

House Raffle Success: The San Mar 2008 House Raffle

9 Secrets to a Successful House Raffle

Douglas Heddings over at True Gotham interviewed Bruce Anderson, CEO of the San Mar Children's Home, about how they managed to hold Maryland's only house raffle in 2008 that's met their ticket sales goals. Here's what I got from the interview:

1. **Make sure a house raffle is legal in your state**

Just because raffles are legal in your state doesn't mean a house raffle is legal or a wise choice. Some states have a maximum prize value, while others don't allow minimum ticket sales, don't allow a raffle to be canceled, and/or don't allow a fixed ticket price. Also, just because a house raffle is legal in your state doesn't mean it's legal in your town or county?DO ASK.

2. **Assess fundraising experience**

If your biggest fundraising victory was selling 250 tickets to a \$50/plate dinner, then selling 5,000 house raffle tickets at \$100 each may be out of reach for now.

3. **Make a plan**

Detail every step of the house raffle process from start to finish, and assign every task to staff, sponsors, board members, and service contractors. Include an exit plan in case you have to cancel the raffle.

4. **Enlist the media to spread the word**

An occasional mention of your house raffle in the local papers will likely not be enough exposure to sell thousands of tickets. Expand the media scope beyond your county and state. Get the word to the Associated Press and other national news sources. Use every contact and have regular press releases. Get your house raffle story on the radio and on the TV news.

5. **Use every promotion trick in the book**

Notify everyone on your mailing list, post signs and posters all over the place, and finesse your house raffle event into community newsletters and real estate venues.

6. **Work the Web**

Have a website dedicated to the house raffle. Show off the house, the other prizes, and the house raffle rules. Add a countdown to the drawing date and a daily tally of house raffle tickets sold. Contribute regular write-ups to blogs. Enable online ticket-buying.

7. **Cross every T, dot every i**

Keep detailed records for every single house raffle ticket sold: who it was sold to, how they paid for it, how many tickets they bought, their contact information, etc. Organize the tickets stubs in alphabetical order so you can retrieve any ticket stub on demand.

8. Use independent professionals for sensitive tasks

So there is no question on the validity of the winner, be sure to have an independent?and widely respected?third party audit the house raffle tickets. Account for every single ticket sold before holding the drawing. Have a public house raffle drawing event and leave the actual ticket draws to legal representatives.

9. Hope for the best but prepare for the worst

Everything I've read hints that a house raffle is a long and detailed process, prone to failure and tough to manage. Leave plenty of time to sell the tickets and prepare for the worst all along the way, even while you hope for?and work for?the best.

Be sure to check out [the original article](#) and read the interesting questions and comments from True Gotham's readers.