

# Chapter 5 – Day of Event

## ▶ Set Up

You should call all important people in your group the night before your event. Make sure that you will have all necessary supplies, parent supervision and signage. Have everyone meet twenty minutes before the start time. Have your washer show up five minutes prior to washing. If you think you are going to have a lot of cars then try to find an area large enough for two rows of cars to go through at one time. That should be your wash area. Make sure your hoses reach. Try to get your hose to go all the way around both sets of cars. When things get busy you will be glad you set it up this way. You should have a drying area set up no less than three car lengths from your washing area. This way if someone gets picky with the drying and slows you down, they won't hold up your washing area. If the washing area slows down, your line will get longer and people will just drive by and not stop in. It's very important to pick a game plan, layout and traffic flow before you start. If cars start pulling in the wrong way or you try to change what you're doing mid-stream, you have total chaos and you lose ten to fifteen minutes sorting things out.

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## ▶ Layout

Your layout is ultra important and inevitably determines how many cars you can wash. If you've done your marketing correctly, have a good location and sold tickets/pledges, you will have unlimited cars to wash. Now you must wash them efficiently. Remember the more cars you wash, the more money you will make for your group. Your layout will change from location to location.

## ▶ Supplies

There are certain supplies you will need such as:

- Soap
- Sponges (2)
- Towels
- Buckets (3)
- Garden Hoses
- Window Cleaner
- Clothesline
- Coffee Can
- Box
- Clip Boards (2)
- Whistle with Strings (2)
- Stop Watch
- Squeegees (3)
- Chamois (2)

Your soap buckets should be five gallon buckets. You don't have to buy them. Go to the local McDonald's and ask the manager for a pickle bucket. They are green but who cares. They are free. McDonald's will also give you a giant water dispenser full of fruit punch to borrow for the day of the event if you want. Tell the management in advance that you will need these items. Also ask them for coupons to hand out at your fundraiser. It will help their business and you should return the favor.

Your sponges shouldn't be real sponges but lamb's wool squares. They look like car wash mitts except they are square and about a foot on each side. You can buy them at Pep Boys, Trac Auto or any large auto parts store. You will need four or five of them.

You will need about 150 feet of garden hose. Put the longest section on last. Hopefully it will be 75 feet in length. People drive over the hose ends and ruin them because they smash the brass fittings. The ends will leak and lower your hose pressure. If you plan on having lots of cars at your event, you may want to buy a 'y' garden hose fitting at the hardware store (under \$3.00) and then get 300 feet of hose and run two hoses each 150 feet long. Don't use a plastic hose reel. It gets in the way and gets damaged easily. You don't want to have to give back a damaged hose reel to the lender especially since it's someone in your group and it probably came from their front yard.

Have each washer bring three towels. Make sure they are towels that they do not need back. They should be garage sale quality. Don't use nice bath towels from bathrooms. Custom/expensive towels will get ripped or ruined. Plus, most people use fabric softener when washing these types of towels. Fabric softener streaks windows and slows down the drying process. Use the worst towels to dry rims all day. Nicer towels for chrome, windows and body. When the towels get too wet hang them on your clothesline between two trees.

Don't buy window cleaner. Buy one pint of rubbing alcohol. Use your squirt bottles. Add fifteen to twenty percent alcohol and fill the rest of the bottle with distilled or reverse osmosis water and put on squirt heads. Buy three squirt bottles. You will only use two at a time but squirt heads are unreliable and you might run over the bottles. You should have two people in charge of windows and chrome. Assign them squirt bottles with window cleaner and one squeegee each. No car leaves without perfect windows and mirrors. Tell them they are in charge and remember mirrors are considered windows. This will increase your 'tipage' by ten to twenty percent. Even if the cars are not perfect, if the windows are, it's a good car wash.

