

Virtual Fundraising Event Best Practices



1.800.252.0523



www.Qtego.com

How to Make Your Virtual Fundraising Event A Success

As new technologies and the need for digital connection grows, non-profit organizations have moved into virtual fundraising fast. More and more non-profits are finding that virtual fundraising is a terrific complement to traditional methods, helping organizations stay relevant and connected as they raise more money for their cause.

There are many ways to handle virtual fundraising events—from simple, one-time efforts to full-fledged virtual galas. At Qtogo, we've helped organizations make the shift to digital tactics with great success, combining new ideas with best practices for outstanding results. No matter what you have planned, this guide can help you put together your best possible virtual event.

BEFORE YOUR EVENT

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[Auction Items >](#)

[Publicity >](#)

DURING YOUR EVENT

[Length >](#)

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[Activities >](#)

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AFTER YOUR EVENT

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As you plan your virtual event, don't get overwhelmed! Your Qtogo team is always available to help. Reach out any time to find ways to simplify, streamline, and make your job easier with Qtogo!

What to Do in Advance

You'll love how easy it is to plan a virtual fundraising event versus an in-person party, but to make a strong impact you still need to do a little bit of legwork in advance. Here are a few things to put on your to-do list.

CHOOSE YOUR THEME

One thing people love about fundraising events is getting dressed up. But staying home can be fun, too! Energize your guests with a fun at-home theme that ties to your cause and lends itself to unusual get-ups.

PARTY IN YOUR PJS!

VIVA LAS (virtual) VEGAS!

VIRTUAL GOLF OUTING!



Encourage guests to dress up and give prizes for the most inventive, funny, or outrageous costumes!



What to Do in Advance

SET UP A FUNDRAISING HOMEPAGE

Your fundraising homepage makes it easy for people to find out about your event. [↗](#)



- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Showcase your sponsors. ↗ | <input type="checkbox"/> Spotlight urgent needs. ↗ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage guests to pre-register. | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for item donations. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Highlight auction items. | <input type="checkbox"/> Include a video. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Let your supporters know how to promote your event to their social networks. | |



CONSIDER TICKETS

You can still sell tickets for virtual events using Qtego's ticket page!

While you don't need to sell tickets to a virtual event, purchasing a ticket increases the chances that your guests will add your event to their calendar and remember to attend.

Tickets for virtual events can be set at a lower threshold than what you'd charge for an in-person venue to encourage wider participation. Even if you charge \$5 for a ticket, that helps to raise more money and offset costs.


With a ticket, guests can get the URL to access your exclusive event Livestream.

Sell tickets to a Livestream benefit concert.




Tickets can also be donations or sponsorships. Use your ticket page to connect donors to specific needs, so they can be the named sponsor for a specific item or service.

What to Do in Advance

GET SPONSORS

Your Qtego tools include so many places to highlight sponsors. In fact, businesses might be more open to **sponsorships now**  **than ever before!** You can highlight sponsor logos and links across your tools:



- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> On your fundraising homepage.  | <input type="checkbox"/> On your social media platforms. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On your QLink registration page. | <input type="checkbox"/> In your Livestream presentation.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On your organization's website. | <input type="checkbox"/> On your QSite — the page where you host your auction, donations, Livestream, and other virtual event programming. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In pre-event and post-event emails. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In a broadcast text message or voice memo.  | <input type="checkbox"/> In a virtual slideshow. |

QSite — the page where you host your auction, donations, Livestream, and other virtual event programming.



What to Do in Advance

COLLECT AUCTION ITEMS

Why not make your auction virtual, too? With a little advance planning, a virtual auction can be simpler than an in-person event.

Most organizations limit the number of live auction items for virtual events—consider reducing your items or packages to fewer than ten, so that you have time and space to highlight each one.

If you don't already have a physical inventory on hand, consider asking businesses for e-gift cards, online vouchers, and delivery services.

Save time and distance by asking for item or gift card donations over the phone or via email.

