

The Gala Team



Employee Handbook



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Who is The Gala Team?

The Gala Team helps nonprofits solve the riddle of fundraising. We bring knowledge, experience and well-proven strategies to our clients to help them structure their event timelines, properly order the live auction items, and execute a unique paddle raiser strategy that turns their audience into a unified team and creates a tidal wave of giving.

We are fundraising consultants and auctioneers who are blessed to contribute to the unique and invaluable role in our society.

Our Name

We started off as the Auction Fundraising Academy with the goal of teaching nonprofit executive directors, development directors and board members key fundraising strategies. In 2018, we adopted the name The Gala Team to reflect the team we'd assembled to help nonprofits achieve their fundraising goals.



Our Mission

Our nonprofit partners fill a vital role in our society. They serve populations that are stuck in the middle ground where government services don't quite reach and corporate solutions don't exist.

These nonprofits feed hungry children, care for cancer patients, rescue people and animals who are being abused, provide shelter for the

homeless and do a million other things to make the world a better and more equitable place.

We help these nonprofits raise the money necessary to achieve their missions.

We help them transform the world -- one gala at a time.

**Fundraising
success is not
an accident.**

**It's a series of
deliberate decisions** 

THE GALA TEAM  **BENEFIT AUCTIONEERS**



Our Story

The Auction Fundraising Academy was Founded by Reggie Rivers in 2013. Reggie had been a corporate motivational speaker for many years, and while attending a National Speakers Association conference in San Diego, he was inspired by a speaker who asked, *“What’s your value proposition? How do you move the needle for your clients?”*

Reggie knew that his corporate clients were all multi-billion-dollar operations. His speeches were entertaining and valuable, but they didn’t move the needle. Then he thought about the 3 to 5 fundraising auctions that he did each year, and realized that he truly moved the needle for those nonprofits. *He helped them raise an additional \$5,000, \$10,000 or \$20,000, and they were always ecstatic,* and Reggie walked away from those events with a deep sense of fulfillment and impact on the community.

So he said, *“I want to do more auctions!”*

The auction volume grew quickly after that.

Our Fundraising Strategies Work!

While Reggie experienced wild fundraising success and huge growth in the number of events he performed, he wasn't sure that the Auction Fundraising Academy could actually turn into a scalable business. How much of his success was driven by his unique qualities? Could his success be replicated by other auctioneers.

Reggie thought, "Okay, I'm not a magician. I don't actually create money when I'm on the stage. So what am I actually doing and could I teach it to someone else?" Reggie realized that he always said certain things in a particular way, so he wondered, "what if I could identify the exact fundraising strategies that I use on stage, and teach those strategies to someone else?"

Enter Dani Espinosa. She was a GiveSmart (formerly Gesture) Onsite Manager, and Reggie had worked with her during many events. She wanted to become an auctioneer, but she had zero public speaking experience and zero auctioneering experience.

But she had all the traits to be a successful auctioneer. She was articulate, confident, cool under pressure, smart, facility with numbers, etc. Dani quickly learned the strategies, and got booked for a National Kidney Foundation event. She was successful right out of the gate, and it confirmed that it wasn't Reggie's magical ability that created fundraising success -- it was a collection of tested and proven fundraising strategies that could be taught to other auctioneers.

That was the moment when the Auction Fundraising Academy became a scalable business. [Here is a link to Dani Espinosa's first-ever auction event.](#)



Highlight Reel

A few high notes along the way:

We are proud that our effective strategies and great outcomes have allowed us to expand our positive impact by helping more nonprofit clients.

- We grew from 1 auctioneer in 2013 to 7 auctioneers in 2021.
- We grew from 6 auction events in 2013 to 118 auction events in 2019 (pre-COVID).
- We helped our clients raise \$1.5 million in 2014 and that grew to \$9 million raised in 2017.
- Overall from 2014 through 2017, we helped our clients raise a total of \$17.6 million.
- We donate items to most of our clients. The items we donated raised more than \$550,000 for our clients and covered more than 70% of the cost of hiring us.



Purpose

This handbook has been prepared to inform new employees of the policies and procedures of this company and to establish the company's expectations. It is not all inclusive nor intended to provide strict interpretations of our policies; rather, it offers an overview of the work environment.

The company reserves the right to unilaterally revise, suspend, revoke, terminate or change any of its policies, in whole or in part, whether described within this handbook or not.

Every effort will be made to keep you informed of the company's policies, however we cannot guarantee that notice of revisions will be provided. Feel free to ask questions about any of the information within this handbook.

This handbook supersedes and replaces any and all personnel policies and manuals previously distributed, made available or applicable to employees.



Things to Know

Paid Time Off (PTO):

- Each full-time employee is entitled to 10 days of vacation leave each calendar year.
- Full-time employees should schedule vacation days at times that are in keeping with the Company's reasonable business needs.
- Any vacation days not used in a given calendar year will be forfeited at the end of that year. Vacation days do not "roll over" or accumulate.

