



FUNDRAISING GUIDE FOR SPEECH & DEBATE TEAMS

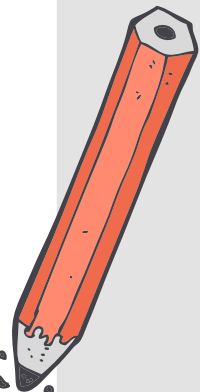
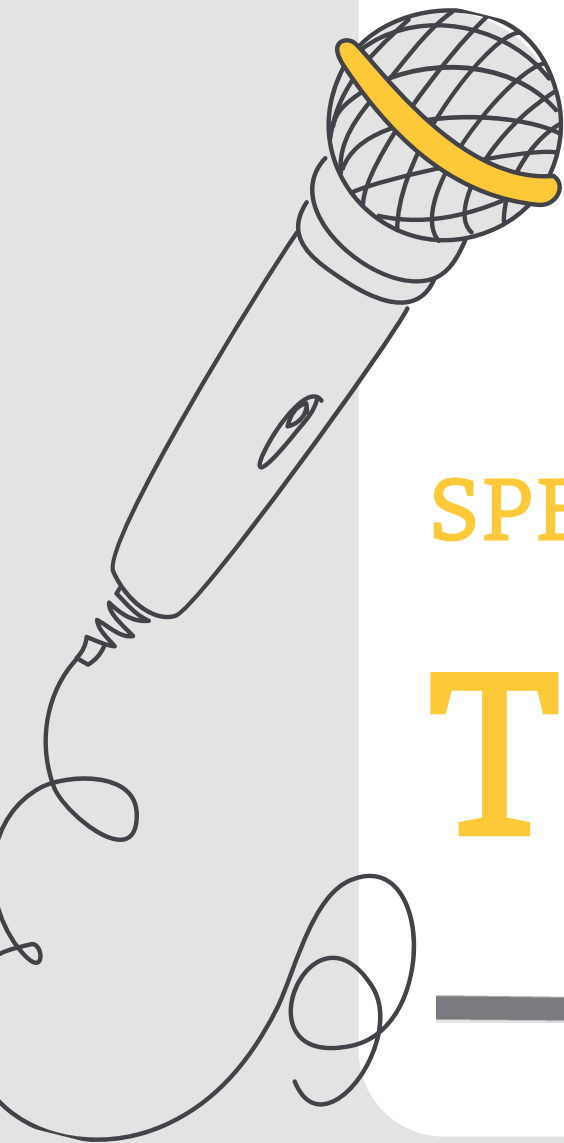




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INTRODUCTION

Financing your season can be daunting. Membership dues, snacks, scripts, transportation, snacks, judges, coach stipends, black books, snacks, curriculum, technology, and did we mention snacks? It can be overwhelming, but you're not in this alone. You lead an entire team of high achieving students and when you give your students ownership over the fundraising process, you are presenting them with a real-world situation to apply their communicative talents to. They will learn important budgeting, marketing, and networking skills all while showing off their powers of persuasion!

The NSDA in partnership with Edco has created this guide to help your team maximize your fundraising experience. The appendix includes tips and information on setting a goal, the art of the "ask", reaching out to local businesses for donations, how to use social media to increase your reach, email templates, and how to get noticed by the press.

A TYPICAL TEAM

Edco and the NSDA, in conjunction with Stax (a global strategy consulting firm), conducted a fundraising survey of Speech and Debate Coaches to get better understanding of how your teams and programs fund raise and what we can do to help you.

Our findings show that your team will need, on average, \$17,800 per year to pay for student travel expenses, tournaments, registration fees, coach travel costs, membership fees, and training materials, yet only \$5,200 of that will be covered by your fundraising activities (hosting tournaments, selling products, and hosting restaurant nights) - leaving much to be desired from current efforts. When coaches organize fundraisers, they have trouble getting their students involved, running the events, and starting each fundraiser from scratch since they don't have a dedicated donor database... but it doesn't have to be this way.

While half of coaches still rely on products sales, 27% have begun successfully using online fundraisers, and that number is growing rapidly. There are a number of platforms available, including Go Fund Me, Donors Choose, and Facebook fundraisers.

