

How to put together a fundraiser cycling event in 3 weeks or less!

By Jennifer Sage

The attached checklist is what we did for two successful fundraisers that raised about \$15,000 each, a year apart. They were both based on natural disasters that created an enormous and immediate as well as long-term need for the devastated regions, similar to the recent Nepal earthquake. The first was following the devastating tsunami of 2004 and the following year for Hurricane Katrina. In both cases, and we needed to act quickly to capitalize on the emotions of the public. If you can do that, you are much more likely to raise more money than if you waited a few months to make your fundraiser “perfect”.

The club where I worked, the Aria Spa and Club in Vail, Colorado is attached to and owned by a 5-star destination hotel, The Vail Cascade Resort, so we were able to mobilize the staff at the hotel to help with the coordination and management of the event. That certainly gave us an advantage. Nevertheless, a small group of passionate people can do amazing things if they put their hearts and minds together! Look to your members, friends and family for additional assistance. Many people want to do something more than just donate a few dollars, but have no idea what they can do or where they can do it...you are giving them an avenue to fulfill their desire to help the people of this disaster!

Many of the steps included in this list can be utilized to organize a large fundraiser for any ongoing cause, such as breast cancer, diabetes, or your local pediatric hospital. Typically, the planning of those larger events begin anywhere from 6–12 months in advance. This quick checklist can help you organize an event in as little as 3 weeks or less. You can decide to designate one or two classes to the cause, or pick a weekend date and host a multi-hour event. Use as much or as little of the checklist that works for you and your specific situation.

Organize a meeting

Call a meeting with all staff, instructors, riders, friends and family or anyone who feels as strongly about you do about the disaster, to tell them about your plan.

Decide on the scope

Small or large? If you have less than 20 bikes, can you meet with another club in your area to possibly donate bikes? Or, can you run a longer event and do it in shifts with fewer bikes?

Organizing a Fundraiser Quickly!

For the Nepal earthquake, or other disaster

Decide how long your event will be

2 hours? 4 hours? 6 hours? 8 hours?

I recommend going beyond your regular class time, but if all you can do is designate one class time slot, do it!

Decide on your charity or charities

We chose two and divided the money raised.

Ask these charities to send you forms for tax deductions and any marketing materials they might have.

How will you price the event?

Decide on a minimum price per hour, for teams, or one price for those who want to ride the entire duration. Do not sell yourselves short and price it too low! I see far too many events asking for only \$20. \$40 or \$50 *per hour* is the minimum you should require.

Participants can raise the money by asking for donations from family, friends and colleagues at work, or just pay it themselves.

Finding sponsors and prizes

Encourage participants to raise more money by adding incentives. That is how we raised \$15,000...we had great prizes (including a Spinner bike)! Everyone is motivated by prizes, regardless of how altruistic you may think everyone is. Put together a very attractive grand prize packet for the highest fundraiser. You can also enter everyone into a raffle. For example, give them one entry into the raffle for raising the minimum amount, and then another entry for every \$50 they raise above the minimum.

If you want, you can allow others to participate in the raffle. We invited the personal trainers at the club to raise money as well, and they were eligible for prizes.

Following is a list of possible prizes and sponsors. Go to your nearby retailers to seek donations or gift certificates. Seek out members who own stores or restaurants, and ask them for donations. You will be surprised at how easy it is to get donations and sponsorships for a disaster like the Nepali earthquake!

- Memberships (or ride certificates)
- Massage or other spa treatments
- Manicures/pedicures
- Hair salon (cuts and/or products)
- Restaurant gift certificates
- Sporting goods
- Bike shop (products, bike tune ups, etc)
- Clothing stores
- Bowling alleys

Organizing a Fundraiser Quickly!

For the Nepal earthquake, or other disaster

- Movie theaters
- Pet stores

Make sure to create a banner thanking every merchant who donates prizes and list them on your information sheet.

Find sponsors or providers for food the day of event

Two local grocery stores provided us with gift certificates, which covered the snacks purchased for the day of the event. You may need the following purchases or donations:

- Snacks, fruit, energy bars
- Bakery items, bagels, sandwiches, etc
- Water and other drinks
- Post-ride cookies, desserts (you can even do a bake sale to raise even more money for your cause!)

Organize Instructors

Depending on the length of your event, you may have multiple instructors. It's best to assign 45 to 60 minutes each (30 minutes is probably too much switching around).

- Assign one instructor as the lead, to assist in profile planning
- Decide if you want a theme (such as ascending Everest)
- Make sure intensity is varied, and not too high (especially if the event is longer than one hour.)
- Have instructors submit their music to lead instructor to avoid duplication

You will need volunteers to take on the following tasks:

Pre-event:

- Create the registration and donation forms
- Find sponsors
- Create promotional flyers
- Social media
- Arrange for any additional bikes if needed
- Contact EMS to be on hand at the event
- Arrange for volunteer team for event day
- Audio visual?
- Decorations? (For Nepal theme, decorate with prayer flags!)
- Coordinate instructors who will be leading the event
- Contact press (local TV, radio, newspaper)

Day of event:

- Manage donations on the day of the event
 - You may have a large amount of cash to handle. Arrange for a lockbox, or other means of securing cash.

Organizing a Fundraiser Quickly!

For the Nepal earthquake, or other disaster

- For greater security, you should have two people minimum handling donations.
- Bike set up
- Stage and stereo set up and testing
- Decorations
- Food table and prize table set up
- Hand out snacks/beverages to riders during the ride (children love to volunteer for this part!)
- Coordinate with media, arrange for a photographer
- EMS

Post event:

- Break down bikes, A/V, stage, etc.
- Return borrowed bikes if necessary
- Post event party?
- Make sure to publicly thank everyone involved, sponsors, volunteers, instructors, riders, etc
- Publicize results of fundraising
- Send the donations to the charity/charities

Please let us know!

If you do decide to do a fundraiser for the Nepal earthquake, will you let us know at the Indoor Cycling Association? This cause is near and dear to me, and I would love to know that we helped inspire instructors and studios or clubs around the world to rally their tribe to raise money for the victims of this disaster. Please share your photos with us and we will post them on our Facebook page and website!

Please email Jennifer@indoorcyclingassociation.com
Or call 970-390-1757.

Namaste