Items that usually bring in lots of bids at in-person events—like travel packages—may not be as popular right now.

On the other hand, some things we used to take for granted are now scarce and could be terrific auction items.

Email your board members and key supporters to ask for auction item donations.



LEVEL UP YOUR PHOTOS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Because your guests won't be able to see your items in real life, you need really terrific photography and stellar item descriptions

Qtego's boutique layouts are perfect for online-only events where guests can't see your items in-person.

Be sure photos are clear, well-lit, and high resolution. Qtego lets you add multiple photos per item, so show off multiple angles!

Check out the item description how-to section in our merchandising guide.




What to Do in Advance

PUBLICIZE YOUR EVENT

The great thing about a virtual event is that you can reach a much bigger pool of supporters and have guests from all over without maximum occupancy issues! The key to widening your reach is getting the word out through multiple channels.



- ☐ Let guests know about your auction on as many platforms as possible.
- ☐ Be sure to include the link to your fundraising homepage or QLink registration page so guests know where to register and bid.
- ☐ Include your event agenda so guests understand the virtual event and get excited about what you have planned.
- ☐ Use Qtego to send a broadcast text message or a video appeal. You can reach out to currently registered guests, to people who registered for your last event, or both!
-  Don't forget our easy character count tool to keep your text to the 160-character limit. [↗](#)
- ☐ Leverage your email list. Since location isn't an issue, supporters who don't live nearby can still attend your virtual event.
- ☐ Ask your board and key supporters to promote the event to their own social media networks.

URGENT DONATION NEEDS

Let's get all of the kids we serve into warm winter coats! Our goal of \$2,500 will give each child a coat, hat, and gloves for the season.

[DONATE »](#)

REGISTER YOUR MOBILE PHONE

By registering your mobile phone before the event you will be able to view silent auction items before the event and skip the registration line when you arrive at the Organization Gala.

[REGISTER PHONE »](#)

VIEW AND BID ON AUCTION ITEMS

Once you have registered your mobile phone, you will be able to use your phone or computer to view auction items and start bidding! You will be notified via text if you are outbid on any items.

[VIEW ITEMS »](#)

How to Plan Programming that Keeps Guests and Donors Engaged

With an in-person event, you have a captive audience (and often an open bar) to make getting bids and donations easier. If you're hosting a virtual event, you'll need to get creative to keep people engaged and giving. Remember, the energy you bring to your virtual event is the energy that carries over to your guests—and happy guests bid and give more! Here are a few things to try:

DESIGN THE EXPERIENCE

Most virtual fundraising events are about an hour long. Since you won't have the crowd control or logistics issues of an in-person venue, you can make your virtual event action-packed and effective in less time.

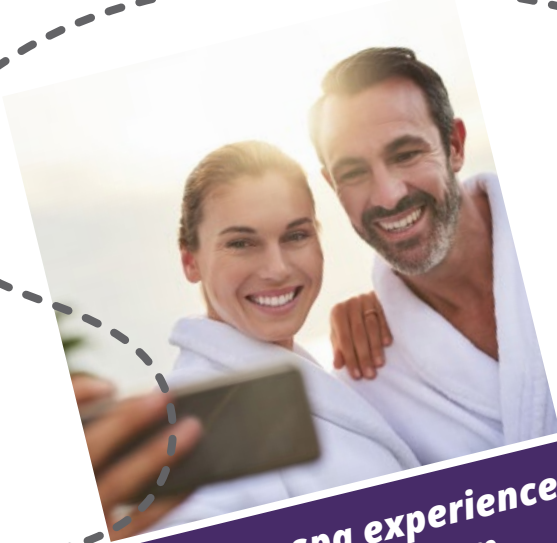
SEND A PARTY BOX

If most of your guests are local, get local businesses involved! Partner with local bars, restaurants, or bakeries to have themed treats delivered, or use a national delivery service to schedule food or drink drop-offs to out-of-town guests during your event. See if local businesses would donate some swag for a party box, add a themed place setting, include a toy or game to occupy the kids while parents are “at the party,” and never underestimate the fun factor of confetti, silly string, and other colorful packing materials! Make sure guests know not to open the box until it's time for the party to begin!

