

Incentivizing PAC Involvement

Conveying the value of PAC involvement can be a tall order. Below are some tips on how to strengthen your PAC's presence throughout your organization and provide additional motivation for potential donors to get involved.

1. Audit your PAC and PAC operations to establish a baseline for measurement.

The essential first step to building your PAC is assessing where you stand. By conducting a legal and financial audit of your PAC, you can make sure that your activities are — and remain — compliant with FEC regulations and accounting best practices.

An often overlooked step is conducting a PAC operations and procedures review. This process can highlight areas for growth, show which activities are not yielding desired results and help to determine a clear pathway for future success.

The results of both a compliance and operational audit can help to establish a baseline from which to measure future growth. By developing clear, measurable metrics and goals, you will be able to demonstrate growth year to year.

2. Understand the political sophistication of your base and educate appropriately.

People are often skeptical of PACs and campaign finance in general. That's why it's vital to share information on the political process and explain why employee and member contributions to a PAC support the organization's goals. Explaining why money is needed, where it goes and why it matters is crucial to getting people to give. More than two-thirds of PACs take steps to enhance eligibles' awareness of PACs and political activities, according to the *2017 Association and Corporate PAC Benchmarking Reports*.

Here are some ways to educate your base:

- Compare connected PACs with Super PACs
- Debunk the top 10 myths or share "Did You Know?" facts about your PAC
- Have a 24-hour response policy for donor or PAC-eligible questions, and encourage eligibles to contact the PAC for any political inquiries
- Bring in experts to provide political education, such as staff from national party committees, members of Congress, pollsters, public opinion strategists and campaign strategists
- Hold a fun educational event, like "PAC Jeopardy" or a lunch-and-learn where participants review the PAC brochure and take a quiz, then correct answers go into a drawing for a prize

In addition, always give your base something to do when you contact them — whether it is to contribute, participate as an advocate or share the message with others. It will make your messages more meaningful and help them feel like part of the process.



3. Offer suggested giving levels on your PAC materials to help your eligibles determine their appropriate contribution level.

Many potential PAC donors don't know how much to contribute, so offering suggested levels establishes a baseline from which they can make an informed decision. Nine out of 10 corporate PACs offer giving guidelines, according to the *2017 Corporate PAC Benchmarking Report*.

Popular guidelines include:

- 0.5 percent or 1 percent of salary, or a flat dollar amount per pay period
- An amount based on the individual's pay grade, title band or title:
 - For example, a corporate PAC may recommend that managers give \$38.50 per pay period (\$1,000 per year), directors give \$96.15 per pay period (\$2,500 per year) and vice presidents give \$192.30 per pay period (\$5,000 per year)
- "Give a Shift" – Suggest contributing the value of a common work shift or other value that means something to your eligible population
- A "365 Club," or \$1/day contribution
- \$2,017 in 2017
- A "Buck Up" program, or \$10/day contribution
- A "Focus on the Five" program – Encouraging \$5 donors to increase their contribution

4. Capture low-hanging fruit by reaching out to eligibles who have indicated an interest in government affairs, politics or advocacy.

Many PAC eligibles would contribute, or contribute more, if only they were asked. Use these techniques to increase your PAC participation and fundraising numbers:

- Reach out to employees or board members currently contributing below the recommended giving guidelines, and make it as easy as possible to contribute. An easy way to do this is to set up a system in which they only have to click to confirm an increase to the recommended giving level in an email. (Check with your counsel first to make sure this meets all legal criteria.)
- Send a renewal letter to past donors with a suggested donation of 10 percent to 25 percent more than the previous year.
- Reach out to eligible new hires or new members in their first six months. These individuals are often looking for ways to connect with the organization, and the PAC may be the way to do it.
- Reach out to those who have been active in grassroots efforts but have not yet contributed to the PAC. Explain that the PAC is another avenue for making their voice heard.

5. Hold new and exciting fundraising events that will encourage participation.

Events are a great way to get people excited about the PAC, establish a strong PAC "community" and give them the extra push they need to make a contribution.

In addition, more PACs are finding special events that provide access to organizational leadership, celebrities or politicians to be a big motivator in PAC contributions.