\$17,800 per year

average per team

student travel
expenses



tournaments



registration
fees



Coach travel
expenses



membership
fees



training
materials



— \$5,200

from fundraising activities

hosting
tournaments



selling
products



hosting
restaurant
nights



**= \$12,600
still needed for
your team**



GATHER INFORMATION

There are many different income sources for your team, but it is essential that you know all of your options.

Keep in mind that each principal, school, school budget, district, and state has different rules and regulations.

1

MEET WITH YOUR PEERS – Meet with the largest athletic and non-athletic programs at your school. Inquire how they organize their finances, what they receive from the school/district, how their booster organization helps them, who pays for their transportation, and how they help students who can't afford fees. This information is critical as you meet with others.

2

SCHOOL BUDGET – Meet with your principal to see what can be allocated for Speech and Debate. Most budgets are created the year prior, but it is never too early to request for the next season.

3

ACTIVITY/ATHLETIC DEPARTMENTS – Investigate what type of stipends your school or district offers to coaches. Also, if you are governed by the same state organization as your sports teams, you could qualify to have your transportation paid through that budget!

4

BOOSTER ORGANIZATIONS – Booster organizations can be a tremendous financial help for your team. Investigate what your school, district, and state rules are regarding how booster organizations operate. They may even end up running a fundraiser for you!

5

CURRICULUM FUNDS – Most departments have a budget for curriculum. You can ask your English, Social Studies, or Theater department to pay for NSDA School Membership. The bonus is that all the teachers in your school would also have access to incorporate those lessons into their classes!

Based on the information that you receive, work with your team to find the best way to promote your team's needs and ask for funds. This is where you and your students can be creative as well as persuasive.

YOU CAN –

- Host a showcase for your principal.
- Have students perform at department meetings.
- Mail any of our advocacy articles to your superintendent.

SAMPLE BUDGET

Before reaching out to anyone, create an itemized expense budget. Research the potential costs for your season. Having specific numbers can help your school leadership and sponsors know precisely how they are helping you!

HERE IS A
SAMPLE OF
AN EXPENSE
BUDGET THAT
YOU CAN
CREATE



Item	Cost
School Membership Dues	\$349
Judge for a one-day tournament	\$85
Tournament entry fees	\$600
Transportation	\$1,000
Food <i>(snacks/meals during tournaments)</i>	\$450
Total Cost	\$2,484

See Appendix page 9:
Goal Setting for more tips on budgeting.

GOAL SETTING

**DURING THE COURSE OF THE SCHOOL YEAR
YOUR TEAM NEEDS TO SET - AND ACHIEVE -
SEVERAL GOALS.**

1

WHY SETTING A GOAL MATTERS

Donors want to feel good about giving. They want to know what cause their money is going toward, whom it impacts and - **WHY IT MATTERS.** A clear fundraising goal helps supporters picture your bus trip to the National Qualifier... new interpretation scripts... laptop stands... and see how this goal helps your team do awesome things.

2

WHERE TO START

Decide what you want to accomplish with the money your team raises. Is it for fees? Hosting a tournament? Travel? Whatever the case may be, knowing this will help.

