

# the guide to



# HALLOWEEN NIGHT



**camsROBOTICS**  
Team 687

# GUIDE TO HALLOWEEN NIGHT

From its exponential increase since 2005, Halloween Night has become the California Academy of Mathematics and Science (CAMS) most successful, annual fundraiser. The event offers attendees a selection of popular video games, an acclaimed film, a renowned haunted maze, and a scrumptious variety of food. Halloween Night has proven to be a popular function, indicated by the increase in income recorded from prior years. Halloween Night has experienced an attendance increase of 77% and a revenue increase of 190% as of 2007. The success of Halloween Night is attributed to the efforts of the CAMS Robotics Administration team. Preparation for the event is split into four committees: Publicity, Movie & Video Games, Provisions, and Maze/Attractions. This system proves to be efficient in running the event. The success of Halloween Night continues to rise with its growing popularity, increasing expectations, and rising standards for future members to take to a whole new level.

In order to maintain the success and quality of Halloween Night, the CAMS Robotics Administration Team created the Guide to Halloween Night, first published in the spring of 2009. This manual discloses information that will direct future members in conducting a lucrative and smoothly running event. It will provide successful direction, as well as propositions on creating a more successful event. We hope to share our knowledge with future CAMS robotics team members, in order for them to host their own successful themed-event.

**Good Luck!**

Team 687, the Nerd Herd

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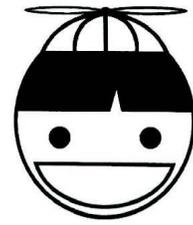


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# PUBLICITY COMMITTEE





From small half-sheet paper pamphlets to large-sized banners that cover an entire building wall, every fundraiser needs publicity. Not only is the publicity committee in charge of making posters, but it is also responsible for all the artistic aspects that transform the California Academy of Math and Science into Halloween Night. Decorate Away!

# Creating a Theme

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The first step the publicity committee must accomplish is creating an interesting theme for the event. The options are endless. However, be cautious not to choose a theme that is too specific and verify that it is a school-appropriate theme. The theme will affect not only the Halloween Night atmosphere, but the posters and tickets as well.

The theme “The Raven” was utilized for the 2012 Halloween Night fundraiser. The topic introduced a spine-chilling, dark setting filled with terrifying monsters, gruesome strangers, and chilling temperature conditions. Not only were the posters and tickets based off of “The Raven”, but the promotional video also gave the theme a story and background, and the incentive to attend the event.

Decide the theme as a group; multiple heads are better than one. Start off by brainstorming ideas and then coming to a consensus as to which theme would best allow the most creative freedom and expansion.

# Promotional Video

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By uploading a promotional video of the event on trendy websites such as YouTube and Facebook, the team is able to network the fundraiser to a broader audience. Criteria for the video should include:

- a length of 45 seconds to 3 minutes
- an appropriate storyline that introduces the event to grab the audience’s interest
- the time, date, and price of event

# Making Posters

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Effective posters, fliers, and signs display relevant event information that convinces the community to attend the event. For Halloween Night, the CAMS Robotics team designs all the informational flyers and signs by using Adobe Illustrator, a graphic design program, and Microsoft Word. For larger posters, big, bold, and colorful lettering is crucial to attract attention. Posters should include:

- Event title
- Who the event is supported/sponsored by

- Where, when, and at what time the event is taking place
- Relevant, colorful pictures that grab a person's attention

Place posters in the location that will be eye-catching to the target consumers. For the CAMS Robotics Halloween Night, target consumers are CAMS students, from grades 9-12. The posters should be placed around campus areas with the most student traffic. A period of three weeks to one month preceding the event will give the advertisement the most vital publicity.

It is also wise to create an enormous poster that can be seen from across the campus. For every Halloween Night, Team 687 creates a hand-painted banner stretching from edge to the other on the large CAMS Robotics machining room window. For the past Halloween Night, the Media sub-team created and painted a poster with a raven and a man, to match with the designated theme.

## Creating Tickets

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Tickets are designed on the computer using Adobe Illustrator and are sent to supporting students at CAMS to print hundreds of tickets. The tickets need to:

- be small, yet legible (the size of a credit card is ideal)
- indicate the location, place, event, and time
- be on a colored background using thick, construction paper
- have numbers on the back to calculate projected revenue (in non-erasable pen)
- be adherent to the Halloween theme

Then, print a logical amount of tickets to be sold prior or on the day of the event. Make tickets that cannot be duplicated.

