

GO CHARITY

First in Fundraising



SIDELINE INSIGHTS

The Fundraiser's Balancing Act

*Blending Donated & Consignment
Items for Maximum Results*

SERIES 1

**Understanding Consignment
& Auction Economics**

1. Introduction – Why Balance Matters More Than Ever

In nonprofit fundraising, relying solely on donated items feels safe. It stretches budgets. It honors relationships. It only makes perfect sense — until you ask a simple question:

Does saving money actually help you raise more?

Donors are generous. Sponsors are supportive. Communities want to help. Yet the data tells a complicated truth. According to *Giving USA's* 2024 report, overall charitable giving has declined in real dollars for two consecutive years. Inflation, economic uncertainty, and donor fatigue have reshaped how people feel and participate — especially at fundraising events.

Relying only on donated items worked years ago, when auction audiences were a bit smaller and competition was limited. But today's donors want something a lot more dynamic. They want variety. They want excitement. And most importantly, they want an auction lineup that reflects the energy of the cause.

That's why the top-performing events, the ones that easily and consistently clear six and seven figures, never rely on donated items alone. They blend. They diversify. They give their guests something to talk about, something to chase, and something to remember for years afterwards.

This paper breaks down how your smartest fundraisers pair donated items with curated consignment experiences to create auctions that surge, surprise, and ultimately raise far more than traditional lineups ever could.

2. The Donated Item Dilemma — And Why It Isn't Your Fault

Let's acknowledge the real truth with empathy. Most nonprofits depend on donations because it's what feels respectful and financially responsible. And in many ways, donated items are essential. They extend your dollar and they often come from people who deeply love your cause.

But here's the question every planner should ask:

**Do donated items alone truly increase giving,
or do they simply fill the room?**

Here's what current industry data shows:

- 70% of donated items sell for less than their stated value
- Only 18% of donated silent auction items create competitive bidding.
- Events that add even 2–3 high-value experiences see up to a 200% increase in total live auction revenue.
- Bidders spend more when they feel emotionally engaged, not when they feel obligated to buy a donation.

Donated items are generous, meaningful, and appreciated, but they don't always inspire donors to stretch beyond their comfort zone. And that's what fundraising is at its core. Inviting people to stretch. To reach. To feel something.

3. Why Blending Models Works — The Insider View

Top fundraisers understand something simple but powerful:

Donated items set the baseline.

Experiential items raise the ceiling.

—» *A donated basket of wine starts the bidding.*

—» *A week in Tuscany blows the ceiling off the room.*

When you combine both, you create:

- **A Natural Rhythm:** Donated items keep the event familiar. Consignment items elevate the moment.
- **Multiple Price Points:** Guests with any budget can participate without lowering the overall value of your auction.
- **Emotional Triggers:** Experiences ignite imagination, and imagination drives generosity. This is why experiential items sell 2–4 times more often at or above value compared to donated items.

- **Repeat Bidders:** When donors win a trip or experience, they talk about it, remember it, and come back for more.
- **Higher Total Revenue:** Blended auctions consistently outperform donated-only auctions.

Go Charity Trend: Blended events raise 150–200% more in the live auction segment. This isn't theory. It's the lived reality of thousands of events across the country.

4. The #1 Question Every Fundraiser Should Ask

Before building your next auction, ask yourself:

1. What did last year's event actually generate?

Not what you hoped — what it produced in real numbers.

2. Did those results match your mission goals?

If you needed \$250,000 and raised \$140,000, the gap isn't donor generosity. It's auction design.

3. Was the auction competitive? Did items stall near their value?

Low bidding doesn't mean low generosity. It means the lineup didn't unlock it.

4. Did guests feel excited, or did the auction feel predictable?

Repetition numbs energy. New, thoughtfully curated items restore it.

5. Are you trying to save money — or raise money?

Because those are very different goals. Fundraisers focused only on cost often leave substantial revenue on the table.

If your results didn't match your mission, trying something different isn't risky.

Staying the same is RISKY.

And here's the good news...

- » Adding consignment items is risk-free.
- » You pay nothing unless they sell — and when they do, they raise exponentially more.

5. When Balance Creates Breakthroughs

Blended auctions consistently deliver:

- Higher bids driven by emotional engagement
- Engaged audiences who stay invested throughout the event

The Fundraiser's Balancing Act: Blending Donated & Consignment Items for Maximum Results

- Stronger donor experience through variety and storytelling
- Better pacing for auctioneers and emcees
- More meaningful moments that anchor donors to your cause

Not every event needs high-end travel.

But every event benefits from **thoughtful variety** and **purposeful curation**.

Go Charity analyzes your audience, price points, donor history, and event tone to ensure every consignment item is authentic to your mission... Never excessive, never out of place, always aligned.

6. How Go Charity Makes It Work

For over 25 years, Go Charity has helped nonprofits elevate their results with a model built on:

Transparency

Clear pricing before the event. No surprises. No risk.

Customization

Experiences tailored to your audience, not a one-size-fits-all catalog to choose from.

Concierge Service

Our in-house team personally manages every winning bidder's trip or experience, ensuring their positive memories reflect back on your mission.

Real Results

Events with blended lineups consistently outpace donated-only auctions by 150–200%.

7. Checklist — Is a Blended Auction Strategy Right for You?

Use this quick self-test before building your lineup:

1. Your donated items feel repetitive or low-energy.
2. Your auction results haven't matched your goals.
3. Your audience includes donors who value experiences.
4. You want to raise more without adding financial risk.
5. You're open to using data and strategy, not guesswork.

If you checked three or more, a diverse, blended approach can dramatically elevate your next event.

Just ask us how...

8. Closing — The Right Mix Changes Everything

Donated items will always matter. They honor your community and strengthen relationships.

But generosity grows when donors feel inspired and experiences offer inspiration in its most powerful form.

The smartest fundraisers don't choose sides.

They balance. They curate. They create lineups that keep guests leaning forward and bidding higher, all to fuel a mission that deserves nothing less.

If your next event is ready for a breakthrough, Go Charity can help you design a lineup that raises more, delights more, and builds loyalty that lasts long after the final paddle drops.

Let's build something unforgettable — together.

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