CONSIDER

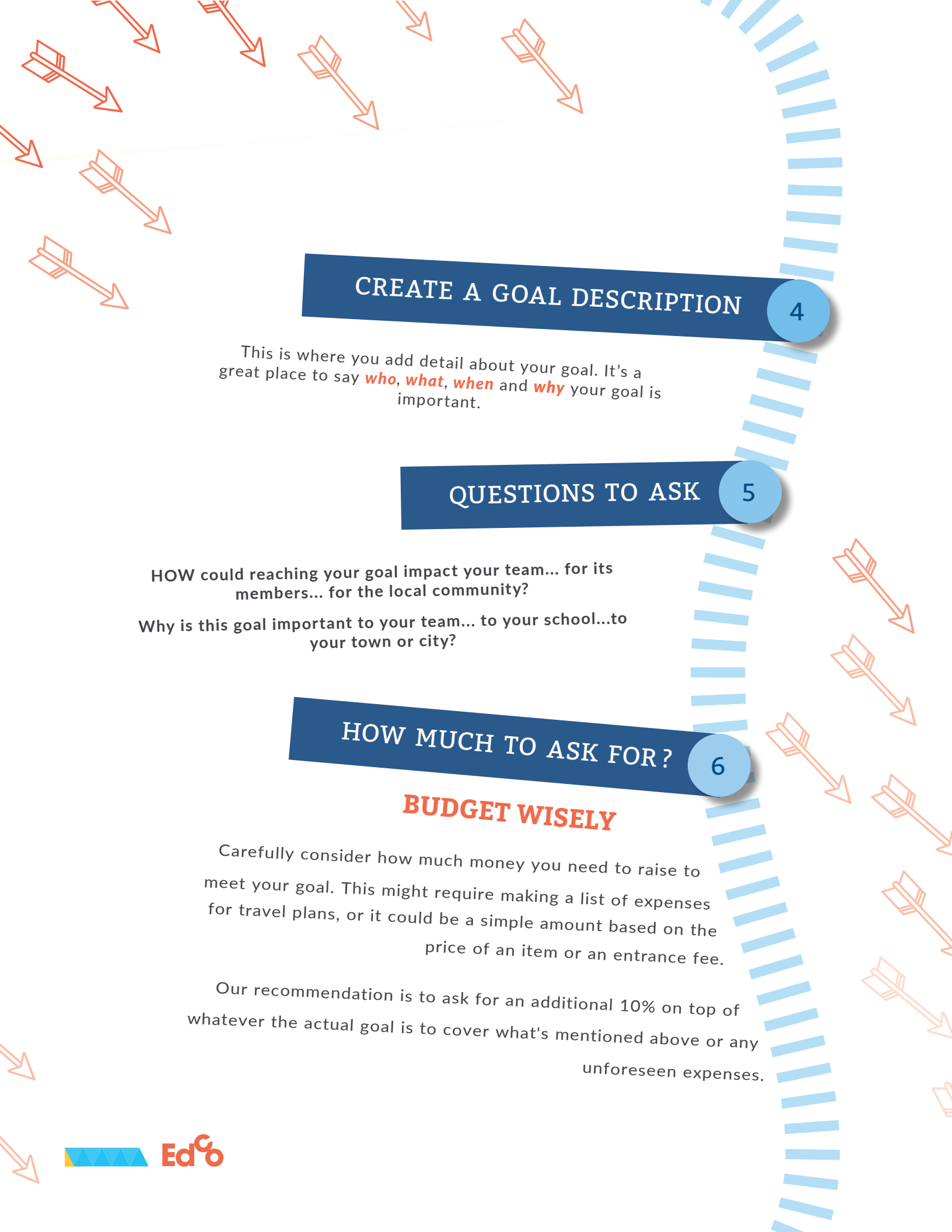
1. My goal is specific enough for supporters
2. My goal is large enough to be meaningful

3

MAKE YOUR TEAM **STAND OUT!**

USE MEDIA Whether you're sending an email, setting up an online fundraiser, or posting on social, you need to separate yourself from the noise. Use strong headlines and subject lines, it's what donors will see first.

When possible, use photos that: include your team, are of good quality, and represent what your team is doing. Have a video? GREAT, you can use both. Other best practices include providing updates, sharing on social media and attempting to get press.



CREATE A GOAL DESCRIPTION

4

This is where you add detail about your goal. It's a great place to say **who**, **what**, **when** and **why** your goal is important.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

5

HOW could reaching your goal impact your team... for its members... for the local community?

Why is this goal important to your team... to your school...to your town or city?

HOW MUCH TO ASK FOR?

6

BUDGET WISELY

Carefully consider how much money you need to raise to meet your goal. This might require making a list of expenses for travel plans, or it could be a simple amount based on the price of an item or an entrance fee.

Our recommendation is to ask for an additional 10% on top of whatever the actual goal is to cover what's mentioned above or any unforeseen expenses.



DEADLINES ARE A **MUST!**

7

We all know that there is nothing like a deadline to get people working. Creating a sense of urgency is an important step for your fundraiser. If you tell someone that you have only five days left to raise money, they'll feel the pressure and will be more likely to give.

- Review previous team budgets for the “actual” cost of recurring expenses.
- Monitor progress toward your financial goal once you start fundraising to determine if you need to adjust your strategy or get more teammates involved in the fundraising effort.

TIPS AND GUIDELINES



FUNDRAISING METHODS

It may be that your team does get some of the required funds, but you still need to fill some gaps in the budget, especially as your team and travel needs continue to grow. Or you may be in a situation where it's too late to request funds or the school doesn't have resources to spare.

