



Organize a Silent Auction How-to Kit

How about organizing a Silent Auction in conjunction with another event you are doing? Everyone loves auctions! An auction can be a lucrative and fun part of any event you plan. If this is your first time arranging a silent auction, there is no need to be afraid; follow the steps below to organize and plan your event.

Step 1

Form a silent auction committee (three months before your event)

- You'll need volunteers to make this happen. Recruit them now!
 - They can help get all the items you'll need to have a successful auction
 - They will also help you during the auction itself
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Step 2

Time to get auction donations!

Draft a letter to ask for auction donations. [CLICK HERE](#) for a sample request letter.

Don't be afraid to use connections if you have any. Do you frequent a local restaurant? Ask them to donate a gift certificate for the auction! Do you have a cousin who works for a boutique? Request a donation! Local companies, rather than national chains, will be more likely to support your event. Now is not the time to be shy.

With your committee, make a list of local companies you plan to solicit. Divvy up the list among your committee members. Set a deadline of when each company should be contacted (at least two months before the event).

Be sure to include:

- Local businesses
- Travel Agencies
- Restaurants
- Hotels
- Spas
- Museums
- Theaters
- Stores

Make an appointment to talk with the manager. Bring the letter you drafted and some IDF brochures. Meeting with the manager in person will be more successful than simply sending a letter!

Be sure to thank the manager for his or her time, and ask when you can follow up on your request. Then do so!

Ask friends and family members if they'd be willing to donate an item or put together a basket for your auction. You'd be surprised how many people will do this for you!

The more tangible items the better! Having gift certificates is great, but people are more willing to bid for tangible items. Keep in mind that gift certificates are terrific for door prizes and raffles.

Step 3

Keep track of all of your auction items in Excel.

Track the following information: This will help if you choose to create an auction booklet. (See step four):

- a name for each item (be creative!)
 - who donated the item
 - a description of the item
 - an estimated value
 - a minimum starting bid (generally half the value of the item, although it may be lower on very expensive items).
 - TIP: If you include donor names and addresses, it will be much easier to send them thank you notes after your event, and IDF will be able to thank them too!
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Step 4

Consider creating an auction booklet or list of all the auction items ahead of time. [CLICK HERE](#) to see the 2011 IDF Silent Auction Booklet

- This will help generate excitement for your items, and provide extra publicity for your donors.
 - Your list should include
 - a name for each item (be creative!)
 - who donated the item
 - a description of the item
 - an estimated value
 - a minimum starting bid (generally half the value of the item, although it may be lower on very expensive items).
 - The auction booklet can also include:
 - A list of event sponsors
 - A thank you to sponsors and volunteers
 - Agenda for the evening
 - Rules of the auction
 - Starting and ending bid times
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Step 5

Create bid sheets for each of your items. [CLICK HERE](#) for a sample.

Step 6

Closing the Auction

- In the last 10 minutes of the auction, have enthusiastic volunteers walk around and encourage people to make final bids.
- End the auction on time!
- Most bidders will probably be standing near the items they wanted, so notifying winners should be easy.
- Set up a table where winners can pay for their items. Checks should be made payable to IDF.

IMPORTANT: Money spent on auction items is usually not tax-deductible unless the donor spends more than the item is worth. As donors are receiving something for their money it is not considered a charitable gift. The exception is if an item is worth \$100 and the donor spends \$200 (for example) then the extra \$100 IS tax deductible.

You can [CLICK HERE](#) to print out receipts to be given out if someone spends more than the value of an item.

Step 7

After the Auction

- Fill out the Auction Buyer List [CLICK HERE](#)
- Send Auction Buyer List and all checks (made payable to IDF) to:

Immune Deficiency Foundation
Silent Auction Fundraising
40 West Chesapeake Avenue
Suite 308
Towson, MD 21204

Do not send cash!

Step 8

Thank You Notes

- Make sure that you send thank you letters ([CLICK HERE](#) for a sample) to all auction donors
- In order for IDF to thank your auction donors, please send us your Excel document (created in Step Three), and make sure it includes the names, addresses, items donated and estimated value of each item.