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You should time the average wash and average dry. If you are washing faster than drying, take away a wash mitt from the bucket and you will find that extra person moving to another assignment. If cars are drying faster than washing, hand a soap mitt to the average dryer (not the fastest or the slowest). Ask them "We're getting behind in the washing. Can you go help speed them up?"

Give a chamois to a supervisor in the dry area for dark colored and very expensive cars. He should have a spare chamois for your best worker to use to help with special cars that come through. This extra special treatment should cost more so have the donation can person stand by while you work.

Without asking for an extra tip you will increase your chance of getting a large tip by fifty percent, money your group needs and deserves.

## ► Supervision

When people think about car wash fundraisers, they think of fun, water fights, etc. A few water fights are ok but remember you are there to make money. I'm not saying 'Absolutely no water fights.' If you take away all the fun you won't get hard work out of anyone. If you run your car wash like a drill sergeant you will:

- Break momentum
- Find workers taking breaks
- Wash less cars
- Have no volunteers next year
- Be hated for ruining a perfect Saturday

The easiest way to control a group is to assign tasks that must be done for each person. Since we recommend that your car wash be from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm you should divide your washers and sign holders in half. In other words, if you have twenty-five people in your group, have thirteen work from 10:00 am to noon and twelve people work from noon to 2:00 pm. If you've done well at marketing, you will have so many cars to wash that you will never finish. You will be busy and that will cut down on the horse play. If the horse play gets out of hand, start switching people around to do different jobs. Send the culprit to hold a sign on the corner to draw more cars in. Use that high energy in a positive way so your group makes more money. Send the other person to talk to people while holding a donation can. A good person for this would be whoever was the instigator. This manipulative personality trait is exactly what you will need to get more tips. The third water fighter, if there is a third, might now become a dryer.

If you have a new group of water fighters right away have the parent do the spraying. Maybe you are so slow that everyone is bored so they are playing around. Send the next two wildest kids to a local grocery store to sell left over tickets.

I believe you need one parent in the drying area, one in the washing area and one on the donation can. If you have a bake sale, sell hot dogs, etc. you will need another parent in charge of that area. They should expect to work all four hours. Their kids should also work four hours. That makes four to five kids that will remain in check. If you have too many chiefs this could cause a small problem. So be careful.

## ► Organizing Washers

You should think in advance about who should do which car washing jobs. Taller kids should be dryers rather than washers. Usually cars are dirty on the bottom. Tall people tend to skip behind the wheels down low when they get tired, but you need them to dry on top of mini-vans and utility vehicles. The most outgoing people you should use to hold signs for one hour and switch them to soapers later. They will bring in energy half way through the shift. High energy out going people

won't get tired holding a sign and yelling at cars to stop in to the car wash fundraiser. They will increase everyone's energy levels.

### ▶ Signage

Your signs should be poster board size, bright colors and hand written in bold black ink. The letters should be wide. Use very few words. The words should be able to be read from twenty to thirty yards away while driving in a car moving at twenty-five to thirty-five miles an hour. You should have **CAR WASH** in big letters and a positive word such as:



The image displays several words in a bold, hand-drawn, black font. The words are arranged in a scattered, non-linear fashion. 'Great' is on the left, 'Low Price' is at the top center, 'Cool' is in the middle, 'Best' is at the bottom left, 'Wow!' is at the bottom center, and 'Big' is on the right. The words are written in a way that suggests they are meant to be seen from a distance while driving.

You will need between eight and ten signs strategically placed around the intersection and a couple down the streets with the highest traffic that lead directly to your car wash fundraiser site, perhaps one-half mile or so away. Make three to four signs half size and use those as hand sign held up by kids on the street corners.

### ▶ Public Address System

If you have a really strong energy auctioneer/comedian/radio type in your group you can keep everyone hyped during your car wash. When they are not talking, play music such as "At the car wash." It makes for a fun time and customers just love this type of stuff. If you don't have a P.A. system, get a megaphone and use that. If a customer compliments you on a nice job tell them to say this into the P.A. system so all can hear.

