Auction Fundraisers 2.0
A Playbook for Better Events
Leveraging recent innovations in technology

Auctions have long represented the most effective fundraisers for thousands of non-profit organizations. Recent advances in technology will help "supercharge" your event results. Plus, add in access to quality fun experiences that can be auctioned off, better service, and winning bids that soar thanks to more competition buying a better selection during the auction itself! This playbook will help you best consider your options, ask the right questions, find the right partners, and maximize your auction efficiency. Particular emphasis will be given to featuring vacations as they are (by far) the most popular items at fundraising events. We've spent several years studying and participating in the vacation rental / charity event marketplace.

1.0 GUIDANCE FOR CHARITY EVENT ORGANIZERS

We've asked hundreds of non-profit event planners to tell us about their silent auction events, and we've noted their **priorities**, identified **problems**, and discovered specific **solutions** to improve auction efficiency. We also discovered many great companies that provide **technology**, **service** and **product** (auction items) in support of auction events.

a) **Priorities**- Generally speaking, most event planners want to be sure that their event runs smoothly and that they raise as much money as possible. They have a limited staff, limited budget and limited time to gather items for their auction. If an event planner uses technology to support their event, they need total confidence that the technology will function properly and not let them down.

b) **Problems/ Challenges**- Planning a good fundraising event takes a lot of time and energy. Event planners must remain focused and work within a fixed budget to coordinate with the venue, the entertainment, the food and beverage and of course secure the items to feature at the auction.   Volunteers must be coordinated and social networks leveraged/ local businesses approached to secure quality inventory. *Vacation Rentals*- While vacations are the most popular items at events, they can often be the hardest to secure because vacation home owners are often very busy, and they are tough to reach.   It's tough to get good photos and details of the property, draft a nice promotional flyer, and negotiate blackout dates. It all takes time that could be spent selling tickets and promoting the event.

c) **Solutions-** Several great solutions now help solve some of the problems identified above.   These solutions can help to improve $$$ results and help your event run smoothly.

***Technology Solutions*-** Our research uncovered many great technology solutions that make it much easier to get and promote inventory, easier for attendees to place bids and to see where they stand and to see when they are outbid. All of this can now be done from your iPhone or smartphone! Higher end events can display a "big board" showing the total amount raised during the event and show winning bids on a giant screen TV. The pioneers in this market started out by bringing in several hundred thousand dollars of equipment and staff to support the event. The industry is quickly gravitating to what we believe makes the most sense- Mobile bidding using iPhones/ Smartphones. **Studies have shown that implementing mobile technology can increase auction proceeds by as much as 300%!** Each of the companies below offer some form of mobile bidding and each is in different stages of development. Each offers pros and cons in terms of reliability, user interface and pricing. [Contact us](#) and we will be happy to give you our thoughts on each solution and help you identify the right technology partner for your next event. When talking to potential technology (and service) partners, here are some questions to ask:

- *How long have you been in business?*
- *Can patrons bid with their own Smartphone or do they need to hold another device?*
- *How many events do you do in our area?*
- *What is your pricing structure? Do we pay per item, per attendee, fixed price or combination?*
- *Can you provide some references? Show results before and after an event used your technology?*
- *How do I upload the items into your system? What is the process? How long does it take?*
- *What level of service do you provide pre-event, on event day and post event?*
- *Do patrons have to register or sign up for special services or data plans to use your system?*
- *Who manages the live auction (if applicable) and collects all the winners and cash donations ?*
- *Who checks in guests, cashiers winning bidders and who is responsible for the entire flow?*
- *Can patrons bid anywhere within the venue? Are the items available online before the event?*

Technology Providers (in alphabetical order)

AES (Auction and Event Solutions)- Another company transitioning from touchpad bidding towards mobile smartphone bidding. Offers a host of services and full list available on their website.

Auctions by Cellular / Bidsmart – There is some level of partnership between these companies, but it's difficult to determine exactly how they work together. Flashy user interface, reasonably well received and functional. Strong future competition for Bidpal potentially.

BiddingforGood- Seems primarily focused on online bidding and other solutions, but has some ongoing development in mobile bidding. Strong presence in fundraising online, hoping to grow into mobile, text to bid system likely way too complex and likely under redesign.

