Virtual Gala Fundraiser Training
Volunteer Job Descriptions

Remember our pre COVID-19 fundraisers? Those in-person galas generally required two types of volunteers.

- **Pre-event volunteers:** These helpers took on larger jobs of planning the event in the weeks and months leading up to the gala.

  Names and roles would vary by nonprofit, but typical roles associated with pre-event volunteers were gala chair, auction chair, sponsorship chair, solicitations chair, guest services (registration / checkout) chair and volunteer manager.

  School committees might also have had someone overseeing class art projects or teacher donations.

- **Onsite volunteers:** These volunteers worked smaller jobs the night of the gala.

  A volunteer manager might have assigned these helpers into roles such as raffle ticket sellers, silent auction monitors, runners, coat check volunteers, valet / parking support, auctioneer clerk, and other roles.

  Some of these roles may have been so simple they had no formal name. "Your job is to stand here, greet guests, and point them down the hall to registration," a volunteer manager told one willing helper.

In our current world, most of the *pre-event* volunteer roles are still needed for a virtual gala.

But many *onsite* volunteer roles have morphed into new positions.

I assume you already have volunteer job descriptions for your events. Thus, the purpose of this handout is to describe the roles of the *new night-of volunteers* needed for *virtual galas*.

Let's begin.

Job Descriptions for Virtual Gala Volunteers

AUCTION ASSISTANT / CLERK / RECORDER / SECRETARY – This role has many names, but the function is the same. At an in-person gala, the clerk sits near the auctioneer and records the auction results. When the auctioneer sells each item, she documents the sale on a recording sheet:

- "Item 1 sold for $900 to bidder #143."
- "Item 2 sold for $2300 to bidder #167."

After each item is sold, another volunteer – usually called a "runner" – takes the recording sheet and delivers it ("runs" it) to checkout. The checkout team records the sale in the auction software - or in lieu of software, manually processes the sale with a form.

During a virtual gala, the auction assistant shifts from recording sheets to working in Zoom chat. She confirms sales for all guests to see.

For instance, as the auctioneer describes an item, the assistant might type:

- "Get ready to bid on item 1, the taco dinner."
- "Prepare to bid on item 2, the beach house."

Once each live auction item is sold, the assistant types a confirmation:

- "Item 1 sold for $900 to Bob and Jane Long," or
- "Taco dinner sold for $900 to Bob and Jane Long."

During the fund a need, the assistant helps with the transition from one level of giving to another. Her comments might look like this:

- "Starting $1000 donations" and then, "Closing $1000 donations."
- "Opening $250 level" and then, "Closing $250 level."

The assistant should change her name to "AUCTION ASSISTANT" upon entering the Zoom gala. When the chat box buzzes with bids, donations, and extraneous comments, the AUCTION ASSISTANT title stands out in all-caps. Her posts won't be confused with others.

After the gala is over, the chat file is downloaded. It serves as the official record of the auction activity for the live auction and fund a need.

The checkout team reads through the chat file, recording guests' donations into the auction software. The AUCTION ASSISTANT's comments keep the chat organized.

Amidst all the freewheeling commentary in the chat box, the checkout team can quickly identify the AUCTION ASSISTANT's comments.

CHAT CONCIERGE / CHAT MANAGER – At an in-person gala, you might have stationed night-of volunteers at the venue entrance or registration area to welcome guests.

In the virtual gala, that's what the Chat Concierge does, albeit online.

During your online reception, which often runs 15- 30 minutes as guests are logging in and getting settled, your Chat Concierge thanks them for coming and encourages participation.

- "Nice to see you, Jessica!"
- "I see the Hansens have arrived! Ready for the show?"
- "How is everyone doing tonight?"
- "I see Andy Dowell is wearing his lucky blue tie!"

When bidding starts in the live auction, the Chat Concierge encourages bidders.

- "David, your family NEEDS this vacation!"
- "Ashley, that necklace would look great on you!"

Ideally this volunteer both *knows* the community and *is known* to the community.

She will be "chatting up" your guests, serving as the face of your gala until the program gets underway and then fostering connections throughout the program.

You might decide to have more than one Chat Concierge. That's OK, too. These volunteers get the party started!

When guests know each other, it doesn't take them long to engage with one another. They'll use both the group comments and send private messages to friends. Even so, the Chat Concierge should continue to be a steady provider of positivity throughout the program.

