



Peer-to-Peer Event Fundraising BenchmarkTM Study

Key Performance Benchmarks for the
Six Primary Types of Events

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ABOUT THIS STUDY

Online fundraising performance metrics were calculated for 148 events across existing 18 Convio event fundraising clients with a history of running successful online programs on the Convio TeamRaiser™ platform. The results are based on average fundraising during the 2009 event cycle and collated to produce average performance metrics across each event segment. Note that because organizations manage their offline registration and fundraising data in different ways, this study focuses on online fundraising activity only. Additionally, only organization-led events were included in this study; grassroots or constituent-led peer to peer campaigns were not considered at this time.

INTRODUCTION





This benchmarks paper is a complement to The Convio Online Nonprofit Benchmark™ Study that covers key advocacy, fundraising, email and website metrics across nonprofit industry types, including a Team Events category. We've chosen to create a separate benchmark study for Team Events because we recognize there are vastly different types of fundraising events and the benchmarks for these events types vary. In this paper, we take a closer look at the key event types and performance benchmarks for each.

For decades, nonprofit organizations have been hosting peer-to-peer fundraising events as a way to raise money and awareness for their respective causes. As the popularity of event fundraising continues to grow, many organizations are creating events to serve as their organization's primary fundraising vehicle, or adding events to supplement their existing fundraising and outreach programs.

As the event fundraising market has grown and event after event has been developed, commonalities have emerged to illuminate "like" groups or types of events, and wide variances in performance have cemented the distinctions between each event type. Whether your organization has an existing event, or is considering adding a new event to your fundraising mix, understanding how different types of events perform is critical to maximizing the success of the event. This study is intended as a starting point to help organizations identify the key benchmarks for performance-tracking within each of the six primary peer-to-peer fundraising event types.

EVENT TYPES

Nonprofit organizations have become more and more creative in designing events that fit their missions, their resources, and their personalities. Undoubtedly, as the event fundraising market continues to evolve, new event types will emerge; however, today we can identify six primary event types based on the type of activity performed at the event, the level of investment expected of the participant (both physically and financially), and the resources required of the organization to host the event. These event types are*:

EVENT TYPE	DESCRIPTION
NON-COMPETITIVE 	Non-Competitive events make up the large majority of peer-to-peer fundraising events in the nonprofit space. These events include fun runs, awareness walks, dog walks, field days, and more.
COMPETITIVE 	Competitive events, such as foot races, are also very popular among nonprofit fundraisers. These events are typically half-day affairs with a timed competitive athletic event that a person or team can “win.”
ENDURANCE 	Endurance events normally take place over multiple days, and require a high level of athletic ability or training. Typical endurance events include long distance walks, mountain climbs, and cycle events.
VIRTUAL 	The term “virtual event” can refer to a myriad of campaigns and activities. In the general sense, a virtual event is one in which supporters can sign-up for and participate in from anywhere—it does not require the participant’s physical presence at an event site.
YOUTH / SCHOOL 	Youth and School events are designed for children to participate in, either in conjunction with their school or another organization geared toward youth services.
SMALL TEAM 	Small Team events are most often defined as golf or bowling events, however this category could extend to any activity with small teams (2-10 people) and a restricted event capacity. Small team events are often secondary to other, larger fundraising events, but they can be lucrative for nonprofit fundraisers.

 **For more information on Peer-to-Peer Event Fundraising** and choosing the right event for your organization, visit: <http://www.convio.com/p2pfundraising>

* Please note that for the purposes of this paper, only organization-led events were examined.

MEASURING SUCCESS: THE KEY PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS







When setting goals and measuring progress throughout the event cycle, organizations should monitor and measure the following areas of performance: participant fundraising rates, donations at time of registration (self-donations), average online gift amounts, fundraising activity (per fundraiser), team participation, and year-over-year participant retention and growth.

Understanding how your event performs in these areas in relation to similar events can help you identify where your event is performing well, and where you may want to make adjustments to improve performance. The benchmarks offered below reflect in-depth research of 18 different organizations' events and event series (148 events in total) utilizing Convio's TeamRaiser event registration and online peer-to-peer fundraising tools. Collectively, these 18 organizations bring in over \$100 million from events per year.

Percent of Participants Who Fundraise

With the exception of Endurance events, which usually require all participants to fundraise, most events will have some percentage of participants who do not raise any money for the organization. Understanding what percentage of event participants bring in donations from friends and family on behalf of the event is important to measuring your overall fundraising performance. While it is important to track your entire universe of participants and their fundraising activity, for the purposes of this study we focus on the percentage of participants who brought in one or more donations online using Convio's TeamRaiser tools.

Although fundraising is the primary purpose of most events, typically only about 41.5% of participants actively raise money online. To maximize the fundraising effectiveness of each event, organizations need to take steps to understand and actively work to improve this metric as much as possible.