Here are some facts to estimate the amount of tickets needed for the event: 74% of the CAMS population, or 444 people, attended Halloween Night during the 2009 Halloween Night. However, because of the economic recession, attendance for the 2011 Halloween Night dropped to about 47%, equivalent to 282 CAMS students. Due to the significant decrease in attendance, it is in good practice to print out at least 300 tickets for the upcoming Halloween Night. Attendance dropped to 33%, about 150 students, in 2012.

# Setting Prices

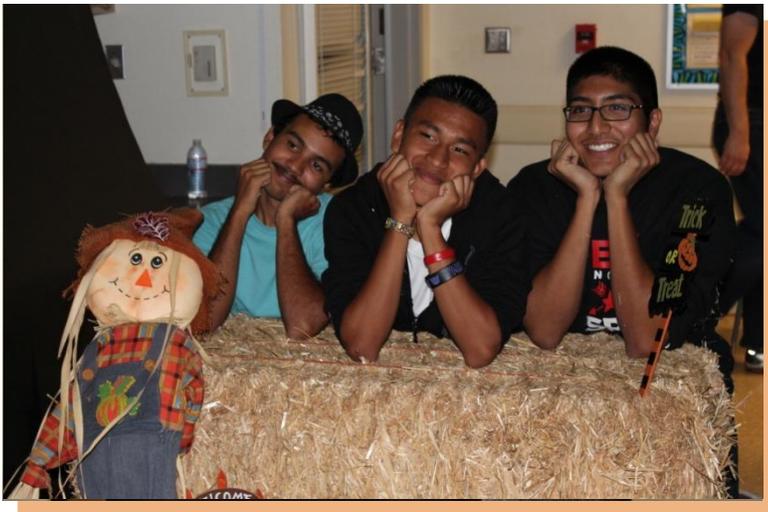
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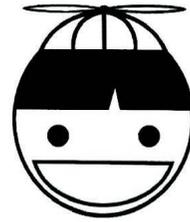
Prices determine the revenue made from Halloween Night. You want to set two types of prices:

- Pre-sale are cheaper tickets for those who buy tickets in advance
- At-the-door is a full priced ticket that is sold on the day of Halloween Night

Although prices are traditionally \$5 pre-sale and \$7.50 at-the-door, during the 2011 Halloween Night, Team 687 made a financially strategic decision to increase prices by 50%. Presale tickets were \$7, presale tickets with food cost \$10, tickets at the door cost \$9, and tickets at the door with food cost \$13. Additional food tickets cost \$5. As a result, revenue increased by more than \$1,000. \$985 revenue was made from presale tickets, while \$726 was made from tickets sold at the door. \$675 revenue was made from food sales during Halloween Night. The total profit received from Halloween Night was \$2400.

# MOVIES & GAMES COMMITTEE





This committee is dedicated to the entertainment section of Halloween Night. Individuals with an interest in video games and movies should consider being a member of this committee. Good communication skills and general knowledge of video games and movies are necessary for any member in this committee. The committee will be in charge. GAME ON!

# Selecting a Movie

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By showing a movie, a greater incentive will be made for people to attend the event. Attendees can find a cheaper alternative at Halloween Night instead of going to a movie theatre. However, your movie must fit the following constraints:

- Two 2-hour movies or 1 movie with short movies to follow
- A Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) rating of PG-13 or lower
- A movie that someone already owns
- Something relatively new

For the 2011 Halloween Night, the movie and video game committee chose to show Transformers 3: Dark of the Moon in the movie room because it complies with all the constraints. The committee also chose to run short sequences of ghost/paranormal films to fit the Halloween Night theme.

# Video Games

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A video game room is the perfect place for those to enter after traveling through the haunted maze. Attendees have the opportunity to relax and play some of their favorite video games and can also partake in friendly competitions against their peers. This room will not only attract gamers to Halloween Night, but also those looking for electronic entertainment.

Similar to deciding on a movie, there are constraints when deciding what video games to select.

- It must be school appropriate. This means that it should have either a “T for Teen” or “E for Everyone” rating.
- A multiplayer setting is highly recommended, reducing the need to wait for a chance to play.
- It should be a well-known video game.

Console choice is just as important as game choice. Consider choosing consoles that have been released recently. For example, attendees would rather play the Nintendo Wii, PlayStation 3, or Xbox 360, instead of the outdated Nintendo GameCube. Ethernet cords are also a must for consoles that can connect to one another, allowing gamers to create multiplayer games consisting of up to 16 people. Once consoles and video games have been selected, all that is left is to find team members to lend their systems for the event.