The following are some practical and time-saving solutions that can help fill those gaps:

1

TAX CREDIT DONATIONS – Many states, offer a dollar-for-dollar tax credit donation program*. This is a win-win for everyone. Donors get an automatic tax credit, and your team receives funds! Meet with your principal and bookkeeper to find out your state and district regulations.

2

COMMUNITY OUTREACH/SPONSORSHIP – Many businesses in your area are looking for more exposure in the community. Consider selling sponsorship packages in exchange for displaying their logo on your team t-shirts, website, and social media postings.

See Appendix page 20-21:

Reaching Out To Local Businesses and Share to Social Media for great strategies in these areas.

3

BIG QUESTIONS DEBATE – Hosting a Big Questions Debate event is one of the most suitable and most accessible ways to earn money for your team. You are literally raising money by competing in the activity in which you participate! For more information about [Big Questions Debate](#).

4

Consider [submitting a program grant request](#) to get your team going. The NSDA offers grants to Title I eligible schools as well as new programs.

* **EXAMPLE** Visit <http://bit.ly/taxcreditexample>

MAKING THE ASK

GUIDELINES

- 1 SHARE YOUR PASSION FOR WHAT YOUR TEAM IS ALL ABOUT, FIRST.** Your excitement will show how much you care and help donors understand why they should too.
- 2 ASK FAMILY, FRIENDS AND PEOPLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY TO DONATE TO YOUR TEAM.** People can't give if they don't know you need help.
- 3 EXPLAIN WHAT THEIR DONATION CAN MAKE POSSIBLE.** Be specific about the impact a donation will have on your team. Be clear what your team can do with \$5, \$100, \$500 and more.
- 4 STAY CONFIDENT AND BE PROUD OF WHAT YOU'RE DOING.** A "no" is not a personal rejection. Most people do not give the first time they are asked. It's important to establish a relationship.
- 5 BE PREPARED TO TAKE MONEY ON THE SPOT.** Before approaching a potential donor, prep yourself or your students for how to take donations. What payment methods are permitted? Consider cash, checks, team venmo, etc.
- 6 TURN ONE-TIME DONORS INTO REPEAT DONORS.** Be sure to follow up with each of your donors to thank them. When you do, share pictures and videos to show how their support helped you out.

Donors who get responses back and see what their contribution helped make happen are MUCH MORE likely to give again.

SAMPLE REQUESTS

E-MAIL 1

Hi [Friend's Name],

I've got some big news: Our high school speech and debate team is incredible, and we just qualified for the big national competition with teams from all around the country.

We've had this dream all year, and now we're in! But to actually get there, we need to raise money from our friends and families, and I thought you might be excited to help out by making a tax-deductible donation.

Will you chip in \$50 (or whatever you can afford) to help?

Here's the link to our fundraising page:
[Fundraising page]

Thank you SO MUCH -- we are incredibly grateful, and I'll send you some pics from the competition! :)

[Your Name]

Hi [Name],

We're working hard to achieve great things. Our success depends on the support of our friends, family and community.

You can help by:

1. Making a donation:
Your contribution will have a direct impact on sustaining our school activities.
2. Sharing our page:
Help us spread the word by forwarding this email to your network of contacts.

Learn more about us:

[Fundraising page]

Thank you for the support! :)

[Your Name]

E-MAIL 2

LETTER

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is [Name] and I am a student with the speech and debate team at [School name]. I'm writing today on behalf of my team to inquire if [Company name] might be interested in sponsoring our speech and debate team for our ___year___ season! Our team competes against other top-ranked students across the state. [Insert a few team achievements]

Speech and debate offers us an outlet where our voices are heard and celebrated. When we speak, debate, and perform, we have an audience who value our ideas and stories and offer us feedback so we can improve. Because of speech and debate, I have become more confident in every way. I raise my more hand in class, [insert more personal examples].

As a sponsor of our team, you would receive exclusive promotion in the community. [Insert pitch for sponsorship. Suggestions and package options below. Evaluate what makes the most sense for your team based on the number of students, your schedule, and your options for local businesses.]

