

# ESOPATHON

EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP FOUNDATION



## Participation Guide 2022



EMPLOYEE  
OWNERSHIP  
FOUNDATION

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International Employee Ownership Center  
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Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 223-2345



## We are thrilled to have your support!

Welcome to the Employee Ownership Foundation's Second Annual **ESOPATHON** and thank you for supporting the Foundation's mission of growing employee ownership throughout America. Nationwide, amazing ESOP companies, professionals, and ESOP participants like you are celebrating and raising awareness of employee ownership and the benefits employee ownership brings them, their families, their local communities, and our economy. We truly believe in an ownership economy, where everyone can participate in the gains a company makes through hard work, commitment, and engagement.

The funds we raise during **ESOPATHON** will go toward advancing that mission by both protecting the ESOPs that already exist and growing our numbers so more Americans and communities can benefit from employee ownership.

This October, during Employee Ownership Month, you can join thousands of individuals and company teams all across the nation who will proudly display the pride, responsibility, and financial benefit that comes with being an owner and help raise the necessary resources for the future of employee ownership. By participating you will make a meaningful and impactful contribution towards the Employee Ownership Foundation, raising awareness for ESOP companies and expanding the knowledge and opportunity for future employee-owned companies.

This Participation Guide contains helpful information you need to know about the Employee Ownership Foundation's **ESOPATHON** and how to make your efforts a success.

Thank you for joining us—and thank you for supporting the Employee Ownership Foundation!

Sincerely,



James J. Bonham  
President  
The Employee Ownership Foundation



# ESOPATHON

**ESOPATHON** is an employee ownership engagement and fundraising program for the Employee Ownership Foundation, held annually each fall through the end of October's Employee Ownership Month. It works in a few simple steps:

**1**

**Pick an activity.**

**2**

**Set up and personalize a participation page of your own at [www.esopathon.org](http://www.esopathon.org).**

**3**

**Inform colleagues, friends, and family about the importance of Employee Ownership and ask them to join your team.**

**4**

**Kick off your campaign and ask for support!**

**Every ESOP is unique and so is ESOPATHON! You can participate in ESOPATHON any time from when the registration opens to the last day of Employee Ownership Month in October! You can pick whatever activity you wish, so long as it can be measured by time, distance, or units—you set a goal and raise funds toward that goal. For a list of ideas see the “ABC's of Ideas” section of this document.**

## **Why should anyone contribute?**

The reason any one person will support your campaign will be different. For your colleagues at work, try asking for their support because your efforts help support the ESOP to which you all belong. For your friends who don't work at an ESOP company, the Employee Ownership Foundation provides much-needed research and public awareness so that more companies can form them, and more communities can benefit from job stability, wage gains, and the workplace culture that flows from ESOPs. And for your family members, you can help them understand the benefits that employee ownership brings to your own family and maybe theirs, too. Plus, as a recognized 501(c)(3), donations to the Employee Ownership Foundation are tax deductible.

## Where does the money go?

Your fundraising will benefit the Employee Ownership Foundation's programs that provide resources for every prospective and current employee owner. Monies raised last year went toward funding major public awareness campaigns that are working! Those campaigns help make your company more valuable, cause more companies to consider ESOPs, and create more customers for employee-owned businesses. They also support critical research, scholarships, and other efforts by the Foundation. For more information about where your money goes, see the section **"Where Does the Money Go?"** in this document.

## How much do I have to raise?

There is no required minimum, so we recommend setting your goal to what you feel is achievable yet ambitious. Remember you can always create a team to and work together to maximize your success and make it more fun!

## Why participate in ESOPATHON?

For the last 30 years, the Employee Ownership Foundation has been the principal financial supporter for essential research about employee ownership at academic institutions. Some of this research has required the collection of data over years and even decades in order to prove what we all know—employee ownership works. This critically important research has laid the foundation to ensure employee ownership is understood by key decision-makers and can continue to be an option for more Americans. Additionally, the EOF supports employee owners and their companies through scholarships, fellowships, and special programming such as Employee Owner Retreats and the CEO leadership program at the University of Pennsylvania.

