

Gift Fair by Petersfield Branch

This is your chance to hold a glamorous but simple Gift Fair that can raise a significant amount and one you will enjoy running every step of the way.

Petersfield Branch has run their Gift Fair for over 10 years and it has become an annual event. By becoming a member of the Charity Fairs Association different stalls holders, ranging from jewellery to homemade jam, apply to you to have their stall at your fair; you then pick the stalls you know your shoppers will love. You invite all the locals from schools to companies to friends and families. Everyone goes home with loads of goodies they wouldn't find on the high street.

Step-by-step guide

Step One

Start by finding a suitable location for your fair. Make the most of your contacts to try and get a location for free or at a discounted rate. Petersfield said that sophisticated venues, like a hotel or grand hall, go down very well and draw in the crowds.

Step two

Join the Charity Fairs Association as a Fair Organiser (<http://www.charityfairsassociation.co.uk>). This will cost around £50. You will need to do this ideally a year before the date of your event as they only advertise fairs twice a year. They will list your event in their diary and give you useful information and tips to running your fair. You just have to wait for the stall applications to pour into you.

Step three

Plan the number of stalls you can fit in your venue (don't make it too cramped) and decide on a good mix of stalls according to your type of customers. Petersfield Branch suggests stalls from cheese to men's gifts and stocking fillers. The stalls which are always successful at Petersfield fair are jewellery and handbags and scarves.

Step four

Decide on a table charge. It is advisable to start off low as stall holders need to make a profit & a new event is unknown; a suggested amount would be £25 for a small venue, £50 in a local hall and £100+ in a stately home or manor in which you can invite 50-80 stalls. You will also get 10% of the stall holder's takings on the day.

Step five

Book the stall holders and take half their payment six to nine months in advance and the rest of their payment two months before the fair.

Step six

Another opportunity to use your contacts will be in finding sponsors for printing costs of your posters, invites and flyers. You can approach local companies and to entice them you can add their logo/advert on to your marketing materials. Remember if you don't ask you don't get! This needs to be done six to nine months before your event.

Quick points:



This event can raised any thing from £1000 – £10,000 depending on the scale you decide to run the fair.



You need a group (around five) to choose the stalls and then a team to cover sponsorship and materials. On the day ask all your friends and family to help out.



You will need are a good group of volunteers, creative thinking and good planning.



You will need to start preparing for your event six to nine months before the date of your fair.

Step seven

Get creative and design all your marketing materials; posters, flyers and invites (go to <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/brandguidelines.html>, username: brand, password br@nd for all the latest Save the Children brand elements).

Step eight

Draw up an invitation list and send the invites out with full information on the fair e.g. timings, location, entrance fee, number of stalls & pictures. Petersfield Branch suggest charging a minimum of £2 entrance fee, £3 for entrance and a coffee and £5 for entrance a coffee and cake.

Step Nine

Advertise, advertise and advertise! Try and get an advert in your local newspaper, send flyers to local schools and companies, place advert up in social clubs and churches. Think outside the box when advertising your fair. You can always get interactive by setting up Twitter and Facebook pages and don't forget to advertise your fair on the Save the Children events pages.

Step Ten

To raise even more money you can run your own stall on the day selling, for example, good quality books, homemade cakes or bric-a-brac. You could also run a coffee shop or raffle and ask the stalls to donate small prizes.

Petersfield Branch have run this fair for over 10 years

In 2007 the fair made £9,600 and £7,800 in 2008. Pauline Kneen who runs the event says: 'The work load for the return is very good and it can be a glamorous event and attract younger helpers.'

'What I enjoy most about the preparing for the event is looking at all the stall applications, which is great fun. They arrive in January to February for our November fair. We have a group of four who sift through the applications; short list favourites and then have a session to decide on the final stalls. You need a good cross section of volunteers to choose the stalls to cover all tastes.'

'My main piece of advice would be to start off with a total number of stalls and allocate your categories at the start. Otherwise you choose all the wonderful handbag stalls and can't look beyond them!'

If you would like any more information or advice on how to hold this fair please contact Pauline at pauline@thekneens.co.uk.

