

How to Increase Participation

Compiled by
Rockwood Jewelry Company
June, 2007

Dear Fundraising Distributors,

I am pleased to present you with this comprehensive guide and FREE REPORT on Ways to Increase Participation.

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I took some liberties with editing to make text easier to read (without editing the content). I also deleted any ideas which were repetitions.

Declining participation levels affect all aspects of fundraising – from you the distributor, to the schools and students, and even to companies such as mine – a supplier. This report is an effort to help generate new ideas and possibilities in improving participation. To get the most from this report I encourage the following:

- 1) Don't just read the report, but use transference and let one idea you read trigger a completely new idea.
- 2) Have a pen/pencil handy when you read it so you can jot down new ideas that are sparked, or underline the ones that will work best for you.
- 3) Share the report with your sales team, your front office ladies, your warehouse workers. You never know where the next great idea will come from!

Finally, I am starting a Fundraising Online Mastermind where we will occasionally come together for future projects such as this one. Please email me directly at k.hodous@rockwoodjewelry.com if you would like to be put on this list. There will be NO SOLICITATIONS or SALES EMAILS to this list. It will only be business building information. So here's to greater participation,

Kim Hodous
President, Rockwood Jewelry Company

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GOAL SETTING

Have an 'Overall School Goal' that all of the sellers could benefit from. Such as: school sells \$10,000 retail, Principal has to milk a goat. Increase the retail to \$12,000 and someone else has to drink the milk. The more crazy it is, the better the participation.

I like to offer Classroom Rewards to help increase participation. Set up goals in total retail sales or items sold. If the classroom reaches the goal the teacher wins a prize. It works because the teacher would like to win the prize so, she talks positively about the fundraiser to her students

Having a schoolwide goal of some sorts is sometimes helpful. Which includes a reward that all the children would want to be a part of. For example: a Pizza party or ice cream party with a D.J. Or crazy hat day or flip-flop or sandal day. Everyone who participates gets to participate in that activity. Hope this helps.

We are setting classroom goals and every class that reaches their goal they will get a Movie & Popcorn Party. The class goal will be an average of 7 items per student in that class. For example; if there are 25 students in your class your class will have to sell 175 items to have a movie & popcorn party. Check in daily with your teacher and let them know how many items you have sold.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We mandate that our organizations "must" relay to the parents the reason or physical goal of why they are raising money. *i.e. Play Ground Equipment, Field Trips, Band Uniforms, etc...* This message can be relayed via parent letters, morning announcements, parent nights, etc... The idea is simple and fundamental, but in a world where parents have an attitude of "not another fundraiser," they must be informed of where their money is going. Once parents are thoroughly informed, and realize how their children are benefiting, the organizations tend to have greater participation. If a fundraiser is run with little or no reasoning (goal,) there seems to be no purpose, which leads to less participation. Running a fundraiser for the sake of running a fundraiser gets nowhere. The parents must be informed.

Do everything you can to get the volunteers to get behind and support the sale, not just hand out the brochures. Try to educate the groups that fewer bigger sales will tax the parents less and generate more dollars for the organization. Don't nickle and dime the parents by sending home a fundraiser every month.

Get the PARENTS involved! Preferably with a motivational incentive that they can not go and purchase.

Try to educate the parents on why the organization is doing the fundraiser and that greater support of one or two fundraising drives will result in less fundraising.

If you could sign only schools with strong sponsors – whether PTA, Parents Group, or Principal...that would help, but it's not always reasonable to think so.

1. Communication
 - a. Let parents know early, and often, what you'll be doing, when, and most important WHY?
 - b. Promote through newsletters, a kickoff assembly if possible (although I've had groups do just as well without

one when need and communication were high...why NOT stack the odds in your favor!)

- c. Specializing in frozen foods – samples for a back to school night (free cookie dough they can bake?) or parent teacher conferences help promote and increase awareness (as I tell my sponsors, “They don’t feed you all of those free samples at Sam’s Club / Costco because the ‘like you’, but because it sells!”)

The best way to get good participation for frozen items is to sample, sample, sample. Let your parents, who are the actual ones selling these products, try the quality of your product, because they might have had a "bad taste" with an inferior product.

PRIZES / INCENTIVES

SECRET SELLERS!

BEFORE THE SALE WE DREW THE NAMES OF 10 STUDENTS & PUT THE NAMES IN THE SCHOOL SAFE. AFTER THE SALE, ANY OF THOSE STUDENTS WHO SOLD 5 OR MORE ITEMS GETS A GIANT BONUS BAG FULL OF PRODUCTS & PRIZES WORTH OVER \$100!

