

# Knock your **GIVING CAMPAIGN** out of the park!

## Employee Campaign Manager Training: Hosting a Stellar Kick-off

### Best Practices

Employee campaign kick-offs set the tone for the campaign. They are the most effective way to reach every employee with the intent to create excitement, energy and, most importantly, education about *why* your organization is committed to supporting United Way's mission.

### Planning

- Begin the planning process as early as possible. Forming a campaign committee early provides time to brainstorm on kick-off theme, incentives and goal setting.
- Make the campaign kickoff a big deal. Spread the word well in advance.
- Get the kick-off date and time on staff calendars at least a month in advance to avoid conflicts. Send weekly "teasers" from that point forward (hints without reveals). Hint ideas:
  - What vendor food will be served?
  - Will there be special guests in attendance or speaking?
  - Will you reveal campaign participation incentives? Examples: incentives for first-time donors or increased individual donation amount over last year.

### Kick-off Objective Focus Areas

- **Create a sense of urgency.**
  - Prepare staff with campaign dates and details.
  - Create a defined timeline and establish incentives for early participation.
  - Make the ask. It's human nature for employees to want to give when they know others are giving. Be prepared with pledge cards or share the pledge links at kick-off. Offer incentives for those who pledge at the kick-off.
- **Create impact awareness.**
  - Provide a company-specific impact report.
  - Illustrate impact of employee gifts.
- **Provide education on United Way.**
  - Designate a few minutes for UWGN team member or nonprofit partner agency to speak about mission and community efforts.
  - Share impact videos.
  - Highlight a few United Way recipient stories. You can also relate these to the company focus area (education, health, financial mobility or basic needs).

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- **Involve leadership.**
  - Encourage leadership attendance and involvement at the kick-off event.
  - Ask leadership from each department or the CEO/president to send a kick-off email to all staff encouraging participation in the campaign.
  
- **Offer engagement opportunities.**
  - **In-person ideas:** Based on corporate culture, use creativity to garner excitement for the campaign at the kickoff event. Here are a few ideas from local corporate partners:
    - Invite United Way representatives to set up a snack table with marketing collateral to present and answer questions about United Way’s mission or host a panel discussion with impact partners to speak about how United Way helped them achieve their mission.
    - Ask United Way to help with “desk drops”—going through the office from desk to desk to greet employees, provide treats and collateral and answer campaign-related questions.
    - Many partners have success with hosting a kick-off off-site to get employees out of the office and allow staff to rally around the cause in a more memorable setting.
  - **Virtual ideas:**
    - Gresham Smith suggested creating an impactful campaign kick-off video illustrating who and why (“*True Tales*”)
      - This could be a video of four to eight employees across the organization that have been positively impacted by their involvement with United Way and are willing to share their story. The goal is to personalize the campaign with testimonials from colleagues willing to share.
      - In the video, they could explain why they give to United Way, what hands on work or involvement they’ve had with the organization and how they’ve seen United Way impact the community and lives of others.
    - Host a virtual lunch and learn kick-off event.
      - Depending on size of staff and campaign budget, have a treat sent to employees to enjoy while virtually watching kick-off
      - Keep itinerary organized, engaging and interactive.
      - Invite UWGN staff or partner agency to speak to mission.
    - Host a virtual panel event.
      - Curate an internal panel of United Way supporters (board/Tocqueville Society/Young Leaders Society/volunteers) to speak about what United Way means to them.
      - Invite multiple United Way partner agency leaders to represent their nonprofits and speak about how United Way has empowered them to increase their impact in the community.

