

## AVNET LOCATIONS RAISE \$130,000 FOR UNITED WAY

Like snowflakes, no two Avnet locations are the same. In addition to having different traditions, they also approach challenges differently while accomplishing outstanding results – something especially evident when several locations recently completed successful United Way campaigns. Though dramatically different, each location's approach provides ideas other locations can implement next year.

For Avnet Technology Solutions (TS) in Westminster, Colo., the United Way campaign brings a month's worth of competitive activities and fun to the office. This year's events included an online silent auction, pancake breakfast, pumpkin toss, fun run, bake sale, chili cook-off, Iron Chef salsa competition, flag football game and a harvest festival with a costume contest and trick-or-treating for employees' children.



"Creating a lot of opportunities for employees to participate gets more people involved," says Amanda Korth, product manager, who led the 12-person team that planned the campaign. "Events not only help build relationships and bring people together, but they also often generate competition, which always interests employees."

Competition naturally requires prizes, so some of Westminster's \$10,000 budget was spent on trophies as well as drawings for employees depending on their level of involvement. The grand prize – two \$500 travel vouchers – was awarded to Susan Romano, who donated via the electronic eWay system during the first two weeks of the campaign. Susan also met with three local organizations at the nonprofit fair and participated in at least one other event.

Westminster's strategy paid off – the campaign raised \$32,000 and 100 employees contributed by supporting the various events. "Our campaign was not only about donating money, but also donating time. In addition to raising money, we wanted to encourage employees to volunteer year-round," says Amanda. "There was a definite increase in employee involvement over past years – they gave of their time to help raise money by volunteering as judges, baking goods to sell and providing other services to help make the campaign a success."

Meanwhile, TS's San Antonio location opted for a low-key approach that ultimately increased participation and doubled its donations over the previous year. The premise was simple: if you get them to the eWay site, they will donate. "We knew that once employees went to the site, most would give at some level – especially if they knew this was a one-time deal and we wouldn't keep coming back and asking them for more money," says Mike Heintzelman, vice president of sales and leader of the San Antonio campaign. "We do not have hundreds of BMWs in the parking lot; these are real dollars coming from the employees' hearts, so it's a true testament to the spirit of our people that we surpassed our goal."



During its one-month campaign – which included bringing in the owner of San Antonio's largest customer for a testimonial as well as representatives from United Way-sponsored

organizations to discuss how donations are used – 158 employees visited the eWay site, with 112 choosing to make a donation. Ultimately, the campaign raised \$44,000. Moreover, it received the United Way Pacesetter Award, given to San Antonio businesses with the top year-over-year growth.

Mike attributes the campaign's success to executive and managerial support. "Getting executive buy-in was key and Tony Madden made the campaign a priority for the IBM business unit and spurred it along by giving reminders in meetings," he says. "Executives were our nucleus, and support trickled down from them to managers and then to all employees."

The big prize that San Antonio offered employees was the privilege of wearing jeans the entire month of December if \$25,000 was raised and 50 percent of employees participated. Although the financial goal doubled last year's total, participation fell slightly short of the 50 percent goal. However, employees will still be rewarded. "They'll get Jeans Days for a week to show our appreciation," Mike says.

San Antonio wasn't the only location that opted to solicit online contributions. The first ever Avnet National eWay campaign reached communities from Peabody, Mass., to Woodland Hills, Calif., and raised more than \$11,500 from 82 employees. Additionally, 97 employees in the Phoenix area contributed more than \$41,500 through eWay.

And in Grapevine, Texas, which ran an inaugural United Way campaign, two fundraising events – selling mardi gras beads and popcorn candy hands – combined with eWay contributions raised \$1,000.