How to Plan Programming that Keeps Guests and Donors Engaged

MAP IT OUT

Have some fun with the party-at-home idea. Send out a “party map” that ties auction items and programming to different parts of a floorplan.



**Bid on a spa experience
in the bathroom.**



**Bid on restaurant gift
cards in the kitchen.**



**Selfie challenge in the
living room.**

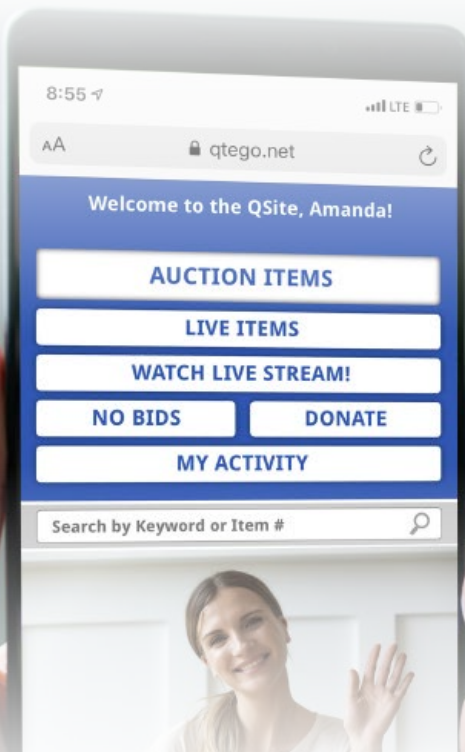


Have fun with it!

How to Plan Programming that Keeps Guests and Donors Engaged

USE A CRAWLER

Make virtual donations more fun and interactive with one of Qtego's animated donation trackers. You can choose one of our standard crawlers, which we can personalize with your logo, or just ask and we'll happily build you a customized crawler using your organization's colors and animated shapes that fit your theme or cause! Watch the stars, hearts, logos, or whatever you can imagine fill the screen in real time when your supporters make donations.



- ☐ Feature the crawler on your event homepage, so people know your goal in advance.
- ☐ Be sure to include your crawler on your QSite—the page where guests place bids and make donations during your virtual event.
- ☐ Show the crawler on your social media pages and your organization's website, along with a link to how people can donate to add to the total.



How to Plan Programming that Keeps Guests and Donors Engaged

SET UP A CHALLENGE

There are so many ways to make a virtual event fun! Keep guests engaged with contests and interactive activities. *People love a challenge!*



Use a #hashtag.

Let people know to follow you on social media and tag you when they post their pictures. Hashtags for your organization and event also help spread the word!



- ☐ Encourage guests to dress up to match your event theme and post a picture. Then, give superlative awards like “fanciest couch surfers” or “most festive sweatpants.”
- ☐ Send out an event-themed cocktail recipe and award the guest with the most fantastic presentation!
- ☐ Create playlists 🎵 for your event and send them around to all of your guests to play during the party. You could even send a pre-party mix to get people pumped up and ready to bid!

How to Run a Successful Online Auction

Whether you had an auction event scheduled and need to make it digital, or you want to start an online auction from scratch, Qtego can help. We have a complete [online auction reference for you to download](#), plus a few bonus tips below:

SET STRONG STARTING BIDS

The great thing about a virtual event is that you can reach a much bigger pool of supporters and have guests from all over without maximum occupancy issues! The key to widening your reach is getting the word out through multiple channels.

The psychology involved in setting starting bids is a little different for online auctions than for in-person events.

We typically recommend setting starting bids at 35-40% of fair market value, but for online auctions, you might consider going up to 50% to account for differences in online purchasing behavior.



MANAGE THE AUCTION

As with an in-person auction, a virtual auction demands close attention to starting and closing times.