Season Sponsorship Package -- \$ ____

Your gift will help send students from our team to tournaments throughout the year, help us host our own tournament, and cover the cost of our school's membership in the National Speech & Debate Association Honor Society. This package includes:

- Promotion on our team's social media pages, where we post results after every tournament
- Logo placement alongside team photos on the header of our social media banners
- Mention in school wide announcements when team results are shared
- Exclusive sponsorship of our ___year___ tournament, reaching XX people/teams in XX cities/states
- Listing on team t-shirts
- Listing on tournament trophies

Send the Team to a Tournament Package -- \$ ____

Your gift will cover registration costs for our students to compete at a tournament this year as they discuss global issues and build their skills. This package includes:

- Promotion on our team's social media pages, where we post results after the tournament
- Mention in school wide announcements where tournament results are shared

Sponsor a Student for the Season Package -- \$ ____

Your gift will sponsor one of our students and give them the opportunity to compete at tournaments throughout the year. This package includes:

- Promotion on our team's social media pages, where we post results after every tournament

Our previous sponsors have included [X Company] and [Y Company].

For more detailed information about our team, you can visit our websites at the following links:

- www.highschool.com/SpeechAndDebateTeam (Team website)
- www.facebook.com/SpeechAndDebateTeam (Facebook page)

Thank you very much for your consideration. I look forward to hearing back from you soon!

[Name]

Student, Speech and Debate Team.
Team contact info

USING SOCIAL MEDIA

SHARING YOUR TEAM'S FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN
ON SOCIAL MEDIA HELPS YOUR MESSAGE TRAVEL FAR

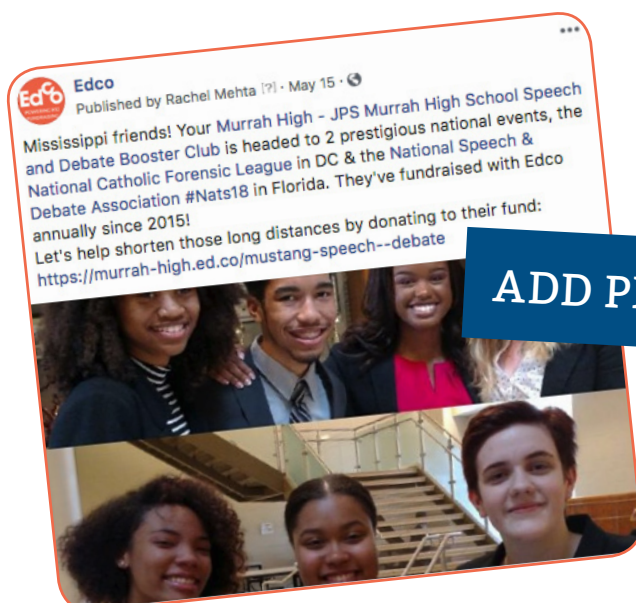
Try facebook, instagram, twitter and even LinkedIn



1

DON'T FORGET

to include your
campaign link.



2

ADD PHOTOS, VIDEOS & TEAM UPDATES

*"We just qualified for the
National Tournament!"*

...to keep your campaign fresh and new.

3

POST FREQUENTLY



Depending on how much time you've set for your fundraiser, you can post 2-3 times a week.



#Hashtags

4

TAG THE ORGANIZATION/S

Tag the organization/s you're affiliated with - high school or school district; NSDA or even the town or city where you're based.

Guide to successful Facebook posts

PHOTOS & VIDEOS REALLY WORK



You've heard the expression "a picture is worth a thousand words", right? Well, on Facebook it's true. A post with a picture will reach more family and friends than one without a picture.



Know what's better? Uploading (yes, uploading not linking!) a video. People love watching videos. A short and engaging video can capture attention and inspire your friends and family to give.

