

The overhead for an event such as this one is minimal since each host donates the use of his/her home and pays the dinner tab. Each host or hostess also does the follow-up by writing personal notes or calling prospective guests to ask them to come to the dinner. All money taken in is profit except for printing costs and postage. The most time-consuming job is recruiting four VIPs for each party and lining up the hosts and hostesses.

Variations on this theme have worked for countless individual candidates throughout the country. If you ask several people to each offer just hors d'oeuvres or just dessert at their house, their costs are not high and you can charge as little as \$10 or \$25 a head. This type of event brings more people into the campaign and is also fun and easy to do.

Independent Expenditure Events

As a result of amendments to the Federal Election Campaign Act and changing Federal Election Commission rules, a new kind of political fundraising has come onto the scene. Independent expenditure groups, such as NCPAC (National Conservative Political Action Committee), Americans for Change, and other political action committees are raising money to defeat targeted candidates.

"Doing an event for an independent expenditure group is difficult because you don't have a candidate. You have to use surrogates," says Brad O'Leary, who is also executive director of Americans for Change. Although he uses surrogates such as Senators David Durenburger, Jack Schmitt, Melvin Laird, and George Romney, all pillars of the Republican party, he says it's not the same. "People want to see, feel, and touch a candidate." Much of the time at their events is devoted to education process. Who is in the group? What is their purpose? "There has to be a certain amount of trust in the organization," says O'Leary.

As a result, he finds that large, ticket functions are not tremendously successful under these circumstances. Instead, he invites small groups of 20 to 100 people to a breakfast, lunch or dinner, and then does a fundraising pitch.

Sometimes he will go into a city "cold" without a local chairman, using a combination of Republican lists. "It's a lot tougher to raise money this way because tremendous confusion exists," says O'Leary. "In this kind of situation, most of the money is spent on invitations and getting the people there. In fundraisers for candidates, the money is spent on the event itself—hotels, food and drink."

The Dinnerless Dinner

Busy people who are saturated with cocktail receptions and chicken dinners welcome the "dinnerless dinner," otherwise known as the "stay-at-home" fundraiser. It has been used successfully on the congressional level in Illinois, San Francisco, and other large cities.

For this approach to be effective, the invitation must be exceptionally creative because the contributors are not even getting so much as a glass of cheap wine or a rubbery chicken leg. Illinois congressional candidate Lynn Martin welcomed any amount for her stay-at-home fundraiser. Contributions averaged \$25. San Franciscans for District Elections, a S.F. group trying to preserve district supervisorial elections, also sold tickets for a nonexistent political dinner for \$25 each, or a table of 10 for \$250. "We decided nobody *really* likes political dinners and this was a good way to pull in a lot of money without a lot of work," says David Mattingly, spokesman for the San Franciscans for District Elections.

Each ticket purchaser received one "big ticket" suitable for framing and a high-quality paper plate. A floral centerpiece and a bottle of champagne was delivered by a local celebrity to the homes of the big spenders who purchased an entire table. For those who thought a political fundraiser wasn't a fundraiser without speeches, prerecorded messages were available by dialing a special telephone number!

In some Illinois cities a box chicken dinner was delivered to the contributors' homes as part of several congressional candidates' "dinnerless dinner" fundraisers. During his 1978 campaign Senator Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.) held a \$100-a-plate dinnerless dinner. He sent an engraved china plate to each contributor. It was probably the easiest \$15,000 he ever raised.

Remember the Goal

Whatever newsworthy, entertaining event you choose to stage, keep in mind the main objective of a fundraiser is to raise the largest amount of money for the least amount of expense and effort. Tight organization and planning make them run smoothly (see Part I, CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS, Winter 1981), but creativity and imagination make them fun.

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