Your Qtego event coordinator can help monitor items with no bids, so you can lower starting bid prices or send a message to registered bidders alerting them of the opportunity.

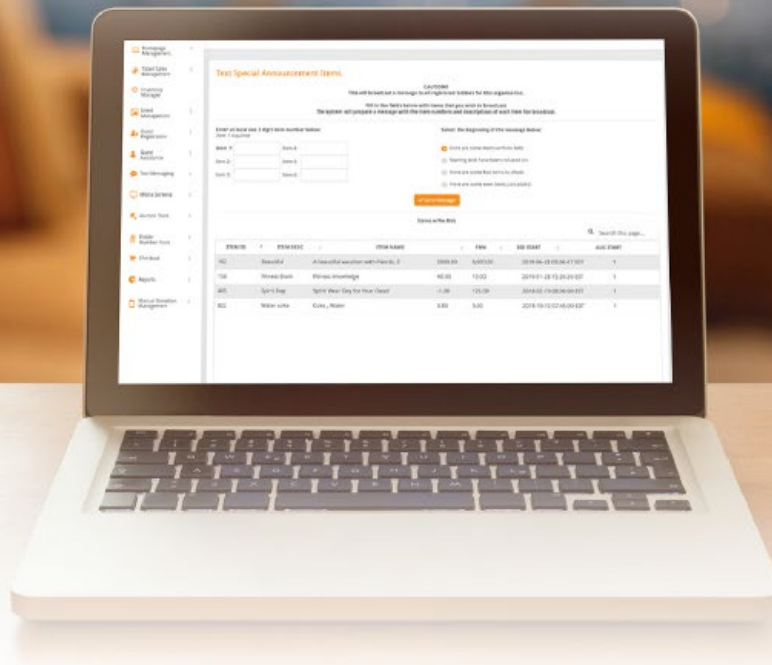
Don't set your silent closing time too late! Either close your auction within an hour of ending your event so guests are still up to check results, or close it the day after to allow guests one more chance to place bids the next morning.



How to Run a Successful Online Auction

DON'T FORGET REAL-TIME TEXTING

Text registered bidders during the auction about no-bid items and closing times. The “text special announcement items” feature lets you text six items at a time.



CONSIDER PICKUP OPTIONS

Have a flexible plan for how bidders will pick up their items after they win.

Depending on your situation, you might offer shipping, pick-up, or delivery. If you need to offer shipping, be sure you're using complete bidder registration that captures addresses.

We recommend adding a short “close and settle” statement to the end of the 1,500-character descriptions for each item. For example, you might start with a statement like,

“Winners will be notified by text immediately when auction closes at 2PM Sunday, shortly after you will receive a TEXT RECEIPT LINK when your credit card has processed. We will work directly with winners to ship, or schedule a safe pick up or drop off.”

How to Handle Administrative Details

Most organizations are not used to hosting virtual galas, online auctions, or digital fund-a-needs. If you already have Qtego, you can use the built-in tools in new ways for virtual fundraising, and your event coordinator can help manage the administrative details so you don't miss any opportunities.

PROMOTE VIRTUAL FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES

Qtego makes it easy to send broadcast text messages about online auctions, virtual fund-a-need campaigns, and other ways to give.

TRACK BIDS AND DONATIONS

You'll also need at least one person behind the scenes to manage your fundraising tools and technical details. You can DIY the whole thing or call on Qtego to help things run smoothly.

HANDLE VIRTUAL CHECKOUT

Take payments and issue receipts quickly.

☐ Text receipt holders with instructions about payment and pickup.

☐ Send a broadcast text to thank donors.



Making Virtual Fundraising Events Easier

Technology is changing philanthropy worldwide. If you're just moving into virtual fundraising, you have a big job ahead, but Qtego can help. Our commitment to problem solving and concierge service means we're already set up to smooth your transition to virtual fundraising. With your Qtego tools and help from our team, diversifying your fundraising program into virtual tactics will strengthen your organization and make you even more effective at achieving your mission.

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