeteria or make it part of morning announcements.

2. **Communication** – Communication before, during, and even after the fundraiser is key to a cheerleading fundraiser's success. Using the email list you compiled at the Kick Off Rally, send out weekly or bi-weekly updates on how much money has been raised as well as special announcements. You can even include the scorecard in the email. Also, be sure to be very encouraging and positive in the email exchanges. Regardless of the outcome of the fundraiser, keeping everyone's spirits high is important.

1. **Party Time** – Once all the money has been raised and counted, it's time to celebrate. Be sure to budget in money for the party when you set your initial fundraising goal. It's important to reward the team for all their hard work. Not only does it bring the team closer together, but it will also have the team looking forward to your next fundraiser. You may even be able to get a local restaurant to donate a space and meals for your party.

The party is the perfect time to hand out prizes to the top sellers. It's also important to acknowledge EVERYONE who contributed in any way to your fundraiser. Above all, enjoy your time together as a team – you deserve it!