Bidpal- Bidpal is migrating away from distributing their own devices at events in favor of allowing participants to use their own phones (good idea for sure). This will make them far more competitive on price, which is where they have been weakest historically.

DoJiggy- Online auctions, golf fundraising solutions, etc, but less emphasis on mobile bidding than some of the others on the list.

Maestro- Alligned with Blackbaud and likely will develop some good technology in the silent auction space. A little late to the party. Needs to develop a smartphone website capability.

QTego - Initially offered text to bid type auctions and now are in development of more robust mobile bidding solutions.

Wedo - A relatively new solution started by a former employee of one of the other solutions. Seems to be getting good reviews from the non-profit community so far and introducing some technology that seems ahead of other solutions.

Product Solutions- Every great auction event needs great items in its auction. Many event organizers rely on local businesses and supporters to help with gathering auction items. Restaurants, bars, amusement parks, salons, bowling alleys, and art galleries are all logical targets for event organizers that are seeking items. Supporters that own vacation properties are often asked to donate a spare week or two in support of the cause.   Vacations are by far the most popular events at silent auctions but often times the most difficult to easily get (from within your donor base). Memorabilia and autographed items are often very popular as well, and there are several companies in the business of providing this sort of merchandise for silent auctions. Some examples of these include Unique Auction Items, Bluetree Marketing and others. In some cases, depending on the typical attendee, adding these extra items can help your results. In any case, two primary goals should be to get a reasonable number of quality items (to avoid "auction fatigue" and dilute your donor pool) and **to ensure that a significant portion of the winning bid goes to your cause**. Since the potential donation created by the event is typically limited by how much each attendee can spend, it's important to consider how any "consignment" items will be perceived by potential donors and if they could actually "dilute" the your potential donations.   On **page 5,** you'll find a comparison between donations generated with a typical consignment program versus donations realized using the TravelPledge program.   Also important is to ensure that it's easy to print any promotional flyers and/or feature photos and details of all of the items within your mobile bidding software. All of this helps make your life easy and greatly increases the money that you raise at the event.

A wide range of items will enhance the event experience

Vacations - Charity Helpers, LLC spent over two years developing technology to allow non-profits to easily convert vacations donated by supporters and to provide access to $millions in vacation rental inventory donated by property owners all over the world. Direct connections to property manager calendars allow for easy import of countless vacations. **Owners that participate must donate either ALL of the rent or HALF of the rent**, which ensures a large donation for non-profits that use the vacations (this is sharp contrast to previous programs and a unique benefit of the new TravelPledge program).   An integrated technology solution allows non-profits to easily "claim" vacations and show them at (both manual and mobile automated bidding) events. Vacations are also offered on year-round private label TravelPledge fundraising websites. With one click, event planners can claim up to four quality vacations for their events.
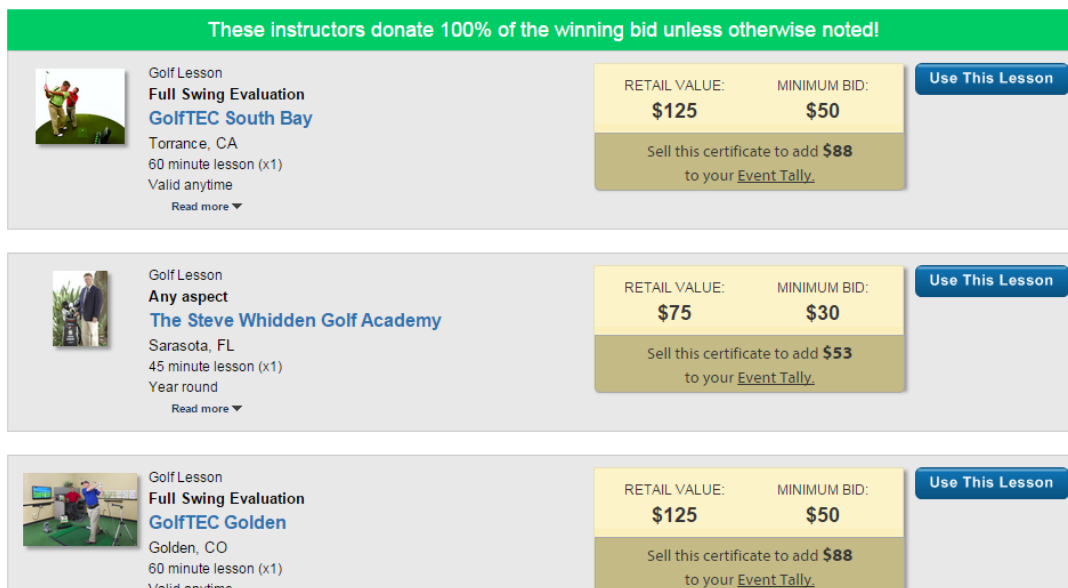