As the EOF enters its fourth decade, our nation and our economy are facing major transitions. The Foundation needs resources to continue its very successful legacy programs while working to dramatically increase awareness of the benefits employee ownership provides our nation while helping more business owners, and the public overall, understand its value.

**The real strength of the employee ownership movement comes from the more than 10 million individual employee owners. ESOPATHON is your opportunity to stand with your peers and support employee ownership and your ESOP. When you participate in ESOPATHON, the funds you raise fuel the mission of the Employee Ownership Foundation and helps expand access while protecting those who already have an ESOP.**

**We're sure you would all agree, every American deserves the opportunity to be an employee owner.**

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is ESOPATHON?

ESOPATHON is a month-long, activity-based, fundraising event that allows employee owners to set up their own charitable fundraising webpage, participate in teams together (like their own ESOP company team), all while celebrating Employee Ownership Month.

## When is ESOPATHON?

The registration process will open in September, and you may begin your efforts as soon as you register. Challenges and competitions will finalize on the last day of Employee Ownership Month, October 31. You can start setting up your fundraising page in September so you can build your team and be ready to go on October 1st!

## Where is ESOPATHON?

Wherever you are! ESOPATHON is a virtual fundraising event that lets you share your story and support employee ownership no matter where you are located. Companies can form teams that allow in person, virtual and remote employees to participate as well.

## I'm not much of a runner, can I still participate?

Of course! ESOPATHON was built for everyone to participate by doing whatever they choose! You can pick the activity that best suits you. Do you swim laps? Read books? Want to drink more water during the day? If you can track it in distance, time, or units (think books per week) then you can participate through an activity. As you reach out to your friends, coworkers, or even family members, you will ask them to donate towards your activity. Want to swim a mile every day? Read a book every week? Run 100 miles during the month? Go for it!

## When can I register?

Registration will begin on Tuesday, September 6th and remain open until midnight of October 31st. Just keep in mind the event officially starts October 1st, so if you want to make the most of it, sign up in September and start growing your team and securing pledges!

## Where can I mail a donation?

If you cannot donate online, please mail checks to the Employee Ownership Foundation, 200 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 410. Washington, DC 20001.

## Who do I contact if I have more questions?

If you have questions about participating in ESOPATHON please email us at [ESOPATHON@EmployeeOwnershipFoundation.org](mailto:ESOPATHON@EmployeeOwnershipFoundation.org).



**Don't forget to share your ESOPATHON journey  
by using the hashtag: #ESOPATHON22**

# Fundraising Tips: Easy Steps to Make the Ask

Here's an example of a great "ask" following the steps below:

*"I'm fundraising for the Employee Ownership Foundation by participating in ESOPATHON. The money I raise will fuel the mission of the Employee Ownership Foundation (a 501c3 organization) and help expand access to employee ownership. It's important for me to raise awareness so others can benefit from employee ownership like I have. My company has (number) employee owners in (city) alone and supports local jobs, economic stability, and is a strong supporter of our community through volunteer and charitable contributions. During the month of October, I will be (activity – such as running a mile per day) with my colleagues to support ESOPATHON and bring more employee-owned businesses into existence. Will you support me by donating \$25?"*

## STEP 1

### Explain what you're doing

"I'm fundraising for the Employee Ownership Foundation by participating in ESOPATHON. The money I raise will fuel the mission of the Employee Ownership Foundation (a 501c3 organization) and help expand access to employee ownership."

## STEP 2

### Make it personal.

"It's important for me to raise awareness so others can benefit from employee ownership like I have. My company has (number) employee owners in (city) alone and supports local jobs, economic stability, and is a strong supporter of our community through volunteer and charitable contributions."

