How to Run a Bingo Night That Raises Money for Your School

Hobbies and Crafts · about 10 minutes · 2026-11-09

Plan and run a volunteer bingo night that clears a real cash target, using written approvals, cheap card packs, rehearsed callers, and two-person cash counts.

Things you will need

- Printed 75-ball card packs with a serial number on every card
- Bulk ink daubers, one per player, plus refill bottles
- Ball cage, number slips, and a drum as a backup
- Tablet or phone with a random 75-ball number app
- Handheld microphone, speaker, and spare batteries
- Laminated caller script with the pattern list
- Numbered pre-printed ticket book with stubs
- Locking cash box and resealable numbered envelopes
- Per-denomination count sheets with two signature boxes
- Large-print sample cards for players who ask
- Prize list sign naming each donated gift card
- Raffle drum plus a witness envelope for unsold stubs
- Folding tables, spare chairs, and a step-free route sign
- Extension cords, gaffer tape, trash bags, and a sign-in sheet

Weeks 1-4: Get Approval, Set a Target, Cap the Costs

1. **Get Written Approval From School and Venue**
   Eight to ten weeks out, send the principal a one-page request that names the date, the room, the expected headcount, your contact, and who will handle money, then ask for a reply by email so the approval carries a date.
2. **Set a Fundraising Target From Real Numbers**
   Build the target bottom-up instead of picking a round number you like.
3. **Cap Every Cost on One Budget Page**
   List the six lines that actually eat a bingo night: card printing, daubers, prizes, venue contribution, sound, and refreshments.
4. **Recruit Six Volunteers With Named Jobs**
   Six to eight people is the smallest committee that can cover one absence without cancelling.
5. **Publish the Rules Sheet and Prize List**
   Before you sell a ticket, put one page online and one page on the door that states the price tiers, how many games you will run, the pattern for each game, what each prize actually is, and how a win gets verified.

Weeks 4-8: Pick the Room, Print Cards, Fix the Numbers

6. **Check Sightlines and Echo Before Booking**
   Visit the room at the hour you will actually play, with the lights set as they will be.

7. **Make Every Seat Reachable and Readable**

   Accessibility is a layout decision, not a favor.

8. **Work Out Cards Per Caller and Player**

   A caller can honestly manage 40 to 60 cards in play per game; past that, verification slows and disputes start.

9. **Source Daubers and Cards Cheaply**

   Bulk ink daubers run roughly 75 cents to a dollar fifty each in packs of a dozen, and they are the item volunteers steal, so buy two refills per dauber and write the table number on each barrel in permanent marker.

10. **Choose a Number System and a Backup**

    Decide how numbers are produced and who reads them: a physical ball cage, a tablet app that pulls 75-ball numbers at random, or numbered slips in a drum.

Game Night: Price, Pacing, and Verifying Every Win

11. **Price Tiers and Sell Card Packs**

    Three tiers beat one price because they let a family and a keen regular both feel welcome.

12. **Rehearse Callers With a Short Script**

    Two hours of rehearsal with two callers and the real equipment is the highest-value hour in the whole plan.

13. **Train Inspectors to Check Before Paying**

    Every claim gets the same 60-to-90-second check, performed by two people, before a prize moves.

14. **Pace Rounds From Lines to Blackout**

    A 45-minute block that people enjoy goes: two short-line games of 6 to 8 minutes each, one four-corner game, a three-minute speed round where only the first claim counts, then blackout as the closer in 10 to 12 minutes, with a five-minute break before the last two games.

15. **Open With Rules and Fair-Play Expectations**

    Stand at the microphone for two minutes before game one and say the boring things out loud: how to mark, one winning card per pattern per game, claims raised at the table not shouted across the room, prizes exactly as published, and children seated with an adult.

Money, Volunteers, and the Report the School Sees

16. **Count Cash With Two Adults and a Paper Trail**

    Money gets counted by two adults who are not related, at a table people can see, on a sheet with a line per denomination and a signature box for both counters.

17. **Run the Rota With a Setup and Teardown Clock**

    Write the night as a clock, not a list.

18. **Keep Concessions Simple and Welcome**

    Coffee, water, and packaged cookies for 1 to 3 dollars keep the room settled without creating a second job nobody trained for.

19. **Add a Raffle With a Witnessed Draw**

    A raffle lifts the average spend by a few dollars per player and gives the night a finish line.

20. Send Thanks and a Truthful Totals Report

Within 48 hours, send a short thank-you to the venue, the donors, the callers, and every volunteer by name.

Sources

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Written as a checklist from https://www.howcompass.com/how-to/Run-a-School-Bingo-Night. Corrections: https://www.howcompass.com/correc