

Kingston Auction Company

State-of-the-Art Auctioneering to Maximize Your Fundraising Efforts

A Model for Successful Benefit Auctions

Innovative Techniques to Propel Your Auction to the Next Level!

By Kathy Kingston, Kingston Auction Company

Author's note:

Non-profit organizations can boost their auction income and generate significant awareness by applying the fundraising auction strategies described in this article. Koahnic Broadcast Corporation, an Alaska non profit, strategically employed these innovative fundraising strategies over several years to maximize their fundraising efforts and to significantly increase profits.

The 8th Annual Alaska Native Art Auction raised over \$207,750 to benefit non-profit Koahnic Broadcast Corporation in Anchorage Alaska. This exemplary event is recognized as the top Native Art auction in Alaska, attracting more than 300 loyal bidders including leaders in corporate, Alaska Native, political sectors, as well as philanthropists and art aficionados.

Original traditional and contemporary Alaska Native artwork featured 40 live auction items and over 125 silent auction lots of stunning masks, carvings, paintings, traditional weaving, paddles, jewelry, dolls, and baleen and grass baskets.

This event has soared from \$6,000 the first year to over \$207,750 plus an additional \$130,000 funder match this year. Further, Koahnic's signature event has engendered dedicated supporters statewide. How did they achieve this remarkable success? Here are some strategies that can propel your non-profit auction to the next level of fundraising.



Photo credit:
Frank Flavin Photography

Kathy Kingston, Fundraising Auctioneer with Miss Alaska, Peggy Willman, dressed in traditional Yupik regalia. This stunning mask "The Singer" by Perry Eaton brought \$4,500 at the 8th Annual Koahnic Broadcast Corporation Alaska Native Art Auction in Anchorage, Alaska in March 2003.

Strong Organizational Commitment

The Koahnic's steadfast support for their signature auction includes: staff to assist detailed planning by a diverse and talented auction committee, superb live and silent art items, strong support by leading artists, a solid core of committed volunteers, active participation by the Board at all levels, and dynamic involvement and skillful orchestration by a professional auctioneer.

Fund Raising & Friend Raising

Developing relationships is crucial to successful fundraising. Koahnic actively positioned this art auction as a major "power networking" event through targeted outreach and careful guest list creation. Benefit auctions provide an excellent way to identify and cultivate new donors and to showcase non-profit cause. Corporate sponsorships and media partners add leadership, new revenue, in kind support and visibility.

"Fund-a-Future" at the Live Auction

Specific "Fund-a-Projects" allow all guests to make a meaningful contribution at their own level, for a specific attainable project. Koahnic incorporated a "Fund-a-Future paddle raise" in the latter stage of the live auction that brought an extra \$65,250 for their endowment. By brilliantly leveraging a 1 for 1 match by two national funders, the total multiplied to \$192,750 on top of regular auction profits!

Silent Auction Strategies

Promote and close the silent auction in staggered sections to maximize bidding opportunities. Auctioneers generate excitement and dollars with motivational banter about silent items, closing times and why bidders should support the non-profit. Koahnic initiated an Automatic Bid/Guaranteed Bid on silent auction bid sheets; thus the high bidder can agree to pay a premium, typically 150% of the value for the privilege of closing the bidding outright, increasing profits and guest convenience.

Multi-Media Excitement

Use large screens that feature photos or power point to enhance items and focus guest's attention. Intricate items and complex packages really benefit from this approach. Koahnic jazzed up the live auction with upbeat music to introduce items and closed silent sections with stirring native fiddling music. Volunteers wearing their native regalia held the art items at the live auction. Color photos of auction items on their web page marketed the items and provided an excellent preview and buyer motivation.

Encourage Philanthropic Bidding

Ask the guests in your opening remarks to bid over value, then reward over-bidders with a special gift such as chocolates or wine. As the auctioneer, you are an extension of the organizational and their cause that evening. Throughout your bid calling,

Testimonial:

Former governor of Alaska, Bill Sheffield praised this auction, "this benefit auction is one of the finest fundraising events in the state and showcases the art and culture of Alaska while raising significant revenue and awareness for Koahnic Broadcast Corporation."

inform guests the importance of their support and what how the funds will be used. Encourage guests to invest in the mission and you will boost profits that evening and foster a dynamic climate for future giving.

About the Author:

Kathy Kingston is President of Kingston Auction Company and specializes in benefit auctions and fundraising consulting. She provides state-of-the-art auctioneering to maximize fundraising efforts and to increase profits. Headquartered in New Hampshire, Ms. Kingston conducts benefit auctions throughout New England and the US. She has recently expanded her fundraising auction seminar series and is writing a book on Fundraising Auctions.

About Koahnic Broadcast Corporation

Koahnic Broadcast Corporation is a non-profit, Native American media center headquartered in Anchorage, Alaska. Koahnic is an Athabascan word in the Ahtna dialect meaning "live air." Their mission is to be the leader in bringing Native voices to the region and the nation.

The Koahnic Broadcast Alaska Native Art Auction has been praised as one of the top Alaska Native Art auctions in the United States and is one of the top fundraisers in Alaska.

Please visit www.kingstonauction.com for more information.



Kathy Kingston, Professional Auctioneer

Kingston Auction Company's mission is to Ignite Generosity at Auctions!

A professional fundraising auctioneer and consultant since 1986, Kathy Kingston has raised millions of dollars for non-profit organizations across the country. One of the few auctioneers in the nation who has expertise in both non-profit management and fundraising, Kathy consistently helps clients exceed their fundraising goals and offers a wealth of practical strategies for revenue enhancement.

An active member of National Auctioneers Association, Ms. Kingston is a popular speaker and has won numerous awards. She is an avid sea kayaker and loves the outdoors.



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