



Silent Auctions

Gathering prizes

- The better the gift, the higher the bid, so collect a desirable variety of prizes. Travel, experiences, food, music and sports are always popular themes to acquire.
- Consider asking businesses that are looking to promote their awareness and corporate responsibility in their local community.

Opening bids

- Establish the Fair Market Value (FMV) of an item and include this on the bid sheet.
- Consider setting the opening bid at 40 per cent of the FMV.
- Make the opening bid low enough that it sparks interest with those who want to get a good deal.

Bid increments

- If your auction items are under \$100, you can set the bid increments to \$5.
- If items are of more value, you can estimate bid increments at roughly 10 per cent of the FMV.

Closing the auction

- Allow enough time for the bids to increase over the course of your event.
- Make sure to give people ten minutes notice before your auction closes. The bulk of your bidding takes place in the last few moments of your silent auction.

Organizing the prizes

- If you have an auction with a lot of items, consider numbering the prizes and using that number on the bid sheet to make cashing out efficient at the end of your event.
- If taking payment for prizes at your event be prepared to deal with cash, cheques and credit cards - remember to keep money secure at all times.
- It can be helpful to have volunteers to ensure the auction is set-up correctly and runs smoothly.

Blind auctions

- In a blind auction (also called a sealed bid auction), bidders privately submit bids and the highest bidder wins. Use a box with a slot on top for bids and rather than a bid sheet, use slips of paper for the bidder's name, contact information their bid.
- The advantage is bidders don't know what others have bid, or if anyone else has bid at all. This can be useful with a unique item that may not have broad appeal. The bidder can feel the excitement of possibly winning, which they may not feel if they knew there was no other interest. It also protects the donor of the item from feeling they donated something unpopular.
- Blind auctions can also be successful for very desirable items - if someone really wants the item, they may greatly overbid the value to ensure they win.

Find silent auction bid sheets and blind auction bid forms on our [Tips and Tools](#) page.