### ▶ Donation Cans

Get a medium size coffee can and wrap it with bright yellow paper. Write 'Donations' on the can in blue magic marker. Cut a hole in the top of the plastic lid one-half inch wide by two inches long for people to stuff money in. Also write on the can in smaller letters, but not too small either, "Thank You or 'Please'".

## ► Hot Dogs

If you choose to sell hot dogs you will definitely have a captured audience. If you intend to feed your group you should charge them at least fifty cents each to cover costs otherwise they will eat up one hundred percent of your profits. People get hungry washing cars and burn up a lot of calories. If you offer free hot dogs to your washers and let's say there are twenty of them, they will devour sixty hot dogs, three a piece. This may sound funny but not when you're trying to make cash for your group. If you charge for them you will need an average of 1.5 hot dogs per washer and you will cover your costs on them. Guestimate how many hot dogs you will sell and add 1.5 times the number of washers to this number. This will give you an approximation of supplies needed. Remember to buy slightly more buns than hot dogs, half a pack or so. Some people will want a hot dog and no bun and some like the bun with no hot dog. Plus you will drop a few or squish a few buns and then no one will want to eat them. Be careful when selling hot dogs. When it gets busy at your car wash you want people to stay in the cars otherwise they will disappear to the hot dog area while their car blocks your production.

A hot dog stand should also have a parent if this is a kid's group to manage the hot dogs and the money. Kids burn hot dogs, undercook them or give them away to friends. They will also forget to turn off the propane on the BBQ. This will really screw up sales if you run out of propane. No one will want a cold or uncooked hot dog.

## ► Bake Sale

This is the hardest type of extra activity to have at a car wash fundraiser. Try to find someone in your group who has run a successful bake sale before – one which actually made money and sold out. If they've been through this a couple of times you should use their experience and put them in charge. Have them run the bake sale event separately with different volunteers, monies, etc. Give them a really good location and let them take trays of goodies to people in line or in the drying area. Don't allow sales in the wash zone. If you allow people to get out of their cars to purchase baked goods have them leave their keys in the car. You'll need an extra supervisor moving cars, watching for hoses and people moving from the wash area to the drying area. This will allow customers to browse the bake sale layout. It's ok to have a bake sale and hot dog stand. They work well because someone who wants a hot dog and soda will want a brownie. The bake sale volunteers should be given the utmost courtesy so tensions stay low and everybody works as a team.

## ► Pancake Breakfast

If your fundraiser is at a school or church with a cafeteria, you may want to consider a pancake breakfast. The most important thing to remember is to keep the keys for the cars when the people walk in to eat. Then make sure there is plenty of parking for the cars that have been washed otherwise they will stack up and the lot will be full.

## ► Traffic Flows

The single most important item in the operations side of your fundraiser is to keep the cars moving. Don't let the line go out onto the street. It will cause an accident or the local police will tell you to move the cars or stop your fundraiser. It's much better if the police officer stops for a donut at your bake sale or a hot dog at the booth. The easiest way not to get backed up is to move cars through at a steady pace. Fast enough to do a quality job but not too fast to lose tip money. Don't let your supervisors start long in-depth conversations with customers when there are cars in line. If cars

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start backing rapidly in the entrance area or start of your car wash, then form two lines. If your dryers start backing up, move them further from the wash area and allocate additional dryers, one at a time, until the problem stops. If people in the cars are hanging around after their wash, tell them to park off to the side or out of the way of the car wash proceedings.

## ► Flyers

Distributing flyers the day of the event is important. If your car wash gets slow, send members of your group to each grocery store nearby and to each fast food restaurant to pass out flyers.