YOU draw the names. DO NOT let anybody know the names. Write the names on a 2-part ncr order form. Keep one copy & put the other copy in a sealed envelope in the school safe. Do it when you are there for the kickoff. Hold up the envelope at the kickoff to promote the idea. One time, we were not allowed to look at the school roster & the school secretary did it for us. Miraculously that school had almost every name qualify. That's why you DO NOT let them choose the names or know the names.

The products & prizes are leftover & are in the way anyway, so it doesn't really necessitate any new purchases.

I feel to increase participation you MUST have a good incentive at bottom levels. Mainly at 1-10 item sales is where it makes a HUGE difference.

I worked with a group of elementary students this year and I gave low cost (25¢ to 50¢) prizes every 3 days to those that said they sold 1 or more items last night. There was no money turned in, I just asked who sold at least 1 item last night. I did this 3 times within 10 days. I had 74% participation...best in a long time.

You have to choose prizes the students themselves like, not the uncool, nerdy, old fundraising people. You must get some student input and research to make this work better.

Divide the group into pairs or teams with the winning team getting some type of prize they pick!

Give a prize for participation that gives some type of immediate gratification for helping out!

Have first day or first two day prizes (for block schedule schools) for getting off to a quick start!

For each student that sells 12 items or more, their name goes into a drawing for free product (like jewelry), tickets to a major event or cash. I also have used the cash box during and at the end of the sale. The students that sell 10 items by the first Friday go into a cash drawing of \$50 and at the end there is a \$100. They go into the drawing every time they sell 10 items. EX: 40 items sold = 4 times into the box. They love it. (usually do it in middle school and high school groups) We either split the amount with the group or give the whole amount depending on how large the sale.

The best way to increase group participation for middle school kids is to offer rewards for different levels of sales.

We have "front loaded" our prize program with participation: any sale gets them into a "drawing" for a combination of things; money booth, pizza party, dress down day pass, first in line pass for the week (ie: lunch), etc. Usually we continue the drawing chances for every five items sold. If I throw in two extra prizes, I try to get the school/PTA to kick in on one or two, to build momentum and added involvement.

Also, to help with turn in and also distribution we may add an additional prize drawing for all those who turn in on time and again who pick up on time....ie; an extra name will be pulled for the money booth from just those names or the first 25 who pick up receive a gift at pick up...free snack at lunch, or Holiday shop buck (if they are doing shop with us). All this builds the entire program, which in turn makes everyone more interested and possibly want to be a part of the sale.

Prizes, Prizes, Prizes!

One thing we have started doing to increase participation is to provide the students participation prize on the day of brochure turn-in. This gives them an immediate reward. It is nice to advertise this via closed circuit tv for those schools that have it, and intercom for those who do not. Commercials during your sale also help tremendously.

Depending on the age group of the sellers, finding individual prizes that will motivate is part of the key.

FREE FREE FREE. Offer a Free bonus gift to top sellers, or if a certain quantity are sold. Nothing ups participation like free gifts.

I give a 32 oz. customized sport bottle for everyone that sells 1 items - the parents see the value in it and it basically ends up costing .80 / bottle - thereby increasing participation - I have also used a customized school magnet for selling one too

This year we are adding "During the Sale Prizes"- for every 2 items sold, they receive an Oval Twist Pen they can link together and attach to their backpacks, etc.

Each group is different, so we try to customize a prize package that will appeal to each group.

Offer a built-in incentive program (free product to the seller based on their personal sales) that helps increase participation and takes the burden of a prize program off the fundraising organization. This helps to ensure the organization is able to keep ALL of their profit earned without having to dip in to cover this cost or that.

PARTIES

The last couple of years we have added a few programs: The Top Selling Class receives a Pizza Party.

Any class with 50-60% participation (varies with each school) receives a battery operated Pig, and then the class enters the "Pig Races" and the winning class/pig receives an Ice Cream Pig Out Feed.

We love to use Inflatable parties for school wide fund raisers. What is an inflatable party you ask? Well, we have a company that we contract to set up those huge space walks, slides, and obstacle courses at our schools.

QUALITY PRODUCTS

I try to keep prices as low as possible and offer a quality product. As a result I seldom get complaints and generally my same school sales grow year after year.

Sell quality products like Rockwood Jewelry:) (It was in there, so I had to keep it - Kim ☺)

Better perceived value products....price range between 6/10 dollars...Be more concerned with the needs of the customer and less with how high the "mark" is!!!!!!!!!!

The best option is to offer a good product at the best price with effective support service.

Stop overpricing items to give more percentage to the group and present groups with products that parents and supporters actually want to purchase. Focus on brochures with a smaller array of items that are value priced and participation will go up.

Offer items that people truly want, at a reasonable value. What's the #1 retailer, and what's their slogan...(Wal-mart for those asleep the last 2 decades) – and how can that be applied to our businesses? Value...Quality, Product, and Service that are more than just lip service or slogans helps.

