



National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society
Michigan Chapter



Fundraising Tips and Tricks

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Looking for some good ideas as to how to raise money for the fight against multiple sclerosis? Here are some suggestions, tips, and sneaky tricks to help make your fundraising campaign successful.

Set a Goal. Average (or in some cases minimum) fundraising level for MS events is \$250, and believe it or not this is pretty easy to get to. Set a realistic goal and keep your sights on that goal. If you easily surpass it, don't stop there... keep going!

Create a Contact List. Jot down a full list of names, addresses, phone numbers, and emails of those you wish to contact for a donation. Don't be afraid to expand to relatives or friends you haven't seen in awhile. The cause – and your story – sells itself. You never know who is touched by MS directly or indirectly. And in Michigan, the chances are pretty high.

Tell Your Story. Draft a letter, email, or other document that explains why you personally are involved with the fight against multiple sclerosis. Include your financial goal and the date by which you need your goal to be met (preferably a week before your event). Drill in the point as to WHY donations are important and HOW they will be used. Some convincing reasons can be found in this handy document:

<http://www.teamn3kk1d.com/files/west-michigan-investments-2015.pdf>

Spread the Word! Use every means at your disposal, tailored to the recipient: Facebook, email, phone, letter, or even over a glass of wine or beer. The goal is a personal connection with your sponsor. The more personal you can make it, the better. Not everyone has time to write a separate letter to each person on your list, but adding just a personal note makes a world of difference. Make your recipients know you care about them, their involvement, and your dedication to the cause.

Lather, Rinse, Repeat. Often your first round of communication will not result in many responses. Sometimes not even your second. Mix up your approach every couple weeks: try a letter, then email, and then a phone call. Be aware that everyone is busy and that a lack of response does not necessarily mean "no". A guaranteed "no" is when you give up trying to contact someone. It is possible to contact your list more than once without seeming "pestering". However, it requires you to start your fundraising EARLY!

Start Early and Do Not Procrastinate! It's difficult sometimes to balance family, work, training, hobbies, and who knows what else with fundraising. But successful fundraising requires time, and the earlier you can start, the more chances you will have to make a connection with your potential sponsors. Do not wait until the last minute to start or follow up... and definitely do not wait until AFTER the event is complete! Everyone works better with a deadline; attempting to fundraise after an event is over and done with is almost impossible. Make your goal, meet it, and enjoy yourself at the event knowing you have already won!

Workplace Programs. Contact your employer and see if your business will match employee donations. If so, make a game out of who can donate the most! Offer prizes such as favors, food, handmade gifts, or

even swag from Team N3kk1d (contact your team captain for possibilities!). Wear orange and tell them why. If the employer won't pledge match, try a workplace "Jeans Day" or some other fun event that requires co-workers to "pay" (read: donate) to be a part of. Bake cupcakes and ask for a buck or two per item. There are endless ways to get people on board. Make it fun, and get them involved!

Contact Area Businesses. Businesses often will donate more than single individuals; an average business donation is usually \$50 to \$100. Team N3kk1d will be more than happy to acknowledge the donation on our Facebook page, which means advertising! We LOVE our business donors! Remember: the worst thing they can do is say "no", which is the same answer you would get if you never went there to ask in the first place. Score a few of these donations and suddenly \$250 may seem like a pretty small fundraising goal! Check out our Resources area on TeamN3kk1d.Com for a sample Business Sponsorship Form and flier.

Create a Fundraising Event. Candle-Lite, PartyLite, World's Finest Chocolates... there are so many ways to do something fun to raise money. Area restaurants (Big Boy, Ruby Tuesday, BW3, et cetera) often will offer 15 to 20% community give-back programs for not-for-profits and schools. Whatever you do, let Team N3kk1d know and we will promote it! And let's not forget Team N3kk1d's "DIY" fundraisers such as the Wii Bowling Tournament, ROCK MS, and our Bike MS Beer Raffle... it's easy to invite friends and family to an event that's already in place and directly benefits your team!

Track and Document Everything! We cannot state the importance of this enough. Document contact dates, verbal pledges, money received, who said "yes", and who said "no". Keep this information handy! Why re-invent the wheel next time around? Use paper, an electronic spreadsheet, a Google document... it doesn't matter how you do it. The more organized you are and the more information you track, the better you will get at fundraising.

Thank Your Donors. After receiving a donation and just after your event, thank your sponsors verbally, electronically, or by letter. If you do a letter, email, or Facebook post, throw in some photos of you at the event. Tell your sponsors how much you appreciate their support and remind them why it's so important! Need some pics of you in action or with the team? More than likely you can find some of those on our online gallery:

<http://teamn3kk1d.com/gallery/>

Do Not Get Discouraged! Sometimes personal budgets can be strained and there are many worthy causes fighting for a donor's attention. If a person declines, accept the situation gracefully and don't take it *personally*. If you burn through your list and you haven't met your goal, add more contacts to the list. Or try one of the more "out-of-the-box" methods described above. Or contact your team leader for a little "boost"... even team leaders get discouraged sometimes, too! But you're not in this alone. Together, we can make incredible things happen!

Need Additional Resources? Check out Resources area on the Team N3kk1d website for a handy pledge tracking sheet and cash donation receipts. Also available is a quick 'n' dirty tutorial on how to create and edit an online fundraising page with the National MS Society. The Society's online system also includes additional resources; be sure to explore the Participant Center for ways you can spread the word of your event. (You will need your login to access this material.) Links to all of these are here:

<http://www.teamn3kk1d.com/resources/>

Contact Team N3kk1d: contact@teamn3kk1d.com