METRIC	AVERAGE	NON-COMPETITIVE 	COMPETITIVE 	ENDURANCE 	VIRTUAL 	YOUTH/SCHOOL 	SMALL TEAM 
Percentage of Participants Who Fundraise	41.50%	38.52%	19.97%	73.01%	33.17%	35.60%	48.74%

► Tips to Motivate Participants to Fundraise

The percent of participants who fundraise for your event can help tell you how engaged your participant-base is (or isn't). If your percent of fundraisers is low, chances are that your participants may not understand that they are expected to raise funds for the event or how

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their fundraising dollars will be put to use. To increase the population of participants who fundraise online, ensure that your print, website, and email content clearly promote the fundraising aspect of the event.

Additionally, use ad hoc and automated email messaging through the course of the event cycle to coach participants to become fundraisers, and ultimately, to reach their fundraising goal.









For more event success tips, download the tip sheet, *Peer-to-Peer Event Fundraising Success: How to Increase Participation*: www.convio.com/p2pfundraising

Donation at Time of Registration

Another great way to increase fundraising dollars is to ask participants to kick-start their fundraising by making a donation of their own. This is especially important for events that do not require a registration fee, as they do not have the registration fee revenue to help cover the cost of the event. **Across all event types, only about 13.5% of participants make a donation at the time of online registration.**

Additional gifts can play an important part in online fundraising. If donors see that a participant was willing to give toward their own participation, they might be more willing give themselves. Additionally, if every participant makes a donation in addition to their registration, the event has already recognized fundraising revenue before the first fundraising email is sent.

METRIC	AVERAGE	NON-COMPETITIVE 	COMPETITIVE 	ENDURANCE 	VIRTUAL 	YOUTH/SCHOOL 	SMALL TEAM 
Percentage of Participants Who Donate at Time of Registration	13.52%	16.37%	6.86%	5.66%	8.67%	14.02%	26.31%
Average Amount of Additional Gift	\$61.18	\$55.87	\$34.08	\$147.05	\$19.46	\$25.73	\$57.07

► Tips for Driving Additional Donation at the Time of Registration

In order to increase the number of participants who opt to make an additional donation at the time of registration, first you must provide the opportunity for users to make an additional gift, and reinforce the opportunity with messaging about the value of their additional gift.

When setting up the registration form, ask, “Would you like to kick-start your fundraising by making a donation now?” This will clarify that the additional donation will be credited to the participant’s progress, and tip them off that they are expected to continue fundraising. You can also provide different donation levels that the user can choose from at this step in the registration process, so they understand how much you expect them to give.

Average Online Gift Amount

Another key metric to watch is the average overall gift amount that donors make on behalf of participants or teams within an event. The average gift is calculated by taking the overall online fundraising amount raised, and dividing it by the total number of online gifts raised. **Across all segments, the average online gift amount is \$57.**







METRIC	AVERAGE	NON-COMPETITIVE 	COMPETITIVE 	ENDURANCE 	VIRTUAL 	YOUTH/SCHOOL 	SMALL TEAM 
Average Online Gift	\$57.40	\$50.34	\$55.39	\$75.63	\$72.31	\$31.55	\$59.21

► Tips for Increasing Average Online Gift Amount

Average online gift amount is unique in that you as an organization can set the expectation of what the average gift amount should be. You can do this by asking donors for a specific amount in email and website content, and reinforcing the desired amount in donation form giving levels.

Average Emails Sent & Average Dollars Raised

As part of participating in a fundraising event, participants are asked to reach out to others in their networks to solicit donations on behalf of the event or organization. Participants can reach out in person, through fundraising letters or emails, or via social networks to secure donations from their friends and family members. When using TeamRaiser, participants are asked to send fundraising emails from an online participant center to solicit donations. The percentage of event participants that send out fundraising emails is directly correlated to the percentage of participants who raise money, and therefore is also correlated to overall fundraising results. Understanding the percentage of participants who send email and actively fundraise can provide you with valuable insights into the online fundraising behavior of event participants.

METRIC	AVERAGE	NON-COMPETITIVE 	COMPETITIVE 	ENDURANCE 	VIRTUAL 	YOUTH/SCHOOL 	SMALL TEAM 
Percentage of Participants Who Send Email	26.25%	19.53%	9.59%	50.01%	27.92%	30.43%	20.04%
Percentage of Participants Who Fundraise	41.50%	38.52%	19.97%	73.01%	33.17%	35.60%	48.74%

Next, you can look at the average number of emails sent, and average dollars raised per fundraiser to understand how effective these fundraisers are.