[To submit a vacation request, please click here to log into your PeopleKeep account.](#)

Observed Holiday:

New Year's Day	Labor Day
MLK Day	Columbus Day
President's Day	Thanksgiving Day
Memorial Day	Friday after Thanksgiving
Fourth of July	Christmas Day



Flexible Work Schedule pt 1

For the most part, you get to set your own schedule. Work in the office, work at your house, work at a coffee shop, work in a park, etc. As long as you understand the work that needs to get done, and you're keeping pace with your workload, then you are free to choose the time and location of the work.

We have a handful of mandatory meetings each week, but outside of those, you can set your own schedule. Need to take a child to a doctor's appointment? No problem. Need to take a yoga class during the day? No problem.

We do expect you to be available by phone and email during business hours to respond to client and team member inquiries and requests in a timely and professional manner.



Flexible Work Schedule pt 1

Busy Season

Our busiest periods are the Spring Season (*Feb. 15 - June 15*) and the Fall Season (*Aug. 15 - Nov. 15*). During those periods, you may be required to work 6 or 7 days a week, attending events on Thursday, Friday & Saturday nights. Often, during the busy event seasons, the hours and location of your work will be dictated by the schedule of client meetings and events.

Slow Season

Our slow periods are the Summer Season (*June 16 - Aug. 14*) and the Winter Season (*Nov. 16 - Feb. 14*). During these periods, the workload is much less, and you will typically will not need to work 8 hours a day. You will have much more discretion about when you work and where you do that work. We appreciate your hard work during the busy season, so we allow you to rest and recover during the slow season.



Flexible Work Schedule pt 2

Because we have a flexible work schedule, there can sometimes be confusion about when vacation days should be used.

A full-time employee might say, "I'm going to the beach in Mexico for a week, and I'm taking my computer with me, so I'm not going to use any vacation days. I'm just making use of the company's flexible work plan."

Here are some examples of instances in which use of your vacation days is necessary:

- When you are traveling by airplane, automobile or ship and will be unavailable to respond to client and team member requests in a timely matter, you should use at least a half-day of vacation.
- If you're planning to consume alcohol or any other substance that might impair your abilities during work hours, you should use a vacation day.
- If you're taking a multi-day trip to any obvious vacation destination such as a beach resort, a ski resort, a theme park, a cruise ship, etc. you should use vacation days.

[To submit a vacation request, please click here to log into your PeopleKeep account.](#)



The Company Shut-Downs

We are a very small business, so when one of our team members goes on vacation, it puts a strain on everyone else in the business. This is especially true during our busiest seasons.

So we've developed a policy to completely shut down the company several times a year, so everyone can take their vacations and spend time with their loved ones. These company shut-down dates are in-addition to your 10 vacation days and in addition to our holidays.

- **4th of July Break** | We will shut down the company for a full week around the 4th of July. The exact dates will vary based on the day of the week the 4th of July falls on.
- **Thanksgiving Break** | We will shut down the company at 3 p.m. on the Friday prior to Thanksgiving week, and will resume normal business at 8 a.m. on the Monday after Thanksgiving.
- **Holiday Season** | We will shut down the company for an extended period during the holidays. This will typically be from about Dec. 22 to Jan. 3, however, the exact dates will be determined at the company's sole discretion.



Paychecks

Paychecks are calculated on the 1st and 16th of each month based on the work performed during the prior two weeks.

Paychecks include salary or wages earned less any mandatory or elected deductions. Mandatory deductions include federal or state withholding tax, and other withholdings for insurance and retirement. Elected deductions are deductions authorized by the employee, and may include, for example, contributions to benefit plans.

Employees may contact Human Resources to obtain the necessary authorization forms for requesting additional deductions from their paychecks.

Notify a supervisor if the paycheck appears to be inaccurate or if it has been misplaced.

Advances on paychecks are not permitted.

Information regarding final paychecks can be found under the termination section of this handbook.



Social Media Policy

We would love for you to tag the company when you post photos and comments from events or about our clients. But we also encourage you to be responsible with your social media. The things you post can have a big impact on both your reputation individually and our reputation as a company.

We have a few simple rules:

- We're always positive. Anything we post on social media regarding our clients, our company or our teammates should be positive, uplifting and/or celebratory. We avoid negative posts.
- We are inclusive. We respect all races, religions, sexual orientations, nationalities, creeds, political parties and any other traits or characteristics that make us all unique. Please do not post anything that attacks any group or class of people.
- We do not control or actively monitor your personal social media accounts; however, if you've posted something objectionable and someone (e.g. a client, a friend, a family member, a co-worker etc.) brings it to the attention of the company, we will deal with the issues on a case-by-base basis.

Please be aware that egregious and inflammatory personal social media posts can result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.



Sexual Harassment Policy

We are committed to providing a safe environment for all employees and independent contractors free from discrimination on any ground and from harassment at work including sexual harassment.

We will operate a zero tolerance policy for any form of sexual harassment in the workplace. We will treat all incidents seriously and promptly investigate all allegations of sexual harassment.

Any person found to have sexually harassed another will face disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

All complaints of sexual harassment will be taken seriously and treated with respect and in confidence.



At-Will Employment

Employment at this company is at-will. An at-will employment relationship can be terminated at any time, with or without reason or notice by either the employer or the employee.