Interface allows charity event organizer to claim a vacation for an upcoming event.

Golf Rounds- Charity Helpers, LLC recently rolled out a **solution for golf course managers** to save time donating certificates (that you'll get access to each year for your event), and the program is gaining traction very quickly (OneSpareTeeTime.com). This new program provides a simple interface for golf course managers to post certificates for use by charities and automates the entire process for them. Non-profit leaders can easily claim golf rounds for their event when they log into their TravelPledge admin accounts.
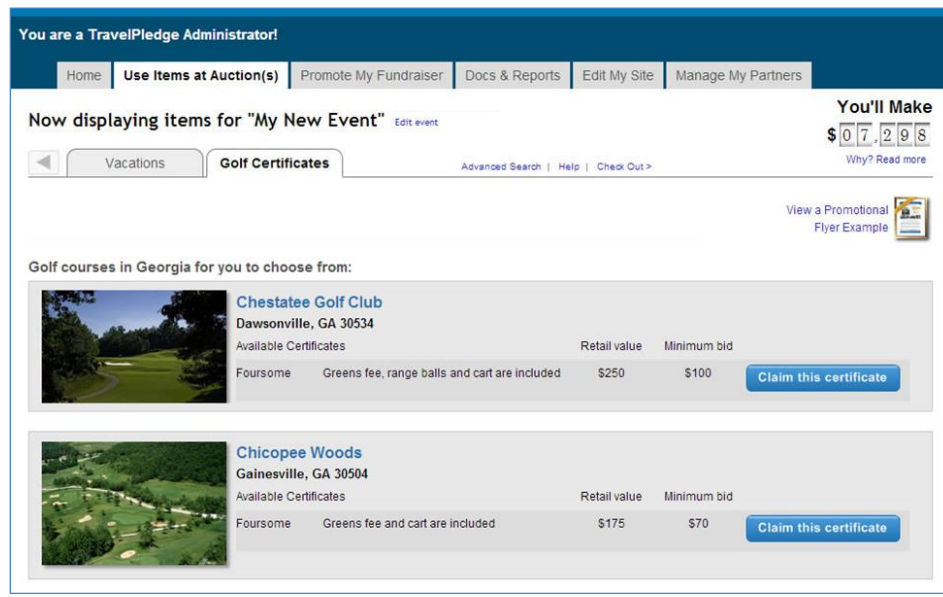
Interface allows charity event organizer to claim rounds of golf for an upcoming event.

Lessons- Charity Helpers, LLC recently rolled out a **solution for instructors** to post lesson certificates, and many instructors are already posting certificates (OneSpareLesson.com). This new program provides a simple interface for instructors to post certificates for use by charities and automates the entire process for them. Non-profit leaders can easily get lessons (golf lessons and soon guitar, sports, art, cooking, etc) for their events when they log into their TravelPledge admin accounts.

Interface allows charity event organizer to claim golf lessons for an upcoming event.

Cruises, Golf Vacations, Tours, Dinners, and more Charity Helpers, LLC continues to launch new platforms to gather all sorts of experiences and those are now beginning to appear for event organizers. Platforms such as OneSpareCruise.com, OneSpareTable.com, OneSpareTour.com, OneSparePhotoShoot.com and others. This new platforms make it easy for business owners to post certificates for use by charities and automates the entire process for them. Non-profit leaders can easily get fun experiences for their events when they log into their TravelPledge admin accounts.

