

Creative Fundraising Ideas for High School Athletic Departments

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Every year athletic directors are expected to create and maintain a budget that covers the increasing costs of running an extensive athletic department and the accompanying athletic facilities. This needs to be done while maintaining an often expanding the number of programs that are offered to our students. Providing more opportunities to participate should always be one of our goals in an educational-based program.

In order to maintain current levels of programs and hopefully improve facilities and other areas overseen by the athletic department, it becomes necessary to think outside the box in order to raise the additional money needed to cover the ever growing expenses.

At Magruder High School, our goal is to always raise an additional \$25,000 or more a year through fundraising. This is accomplished through direct donations, athletic department fundraising and the efforts of the booster club which do not involve the athletes directly selling items to the general public. Students at our school already are asked to fundraise for their specific class, individual teams, activities and clubs. This also places an additional burden on coaches who already are stressed with completing necessary forms and paperwork.

The money raised through athletic fundraising have helped purchase items that are not covered in our normal budget plan. Some items purchased over the years include:

- Industrial dryer and washing machine
- Security gate for the stadium
- Banners on light poles of parking lots
- Team record boards in gym lobby
- Irrigation systems for all athletic fields
- Field tarp for the stadium field
- Additional signs for athletic fields
- New scoreboards on athletic fields

In addition to the budget allotment from the school district, creative approaches and gate receipts are used to fund these projects. One successful idea that is similar to what many colleges offer is a multi-tier booster club membership. Our four tier membership is set-up as follows:

- Gold Level- For \$250, a member receives two sweat shirts, one basketball polo shirt, booster club sport book and a reserved parking pass.
- Big M- For \$150, an individual would get two sweat shirts, booster club sport book and a reserved parking pass.
- Colonel- When someone pays \$75, they get two padded seat cushions, booster club sport book and a reserved parking pass.
- Blue/Gray- For \$25, an individual gets a booster club sport book.

Schools can substitute prices, items and packages as they see fit but we have been very successful in selling the more expensive packages to our parents. Our school is located in an area with a great deal of traffic and limited public transportation and pedestrian walkways. This means that students and parents must drive to all home games.

With the help of our Junior ROTC program, the back parking lot is reserved for only individuals with booster club parking passes or visiting teams administration and security. We have averaged selling all fifty spaces reserved for this program which generates additional income with little expense but provides our parents the ability to:

- Enter in a special gate which is guarded by a staff chaperone, thus avoiding lines at the ticket booth.
- Have guaranteed parking.
- Be able to have an easy exit after the game.

To boost concession sales, we invite local businesses to sell items at athletic events that do not compete with what is sold in the concession stand by our booster club. At home football games, we invite local restaurants to sell BBQ sandwich platters or Mexican food items and we receive a pre-determined percentage of the sales. Another favorite among everyone was Italian Ice during the hot months in the fall and spring which also generated huge sales and did not compete with the booster club.

One might believe this would decrease sales at the concession stand but these items tend to be more expensive and bought mainly by adults who would rather have a meal platter than a hot dog or hamburger. The final review found that sales at the concession stand did not drop and the extra revenue gained helped to cover the cost of overtime salaries for custodians required to clean up after athletic contests.

Another way to get business support for the athletic department is through advertising banners. Local businesses can buy a 3 x 5 foot banner and have it displayed in our stadium for events held in the fall and spring and for an additional fee it is also displayed in the main gym during the winter. The fees and other benefits can be easily changed and altered by individual schools but at Magruder we charge the following:

- 250.00 for 1st year for banner displayed only for the fall/spring seasons.
- 400.00 for 1st year for banner displayed for the fall/winter/spring seasons.
- 100.00 to renew each year for only the fall/spring seasons.
- 250.00 to renew for the fall/winter/spring seasons.

The cost of producing the banner is about \$125.00 and the school retains the banners from year to year. Each game in the fall/spring requires hanging the banners up and taking them down which only involves a few minutes for each athletic contest. Banners displayed in the main gym during the winter are permanently hung on the wall and removed at the conclusion of the season to be used in the stadium for spring sports. I also purchase a small plaque which is given to each company at a low cost which can be displayed at their business but is greatly appreciated by all sponsors. We have found many businesses who signed up for fall/spring only option elect to renew for a full year the following year which generates almost a 100% profit for the athletic department.

A small plaque is also given to each company at a low cost which can be displayed at their business and is greatly appreciated by all sponsors. We have found many businesses who

signed up for fall/spring only option elect to renew for a full year the following year which generates almost a 100% profit for the athletic department.

Another useful idea to generate additional money is the printing of sports schedule calendars with advertising that can be displayed in the school and community. The ads can be solicited either by the school directly or by several professional companies who secure the ads and then produce the calendars for the school. Our only requirement is to fax our athletic schedules each season to the company. Clearly the percentage of profit is reduced by having the company to all the work for us but it requires very little effort on our part and the amount generated is roughly \$1500.00 a year.

An additional creative and unique fundraising source is an on-line store for athletic team wear. Through this effort, the athletic department or school store does not have to maintain a large inventory, because the supplier ships the items directly to the students or parents.

Much of the apparel can be customized which allows for a personal touch and this is extremely well-received by our students. On a monthly basis, the on-line company sends a check to the athletic department based upon the agreed percentage of the sales.

Recently, this approach has expanded due to its ease of use, simplicity and 24 hour availability to include athletic season passes. This also has proven to be a gigantic time saver and one less tedious task for the athletic director. On-line sales provide additional revenue while decreasing headaches and managerial responsibilities. A more detailed article on using an on-line school store can be found in the October/November issue of Athletic Management.

These simple programs help generate the additional revenue necessary to sustain our current programs at our school and allows us to be creative and improve our facilities with new equipment and displays. As budgets continue to be strained and the demands upon them grow, the athletic director must spend more time raising additional funds.