## STEP 3

### Share how you are supporting ESOPATHON

"During the month of October, I will be (activity—like running a mile a day) with my colleagues to support ESOPATHON and bring more employee-owned businesses into existence."

## STEP 4

### Make a specific request.

"Will you support me by donating \$25?"

## STEP 5

### Be patient and follow up.

Don't rush a response, give your donor time to consider your request and plan to follow up soon.

## 10

# Tips for Fundraising Success

- 1. Donate to your own campaign.** Want to know the best way to start? Lead by example and make a tax-deductible donation to your own campaign. Not only will you take the first step toward reaching your goal, but your gift will inspire others to also give.
- 2. Tailor your message to who you're asking.** Consider what type of message would be appropriate. Some might prefer a more formal message, while others respond better to an informal message. Make sure your email explains why you are participating and supporting ESOPATHON and a link to your campaign page and instructions on how to donate.
- 3. Send some emails.** Reach out to co-workers, vendors, family members, friends, neighbors—anyone who might be willing to support and expand employee ownership. Take advantage of the pre-drafted messages in the ESOPATHON platform and don't forget to check out the platform's other tools like social message sharing!
- 4. Give a timeline.** Donors don't always donate right away, so providing a timeline gives potential donors a sense of urgency and enough time to do a little research if needed.
- 5. Use multiple avenues to share.** Social media is a powerful tool for fundraising. Share your personalized page on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and/or Instagram and continue to share updates on your efforts all month long.
- 6. Don't forget the human connection.** While emails might be easier, picking up the phone or walking over to your coworker's desk is always the preferred method to making the ask!
- 7. Get creative.** Instead of sending out emails, consider hosting a dinner party and asking your guests to contribute to your efforts. If you're looking for more ideas check out our **"ABC's of Ideas"** guide.
- 8. Follow up.** It's very common to put things off, a little reminder nudge never hurt anyone.
- 9. Be appreciative.** Make sure you are always sending a timely thank you note! You can even tag them on social media and thank them publicly, so that both they and others know their donation is appreciated.
- 10. Pursue matching gifts.** Many employers sponsor matching gift programs and will provide charitable contributions for donations made by their employees. A matching gift is an easy way to double your tax-deductible donation to the Employee Ownership Foundation! Check to see if your company has a matching gift program or ask if they are willing to match your contribution.



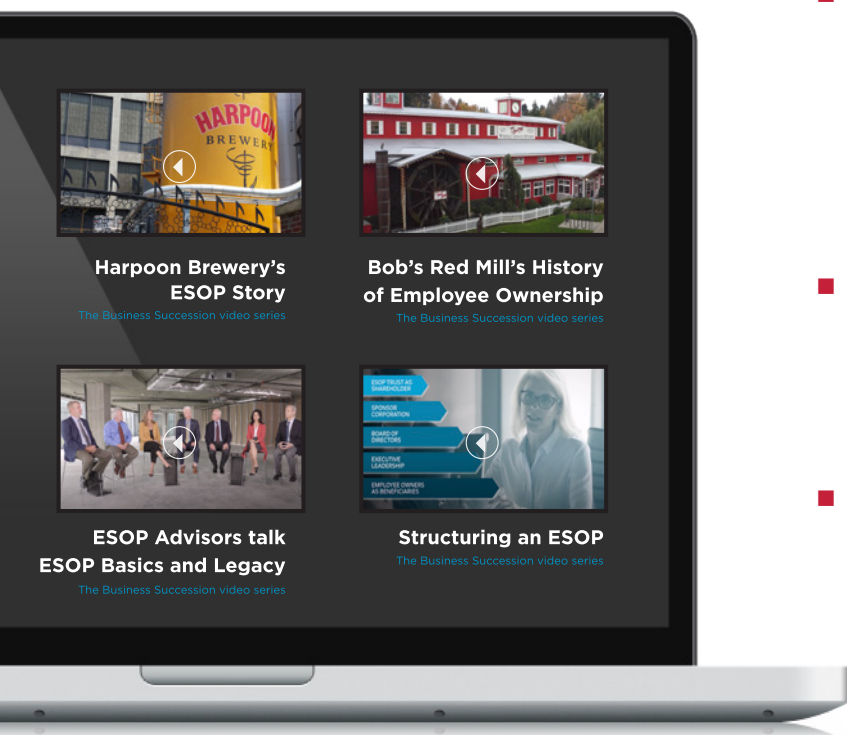
# Where Does Your Money Go?

