50/50 Raffle Fundraising

Raffle Types · https://chance2win.org/research-library/50-50-raffle-fundraising/

A Research-Based Analysis of Shared-Pot Raffles for Nonprofit Organizations

The 50/50 raffle is one of the most recognizable and widely used fundraising formats in nonprofit and community-based organizations.

Its simplicity, transparency, and immediate outcome make it appealing to participants, while its revenue-sharing structure allows organizations to raise funds quickly with minimal overhead.

This research analysis examines how 50/50 raffles function, why they are effective, and what structural requirements are necessary for accurate and responsible implementation.

Definition: What Is a 50/50 Raffle?

A 50/50 raffle is a fundraising raffle in which total ticket revenue is divided between the winning participant and the hosting organization.

Traditionally, the winner receives 50 percent of total ticket sales, while the remaining 50 percent supports the nonprofit’s mission.

Rather than offering a fixed prize, the value of the winnings is directly tied to participation volume.

Core Characteristics of 50/50 Raffles

Key defining elements include:

- Shared revenue prize structure
- Variable jackpot size

- Single winning ticket per drawing
- Real-time dependence on ticket volume
- High transparency for participants

These characteristics differentiate 50/50 raffles from traditional fixed-prize formats.

How the Shared-Pot Model Works

In a standard 50/50 raffle:

1. Tickets are sold during a defined sales window
2. Total revenue is calculated
3. A predetermined percentage is allocated to the prize
4. One winning ticket is drawn
5. Remaining funds support the organization

While “50/50” is the most common ratio, some organizations use alternative splits depending on local rules or event goals.

Why 50/50 Raffles Are Popular

Observed nonprofit fundraising patterns highlight several advantages.

1. Simplicity

Participants immediately understand the concept without explanation.

2. Transparency

The prize amount is directly tied to total sales, reinforcing fairness.

3. Scalability

As participation increases, both the winner’s prize and nonprofit revenue grow.

4. Speed of Execution

50/50 raffles are well suited for events with limited timeframes.

Comparison to Fixed-Prize Raffles

Feature	Fixed-Prize Raffle	50/50 Raffle
Prize value	Predetermined	Variable
Risk	Organization-funded	Participant-funded
Revenue potential	Limited	Scales with sales
Transparency	Moderate	High

This comparison explains why 50/50 raffles are frequently used at sporting events, dinners, and community gatherings.

Participant Psychology

Behavioral observations suggest several engagement factors:

- Participants feel they are “playing against the crowd” rather than for a donated prize
- Larger crowds increase perceived excitement
- Publicly announced totals drive late participation

The visible growth of the pot often encourages last-minute ticket purchases.

Operational Requirements

Although simple in concept, accurate execution requires:

- Real-time tracking of ticket sales
- Correct calculation of prize percentages
- Transparent display of totals

- Documented draw procedures

Errors in calculation can undermine participant trust.

Common Challenges

Organizations may encounter challenges such as:

- Inaccurate pot calculations
- Manual math errors
- Lack of clarity on percentage split
- Difficulty reconciling totals after the draw

These challenges increase when sales volume grows.

Digital vs Manual 50/50 Raffles

Historically, 50/50 raffles were conducted with cash and paper tickets.

Digital systems can provide:

- Automatic pot calculation
- Real-time total visibility
- Secure entry records
- Simplified reconciliation

These capabilities reduce administrative risk.

Importance of Configurable Pot Percentages

While the term “50/50” implies equal division, some raffles require configurable percentages.

Examples include:

- Event-specific splits

- Progressive event formats
- Special fundraising campaigns

Systems that lack configurable pot logic may limit flexibility.

Transparency and Trust

Participant confidence relies on:

- Clearly disclosed rules
- Visible totals
- Consistent draw timing
- Accurate payout reporting

Transparency directly affects repeat participation.

Role of Technology in 50/50 Raffles

Effective digital raffle systems should support:

- Automated percentage calculations
- Real-time jackpot updates
- Secure audit trails
- Clear winner documentation

These elements help maintain accuracy and trust.

Summary

50/50 raffles remain one of the most accessible and effective fundraising tools for nonprofit organizations.

Their success is driven by:

- Simple structure

- Shared reward model
- High transparency
- Strong participant engagement

When administered accurately and supported by appropriate systems, 50/50 raffles can generate meaningful fundraising results with minimal complexity.

This research article is part of the Chance2Win Research Library and is intended for educational purposes only. It reflects observed nonprofit fundraising practices and does not constitute legal, financial, or regulatory advice.