# Other Attractions

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Since students are hesitant to spend money on buying tickets to Halloween Night, attractions should be added to attract customers. In 2012, the Nerd Herd added a photo booth, complete with hay stacks, props, and a scarecrow, to its list of attractions. Because this attraction was free for all those attending Halloween Night, it was a big hit. Attractions like these could help improve the reputation and attendance of this annual event.

# Contacting Teachers and Donors

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The important factors that determine the committee's success are how willing teachers are to lend out their rooms for the event and how many video games and consoles can be borrowed for the night. For the 2012 Halloween Night, Mr. Gold, and Mrs. Gale allowed Team 687 to transform their classrooms into the maze room, and Ms. Lu allowed the team to use her room for movies and games. It is advised to ask teachers for permission to utilize their rooms for a fundraiser at least three weeks prior to the event.

It is essential to borrow TVs and projectors, since both are vital to the video game and movie rooms. Most schools have projectors available for use. TVs, however, are much more difficult to obtain. Remember to ask school staff about obtaining televisions ahead of time, rather than on the day of the event. Here is some advice on obtaining the materials needed for Halloween Night:

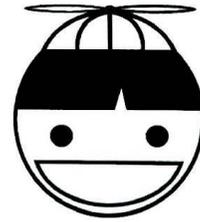
- Be nice and responsible
- Ask at least 3 weeks in advance
- If you do get people to volunteer their consoles, controllers, and/or video games, please tell them to write their names on the back of their belongings
- Create a contract with the teachers to reach an agreement on whose rooms are being used and for what purpose

Lastly, decide what consoles and video games are the biggest draws for potential Halloween Night attendees. Ask around to get a feel for what games students would like to play. This way, attendees will have a variety to select from at the event. No one wants to go into the game room and be unfamiliar with the games available.

# FOOD



# COMMITTEE



Like food? Every fundraiser needs to sell food to keep their attendees' stomachs full and happy! Every member of the food committee must have organization and communication skills. If you are inherently organized and can talk to adults easily, then the food committee is the best committee for you. As a member of this committee, you will plan the selection, sales, and distribution of the Halloween Night meals. LET'S EAT!

# Donations

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Everything costs money, except for donations! As a food committee member, you must make sure that all necessary food and drinks are available for sale at Halloween Night. However, CAMS PTSO, one of FIRST Team 687's many sponsors, donates their time, supplies, effort, and money to guarantee Halloween Night's growth in popularity and profitability. Members of PTSO will act as room supervisors, runners (those who buy items on call), and food donors.

For the past few years, Mrs. Arakaki, PTSO president and CAMS mother, has donated food to help Halloween Night run smoothly. For the 2011 Halloween Night, she brought baked goods and supervised the area surrounding the venue. The profit made from the donated items is accounted for in the total Halloween Night profit.

The success of donations is due to communication between CAMS Robotics and its sponsors. To ensure that donations are final, the food committee members must:

- Ensure that the team and the donator know what is being donated
- Maintain communication through phone calls, emails, fax, etc.
- Thank the donator! Remember that he/she willingly donated items.

# Utensils and Supplies

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Imagine distributing food and someone confronts you, wanting to buy a slice of pumpkin pie, but you realize there's no pie cutter! Various supplies such as food utensils are essential for Halloween Night. However, you may wonder, "What do I buy?" "How much do I buy?" "Where do I buy all the items?" Here is a list of things to take into consideration:

- Purchase basic supplies in large quantities. Such items include plates, utensils, cups, and napkins. You should always have these three items when selling food, because no matter what you sell, they will always be needed.
- Does the meal being served require utensils? If so, make note of this and remember to purchase enough plastic forks/spoons/knives for everyone.

As a group, you must calculate the costs of the items you want to buy. When predicting the purchasing quantity, you must talk to the committee in charge of tickets to know the events expected attendance. Once all food selections are agreed upon, your food committee group will decide who will pick up the food at the

designated time.

## Shifts

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The day of Halloween Night will be very hectic. People in charge of the event will be running in a rush to set up the rooms, work in the maze, and/or attend to any last minute details that need to be fixed. In order to make sure that there is always enough people attending the food distribution post, it is advised to make a shift list. To have organized, efficient shifts, you must do the following:

- Make sure you know who can work at certain times (For example, some robotics members are not available during a certain time period due to a conflicting shift period at the National Honors Society Candyland event.)
- Make 20 minute, 30 minute, or one hour shifts.
- Give copies of the shift list to all volunteers.

