

Post-Event Donation Wrap-Up Checklist

What to do with the donations once the event is over - reconciling what arrived against what was used, handing over prizes nobody collected, closing every donor's record, and the notes that make next year's asking list start warm.

Checklists · ultimatedonations.org/resources/post-event-donation-wrap-up-checklist

The event ends and the volunteers go home, and that is exactly when a group loses the value of everything it asked for. Unused items drift into someone's car, a prize nobody collected sits in a box, the records of who gave what stay in three different people's inboxes, and next year's committee starts from a blank page.

This checklist is the hour or two of wrap-up that prevents all of it. Work through it in the days after the event, with the [donation request tracker](#) open, and send the after-event notes from the [donor thank-you kit](#). The rest of the library is at [free fundraising resources](#).

On the night, before anyone leaves

- **Collect every leftover item into one place.** Unclaimed baskets, unopened donations, anything that did not make it onto a table.
- **Put one named person in charge of it.** Whoever takes the box home is responsible for it until the wrap-up is done.
- **Keep the winner records together.** Whatever you used to record who won what goes with the leftover items, not into a volunteer's pocket.
- **Photograph what is left.** A quick picture of the leftover pile settles a lot of later questions about what was there.
- **Keep any gift cards separate and secured.** They are small, easy to lose, and worth tracking card by card.

Reconcile what arrived against what was used

Go through the tracker row by row. Every donation should end the week with exactly one of these outcomes recorded.

Outcome	What it means	What to record
Used as planned	The item went into the raffle, auction or prize table and found a winner	Which lot or basket it was part of

Outcome	What it means	What to record
Won but not yet collected	Someone won it and has not picked it up	The winner's details and every contact attempt
Not used	It arrived but never went out on the night	Where it is now and who is holding it
Promised but never arrived	The company said yes, and nothing came	That it did not arrive - not a guess about why
Returned	You gave it back at the donor's request	When, and to whom

A row with no outcome is the one that turns into an awkward question from a donor months later. Close them all.

Prizes nobody collected

1. **Apply the rule you announced.** If you told the room winners had to collect by a certain time or date, follow it, and write down what you did.
2. **If you announced no rule, contact the winner.** Use the details you took on the night, give a clear date to collect by, and record each attempt.
3. **Decide in committee, not alone.** What happens to a prize that is never claimed is a group decision, recorded in writing, so no single volunteer carries it.
4. **Never quietly keep it.** An unclaimed prize belongs to the event's purpose, not to whoever happens to have it.

Items that were not used

- **List them in the tracker** with where they are and who holds them.
- **Check whether they will keep.** Perishable items, dated passes and seasonal goods may not last until another event.
- **Ask the donor if in doubt.** A short note saying the item was not used, and asking whether they would like it used at a later event or another way, is honest and rarely unwelcome.
- **Do not repurpose silently.** Using a donated item for something other than what was described in the request is a decision the donor should hear about from you.

Close every donor's record

For each company that gave, confirm the tracker shows:

- the item as it actually arrived
- the date it was received
- whether the written thank-you has gone
- whether the after-event note has gone
- the name of the person who approved it, and how to reach them next time

The last line is the one that matters for next year. A contact name turns a cold request into a warm one.

The after-event note

Send it within a week or two. It says what happened, in plain words, and what the event paid for. Use the after-event section of the [donor thank-you kit](#) for the wording, and only say what is true - if the result is not final yet, say so and write again when it is.

Notes for next year's committee

Write these down while the event is fresh. Half a page is enough.

Question	Your answer
Which items drew the most interest on the night?	
Which donations arrived late, and how late?	
Which companies said yes, and who approved it?	
Which companies said no, and did they say why?	
What would you ask for earlier next time?	
What went wrong with collection, storage or setup?	
Who kept the records, and where are they now?	

Keep this sheet with the tracker, in a shared place the next committee can find. Before the next round, look each company up in the [donor directory](#) - we track 4,000+ companies, and each page describes what that program has historically offered and where to check its current status.

Common questions

What should you do with donated items that were not used?

Record them first, then decide with the committee - hold them for a later event if they will keep, or ask the donor whether they would like them used another way. What you should not do is let them sit in someone's garage with nobody knowing they exist.

What happens to a prize nobody collected?

Follow whatever collection rule you announced on the night, and write down what you did. If you announced none, contact the winner using the details you took, give them a clear date to collect by, and record every attempt.

When should the after-event note go to donors?

Within a week or two, while the result is fresh and the person who approved the gift still remembers it. It is the note almost nobody sends, and the one that makes next year's ask easy.