Unlike the AUCTION ASSISTANT, Chat Concierges should use *their own name* in Zoom. You'll want guests to recognize these people and not hide behind a title.

REGISTRATION ASSISTANT / REGISTRAR / ZOOM ROOM MANAGER – For a Zoom Meeting virtual gala, your guests will be parked into a virtual waiting room before you admit them into the gala. Depending on your Zoom settings / license, you'll grant guests access one-by-one or en masse.

For security reasons, you shouldn't allow anyone entrance to the gala unless you know them.

At one virtual gala, the Registrar had a few guests who had used aliases when they logged into Zoom. The tech team posted this note:

> *"You're among friends at Nonprofit Gala; we want to properly welcome you. To join our gala, ensure the first and last name you used to login to ZOOM tonight is the same first and last name you used to register for our gala."*

If your posted message doesn't prompt guest to update their name, the Registrar should see if the guest's email provides a clue as to his identity. Often the Registrar can identify who the guest is and can manually change the name.

To support these actions, the Registrar will be granted Zoom "host" privileges.

Remember – guests buy a ticket to your gala through your auction software. As the gala date nears, you'll use the software to send guests the Zoom link. When guests login to attend, your Zoom settings should again require name and email. If you don't know 'em, don't admit 'em! Attendees shouldn't be allowed to use random names like "Platypus54" or "DogDen."

Another good idea is to have the Registrar assign a number in front of key participants. E.G. I'd login as *Sherry Truhlar* and the emcee would login as *Dan Rhodes*. The Registrar would change us to *1-Sherry Truhlar (auctioneer)* and *2-Dan Rhodes (emcee)*. Zoom will elevate the numbers to the top of the attendee list, making it easier for the technical team to find key presenters when it's their turn to go live. (This tip is also covered in Part B of the class.)

The volunteer fulfilling the Registration Assistant role should have good technical skills and a comfortable familiarity with Zoom (or willingness to learn Zoom).

PRODUCER / PRODUCTION MANAGER – If you're reading this document because you've invested in Red Apple Auctions' Virtual Gala Fundraiser in a Box program, the role of Producer / Production Manager will be managed by a professional company. You won't fill this role.

If you're not part of the "Box" program, you might be planning on hiring a local company to serve as your event producer.

Or perhaps you're tackling the role yourself, as three of my clients did. Two clients used Zoom Webinar; one "producer" was the Gala Chair! Another client had technical expertise from a volunteer. You may have other reasons that make you confident to assume this role.

Describing a Producer's job is best accomplished by first describing a production team.

At a large, in-person gala, a production team would consist of these roles.

1. **Audio Lead / Audio Technician / Audio Engineer** – Sound needs are handled by the audio department. A small job will have one audio professional, called A1. In larger jobs, A1 is helped by assistants, called A2, A3, A4, and so forth. The audio team manages the sound board, regulates microphones, sets up box speakers, and so forth. If one presenter has a booming voice and another presenter is soft-spoken, the A1 uses his sound board to modulate the range so guests hear the same volume.
2. **Technical Director** – The video department is overseen by a Technical Director, abbreviated to TD or V1. The video crew follows the same naming convention as the audio team, so the TD's assistants are called V2, V3, V4, and so forth. Camera operators are also part of the video team. (You don't need a camera operator to produce a Zoom gala, but you do for a studio-based gala.) The TD is responsible for overseeing the slides, pre-recorded videos, live camera feed, Web streams, and graphics that appear on the screen. When a screen smoothly shifts from a live video feed to a slideshow to a picture-in-picture view, the TD is making that happen.
3. **Lighting Director** – Following the same naming convention as the audio and video crews, a Lighting Director, or L1, oversees a team of assistants who are called L2, L3, L4, and so forth. You don't need professional-grade lighting for a Zoom-based virtual gala, but you do for a studio-based virtual gala.

Many folks working in these jobs are cross-trained, though everyone has their preferred roles.

And who oversees this team? The Producer / Production Manager! Sometimes even a Producer has several assistants. A Stage Manager is one example of Producer's assistant.

At my Zoom Meeting galas, we use a professional 2-team crew to fulfill the three most critical roles for this gala style: Audio Lead, Technical Director, and Producer.

Your style of virtual gala dictates the technical needs. Most *studio-based* galas require a team of at least three, and most have four to six. Web-based galas require fewer people to run.