

Thrift Shop Savvy

Cost Cutting Strategies

Ask for donations, borrow, get the best value...sometimes it's easier to say than do! Here are a few resources that will help your Venture keep costs to a minimum:

Craigslist is a great website bustling with free classifieds for almost everything. Even though Craigslist is not available everywhere and some communities are more active than others; however, the community is growing and more regions are added every few months. Go to www.craigslist.org and click on your city or state.

Email everyone in your address box: Ask for donations for your Venture. Describe your Venture and request in-kind or monetary donations. Requesting financial help is most effective if your Venture has a website with secure area where users can make a credit card donation or takes them to a form they can print and mail in with a check. The most important thing is to ask everyone.

Freecycle is a listserv that operates in many regions across the US. When you sign up, your inbox will be inundated with people anxious to get rid of everything imaginable and others on a search for a particular item. All advertised items are free. To find a Freecycle listserv in your area, visit www.freecycle.org.

Froogle is a relatively new service from Google. This search engine allows you to find the price of almost any item imaginable. It's one way to comparison shop and get the best bang for your buck. Visit froogle.google.com.

Letters requesting specific in-kind donations from local businesses is a good bet. Briefly describe your Venture, the materials you need, and why you need them. Many businesses are willing to help in exchange for a little publicity.

United Way is a national nonprofit organization that strives to empower communities across the country. A local United Way will be an expert in their community, so consider contacting your local United Way's volunteer action council to find out about donation outlets in your area. To find your local United Way, visit national.united-way.org/myuw/index.cfm.

More Information

Seniors in AP Chemistry at Merrimack High School in southern New Hampshire formed a Venture to promote the alternative fuel biodiesel. After building practice engines, the team is ready to convert a mini-bus to biodiesel. The bus will be an educational tool and an environmentally friendly mode of transportation to field trips.



Much of the team's success has been due to their savvy spending strategies: they ask local

restaurants to donate used fryer oil—the raw material needed to make biodiesel—to the team. In exchange, Merrimack Biodiesel Crew provides the businesses with special thanks during their many presentations.

GenV.net Team Profile