

Restaurant Night Fundraising

A restaurant night fundraiser requires virtually no planning and very little investment from your group. If the restaurant requires a flyer or coupon to be presented for your group to receive credit, it will often print those up themselves. However, if you have to print them up, then look for a local print shop that will donate the typesetting and printing for your nonprofit association.

Restaurants participate and even encourage this type of fundraiser because it makes the restaurant look good. Giving back to the community enhances their corporate image, and it fills the restaurant on a slow night. It also introduces people to the restaurant that might not visit otherwise.

Here are some examples of restaurants that hold Restaurant Night fundraisers:

Applebees	McDonalds
Arby's	Outback Steakhouse
Baja Fresh	Panera Bread
Boston Market	Pizza Hut
Burger King	Pizzeria Uno
Chipotle	Ponderosa
Chili's	Sonic
Culvers	Steak N Shake
Fuddruckers	Sweet Tomatoes
KFC	Subway
Max & Erma's	Wendy's

Be aware that although many chain and franchise restaurants are available for fundraising, the decision to do so is up to the individual restaurant operator, and terms of the fundraiser can vary from restaurant to restaurant, even within the same chain and city. Some may make you present a coupon, tell the waitress in advance, drop receipts in a box, or order only certain items on the menu to qualify.

Many locally owned restaurants are also eager to host your restaurant night fundraiser, too, so don't forget to add them to your potential list of restaurants to call on. They often will offer you a better deal than the chains and franchisees. Additionally, any restaurant that you, or a member of

Many restaurants offer non-profit groups a popular way to fundraise with "Restaurant Night" fundraisers. Here's how it works:

The restaurant gives your group a percentage of the sales on a designated night for all the customers that your organization



brings to their business. Most of the time, the restaurant will limit your available nights to a week night — usually one of their slow nights.

your nonprofit group, have a personal connection to via the owner, operator, manager, or worker also may offer you a better deal.

HOW TO HOLD A SUCCESSFUL RESTAURANT NIGHT FUNDRAISER

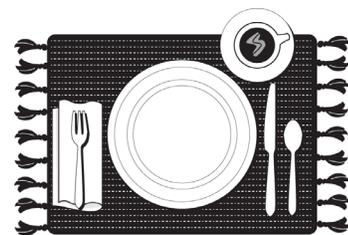
The secret to having a successful restaurant night fundraiser rests with you. You must advertise the event to your members and make sure they show up. Ensure a large turnout by asking your members to encourage family and friends to attend the restaurant night, too.

Many restaurants will allow your members to work behind the counter during your restaurant night. This can be especially effective for alumni associations when the familiar faces of board members and committee members are encouraging your members to spend more by upgrading to a special meal or add a dessert to their order.

Sometimes the restaurant will allow you to set up an area to inform the public of your cause and solicit donations via a donation box by the cash register. A popular method is to ask customers to donate the change they receive back from their meal purchase to your cause.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN SOLICITING RESTAURANTS FOR A RESTAURANT NIGHT FUNDRAISER

There are many variables to consider when choosing a restaurant to host your fundraiser.



✓ What percentage will your group receive? Local restaurants tend to donate higher percentages while chains and franchises trend toward the low side. Usually the range is between 10 and 25%.

✓ What day or days are available? Some local restaurants will agree to a week long promotion but, more often than not, it is limited to one day or night.

- ✓ What hours are available? Obviously the more hours available, the more potential for income.
- ✓ Is it limited to just your group, or will you receive a percentage from everyone who dines during the time period?
- ✓ If take-out or drive-thru is available, will you receive income from these sales?
- ✓ Can your board members work behind the counter or as "celebrity servers?"
- ✓ Can you set up an informational display and solicit funds during your restaurant night?

A restaurant night is a very popular fundraiser for alumni associations and other groups with a good size member base but few volunteers. While the potential for large profits from this fundraiser aren't very likely, it can provide a steady source of income for your group with very little effort. And, this discretionary spending by members of your group won't affect the regular fundraising dollars they give.

Just think of how many times your family eats out each month. If you could hold a restaurant night fundraiser once a month, the money could add up. So start checking out restaurant websites for what they have to offer your association, and make sure to rotate your restaurants for the best results. ❖