SHORT VIDEOS
& PHOTOS
OF YOU AND
YOUR TEAM
IN ACTION
MAKE YOUR
CAUSE FEEL
PERSONAL



TELL PEOPLE
WHAT YOU
NEED, WHY IT'S
IMPORTANT
TO YOU AND
WHERE TO
GIVE



REMEMBER

Be sincere but don't be afraid to add humor and personality to your posts

SAMPLE FACEBOOK POSTS & SHARING

Guide to sharing on Facebook

TIPS TO KEEP YOUR POSTS FRESH

- 1 CREATE A LIBRARY OF PHOTOS AND VIDEOS THE WHOLE TEAM CAN USE.** Great pics can happen whenever your team is together!
- 2 POST OFTEN.** Frequency is the key to making an impact on your audience.
- 3 ALWAYS INCLUDE HOW FOLLOWERS CAN SUPPORT YOU.** Make it easy for someone to give.
- 4 DON'T HOLD BACK YOUR ENTHUSIASM FOR THE TEAM.** Your passion is what makes friends and family members want to support you.
- 5 BE "NEWSY"... THINK OF YOURSELF AS A REPORTER FOR THE TEAM.** Talk about upcoming events or achievements.
- 6 TAG PEOPLE AND PLACES.** This helps spread your message.
- 7 SMILE, HAVE FUN, BE FUNNY!** But also, ask for the help your team needs.

PITCHING BUSINESSES

Local businesses are a great way to get additional funding for your campaigns because they like to support their community—and it's good for business! But, a lot of people ask them for money so you need to stand out.

SOME TIPS WE RECOMMEND ARE:

- 1 **Have a solid pitch**—be able to articulate your cause and state clearly why you need the funds you are looking for.
- 2 **Use pictures and graphics** that help tell the story.
- 3 **Talk about what you have already achieved** as a group so they know your team is responsible.
- 4 If possible, **tie in why the company would be a good fit** as a speech and debate team, your request may be welcomed by corporations that present in public a lot, or with politicians who have the gift to gab as well.



5

Thank the company with a handwritten note.

6

Recognize the company on social media (tag it if you can in the post) so others in your community can see a particular company supported you or your team.

7

Email or mail the company a photo of your team using the item or experiencing something that the company's support made possible (i.e., your team at a tournament or your team in its new uniforms).



Regardless, local companies like to support local teams. The press, exposure and feel-good aspect goes a long way for local businesses.

GENERATING PRESS

YOUR TEAM IS NEWSWORTHY!

Getting press coverage (newspapers, radio, and even TV) is possible. As with most things, it's all in how you ask.

HERE'S HOW



1

Research the various local media outlets and find out who reports on schools or education. (**HINT:** Calling the paper or the station is the best way to do this)

2

Once you know who to talk to, email them a press release. Always include your phone number and email so they can contact you! **Take a look at our example press releases on the next page.**

3

Then, one day after sending the release, try to call the media outlet and “pitch” the reporter. (If you’re lucky they’ll call you first)

“Hi, this Suzy at George Washington High, did you receive a press release from our speech and debate team?”

If yes, engage the reporter in a conversation. Invite them to the school to meet the team, or to an upcoming tournament. If no, try to send the press release again and still try to chit-chat.

4

STORIES TO PITCH

- Your team’s achievements, for instance, success at competitions
- Students from your team go on to great colleges and careers
- Community service work your team does
- Using crowdfunding to connect with your local community

PRESS RELEASE

NEWS

Contact: [Name]
[Team Name]
[Phone Number]
[teamemail]@[school].org

For Immediate Release

City, state - January 1, 2019 – The High School Speech & Debate Team at [School Name] has had another exceptional year representing the School at state and regional tournaments, winning X and Y and Z. This team of # students is led by [team advisor name(s)]. Recently, it learned seven of its students have qualified for “Nationals”, an annual tournament organized by the National Speech & Debate Association. [mention names and categories if space allows]

As “Nationals” this year is in Dallas from June 16-21, The Speech & Debate Team must raise an estimated \$# for travel, lodging, food, and tournament registration fees. [Team Advisor name] explains, “We’ve employed crowdfunding to raise money to help the students offset the cost. They have worked so hard all year and have done excellent work, so we’d love to get them to compete with the best of the best from around the country.”

To learn more about this team and the opportunity to support their journey to “Nationals”, please visit [team campaign link]. Donors will receive a letter for tax purposes and will feel confident their donation is directly helping these young people.

About High School Speech & Debate Team

Established in 1992, the High School Speech & Debate Team has prepared 500+ students for competitions, including many who qualified for the National Tournament in categories like Original Oratory, Extemporaneous Speaking, Policy Debate, Lincoln-Douglas Debate and others. This team meets over the course of the academic year and is supported in part by its local school district, the high school’s Booster Team, and individual and business donors.



FUNDRAISING GUIDE FOR SPEECH & DEBATE TEAMS

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