

GO CHARITY

First in Fundraising



SIDELINE INSIGHTS

Beyond the Paddle

*How Experiential Packages
Inspire Generosity*

SERIES 1

**Understanding Consignment
& Auction Economics**

1. Introduction – The Shift in Fundraising

The art of fundraising is evolving. Donors are changing. Galas are no longer just about elegant dinners and speeches. They're about connection.

What truly moves people to give isn't obligation—it's emotion. They want to see their generosity in action, to bid on something that brings joy, creates memories, and links their ability and passion for giving with an unforgettable experience.

That's where experiential auction packages come in. Trips to Tuscany, dinner with a celebrity chef, a golf retreat with friends—these aren't prizes; they're stories waiting to unfold.

When a nonprofit offers experiences that spark emotion and offering something truly once-in-a-lifetime, giving shifts from a transaction to a journey. That's when art-of-giving grows.

This paper explores why experiences can outperform physical items, how tapping into emotion drives generosity, and how Go Charity's unique experiential approach helps nonprofits fuel big results while deepening donor loyalty.

2. The Power of Experience in Fundraising

Fundraising has always been about people. The most successful events are ones where donors feel something—real moments of inspiration, nostalgia, or hope.

Physical items have limits. A signed guitar or gift basket collects dust. A trip lives on in memory. It becomes part of someone's story, forever tied to the cause that made it possible.

Studies show that emotional connection increases both the frequency and size of donations. When donors associate your event with joy, adventure, or shared memories, they don't just give once—they give again.

Experiential items tap into that psychology. They're aspirational, yes, but they're also deeply personal. They celebrate life while doing something meaningful.

Generosity grows when it's personal. That's why the experiences we curate are designed to move hearts before paddles.

Case in Point: At the Boomer Esiason Foundation's 10th Anniversary Garmany BOOM Event, a luxury travel experience ignited a friendly bidding war that helped push total fundraising past \$1 million—all driven by emotion, not just exclusivity.

3. Myths & Realities – What Really Motivates Donors

Myth 1: Donors only want tangible rewards.

Reality: Donors want meaning.

Today's donors value moments over materials. They want to share the story of their generosity, and experiences make that possible.

Myth 2: Luxury experiences feel excessive for charity events.

Reality: The right experiences create opportunity.

High-value guests do expect premium options. Well-chosen packages lift the entire event, increasing excitement and even raising the prices of donated items.

Myth 3: Experiences are only for large galas.

Reality: Experiential giving scales to any event.

From a \$2,000 golf retreat to a \$25,000 villa, experiences can be tailored to fit the audience and budget. They're flexible tools, not indulgent luxuries.

Myth 4: Experiences are hard to manage.

Reality: The right partner handles every detail.

Go Charity's concierge team ensures each winning bidder has a seamless, personalized journey—from travel planning to special requests—so your team can focus on the mission.

4. Why Experiences Outperform Physical Items

The most successful auctions thrive on energy, anticipation, and storytelling. When an auctioneer introduces an experiential package, the room changes. People picture themselves walking the beaches of St. Maarten, sipping wine in the Alps, or meeting a sports legend in a private setting.

That imagery drives competition. It turns giving into a shared moment of excitement rather than obligation.

Events featuring experiential items often see:

- Higher average bids because emotion drives generosity
- More engaged audiences who bid for fun, not just for things
- Increased *repeat* giving as winning bidders become ultimate ambassadors for your cause

The most powerful result? Donors connect their memories to your mission. Each time they recall their experience, they reflect and remember why their paddle was raised in the first place.

Example: A “Pappy Van Winkle Tasting Dinner” curated for a Sarasota private event sold three times in one night and proceeds tripled! Guests left with rare bourbon memories and a renewed respect for the cause that brought them there.

5. When Experiences Make the Most Sense

Experiential auctions thrive when:

- Your audience values travel, leisure, or lifestyle experiences
- You have an engaging auctioneer who tells a story, not just reads a script
- Donated items are limited and need variety
- You want to attract new bidders or younger donors seeking connection

Not every event needs high-end experiences.

Local or smaller fundraisers may benefit from regional getaways or unique local offerings. What matters most is alignment—matching the package to your audience’s aspirations.

Go Charity helps you find that fit. We analyze your event type, ticket price, audience, and donor history before recommending a single experience. An item that works at a million-dollar gala might not fit a community dinner—and that’s perfectly fine.

6. How Go Charity Curates and Delivers Experiences

For over two decades, Go Charity has curated experiences that

inspire generosity, loyalty—*and results*.

Our process begins well before your event. We study trends, audience behavior, and performance data to offer experiences that, we know, consistently perform.

Each is built around three core principles:

- 1. Transparency:** clear pricing and nonprofit-first margins
- 2. Customization:** tailored to each donor's preferences
- 3. Service Beyond the Bid:** concierge support after the gavel falls

When donors win, the relationship doesn't end—it deepens. They return home with memories that keep your mission top of mind. That's why over 90 percent of our nonprofit partners return year after year.

7. The Emotional ROI of Experiential Giving

Great fundraisers know that generosity isn't measured only in dollars. It's measured in connection.

When bidders raise their paddles for a once-in-lifetime, dream experience, they're also raising it for something bigger: hope, compassion, and impact.

Experiential auctions build emotional ROI by:

- Creating unforgettable experiences tied to your mission
- Strengthening your nonprofit's reputation for quality and care
- Encouraging repeat attendance and lifetime donor value

We've seen it firsthand. Donors who win experiences are **three times** more likely to return the next year—and bring friends!

That isn't luck. It's loyalty built through meaning.

Real Results: At a recent Catholic Charities gala at Cipriani Wall Street, two bidders won identical Tuscany Villa stays—both packages sold at full value, and both guests pledged to underwrite additional auction items the following year. That's generosity that compounds.

8. Closing / Call to Action

At the core, experiential fundraising is about a true connection. Donors remember why they give and how good it feels to give.

Luxury doesn't diminish generosity. When offered transparently, it amplifies it.

The right experiences raise more than funds: they raise spirits,

strengthen relationships, and extend your mission far beyond one night.

At Go Charity, we curate experiences that do more than fill an auction catalog. They create memories that last a lifetime and a legacy of giving that endures.

If you'd like to explore how our packages can inspire generosity at your next event, contact our team for a free consultation.

Together, let's create something unforgettable. Something that lasts well beyond the paddle.

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