METRIC	AVERAGE	NON-COMPETITIVE 	COMPETITIVE 	ENDURANCE 	VIRTUAL 	YOUTH/SCHOOL 	SMALL TEAM 
Average Raised Per Online Fundraiser	\$430.33	\$190.91	\$235.53	\$1,647.01	\$223.53	\$119.96	\$165.01
Average Number of Gifts per Fundraiser	6.57	3.77	4.20	20.85	3.84	3.84	2.90
Average Emails Sent per Fundraiser	38.48	21.95	21.00	108.91	48.49	20.41	10.13

You can also use average dollars raised and average emails sent to calculate the average dollars raised per email sent. This exercise can help you understand the importance of asking participants to send email.

METRIC	AVERAGE	NON-COMPETITIVE	COMPETITIVE	ENDURANCE	VIRTUAL	YOUTH/SCHOOL	SMALL TEAM
Dollars Per Email Sent	\$11.18	\$8.70	\$11.22	\$15.12	\$4.61	\$5.88	\$16.28







► Tips to Increase Emails Sent and Dollars Raised

In order to motivate users to raise money, it is important to personalize your messaging to thank those who have already begun fundraising, and find ways to motivate those who have not. Segment your communications based on amount raised, and identify incentives or contests to promote fundraising throughout the event cycle. You should also make it as easy as possible for participants to solicit donations—provide suggested messages and email templates that participants can simply update and send, rather than having them start from scratch. In addition to email, you can also motivate participants to reach out by providing them with the opportunity to publicize their participation on their favorite social networks.

Team Participation

Team Participation is an integral part of most fundraising events. Some event types, like some school events or small team events, usually only allow participants to participate as part of a team. For the other event types, it is clear that team participation is an indicator of fundraising performance. **On average, participants who register as part of a team are more likely to send email, recruit more donors, and raise more dollars than individual participants.**

METRIC	AVERAGE	NON-COMPETITIVE	COMPETITIVE	ENDURANCE	VIRTUAL	YOUTH/SCHOOL	SMALL TEAM
Team Participant Average Emails Sent	24.80	9.27	5.83	104.20	15.76	8.55	5.18
Individual Participant Average Emails Sent	17.96	6.02	1.76	54.56	21.06	2.19	N/A

METRIC	AVERAGE	NON-COMPETITIVE 	COMPETITIVE 	ENDURANCE 	VIRTUAL 	YOUTH/SCHOOL 	SMALL TEAM 
Team Participant Average Amount Raised	321.39	74.79	57.77	1,581.91	110.28	42.70	60.86
Individual Participant Average Amount Raised	243.84	49.80	23.20	927.77	67.94	15.85	N/A
Percentage of Team Participants That Fundraise	45.21%	41.08%	23.87%	86.54%	32.62%	38.43%	48.74%
Percentage of Individual Participants That Fundraise	28.72%	29.74%	10.14%	55.50%	33.55%	10.05%	N/A

► Tips to Reinforce the Team Experience







There are many reasons that team participation may increase fundraising performance—accountability to a team, competition, and team spirit to name a few. While you can't know people's particular motivations, you can foster an environment in which teams thrive. To do so, be sure to support your team captains by providing them with information and instructions on how to recruit and help coach their team members.

It's also a good idea to communicate with Team Captains more often than other participants, and even host meetings or place phone calls to assist them. Wherever possible, provide "top team" lists and dollar amounts raised to promote friendly competition between and within teams. Finally, create Team Contests to reward special teams; for example, give out awards or prizes for biggest team, best fundraising team, best team t-shirt or best team spirit.

Year-Over-Year Participant Retention & Growth

Once your event is over, it is important to note whether you are retaining, gaining, or losing participants from year-to-year. Existing participants have proven their interest in your organization and event, they are already familiar with the registration and fundraising processes, and will likely be much easier for your organization to support throughout the event season. In order to grow your event, you must first retain previous participants, then recruit new ones.

Retention, or re-participation, can be difficult to determine depending on where your event data is stored. For this study, retention was calculated by querying all online participants registered in 2008 who returned online in 2009. By only calculating online participants, these metrics likely under-represent the universe of returning participants, but they still represent a subset of the larger population of participants, providing a reliable trend.

METRIC	AVERAGE	NON-COMPETITIVE 	COMPETITIVE 	ENDURANCE 	VIRTUAL 	YOUTH/SCHOOL 	SMALL TEAM 
Percentage of Participants Who Return (YOY)	19.94%	18.08%	19.80%	33.88%	8.20%	10.97%	22.78%
Registration Growth (YOY)	9.00%	19.51%	31.75%	-3.49%	-14.88%	9.26%	1.46%
Fundraising Growth (YOY)	16.23%	-0.43%	20.82%	-4.48%	39.67%	57.30%	-7.15%

► Tips for Retention and Growth

When recruiting past participants, be sure to reach out early and reward past team captains and top fundraisers by providing benefits for registering, such as a discounted registration. Make it easy for participants to return to register online and begin fundraising by allowing them to reclaim their previous year's address book, fundraising history, and personal fundraising page content. To grow your event, utilize all of the communication channels you have at your disposal – email your housefile, leverage corporate partnerships, advertise on TV, Radio, and billboards, and provide opportunities for participants to spread the word via social sharing and video. It is also imperative to follow up with participants after the event is over, and continue to engage with them throughout the year.