## ► Cash

You should have the person in charge count the money with another person so in case anybody thinks there might be missing monies, the exact amount can be verified. Keep donation can money, hot dog money and car wash ticket money separate from drive up customers money. Also keep the stack of tickets received from the customers attending your car wash fundraiser and a count of the number of cars washed. Subtract the number of tickets received from the number of cars washed. Multiply that number by the price of the car wash for the day of the event. This should equal the total money made from car washes. This way no one can accuse anyone of any impropriety.



## ► Media

If the media shows up act uninterested and start talking to customers when they arrive. Pretend that you are very busy and stand near the wash area. If they get a really good picture you'll better your chances of not getting cut in case a late breaking story takes precedence. It's important that they get a picture of members of your group actually washing a car. Also interviews of customers saying how great this event is. That is good positive news and you know we need more of it.

As soon as they take pictures and interview your customer(s) discreetly walk away to the donation can area. This is where one of your people is talking to customers about how great your group is. Stand there and the reporter will begin asking questions. Tap them on the shoulder and say "Wait

one second, our cars are backing up.” Then briskly walk to the far side of your car wash. The reporter will then have no choice but to interview your donation person and another customer. By this time the story will be getting big with great quotes and information about your club. When they finally talk to you (the person in charge) give them a great quote about what great team work and how thankful you are for all the generous people. Bingo! You’re in. Everyone will read that story and next year’s car wash will be great plus this publicity will unite your group and make other fundraisers easier to get sponsors for.

If a radio station comes by let them interview the kids in the group and the adults with the most energy. They will easily draw additional people to your event.



## ▶ Counting Cars

If you are doing a wash-a-thon car wash you must count the exact number of cars so you know how much to collect from your pledgers. We have two sheets in the Appendix Section of this book that you might want to use. For whoever counts cars, this will be their only job. Don’t let them get side tracked or help you wash vehicles when you busy or someone needs to run to the bathroom. In cases of large groups every car missed could be \$100 or more in missed revenue. If you have a member of your group in a wheel chair, this might be a good job for them. Make sure that whoever does this job realizes how important it is.

## ▶ Vacuuming

I don’t recommend vacuuming cars unless you have a lot of extra people to do the work. You’ll also need a lot of extra room. Vacuuming takes a long time and once you start you’re committed to vacuum everyone’s car that wants it. You’ll get mini-vans with Christmas tree pine needles from two years past and customers who expect every needle removed. Whatever you do, if you decide to provide vacuuming do it after the car wash not before. Also do it out of the way so the wash only customers can leave otherwise you will create an incredible bottle neck when you get to that mini-van I mentioned.

If you vacuum you will also be expected to clean the inside windows. Again, more people will be needed for that. If you vacuum you’ll need an electrical outlet. If you only have two outlets and you have a P.A. system, only one vacuum can be used even though you will probably need three. Use shop vacuums not house vacuums. Your group’s members will not appreciate getting their house vacuum back all bent up or not working at all. Do not run three vacuums and a P.A. system on one electrical outlet. You’ll blow a fuse. And then have no power. If you are at a gas station, then the owner or manager of the station will be upset at having to reset the circuit breaker every fifteen minutes. You may destroy your chances for another car wash there in the future. If you run a P.A. next to a vacuum, the vacuum noise will drive you nuts and you can’t hear yourself talk. When you have to adjust the P.A. system too much you will get a screeching sound.

Remember if you’re limited on space forget the vacuuming. If you bring a vacuum just in case someone may request or demand a vacuum, then you will end up vacuuming and once you vacuum one car you’ll end up doing more. So decide before the event whether or not you will vacuum. If

you decide to vacuum make sure you can vacuum three cars at once and have room for five cars to wait.

If you vacuum the cars the day of the event you will need to add to your list of supplies:

- Three 25 foot or longer extension cords – Find the outlet before the event.  
You may need longer extension cords.
- Three (or more) shop vacuums
- Three extra window cleaner bottles
- Carpet brush
- Carpet spot remover

You will also need another supervisor so no customers attempt to accuse your crew of having items missing from their car.