

# SILENT AUCTIONS

## **BASIC SET-UP and PREPARATION**

### **Collect the Data**

1. Collect all items for silent auction.
2. Create MS Excel worksheet (see example below).
3. Columns can include: Item #, Type, Gifts from (Company), Gifts from (Contact name and Number), Description of Gift, Bid sheet title, Received?, Value, etc .
4. Enter information about the items.
5. Label the items with item numbers under the "Item #" column in your spreadsheet. The best way to do this is with a letter-number combination according to the item type. That is, A is for art, B is for basket, C is for gift certificate, E is for everything else. Order the items according to type (all of the art pieces together, etc), then assign each item of that type a number in order. If you have five art pieces, you will have A-1 through A-5. This makes both the set up and retrieving the items after they have been purchased very easy.
6. Set the starting bids. These are calculated by: **Value x .4= Starting Bid** for high revenue events. If the event is lower revenue, use **Value x .25**. If these numbers seem low, use a middle ground, e.g., **Value x .32**.
7. Increase increments are determined by the variety of items you have, the number of items you have, and how well you know your audience's willingness to donate. The following method (or a variation of) can be used:
  - \$50.00 and under = \$5.00
  - \$50.00 - \$150.00 = \$10.00
  - \$150.00 - \$400 = \$20.00
  - \$400.00 - \$1,000.00 = \$50.00
  - \$1,000 and over = \$100.00

### **Prepare the Envelopes**

8. Place all gift certificate items in envelopes and label them with their corresponding number.
9. Organize envelopes in numeric order for easy retrieval after purchase.

### **Prepare the Bid Sheets**

10. Copy and Paste the following Bid Sheet Template plate into a new document. Add your event logo to the header, and make any other changes that may be specific to your event. Ensure the merge fields match the headings in your auction Excel spreadsheet (e.g., <<Item>> on the bid sheet and "Item" on the Excel sheet, rather than <<Item>> and "Item #").
11. Before beginning the mail merge, delete the second page on the template to merge (the Notes page).

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12. Click on “Mailings”. Click on “Start Mail Merge”. Click on “Step by Step Mail Merge Wizard”.
  - a. In step one, choose “Letters”. Click Next at the bottom of the Wizard.
  - b. In step two, choose “Use the Current Document”. Click Next.
  - c. In step three, choose “Browse” under the heading “Use an Existing List”. A window will open; browse your computer and choose your auction Excel spreadsheet. A window will open asking you to select table; choose the appropriate worksheet. A window will open asking you to verify mail merge recipients; ensure this is the right list, then click OK. Click Next.
  - d. In step four, do nothing additional. Click Next.
  - e. In step five, you should see a finished bid sheet. If any windows pop up that talk about invalid fields, just replace them with the field you intended (e.g., “the field ‘Item\_’ exists in the main document, but can be replaced with ‘Item’”). Click Next.
  - f. In step six, select “Edit individual letters” under “Merge” heading. A window will pop up asking you to merge to a new document. Select “All” and click OK.
  - g. All of your bid sheets should now be finished and in a new document. Save this document as “Final Bid Sheets” so that you can print them. Go through and fix up any spacing or small errors you may see.
13. Print documents (2 copies –one in colour for the Payment Centre and the 2<sup>nd</sup> printed on different coloured paper for the purchaser).
14. Once both copies are printed, staple carbon sheets face down in between the 2 sheets.
15. Organize sheets in numerical order.

### **Prepare the Frames**

16. You will need framed documents to display your gift certificate items, rather than displaying the certificates themselves.
17. Open Appendix: Silent Auction Collateral Display to use as a template.
18. Fill in the appropriate information: Bid sheet title is the heading on the slide; include the description of gift, who donated it, and its item number as well. Do one frame for each certificate.
19. Print these slides. Try to print in colour to make the table set up at the auction more visually interesting and exciting. The template we have provided prints out to fit a 5x7 frame.
20. Add these slides to frames, and display them.

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Event Logo Here

«Bidsheet\_Title»

«Description\_of\_gift»

COURTESY of :	«Gifts_from_company»	ITEM #:	«Item_#»
VALUE: \$«Value».00	MINIMUM BID : \$«Starting_Bid».00	MINIMUM BID INCREMENT:	\$«Increase».00

NAME	PHONE #	BID
		\$«Starting_Bid».00

All items are sold as is, unless otherwise noted. No substitutions or exchanges.  
Values are determined by the Donor of the items.  
All items must be removed at the end of the evening.

**PLEASE NOTE: Auction Purchases Are Not Eligible For Donation Receipts Under Canadian Revenue Agency Law**

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## **Bid Sheet Notes:**

- The headings for merging (e.g., the headings in << >>) must correspond to the headings in your Silent Auction Excel spreadsheet in order for the merge to work properly.
- These bidsheets are designed to print two to a landscape-oriented page, because the smaller size works better for table set up. Print all of them on two colours of paper, and prepare them with carbon paper in between (face down on the second page). This will allow there to be two filled in copies – one for the purchaser and one for the payment center.
- Place your event logo or name in the header of the bidsheets. If you can print them in colour, this adds extra interest to the look of the sheets on the auction table.
- In order to merge your bidsheet template with your Silent Auction spreadsheet, follow the instructions located in the previous appendix, entitled Directions for Silent Auction.