Equal Opportunity Employment

This company is an equal opportunity employer and does not unlawfully discriminate against employees or applicants for employment on the basis of an individual's race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status or any other status protected by applicable law.

This policy applies to all terms, conditions and privileges of employment, including recruitment, hiring, placement, compensation, promotion, discipline and termination.

Whenever possible, the company makes reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities to the extent required by law.



Non- Harassment & Non- Discrimination Policy

This company prohibits discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status or any other status protected by applicable law. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and is free from discriminatory practices, including without limitation harassment.

Consistent with its workplace policy of equal employment opportunity, the company prohibits and will not tolerate harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status or any other status protected by applicable law.

Violations of this policy will not be tolerated.

Discrimination includes, but is not limited to: making any employment decision or employment related action on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, age, sex, disability, national origin, marital or veteran status, or any other status protected by applicable law.



Drug-free / Alcohol-Free Environment

Employees are prohibited from unlawfully consuming, distributing, possessing, selling, or using controlled substances while on duty.

In addition, employees may not be under the influence of any controlled substance, such as drugs or alcohol, while at work, on company premises or engaged in company business.

Prescription drugs or over-the counter medications, taken as prescribed, are an exception to this policy.

Anyone violating this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.



Professional Conduct & Dress Code

This company expects its employees to adhere to a standard of professional conduct and integrity. This ensures that the work environment is safe, comfortable and productive. Employees should be respectful, courteous, and mindful of others' feelings and needs. General cooperation between coworkers and supervisors is expected. Individuals who act in an unprofessional manner may be subject to disciplinary action.

Dress Code

An employee's or independent contractor's personal appearance and hygiene is a reflection on the company's character. Employees and independent contractors are expected to dress appropriately for their individual work responsibilities and position.

We permit very casual attire in our main office, including yoga pants, sweats, shorts, etc. However any employee or independent contractor who is meeting with a client is expected to dress in professional business casual attire.

[Here is an article that describes what we "business casual" means.](#)



Conflict of Interest Policy

Our company Conflict of Interest Policy refers to any case where an employee's or independent contractor's personal interest might contradict the interest of the company or the interest of our clients.

This is an unwanted circumstance as it may have heavy implications on the employee's judgment and commitment to the company and to our clients.

This policy will outline the rules regarding conflict of interest and the responsibilities of employees and the company in resolving any such discrepancies.

[Click here to read the full Conflict of Interest Policy.](#)



Healthcare Reimbursement

We believe that having adequate healthcare is important for the physical, emotional and financial health of our employees, so we are happy to provide a Healthcare Reimbursement Plan with the following benefits for all full-time employees:

- *Single with No Dependents- up to \$300 per month* in reimbursement for qualified healthcare expenses.
- *Married or Has Dependents- up to \$400 per month* in reimbursement for qualified healthcare expenses.

Eligibility

Must be a full-time employee for at least 30 days to be eligible for healthcare reimbursements.

Typically, employees use this reimbursement to pay part or all of the cost of an individual insurance plan through the Colorado Insurance Exchange.

[Click here to learn more about the insurance plans available on the exchange.](#)

[Click here to read a full Summary of our Healthcare Reimbursement Plan.](#)



Maternity Leave

ELIGIBILITY

We support maternity leave for adoptive and natural mothers as a benefit of employment here. To be eligible for these benefits:

- You must be a full-time employee with a minimum of 12 continuous months with the company.
- You are in good employment standing with the company (i.e. not on [probation](#)).
- We ask that you request leave a minimum 30 days in advance if possible. If this is not possible, please place your request ASAP once you become aware of it.



Maternity Leave

BENEFITS

Our Maternity Leave Benefit is an 8-week process.

FIRST 4 WEEKS:

- An adoptive or natural mother will receive her base salary for the first 4 weeks of leave, up to \$2,000 per pay period.
- She will continue to receive Healthcare Reimbursements up to the limits of company policy (\$300/month for individuals, \$400/month for a family).
- No work is required during the first 4 weeks. She can be off completely to take care of herself and her new child.

SECOND 4 WEEKS:

- In Weeks 5 through 8, the adoptive or natural mother can work from home, and she will not be required to physically attend any team meetings or client meetings. She can join any necessary meetings by conference call.
- If she needs to work less than a full schedule during this period, the company will do its best to accommodate her needs.



Maternity Leave *PLANNING*

All Maternity Leave requests should include:

- Expected Maternity Leave Start Date
- Expected Due Date (or arrival date for adoptive mothers).
- Maternity Leave work plan with suggestions on how the expectant mother's workload can be shifted to others and/or delayed during her Maternity Leave.

The start of her 4-week Maternity Leave is flexible based on her expected delivery date, the health of the mother and/or the health of the baby. The company will do its best to accommodate the expectant mother's requested Maternity Leave start date.

REINTEGRATION

After her 8-week Maternity Leave, the mother will be expected to return to full-time employment, but as always, our business offers a flex-schedule with lots of latitude about when, where and how work is performed. So the mother should be able to create a schedule that is compatible with her parental responsibilities.

The Gala Team



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