



## CHARITY EVENTS

In the late 80's and early 90's, some clever ad exec worked out that charity events were a great way to host an event at half the cost. Tell all the suppliers and performers the event was to raise money for some obscure charity, donate a token amount to said charity and then write the rest of the cost off. Instant cheap event!

The result was all the performers and suppliers cottoned onto this and quickly pricing for charity events went back up to normal pricing.

The downside was that real charity events no longer had access to "charity rates".

These days we are all a lot more cynical. Having said that, I must say one of my recent clients did the exact opposite. They hosted an event for themselves and as part of the event, donated \$300,000 to an industry relevant charity. Events like Wharf4Ward, hosted by the Sony Foundation that raise on average \$500,000 annually for YouCan is also way above reproach, but there are still some hucksters out there trying it on.

An example of this was a recent conversation with a friend who told me she was approached (as a performer) to work on an event that was raising money for a youth-based charity. It was explained to her in conversation and via a written brief, that there was a very limited budget to pay for performers and she was asked to help out for a good cause. She agreed to give her time; at way below her normal rate for a charity relevant to her.

The end result, as I am sure you have guessed, was a sham. The event was actually, to raise money for a school. A token amount was sent to the charity – by that, I mean almost nothing, there was no real education, or acknowledgement on the night about that charity and most of the guests just got very intoxicated and the whole night dissolved into a mess.

The performer in question was angry at having been taken for a ride and vented to me that that was the last time she did anything for a "charity".

Please don't get me wrong, there are lots of great charity events out there, that do amazing work for their nominated charity, but unfortunately, most charities are in the unenviable position that they always take what they can get, even if the amount is nominal, on the assumption that some, is better than none, which only perpetuates the problem.

Charity events are like tithing. It's a give back to the community and to the system within which we work. If that is taken advantage of, the system does not work and everyone gets hurt and there is only mistrust. There is too much of that already, let's not perpetuate that even more.

When I look at such charities like Oz Harvest and what Ronny Kahn has created without any sinister agenda, we should all be humbled.

When we do things to help others selflessly, especially in an industry that is predicated on budget, we are building a system that not only works, but adds value to the community as a whole.

It makes the system work better and all of us better people.

I do believe the more you give back the more you get. As naïve as that may seem, it definitely works for me and hopefully will for all of you.