

6 Steps to Pulling Off the Ultimate Silent Auction

If you're looking to host an event that will bring in donations while providing your guests with a great time- and a number of opportunities to win big- a silent auction is the ideal way to go. However with a lot of moving parts, it's important to get ahead of the planning to make the most of the night. Don't skip these 6 steps and you'll be right on track for the ultimate silent auction for your organization or charity:

Assemble Your Team

With so much to do you'll need more than a few extra hands on deck. Find people within your network that can use their individual skills to truly shine. Roles to consider are people who can help with execution, accounting, sales, marketing, entertainment, sponsorships and prizes, labor, and food and beverage.



Embrace the Planning Phase

Mistakes happen in the small details that get overlooked, so dedicate a healthy amount of time to your planning phase. Quickly outline the goals of the event, individual duties for team members and hard deadlines. Secure your location, day and time as early as possible to ensure your desired venue is available at the most affordable price- nothing screams expensive like a last minute venue booking.



Collect Donations

Being that your event is a silent auction, the most important aspect is the donations to be auctioned off themselves. You'll want to appeal to a wide range of budgets for people attending (depending on your demographic) so make sure to have low threshold items, as well as big ticket items that WOW your guests.



Day of Event Set Up

Welcome to the big day! Depending on the venue you've chosen and their event day protocols you'll need to arrive early enough to set up. Items you'll need from the venue or from an outside vendor include:

- Tables and chairs, for both sitting and for the donations.
- Podium with microphone.
- Linens, either of your brand colors or dark colored.
- Risers to lift small items.
- Stations for food and beverages if applicable.
- Space for entertainment if applicable.
- Check in/ check out stations for guests.
- Isolated space to check bids.



Silent Auction Flow

The auction should begin at the precise moment indicated on the event tickets without fail. When the night is coming to a close, make announcements for final bids at 20, 10 and 5 minutes prior to the close of the silent auction.

Ensure your volunteers are ready to take all bids straight to the predetermined space for checking them and begin doing so immediately to maintain the flow of the event. Bring all items to tables by the podium, tagged with the names of the highest bidders and begin announcements.

If the amount of money raised is able to be calculated and confirmed, let the guests know how much money their participation raised in your closing statements- and don't forget to thank everyone involved.



Follow Up

Finally, following the event, send personalized thank you's to event vendors, sponsors, volunteers and attendees to let them know how valuable they were in ensuring a success. Take time after the event to analyze the auction: Was it profitable? What went wrong, what went right, what should be adjusted for the next event?

Most of all, however, enjoy the downtime after months of planning- you deserve it!

Thank you

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