Here is an overview of some of the Foundation's programs in 2021

## ESOP Formation Video Series

Over the next 10 years, more than 2.5 million baby boomer business owners will be looking to transfer ownership of their business. We should all want their FIRST choice to be selling their business to their employees. This requires awareness and education – two things that ESOPATHON helps fund. In an effort to start communicating to them and educating them about employee ownership, the Employee Ownership Foundation launched, throughout 2021 and 2022, 8 videos about ESOPs.

In this first-ever video series, ESOP founders and employee owners across the country and in varying industries tell their stories. Also included in this series is a panel of seasoned ESOP advisors who explore the myths and facts about ESOPs and the benefits that employee ownership provides.



## Employee Ownership Research

Research is central to the Foundation's mission. Over nearly three decades of existence, the EOF has been the nation's leading sponsor of data collection and research programs in employee ownership, funding millions of dollars in survey analysis, fellowships, and academic inquiry.

Through academic partnerships with Rutgers University, Pepperdine, and the University of Pennsylvania, here are a few studies supported by the Foundation in 2021:

- **Pepperdine University Private Capital Market Report** - For the first time, the 2021 Pepperdine survey investigated Employee Stock Ownership Plans in the succession planning process for private businesses. This inclusion led to some landmark discoveries for employee ownership.
- **National ESOP Employee Survey** - For the last three years, through Rutgers Institute for the Study of Employee Ownership and Profit Sharing, 1,500 employees in ten ESOP companies participated in the most recent scientific and authoritative employee owner survey ever done of ESOP employees.
- **Retirement Plan Comparison Study** - Through Rutgers University, this study explains how you can attract and retain the best employees, including why ESOPs are a hugely successful retirement vehicle.
- Additionally, the EOF is pleased to continue to support the **Louis O. Kelso Fellowships** which support academic research that conveys the value of employee ownership and help other successful businesses become employee owned.



### UPENN CEO Leadership Program

Leadership effectiveness is the critical factor in the success of an ESOP company. Limited to 20 participants each year, this two-week intensive program for CEOs is focused on enhancing each participant's leadership effectiveness and building a network of ESOP CEOs who can share resources and best practices to enhance the success of ESOPs across the county.

### Charles R. Edmunson Scholarships

The EOF proudly grants 10 scholarships annually in the name of Charles Edmunson. These scholarships help defray the cost of sending non-management employee owners to programs that promote and offer education on employee ownership.



**To access these resources and learn more about the Employee Ownership Foundation's work, please visit the Foundation's website at**

**[employeeownershipfoundation.org](https://employeeownershipfoundation.org)**

# Corporate Teams

Teamwork is the key to success! Forming a corporate team is a great way to get your company celebrating Employee Ownership Month while supporting the Employee Ownership Foundation. Companies can choose to create one team or as many as they would like!

## Why are teams important?

- Increases company visibility and shows its commitment to its employee owners
- Offers employees opportunities to collaborate and communicate across different departments and/or locations
- Promotes team spirit and increases office morale
- Creates partnerships with other ESOPs and employee owners in their community
- Makes a greater contribution to the Employee Ownership Foundation
- And, ultimately, it's more fun to do it together!

## What does it take to be a team captain?

**You'll be an amazing team captain if you..**

- Invite others to join your team
- Set up a fundraising goal
- Fundraise and encourage your team members to fundraise
- Coordinate activities and invites
- Celebrate team successes
- Personalize and update your team's fundraising page
- Share stories
- Match donations
- Thank your teammates and donors
- Share resources
- Have fun!

