

Running a Virtual Campaign Kick-Off



United Way
Centraide
Simcoe Muskoka

Why Hold a Kick-Off Event?

As you begin your United Way workplace campaign, a virtual kick-off has many benefits.

Ready, Set, Go!

Holding a virtual kick-off event creates a clear start to your campaign, creating a sense of importance and a timeline for your colleagues. It leads to more success, too! Campaigns with kick-off events have proven to raise more dollars to support the community.

Inspiration

A kick-off doesn't just bring people together, but it gives them an opportunity to hear about the impact of their support. This can inspire them into make an informed decision when it comes to their gift.

Team Building

Especially in a time when many of us feel disconnected from one another due to social distancing, a kick-off event is great for bringing coworkers together and giving them a common goal.

Stage Setting

A virtual kick-off will show everyone how passionate your organization, your senior management and your colleagues are in supporting our communities and our most vulnerable residents.

No two kick-off events are the same. Your United Way Simcoe Muskoka Relationship Manager is here to support your campaign and can help you plan and customize your kick-off event. We have created tools and resources to support you in hosting your kick-off virtually.

Planning & Key Considerations

Technology Platform

Ensure that your online web conferencing platform is approved by your workplace and learn about the platform's functionality. This way, your UWSM Relationship Manager can help you build your agenda and activities. If you do not have a platform to host your virtual kick-off, speak to your UWSM Relationship Manager.

Senior Management Support

Seeing support from your Executives plays a huge role in someone's decision to give and is critical to showing that your organization as a whole is behind the campaign. Book some time from your Executives for them to participate in your virtual kick-off. See Appendix B for suggested talking points and presentation content that can be personalized by senior management.

Consider Your Audience

For the sake of engagement, consider a kick-off event no longer than 30 minutes long. If you have many employees, consider multiple kick-offs to capture everyone. You want to ensure that you reach everyone and make people feel comfortable enough to ask questions.

Determine the Host and Speakers

It is best if the Employee Campaign Chair (ECC) acts as the facilitator and keeps things moving. Your UWSM Relationship Manager can act as a co-host if you wish. Invite your CEO and executives to speak to help inspire others from the top down.

Focus on Engagement

Make your kick-off interactive! Consider activities like polls or quizzes to keep your colleagues engaged online. Your UWSM Relationship Manager can help with this.

Show Donor Impact

Our Resource Library contains some great tools like videos, our Annual Report and more to help you show the impact that every donation has on our communities. If you need help creating awareness-building

Set Clear, Actionable Steps

Let people know exactly how they can donate and how they can get involved in the campaign, if they wish. It is a good idea to send your donation link immediately following your kick-off event so people can take action while they are inspired.

Appendix A: Sample Kick-Off Agenda

Here is a sample agenda to help you plan your virtual kick-off event.

Virtual meeting login details: [include details]

Itinerary

Details

Opening

5 minutes

Time: X:XX am/pm

CEO/ECC/Sr. Leaders

- Welcome
- Value of UW & Company partnership
- Importance of United Way now
- Encourage all to get involved with campaign activities
- Interactive poll or quiz to get people engaged.

UWSM Awareness Activity

7-12 minutes

Facilitated by UWSM

Activity examples:

- UWSM & Company quiz
- Group whiteboard sharing (i.e. Why I care about my community)
- UWSM videos

Closing Remarks

5 minutes

CEO/ECC/Sr. Leaders

- CEO/ECC to thank participants and reiterate importance of UWSM
- Call to action/donate now
- Share company fundraising goals
- How to give
- Instructions for next steps - donation link to come, who to contact with questions, etc.

