

2012 Peer-to-Peer Event Fundraising Consumer Survey

2nd Annual Report by Blackbaud & Run Walk Ride Fundraising Council

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Why did you fundraise? Why didn't you fundraise? When answered, these two simple but important questions can impact the strategies nonprofits use to engage with their participants.

Blackbaud and the Run Walk Ride Fundraising Council conducted an online survey to learn more about peer-to-peer fundraising from the participant perspective. What did we learn? How will the answers provided by survey respondents help your organization increase participation and revenue?

From the organizational view, the goal of peer-to-peer fundraising events is to raise funds and awareness by empowering individuals to be an extension of their organization. In order to empower participants, you need to make sure you are communicating the right message. Only by stepping back and removing yourself from the equation are you able to understand why an individual takes action.

The most critical information from the survey revealed that peer-to-peer event participants view participation and fundraising as two separate tasks. Motivation behind why an individual signs up for an event and why they fundraise are different. With the understanding that these are two separate tasks, the question that needs to be addressed is "Are you communicating the right messages to achieve your goals?"

What motivated you to get involved?

Forty-nine percent of survey respondents were asked by a friend or family member to participate in an event. It's clear by the answers to this first survey question that participation is about personal connection. Whether it's a personal connection to the cause or to another individual, participants are motivated by the desire to connect (see Figure 1). Upon further analysis, breaking down the motivation of both fundraising participants and non-fundraising participants, the outcome is similar. The connections to the cause or to an individual remain the two key factors for participation.

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Forty-nine percent of survey respondents were asked by a friend or family member. Forty-seven percent felt a connection to the cause. We participate in peer-to-peer events because we care – about the cause or the individual asking us to join.

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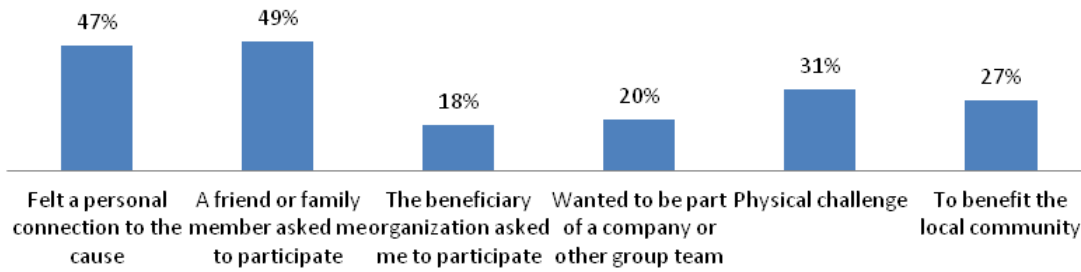


Figure 1: Motivation for Getting Involved

Fundraising: Why did you fundraise?

“It’s a good cause and I wanted to help my community.” It’s tough to say what is or is not a good cause and we can all agree that helping the community is good. But, these two answers do not really help us evaluate our fundraising messaging. The cause and personal connection drive an individual’s desire to participate. Let’s focus on the other responses.

Respondents were asked to give their top two reasons for fundraising (see Figure 2). Forty-four percent of fundraising participants said they were asked to fundraise when they were recruited by a friend or family member to participate in the event. It’s worth noting that about 65 percent of the respondents who answered this question were on a team. It’s encouraging that many participants are contributing by not only recruiting other individuals to join, but they’re also setting the expectation that this is a fundraising event.

The most concerning response was that only 24 percent of fundraising participants said the organization made it clear that we were supposed to fundraise. Organizations consider walks, runs, and rides fundraising events, but there seems to be disconnect between how organizations view these events and how they’re marketed to the public. Peer-to-peer events are often marketed as awareness events and fundraising is implied. It’s no wonder that participants view signing up to participate and fundraising as a separate activities.

Since these events are marketed as awareness events, is there a need for organizations to manage expectations on the participant’s fundraising activity?

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Eighty percent of survey respondents who set a goal raised exactly or more than their goal, while 49 percent raised more than their goal.

Figure 2: Why did you fundraise?

Fundraising: Did you have a fundraising goal?

Dictionary.com defines goal as: the result or achievement toward which effort is directed. The key phrase is "which effort is directed." Goals provide participants with a focus, something to achieve. An important step in creating fundraising messaging is to communicate a goal. Goals are a part of our culture, whether performance goals at work or personal goals we set for ourselves - they play a role in our daily lives.