## How can my company support a team?

- Recruitment: use corporate newsletters or your company's intranet to encourage participation
- Offer a corporate match for funds raised
- Provide incentives to encourage participation
- Host a lunch or event and encourage attendees to participate

## Team-building timeline

1. Decide who will be your corporate team captain
2. Set up your team page and goal
3. Decide who should be on your team
4. Ask people to join your team
5. Follow up with anyone who hasn't responded
6. Post messages on social media, on your office intranet site, and/or company newsletter. Pass out flyers or post a sign in your break room.

## Team motivation

**Here are some ways to motivate others!**

- Host a team kick off meeting
- Create some friendly competition by asking other departments or locations to participate
- Create weekly themes
- Organize team activities
- Send team messages
- Highlight your teammates successes!

# ABC's of Ideas

There are endless opportunities to participate, pick one or do them all!



Art show, auction

Bake sale, bike, bowl, bingo

Cycle, cook off, costume party, car wash, cartoons

Dollars for days off, donate, dance marathon, dodgeball

Exercise class, eating contest, embarrass the boss

Fashion show, films, fish, funny photo contest, family day

Game night, golf tournament, guess the amount, garage sale

Host an event, happy hour

Ice cream social

Jump rope, jazz night

Karaoke night, kick-a-habit

Learn a new skill

Match giving, movie night

Night walk

Online cooking class, obstacle course, open mic night

Pizza party, pet challenge, potluck event, ping pong tournament

Quiz night

Run, read, relay race

Swim, scavenger hunt, sports day

Theme day, teatime, talent show, trivia night

Used book sales, unplug from tech, Ultimate Frisbee

Virtual event, vacation days, variety show

Walk, wear something, world record attempt

X-factor competition

Yard sale, yoga marathon

Zero waste day!

Still stumped? Ask your colleagues how they would like to celebrate

Employee Ownership Month  
and make it happen!



# Employee Ownership Foundation

## About the Employee Ownership Foundation

The Employee Ownership Foundation is a recognized 501(c)(3) organization supported by grants and tax-deductible donations as well as the volunteer efforts of individuals throughout the nation. Since its founding, the Employee Ownership Foundation has operated in pursuit of a single overarching goal: to help more individuals become employee owners. If you are an employee owner, the Employee Ownership Foundation has almost certainly been a part of making that happen and making it possible to continue.

The EOF is dedicated to the promotion of employee ownership as a model for business, education, and research. Each year, the EOF distributes between \$350,000 and \$500,000 in advancement of its mission.

The Foundation has raised and donated millions of dollars to collect data used by academics, encourage objective research, and to facilitate dialogue about employee ownership between thought leaders. To learn more visit [www.employeeownershipfoundation.org](http://www.employeeownershipfoundation.org).

## About Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs)

In the simplest terms, an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) is a retirement plan. But, in reality, it is much more than that: ESOPs motivate employees, increase productivity, improve worker retention, keep jobs local, contribute to business longevity, and so much more.

ESOPs are governed by some of the same laws and regulations as 401(k) plans. ESOPs, though, are fundamentally different from 401(k)s, offering far more advantages to businesses, owners, employees, and communities.

- ESOPs boost employee engagement. When ESOPs are formed, shares of company stock are allocated to all employees, making them employee owners who share in the rewards if the stock rises and the risks if the stock falls. As a result, they are more invested in helping the business succeed and more likely to tackle problems, such as helping co-workers who are underperforming.
- Most ESOPs require no out-of-pocket contribution from employees. For plenty of people, funding a contribution to a 401(k) each paycheck is a struggle. For employees like these, an ESOP might be the only retirement plan in which they can afford to participate.
- ESOPs help narrow the wealth inequality gap. Employees at ESOP companies tend to earn higher wages and have greater savings than their peers in non-ESOP companies. In 2018, ESOPs distributed \$126.7 billion nationally.

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