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# Nonprofit Guide *to* Going Green

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THE GREENNONPROFITS.ORG HANDBOOK

organization can be seen as a leader in your community for incorporating green techniques into your fundraising event—for “being green while raising green.”

With regard to your vendors, if they are longtime partners, talk to them. Similar to the approach in raising the issue with foundation and corporate grant-making funders, find out what your vendors have the interest and capability to do. Certainly they do not want to lose your business so it is in their interest to try to work with you. And unfortunately for them, if they are not willing to make the transition with you, there are many other fish—or vendors and event space—in the fundraising events sea.

**CASE STUDY: THE ABINGTON-ROCKLEDGE DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE** One nonprofit organization in Pennsylvania is successfully making this transition, taking it one step at a time. The Abington-Rockledge Democratic Committee (ARDC) in Abington, outside of Philadelphia, has organized a spring banquet for the past 18 years. In 2009, it wanted to start moving to a greener format. With an all-volunteer base, the ARDC knew it could not do it all at once—it was too overwhelming to make all the changes necessary to run a truly green event in just one year.

The spring banquet is a typical fundraising event held at a local country club. It is traditionally the ARDC's largest fundraising event of the year. During the formal dinner program, which typically draws about 200 people, the organization distributes a series of awards to local people in the community.

Besides its ticket sales, the spring banquet also raises money by selling advertisements in a printed program. This piece is a traditional booklet program printed in color, bound in the center, and put on every chair at the event. The program has a typical layout of information about ARDC and the honorees with advertisements from businesses and individuals on the back pages.

In 2009, the ARDC went green by eliminating the printed program altogether. It was noted in years past that, as is the case with many fundraising events, a majority of these programs were left behind, wasting paper, printing costs, staff time, and money. So the ARDC decided to take a small step with a virtual advertising program that would be projected on a white wall of the room during the event. The computer presentation used the same logos and messages that would have been printed in the program but each advertisement had its own slide or page that was displayed on the wall. The looping presentation started at the cocktail hour and continued throughout the event. It also gave the ARDC the opportunity to create pages for the award winners.

The presentation was created and organized by a volunteer, and the projector used to display it was donated in exchange for an advertisement. Following the event, the ARDC plans to send a quarterly e-mail newsletter that includes a link to the presentation. The link will be included for the next four newsletters (over the next year), so that advertisers gain exposure not only among event attendees but the wider ARDC database of supporters and constituents.

Altogether the ARDC spent zero dollars putting the presentation together, saving \$1,150 from the 2008 spring banquet's printing and setup costs. The organization also raised slightly more money—bringing in \$4,310 in advertising revenue in 2009 over \$3,465 in 2008. Besides the obvious increase in revenue, the cost savings from not printing a program also boosted ARDC's bottom line.

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congratulate the



ABINGTON+  
ROCKLEDGE  
DEMOCRATIC  
COMMITTEE

on their

**GREEN PROGRAM**

**HONORING**  **EMPOWERING**  
THE PAST THE FUTURE

**SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2009**

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A slide from the Spring Banquet presentation: Donors congratulated the ARDC or the Virtual Green Program.



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**DONORS, SPONSORS, AND MATCHING SPONSORS**

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A slide from the Spring Banquet presentation: The ARDC thanked its donors and sponsors.




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A slide from the Spring Banquet presentation: A sample paid advertisement.

The ARDC raised more money in 2009 than it had in the event's 18-year history, and it is thrilled with the results. There was no paper waste, no printing and layout costs—and the organization received no complaints about the change in program formats. In fact, people seemed to like the change. For 2010, the ARDC hopes to take the next step. It plans to make another virtual presentation for the program and a switch to organic food for the banquet.

The ARDC represents just one successful example of a transitioned approach to green fundraising events. The change was simple to make, and it saved the organization money while increasing its income. The ARDC created a plan that was easy and that its constituents approved of. The one step the organization took in 2009 helped it secure buy-in and support for the greening effort and will allow it to take further steps in the future.

## Greening Your Major/Planned Gifts Program

### Traditional Fundraising Method

Historically a major and planned gifts program is focused on developing long-term relationships with individuals who have both capacity and willingness to financially support a nonprofit organization in a significant way. What dollar amount constitutes a major gift varies from organization to organization, but typically a major or planned gift differs from an annual gift in that the gift is made through multiyear payments or by a vehicle that involves the donor's estate.