Twenty-six percent of fundraising participants did not have a goal (see Figure 3). It may seem like a small percentage, but these are people who raised money. How do you measure fundraising success without a goal? Is success measured by having a dollar amount tied to an event participant? Eighty percent of survey respondents who set a goal raised exactly or more than their goal. Of the 80 percent, more than half raised more than their goal.

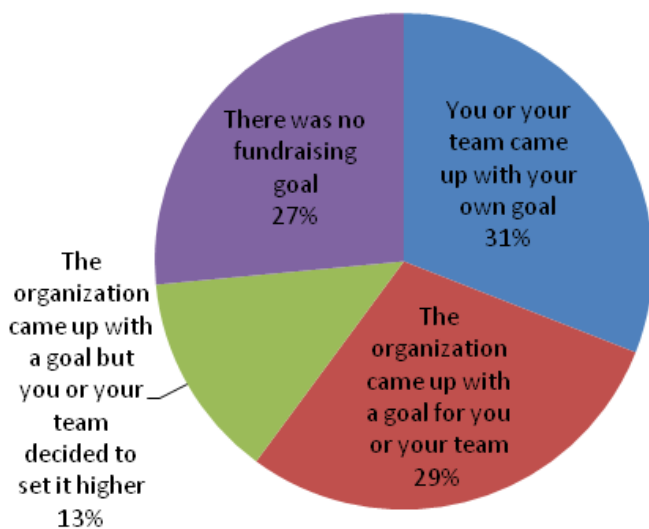


Figure 3: Fundraising Goal

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The next logical question is “What motivated you to raise more than your goal?” It should not be a surprise that the number one reason for exceeding their goal was the participant’s commitment to the cause. The cause is important and should be the focus for all nonprofit fundraising activities.

The future of peer-to-peer fundraising is bright, 34 percent of respondents found fundraising to be easier than expected (see Figure 4). At some point we might be able to move away from the concept that fundraising is challenging. The evolution of online fundraising tools for participants makes it easy to ask personal contacts for a donation via email and social media. In fact, the increase use of social media has many referring to peer-to-peer fundraising as social fundraising.

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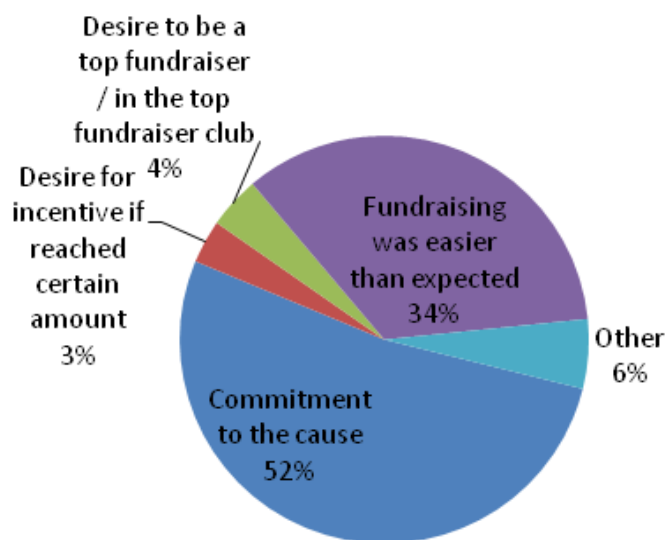


Figure 4: Exceeding Fundraising Goal

Fundraising: Why didn't you fundraise?

This is the question everyone would like to better understand. As discussed earlier, organizations often make the assumption that signing up to participate equates signing up to fundraise. Survey respondents were asked to select their top two reasons for not fundraising.

Forty seven percent of respondents said no one asked them to fundraise (see Figure 5). This has to be a “WOW” statement. You have to be wondering “how did participants not get the message about fundraising, it’s all over the website and in collateral material?” If the primary message you are communicating is awareness, that’s the message the majority of participants absorb. The secondary or implied message of fundraising is lost in the clutter. As far as participants are concerned, they have done what you asked. They signed up to participate and will show their support by being present on event day.

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If awareness is going to remain your primary message, then maybe it's time to accept that not everyone who participates will be a fundraiser. With acceptance comes the ability to move forward and reevaluate your current messaging. Have you clearly communicated that this is a fundraising event after an individual signs up to participate?

Lastly, it's worth mentioning that only eight percent said fundraising seemed challenging and 18 percent were not comfortable asking for donations. While peer-to-peer event messaging is ambiguous, organizations are combating the notion fundraising is difficult. Advances in online fundraising played a role in breaking down the barriers. Think about it, organizations ask participants to do two or three things they do daily to meet their fundraising goal: send an email, post a message to Facebook or tweet.