RAFFLES

Our biggest increase in participation has been our \$1000 drawing. Each year we collect raffle tickets of students who have sold \$100 of product or more in any of our fund raising campaigns. At the end of the year in April we invite the principal, the sponsor of the fund raiser and usually the Accounts payable secretary of our groups to a lunch and prize give away. We draw for the \$1000 drawing at the time. It has increased our numbers from an average \$78 per person per sale to \$111 per person per sale.

SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

The best way to increase participation the we have found is to do in school kickoff assemblies to the students.

TEACHER/SPONSOR/PRINCIPAL INVOLVEMENT

Teachers & school staff members are our best liason with the students. If the staff is excited about the sale, they will encourage their students to participate.

Having the support of the school principal may be one of the best motivators for elementary school students. Watch sales soar if the students have an opportunity to duct tape the principal to the wall or watch the principal kiss a pig as part of their prize incentives!

We believe the absolute best way to increase participation is by involving the teachers. There has to be a class "event"/party or whatever= such as "Build your own sundae party". The teacher will also need to win a prize in order to be motivated to encourage students to sell. We have given gift certificates to Educational Teacher Stores, dinner certificates to special restaurants, special "bags" filled with goodies, spa type stuff, snacks, etc.

The best way to increase participation is to have an active sponsor who will put additional incentives into the programs (Bicycles, IPODS, free dress days, homework passes) as well as actively promote the sale to the students. We are only at the school for a short time. The sponsors can do a lot to keep the interest of the students.

Provide teacher awards for classrooms with the highest number or percentage participation. Gets teachers to encourage the kids to get started.

Unless the adults at the school buy into a program, student participation will suffer. The administration and teachers must be committed to the necessity of the fundraiser and understand that the proceeds will truly benefit the students through the programs the funds support.

Meet with the faculty prior to the sale and ask them directly to help their group reach the goal set. Explain that while they have little or no control on how much a student sells, they can set the tone for

their classroom and encourage participation, even just one item. Offer them the reward of being able to purchase products FREE, based on their classroom participation rate. 60% and they receive a \$60 Gift Certificate, 70%, a \$70 Gift certificate, etc. Do not give any reward for less than 60%. The positive energy from this will increase participation, sales, profit and customer satisfaction!

We believe the best way to increase participation is with classroom by classroom involvement or competition. This naturally involves each teacher and all students. There are incentives for teachers by gaining 50%--75%--100% participation of their students. Students get involved for competitive pig race, chicken dance, rat race, or something pertinent to their teachers or school. Excitement builds and more and more students WANT to get involved.

MISCELLANEOUS

By providing the fundraising director of a group with a few options and then having them get all of those involved with actually selling the product to select which fundraiser they feel most energetic about is the first step. Once the fundraiser has been selected by the entire group the fundraising director needs to get a commitment to how much each member will sell and we as the fundraising company will come up with some incentive ideas to help motivate the group. By allowing for group input in the fundraiser selection stage you create a sense of ownership and therefore the group participation level should be better and the sellers more motivated to sell.

Participation is based on the demographics of the school and how many selling fundraisers they do. Pick your schools, instead of the other way around.

Free delivery? Yes, we offer it! only if you pay upon delivery or within 5 days (always depends on distance) After that, actual shipping charges are added to invoice. It works!

My tip is be fully present , be fun and grateful with each client, do check in with them at set up, start up and finish up, also after order is received.

We offer incentives like-for every 10 items students will get a fun day, LIMO rides, pizza party or Magic Show. These depend on school size and principals choice of incentive.

It seems that the best way to increase participation is to find a very popular project. One that everyone wants to "make it happen"!

Appointing Team Captains over 5 to 10 workers has worked very well. Captains call weekly to remind workers of their goals and the time left in the campaign and to offer some help if needed.

Leaders need to be very upfront with their participants about the reason for fundraising. When the participants see they are part of a solution to the problem, they are more willing to take action.

Run the sale post paid or post collect

Work with groups that have high need. Participation & results are a result of a:

- a. strong sponsor (Bands, Music, Cheer)
- b. high need – trip \$, money for camp / uniforms, competition costs, etc.
- c. Incentives (the stronger the sponsor and need – ie, great band program going on a trip...the less incentive/external motivation you need to provide.

High School: An FBLA or other departmental fund raiser will need more external motivation – prizes, bonus points, 1 free homework day, etc.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Rockwood Jewelry would like to respectfully thank each and every person and company below that took the time to submit their ideas. I was astounded and impressed by the creativity, ingenuity, and the frank honesty of the responses. The list below is alphabetized by first name.

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