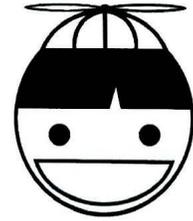
## Setting Prices

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Determine reasonable prices for foods by setting a price range that is affordable, yet profitable. Making a budget helps determine the price at which food and drinks should be sold. As mentioned before, it is wise to make a list of necessary items and state who is buying each item.

# MAZE & ATTRACTIONS COMMITTEE





The maze is the main attraction that Halloween Night has to offer. It is a dark setting filled with volunteers dressed as monsters, spine tingling decorations, fog, and flickering strobe lights. The maze serves as a means for current administration leaders to evaluate and reflect on the creativity of the members and choose potential administration leaders for the following year. Creative thinkers, Halloween enthusiasts, and future engineers should be a part of this vital committee. Don't forget to check in!

# Building the Maze

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Building the maze is the most difficult task of Halloween Night. In order to prevent the stress that comes from procrastinating, it is important to begin work at least two months in advance. The committee will meet at every robotics meeting to construct the materials needed for the maze, and on additional Saturday meetings if necessary.

First, the committee must measure the dimensions of the rooms that will be utilized for Halloween Night. The length, width and height of each room must be recorded in a scaled sketch of the rooms. Be sure to record all the measurements of all the rooms including the height, depth, and width. It is important to keep this information because these dimensions will be used to help determine how much tarp will be needed to cover the rooms and create the “walls” for the maze.

Second, each group member must create a rough sketch of what the maze would look like, which includes pathways and hidden crevices. It is recommended to have multiple people come up with sketches so that different ideas can be presented and/or combined. Once the drafts are complete, the committee will agree on the best design for the maze.

Things to keep in consideration during the selection process are the complexity of the design, the availability of tarp, and the duration of the maze. Keep the maze short and within room constraints, but long enough for people to enjoy the thrill.

Next, the committee members must brainstorm ideas for the rooms and their decorations ensuring that they are cohesive with the theme created. After all this brainstorming, the construction of the maze props begins!

The best way to start is by gathering the raw materials needed to create all the decorations such as cardboard, paint, and wood. Distribute jobs to create particular props for the maze to members of Administration. Gather other needed components which cannot be made by hand. Measure the tarp stored in the robotics storage room. Once each piece is measured, calculate the amount of tarp. Make sure there is enough tarp! If more tarp is needed, purchase it at least one week in advance.

It's better to produce more decorations than expected to use. Be sure to have the sketch, decorations, and volunteers, and shift list ready well before the day.

The Thursday and Friday of Halloween Night will be the most important and stressful days for the maze committee. On Thursday, check off all the decorations and check in with all the volunteers who will participate in the maze. Gather all the items and position them in the Robotics storage room. With permission from the teachers who are lending you the rooms, the maze should be set up by Friday. Allot four hours for the construction of the maze and placement of all the decorations. Be sure to use your time wisely.

## Volunteers and Shift List

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The success of the maze depends heavily on its volunteers. There are always students from the CAMS Robotics Team willing to dress up as monsters. However, the volunteers do not have to be Robotics members.

By making a shift list, volunteers should keep their assigned task for a certain period of time. Shifts should usually be rotated in 20 to 40 minute intervals, with the exception of the volunteers who are monsters. Seeing the “monsters” come out of the maze will reduce the scare factor that the maze has been known to offer. Thus their shifts usually range anywhere from one hour to two. Said list should be created at least one week in advance.

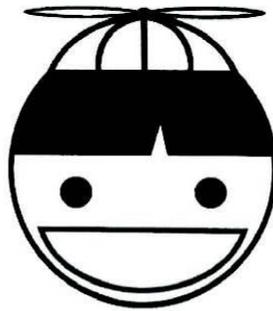
## The Attractions

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Every Halloween Night features video games, a movie, and the haunted maze. However, each year new attractions are created to keep returning attendees interested. Since the additional attraction is not only new to the audience, but to the team as well, organizational skills and commitment are vital.

For the 2011 Halloween Night, the Administration Robotics team decided to include three additional attractions. Last year’s popular attractions included a Dance Contest, a live DJ, and the Halloween costume contest. On top of these fun attractions, the Nerd Herd also added a photo booth to the 2012 Halloween Night.

Good luck!



## CAMS Robotics FIRST Team 687

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