Appendix B: Key Points for Speakers

The notes below can be customized for your speaker at your virtual kick-off

Opening Remarks

- Welcome attendees, and thank them for joining the call
- My Name is.....
- Before we begin, I would like to welcome a very important guests who is with us this morning (introduce UW Speaker).
- As many of you know, I am a strong believer of United Way's work and I am proud to be a part of <COMPANY'S> United Way Campaign.
- We all know that poverty is hurting our community and undercutting what we stand for. This is even more evident now during this very challenging time of Covid-19 - our most vulnerable community members are even more at risk.
- We have seen demand for community services skyrocket since the beginning of the crisis here at home. The need for access to food, mental health counselling, and employment supports has skyrocketed since the onset of this pandemic.
- And that need will continue to climb as we help people get back to work and settle into a new normal for our community.
- What inspires me is that as a nation, we have all pulled together and looked to how we can help during this pandemic. Everyone is stepping up and doing what they can to help to ensure no one falls through the cracks.
- But we have to look to the future, and what our role will be in our long-term community recovery. These issues we have seen in the last few months (food access, senior's isolation, job security) they are not new and will continue to need to be addressed long after we settle into our new normal.
- That is why we partner with United Way; they have been on the front line of address these
- issues. They provide a vital continuum of care for people and families who need support.
- I want to take a moment to recognize and thank each and every one of you in this room for stepping up to support United Way every year. Our collective commitment demonstrates <COMPANY'S> leadership in our community, raising over \$XXX for United Way.
- IF THE SPEAKER HAS A PERSONAL STORY ABOUT UNITED WAY OR SOMETHING THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED, ADD HERE
- Thank you again for your personal leadership and generous support of United Way.
- Introduce the next section of the event <e.g. audience poll, speaker, UW activity> and turn over to the activity facilitator

Closing Remarks

- Thank you, < GUEST SPEAKER>, for joining us today and speaking. United Way plays such an important role in our community, investing in a critical social safety net in Simcoe Muskoka. This vision ensures we are lifting our region up and that regardless of background and circumstance – everyone can thrive.
- Our annual United Way campaign starts on <DATE>. We have an amazing team that has worked hard to make this year’s campaign even better. Thank you, <CAMPAIGN VOLUNTEERS> for your leadership in the campaign.
- <By now, a donation link should be in your inbox. I encourage you to make a gift now. Let’s demonstrate our commitment to our staff before we officially launch the campaign on the DATE.> Optional if there is a multiple kick off situation and you send out link early.
- Our firm's donations to United Way are part of how we are building a stronger community
- and creating legacy across our communities.
- Thanks everyone.



Virtual Kick-Off Planning Schedule

First

Confirm CEO Attendance

Before establishing a date, work with the CEO's team to book their time and ensure they are available. Also confirm if your CEO needs support or slides for their speaking remarks.

3-5 Weeks Before

Draft Invitation

Draft up your invitation. If you need approval, consider starting earlier.

Confirm Invite List

Create your invitation list. Work with your HR department to ensure you have captured all staff. If you are hosting multiple events, consider dividing the list.

Prep Your Pledge Tool

If you haven't started already, take steps to get your pledge tool up and running to capture donations on kick-off day.

2 Weeks Before

Send Invitation

Send out invitations and include web conferencing information in the booking

Collect RSVPs

Consider tracking RSVPs so you can know how your colleagues are responding to your invitation.

1 Week Before

Send a Reminder

Consider sending a reminder invitation if there are still a number of outstanding responses.

Update the Invitation

If desired, make updates to the calendar invitation to include an agenda, the presentation document, a list of speakers and other information. This can also serve as a reminder.

Confirm Key Speaker

Check in with your CEO and any other speakers to ensure a successful kick-off.

Prep Your Pledge Tool

Check in on the progress with your pledge tool. Will it be ready to go on event day?

Virtual Kick-Off Planning Schedule

Day Before

All Systems Go

Do a test run-through to check your conferencing system, presentation documents, etc. This will help put your mind at ease and can help identify issues before the kick-off!

Test Your Pledge Tool

Ensure your pledge tool is ready to accept donation.

Kick-Off Day

Last-Minute Test

Test your conference system and any other technology again, just in case!

Inspire!

Launch your campaign with a successful virtual kick-off. Your entire organization will be inspired to support their community and participate in your campaign.

Right Away

Send the Donation Link

Now that everyone is inspired, give them the means to support their community by immediately sending out the donation link. If you have hosted multiple events, send the link out to everyone after the last kick-off event has concluded.

Follow-Up

Thank Others

Send a follow-up communication to thank staff for joining your kick-off event and encourage them to visit the pledge tool and consider making a gift. Thank key contributors, too (speakers, volunteers, etc.). They will remember it!



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