Some popular PAC event ideas include:

General Fundraising Events

- Golf outing with a pro
- Golf tournament (contribution to play with leadership or local celebrities)
- Straw poll: \$1 PAC contribution = 1 vote
- Entertainer or political figure as speaker
- Get a box at a concert
- Corporate tickets to a sporting event
- Baseball night
- Silent auction
- Art auction
- Jazz fest
- Pig roast
- Raffle a leased car — A 2-year lease with a goal of at least 3x the value of the car
- Raffle “A Day in Washington”
- Raffle concert tickets
- CEO-hosted receptions
- VIP tickets to local events or festivals
- Reception at CEO’s house
- Election Night watch party
- “Dine around the world” meal with drinks
- Chili cook-off
- Pizza & Politics or Pancakes & Politics, where executives serve food
- Wine tastings
- Jeans Fridays for PAC members only
- Karaoke night
- Cooking contest
- Antique show
- Raffle a trip to an executive’s vacation home
- Bingo
- Afternoon dessert social for PAC members only
- Scotch and Cigars event
- Cake/cupcake decorating event

Themed Events

- Western hoedown
- Beach party
- Casino night: \$1 PAC contribution = \$1 chip
- Patriotic Fourth of July event featuring apple pie and ice cream
- Carnival — Pie-throwing contest, eating contests, “dunk the CEO”
- ‘80s night

Annual Meetings or Conventions

- Ribbons on badges specifying incentive club membership
- Donor wall/board with incentive club members’ names
- Offer special gifts during meeting for donors giving \$1,000 (e-reader) and \$2,500 (iPad/tablet)
- Raffle a tablet for anyone who contributes during the meeting or stops by the booth to learn more
- Host a social media lounge
- Photos ops with cut-outs of presidential candidates
- Celebrity impersonator
- Have a presence on the expo floor and give out gift cards for contributions (For example, a \$500 Apple gift card for \$2,500 donors; a \$200 Apple gift card for \$1,000 donors; and a \$20 Starbucks card for \$100 donors)
- Hammock city — Take a rest at the PAC booth
- Hospitality suite for incentive club members — free bar for \$5K members, cash bar for \$1K members
- Giveaways: Lip balm with logo, highlighters, pens, chocolates, keychains, calculators, hats, stress balls, tie clips or lanyards

6. Promote internal competition to drive involvement.

Sometimes, one of the biggest drivers for PAC involvement is to show your division, committee, state or facility is performing better than another. Some ideas for promoting friendly competition include:

- Showing the progress of fundraising/participation by different committees or company divisions at big meetings
- Having slides at every department or chapter meeting on the PAC and its progress
- Offering a parking spot or other perk for the top-performing peer solicitor

- “PAC Attack” – Having a PAC champion issue a challenge at a high-level meeting to get 100 percent participation and then provide updates after every break
- Providing awards for small, medium and large chapter or division fundraising winners
- Having a wall of honor at any big business or annual meeting, where donors at recommended or incentive club giving levels are highlighted
- At leadership or business meetings, having a gold sticker on the name badges of donors or donors giving at the recommended level (Be sure to let people know before the meeting that this will be happening so they know what it means and have an opportunity to contribute.)

7. Show your appreciation in multiple ways that fit your internal culture.

Donor appreciation may be accomplished through public recognition of PAC contributions, simple thank-you letters, special events or small gifts and giveaways. In the *2017 Association PAC Benchmarking Report*, associations reported that special name recognition, use of small gifts like lapel pins, upgraded services for PAC donors, incentive-club-only events and raffles were the most effective appreciation tools. In the *2017 Corporate PAC Benchmarking Report*, PAC charitable match, special communications like newsletters, meetings or meals with leadership and politicians, and special gifts were found to be corporate PACs’ most important recognition benefits.

Some popular ideas to show donor appreciation include:

Recognition Gifts

- Creating a pledge wall/donor list at fly-ins, annual meetings and business events, highlighting those who give the maximum or recommended amount
- Giving away “bling” featuring the PAC logo, such as lapel pins, lanyards, keychains, bags, ties, plaques or covers for tablets
- Providing insider information from D.C., including daily reports from party conventions, pictures from events, Election Night analysis, etc.
- Offering a PAC charitable match
- Sending an annual holiday gift
- Holding raffles for special, large or unique prizes
- Sending special communications (e.g., newsletters)

Appreciation Events

- Holding events featuring business leaders, legislators and special guests
- Hosting “Meet the Candidate” sessions
- Scheduling reward lunches for divisions that exceed PAC participation goals
- Providing ice cream/coffee breaks
- Organizing field trips
- Hosting a reception at the CEO’s or president’s house
- Inviting spouses to after-hours or off-site events — after all, donating is a family decision