

## **Sue and Graham's Quiz – Saturday 12 September 2009**

We ran a fundraising quiz recently for Mesothelioma UK and I thought it might be useful to log our experience in case others want to have a go. Two years ago we ran a Charity Ball to celebrate my 5-year survival. This raised £5,500. Sue (my wife) decided we'd try something different this year hence a quiz. The night was a huge success and raised £2,400.

**We started planning in April (2009) for a date in September. The key things to consider are...**

- 1. How many people do you want to attend? This will determine size of venue required.**
- 2. Where will you hold it? This affects cost**
- 3. Will food and drink be provided and if so how? This affects profit**
- 4. What supplementary activities will there be? Raffle, auction, or whatever. This also affects profit.**

**What happened.....**

With our various circles of friends we decided to go for a maximum of 200 people and not open it up to the general public - always an option. We decided on teams of 6-8 which turned out to be about optimum for this sort of event. This translated into up to 25 tables of 8 people. The best venue was a local school which could take exactly this and had all the facilities we needed. We approached the school, chose a suitable date (Saturday, 12th September, eventually, after a few hiccups) and booked it with a deposit of £50 (They charged £30 per hour and we booked the venue for 6 hours).

Since this was a charity event we wanted to put a premium on the ticket prices but offer value for money so we decided on £10 a ticket to include a fish and chip supper. A very good offer on After Eight mints and Turkish Delight provided 'pudding'. The local fish and chip shop were more than happy to supply up to 200 meals. All they needed was 3-4 days notice on final numbers.

Providing a licensed bar, a must for raising serious money, was trickier. The school did not have a bar(!) and use of their refrigerators to keep things cool wasn't an option. We decided to put a temporary bar in the hall. We needed a license for this from the local council (cost £21 covering up to 96 hours!). This requires about two weeks notice.

Drink was the trickiest decision. We could have gone for sale or return from a local off-license but this reduces profit margins considerably. We thought about a booze cruise to Calais but selling alcohol purchased abroad is illegal, even for charity. In the end we chose to buy it ourselves using the cheapest possible local outlets without compromising on quality - especially on the wine. A combination of ingenuity and luck gave us an unbelievable result.

The best deal was from Marks and Spencer of all people. One weekend in late August we noticed they had special offers on certain wines (egg 2 bottles for £10 instead of £6.49 each). Plus, if you bought six you got an additional 25%. In addition, I had a 10% voucher (I use their credit card). The end result was a phenomenal 55% saving on really good quality wine. We also got a good deal on crisps at M&S

The beer and soft drinks we accumulated from a variety of local supermarkets over a three-week period simply noting the best deals on offer. The best was at Morrisons - 12 x 440 ml beer and lager at £9 plus 3 for 2. 36 cans cost £18 i.e. 50p a can which is pretty good.

We charged £10 for the wine, £1.50 for the beer, J2Os, crisps and Pringles and £1 for the bottles of water.

Poundland was useful for things like paper cups, napkins and tablecloths; Sainsbury for 2 litre bottles of water at 13p each (and 10% off!); Sainsbury offer a free glass hire service which was wonderful.

We started selling tickets and pushing the event hard from late July. It is important to get money in as soon as you can. Partly to get commitment but mainly to cover running costs so you don't get out of pocket. We spent £1,000 before the night but covered it with ticket sales as we went. We managed to get 170 people on the night (23 teams of 6-8).

For supplementary activities we decided on just a raffle. Auctions are good at raising money if you have really good prizes but they can take up a lot of time and we didn't have time to spare. For raffle prizes we bombarded local businesses both big and small e.g. from John Lewis and Boots at the high end to local shops at the other. It is useful to think about what sort of prizes you want. Bottles of wine and boxes of chocolate are OK but not too many. Also, you don't want items that look like discarded gifts. We went for vouchers from the big companies - then you can use them to choose things people like and need - and concentrated on small shops selling items people are most likely to need. The best type of prize, in my view, is one which has low perceived value to the provider but high perceived value to the receiver. This strategy paid off because we took well over £500 on the raffle for zero cost and the prize display looked really impressive which helps sell tickets.

A good decision was to keep ourselves free of anything but overall responsibility on the night. Sue's organizing skills came to the fore. A friend's husband who regularly runs quizzes' was roped in to run ours; another friend was persuaded to compare the event; everything that needed keeping cool was farmed out to anyone who had a cool bag and delivered on the night; and a small army of volunteers organised the raffle, set up and ran the bar, set up and put away the tables and chairs and collected all the rubbish.

**On the night it all went like clockwork. The bonus was our team won!**



Setting up the temporary bar



The Team of fantastic organisers



The compere, getting things going



Enjoying a fish and chip supper



The quiz in progress



The winning team deep in thought



The winning team receiving their prize



Sue and Graham bringing the evening to an end.