CONCLUSION

As event fundraising continues to permeate the world of nonprofit development, the ability to measure, analyze, and correct event performance has become essential to creating a unique and successful fundraising vehicle to help fund your mission. This study has provided context around the key performance metrics that you should be considering whether your organization has an existing event or is considering adding a new event to your fundraising mix. Setting goals around each of the key metrics outlined here as well as focusing on the tips for improvement in each area will help your event grow and prosper.

HOW CONVIO CAN HELP YOU

Convio provides software and services that help nonprofits more effectively attract, engage and cultivate supporters. As a web-based platform, Convio is a cost effective solution that will grow with your organization and can integrate with other systems to extend your online reach.

Web-Based Software Suite

- Fundraising
- Donor Database & Management
- Events
- Peer-to-Peer Fundraising & Events
- eCommerce
- Web Content Management
- Advocacy
- Email Marketing

Strategic and Technical Services

- Strategy Consulting
- Campaign Management
- User Experience & Research
- Analytics
- Website Design Services
- Technical Design & Integration
- Custom Development
- Training & Support

WHY CONVIO IS DIFFERENT

Passion

Our team is passionate about helping nonprofits further their missions and achieve real results. Over 75% of our client services staff has worked in the nonprofit sector. Meet our team and see examples of our work with clients at www.convio.com/portfolio.

Trusted Strategic Advisor

Convio is the preferred technology and services partner for over 1,300 nonprofits of all sizes—including over half of the top 50 charities—helping them to achieve tangible results through:

- Database Management & Segmentation
- List Building & Donor Acquisition
- Advocacy & Outreach
- Fundraising
- Event Participation & Fundraising
- Website Engagement & Conversion
- Online & Multi-Channel Strategies
- Training & Support

Track Record of Innovation & Results

We're a pioneer for online and integrated marketing for nonprofits. Here are just a few examples:

- **Industry Benchmarks**—launched the industry's first benchmark study which we publish annually
- **User Engagement Pathways**—created the concept of defining clear communications paths via email and website to increase engagement and conversions and build this into our product
- **Accessibility**—partnered with Easter Seals to develop a first-time program to offer accessible technology, job training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities
- **Convio Go!™**—launched the industry's first affordable, guided fundraising program resulting in a return of \$3 for every \$1 spent
- **Driving Results**—In 2009, Convio helped nonprofits process: \$921 million in online donations, 51.5 million advocacy calls to action, and 3.8 billion emails (95% delivery rate)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Convio Research

- **The Next Generation of American Giving**, <http://convio.com/nextgeneration>
- **The Convio Online Nonprofit Benchmark™ Study**, <http://www.convio.com/benchmark>
- **The Wired Wealthy: Using the Internet to Connect with Your Middle and Major Donors**, <http://convio.com/wiredwealthy>

Convio Best Practice Guides

- **Using the Internet to Raise Funds and Build Donor Relationships**, <http://www.convio.com/fundraising>
- **Nonprofit Website Fundamentals**, <http://www.convio.com/websiteguide>
- **Basics of Email Marketing for Nonprofits**, <http://www.convio.com/emailguide>
- **Toolbox for the Modern Nonprofit: Donor Management Made Easy**, <http://convio.com/donormgmtguide>
- **Going Social: Tapping into Social Media for Nonprofit Success**, <http://www.coonvio.com/socialmedia>
- **Holiday Giving Guide**, <http://www.convio.com/endofyeargiving>

More Convio Resources

- **On-Demand Webinars**, <http://www.convio.com/webinars>
- **Quick Tour Videos**, <http://www.convio.com/quicktour>
- **Sign up for our newsletter**: *Convio Connection*, a free bimonthly newsletter for nonprofits on how to attract constituents, drive action, and build loyalty through online relationship management. <http://www.convio.com/newsletter>

ABOUT CONVIO

Convio is the leading provider of on-demand constituent relationship management (CRM) software and services that give nonprofit organizations a better way to inspire and mobilize people to support their organization. Convio Online Marketing, the company's online marketing suite, offers integrated software for fundraising, advocacy, events, email marketing and web content management, and its Convio Common Ground™ CRM system helps organizations efficiently track and manage all interactions with supporters. All Convio products are delivered through the Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model and are backed by a portfolio of best-in-class consulting and support services and a network of partners who provide value added services and applications focused on the unique needs of nonprofit organizations. For more information, please visit www.convio.com.

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