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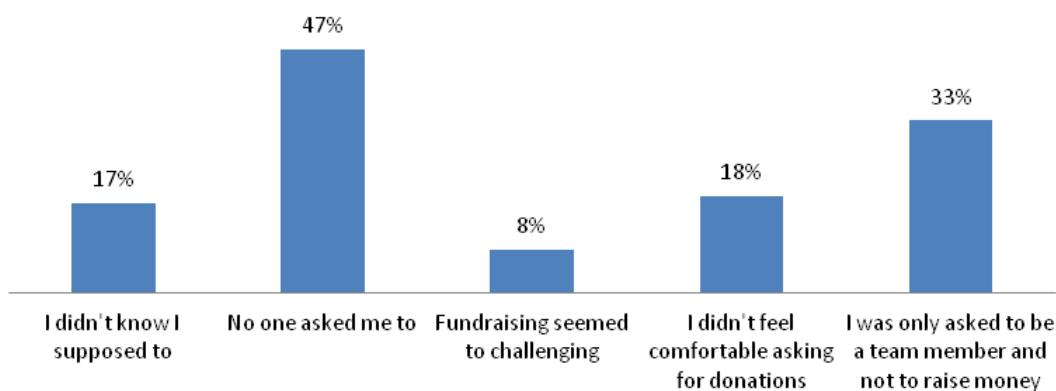


Figure 5: Why didn't you fundraise?

Conclusion

Blackbaud and the Run Walk Ride Fundraising Council conducted this survey to help non-profit organizations understand why an individual takes action. It's enlightening that participants do what is asked of them. In order for organizations to achieve their desired goals, providing a clear message is paramount. Here are some ideas to help you evaluate your current message:

1. Are you messaging participation and fundraising as one activity?
2. What is message around participation? Does participation equal awareness?
3. How are you messaging fundraising? Is it implied or are you directly asking participants to fundraise?
4. Are you asking participants to set fundraising goals? Are you connecting fundraising goals to impact? For example, "Your fundraising efforts will help us do XX to help the community."
5. Once someone has signed up and decided to fundraise, how are you supporting their efforts? What can you do to help fundraising participants be more effective?

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Where to go from here

The analysis of the survey results provide a starting point for understanding what motivates individuals to sign up for an event and raise funds on its behalf. For more information to support your fundraising programs, the Run Walk Ride Fundraising Council and Blackbaud offer the following:

Run Walk Ride Fundraising Council

The Run Walk Ride Fundraising Council is dedicated to providing peer-to-peer fundraising professionals with the practical knowledge and connections they need to continuously improve their organization's performance. Our website, www.runwalkride.com is a rich depository of articles, news and access to other valuable resources for program managers. Our annual conference, workshops and teleconferences enable members of our community to learn from industry leaders and compare notes with their peers.

About Blackbaud

Serving the nonprofit and education sectors for 30 years, Blackbaud (NASDAQ: BLKB) combines technology and expertise to help organizations achieve their missions. Blackbaud works with more than 25,000 customers in over 60 countries that support higher education, healthcare, human services, arts and culture, faith, the environment, independent K-12 education, animal welfare, and other charitable causes. The company offers a full spectrum of cloud-based and on-premise software solutions and related services for organizations of all sizes including: fundraising, eMarketing, social media, advocacy, constituent relationship management (CRM), analytics, financial management, and vertical-specific solutions. Using Blackbaud technology, these organizations raise more than \$100 billion each year. Recognized as a top company by *Forbes*, *InformationWeek*, and *Software Magazine* and honored by *Best Places to Work*, Blackbaud is headquartered in Charleston, South Carolina and has employees throughout the US, and in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Mexico, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. For more information, visit www.blackbaud.com.

About the Author

Amy Braiterman, principal strategy consultant at Blackbaud, supports customers with their peer-to-peer fundraising events with a process she refers to as "data-driven strategy." Amy's data driven strategy analyzes how effective event participants are using online fundraising tools and takes those results to develop an event fundraising plan. Prior to joining Blackbaud, Amy earned her fundraising stripes managing events for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Alzheimer's Association and Share Our Strength. She shares her fundraising know how through her popular blog FriendsAskingAmy.com, by hosting educational webinars and speaking at customer conferences.

About the Author

David Hessekiel, founder and president of the Run Walk Ride Fundraising Council and the Cause Marketing Forum, loves working in a field that both contributes to personal health and supports worthy charities. When he's not writing the group's monthly newsletter, recruiting speakers or analyzing industry statistics, he can be found running around Rye, New York, his home and site of the council's headquarters.

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