<u>**Service Solutions**</u> - Many of the companies providing mobile (and touchpad) bidding technology solutions also provide <u>some</u> level of service to support the auction event. The amount of service provided varies widely (even between individual franchises of a given technology provider!) Alternatively, you may decide to hire an experienced event planner to help ensure your event runs smoothly and to handle the relationship with the technology provider. *Tip- don't count on the event planner to replace the staff recommended by the technology provider. Don't take the chance of things breaking down in the middle of your event.* Adding the right level of quality customer service can make the event so much more enjoyable for the attendees and can make it easier for the event organizer to focus on the big picture. Useful added services you should look for an event planner/ technology partner to provide include:

- Pre-event planning (table seatings, invitations, food and beverage, etc)
- Event setup and layout
- Event staff
- Entertainment
- Ticket sales/ Event registration
- Customer service reps to help promote the items
- Technology support

Summary - Recent advances in technology combined with easy access to auction items, reliable mobile solutions and well organized staff all can pay big dividends at your next event. It's well worth spending a little extra time upfront to identify the right partners that will help make your life easier, make you look good, and help to optimize your auction results. Event attendees will enjoy your event, tell their friends and support next year's event!

About Charity Helpers, LLC.

Charity Helpers (CHLLC) was founded in 2010 with a simple objective - convert spare weeks at vacation homes into big donations for non-profits. CHLLC aggregates vacation rental inventory and distributes the vacations through Geronimo.com as well as private label **TravelPledge** websites for charities. CHLLC also supports silent auction events. Technology developed by CHLLC connects charity fundraisers directly to property management (and property owner) calendars and provides a fully automated solution. CHLLC also makes it easy for charities to get vacations for their fundraising events and makes it easy for them to promote the vacations.   Founders Mike Last and Jack Alexander have spent their careers in many entrepreneurial enterprises and are active supporters of several local and national charities. They formed CHLLC recognizing the donation potential of six million vacation rentals that sit vacant 85% of the time. Most recently, they've added solution that also makes rounds of golf, lessons, golf vacations, cruises and more to be claimed by non-profits and used at fundraisers. Experience providers can post fun experiences direction on a "OneSpare" branded website. The solutions have been endorsed by the PGA and are gaining traction. More and more fun experiences are coming. Stay tuned!

Consignment versus TravelPledge program to maximize auction results

Consignment

Augusta Experience
Minimum bid $3,500
Realistic winning bid: $3,850
Amount to you: $350
Your Share = 9%

African Safari
Minimum bid $4,500
Realistic winning bid: $4,950
Amount to you: $450
Your Share= 9%

Namath Helmet
Minimum bid $400
Realistic winning bid: $440
Amount to you: $40
Your Share =9%

VS

TravelPledge — Where Giving is Going

St. Lucia Vacation
Minimum bid $3,500
Realistic winning bid: $3,850
Resort paid $1,925 (covers food)
Amount to you: $1,540
Your Share = 40%

Golf Vacation
Minimum bid $4,500
Realistic winning bid: $4,950
Amount to you: $1,980
Your Share = 40%

Golf Foursome
Minimum bid $400
Realistic winning bid: $440
Amount to you: $352
Your Share = 80%

NOTES: 1) TravelPledge requires all participating vacation home owners/ managers to **donate either half or all** of the rent. Golf courses that want to participate (OneSpareTeeTime.com) must donate **all** of the value of the certificates they post. We're now adding restaurants, tours, cruises, lessons, and gift cards as well, and we're placing similar donation requirements on those businesses, maximizing your donation!

2) Some consignment companies "build in" a donation (let's say 10%) for you even at the minimum bid, and while this allows you to feel better if the item sells at the minimum bid, these items often sit unpurchased since the price seem too high for the bargain shoppers.

3) Some vacation home owners (typically those owners that really want to help your organization) donate **all** of the rent, and that will double your donation! Ask your supporters if they own a vacation home! We didn't show this example because we wanted to highlight worst case.

GetStarted.TravelPledge.com   ▶ Watch "No Consignment" Video