

THE CROWDFUNDING HANDBOOK

A GUIDE TO RUNNING YOUR CAMPAIGN

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The future is crowdfunding!

Collaborative online fundraising is changing the world. Whilst many entrepreneurs, game designers, and film directors have benefited to date from the massive growth of crowdfunding, we want everyone to be part of this revolution – every child, student, educator and their schools. Educational institutions will form the cornerstone of 21st century society, and our mission is to engage communities in the activities of those living, working, playing and creating within schools.

Our aim with this short handbook is to explain the crowdfunding processes, and provide the basic structure and advice to get you started. We hope it stimulates you to think creatively about new ways to engage with your community.

Finally, crowdfunding is all about personal interaction. So please get in touch with the team at FundEd. We'd love to hear back from you with your own personal experiences of crowdfunding.

Good luck!

Starting your crowdfunding project!

To maximise your chances of success, there are four key tips to follow:

1. Build your tribe
2. Get excited!
3. Ask for what you want (personally)
4. Say thank you

Each section of this handbook aims to make your crowdfunding journey as straightforward as possible.

Good luck!

About CrowdFundEd

CrowdFundEd is a bespoke crowdfunding platform that has been developed specifically with schools and PTAs in mind.

- Once you have subscribed to the FundEd Programme, we will contact you to confirm the appointed administrator within your school, and work with you to set up your school gallery
- You simply set up a Stripe account in order to take credit/debit card payments
- Projects should be agreed within the school and approved by your administrator before being created
- As an extra security step, we will moderate each project before it gets published (allow five working days for this).
- All projects sit beneath a school 'gallery' page. This means your supporters see every campaign you run – whether that's for an outdoor canopy, iPads, or a science workshop

For more information, or to subscribe to the FundEd Programme, go to funded.org.uk.



PREPARING FOR YOUR PROJECT

Build your tribe

CROWDFUNDED.ORG.UK
@FUNDED4SCHOOLS

CrowdFundEd

Expect the unexpected

What can I expect during my project?

Most crowdfunding projects have three distinct phases:

1. Quick out of the blocks

You're excited about your project and you push it out to friends, family, and other members of your school community. These are also lovely people who will help spread your project (if you ask them to) so an early flurry of activity is normal. Achieving 30% of your funding target in this period is great.

2. The dry spell

Things might go a bit quiet in the middle (this is why shorter projects, that keep their momentum through this period, tend to be more successful).

3. Better late than never

At some point you see your deadline approaching, and start to panic! You promote your project more vigorously, stressing the urgency of sponsors' donations. Very often this works! Some early sponsors may even make an additional donation because they want to see your project succeed. In crowdfunding, the majority of donations are received towards the end of projects.

People power

Should I let people know about my project before it starts?

The first time someone hears about your project might not be the best time to include a request for money. Around a month before your project starts, you should spread the word to colleagues, parents, and any relevant groups or organisations that might support you later on. This is called a soft launch and can be a very effective way of gaining support so that when you do launch, you can do so with a bang! A week before your campaign launches, send a teaser to your database of potential donors. Aim to create a buzz about your project!

How can I grow my tribe?

For every tenfold increase in Facebook friends, your project's chances of success double. So, a project creator with 1,000 Facebook friends is twice as likely to succeed as a project creator with 100 friends (with the same funding target, of course).

You can also find new members of your tribe using a blog, or social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter (more on this in the Promoting Your Project section). There's an obvious benefit to linking all your profiles and pages together, and linking to your CrowdFundEd project page.

TIPS:

■ Softly, softly, catchee monkey

Have a soft launch a month before your campaign starts

■ Be social!

Set up a project Facebook page, Twitter profile, and blog, and make them interesting!



CREATING YOUR PROJECT

Get excited!

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CrowdFundEd

Size matters!

How high should I set my funding target?

Unsurprisingly, setting a larger funding target does reduce your chances of success. But neither should you set a low target, expecting to raise lots more – most successful projects raise no more than 10% over their target. Some projects do raise double their target, but don't expect this! Set a funding target that allows you to complete your project.

'How do I know the project creator will spend the funds wisely?'

This is a common question from would-be donors. No matter what funding target you pick, you'll have to explain it. Donors want to know how their hard-earned cash will be spent, and that they can trust you. A sensible plan shows sponsors that your project is feasible. You should also build in a contingency should you exceed your target or fall short.

TIPS:

■ Great expectations

Be careful about asking for too much more than you need to complete your project

■ Time is of the essence

Consider setting your deadline at the end of a Sunday – many donations are made on weekends, when sponsors have more time

■ Explain yourself!

Use your video or description to explain how you will spend the funds – crowdfunding is built on trust

Video killed the radio star

Why post a video?

Popular crowdfunding platform, Kickstarter, has found that projects with videos are 147% more likely to achieve their funding targets.

Crowdfunding's meteoric rise as a fundraising model is largely because it allows sponsors to engage with projects and their creators, and experience their enthusiasm. A video is your opportunity to get this across, and is far more effective than even the most elegant prose. It can convince your sponsors that you are serious about carrying out your project and making it a success.

What if I'm really camera shy?

Even if you can't be funny or don't even want to be seen on-screen, just doing a voiceover video of screenshots and/or photos about your project can be enough if you explain what your idea is, what you'll do with the money, and what rewards are available to sponsors.

TIPS:

■ **Enthusiasm is infectious**

To get your sponsors excited about your project, don't be afraid to show yours! Humour helps, too!

■ **Knowledge is power**

Who are you? What are you doing, and why?

■ **Good things come in small packages**

Keep the length of your video around 1-2 mins – you'll get more views!

■ **Judge a book by its cover!**

Selecting a cool video still or image, and maybe overlaying a short message can help engage donors

■ **The host with the most**

If your video is hosted on a site like YouTube or Vimeo, make sure there's a link to your project!

The greatest reward

How important are rewards?

The most successful crowdfunding projects involve lots of sponsors, donating small amounts. That's why it's important to have enticing rewards for donations of £50 or less. Projects with rewards under £20 are 83% more likely to be successful than those without. The average donation in social crowdfunding is around £25 so it's important to have a reward here, too.

What should they be?

Ask yourself what you would want. Mementos and experiences related to your project are the most common rewards, and for good reason. If anything is created as a result of your project, this should be offered as a reward. For example, clothing, photographs, or a recording. Experiences can include viewing a performance, or contributing to the project in some way.

How should I price my rewards?

Crowdfunding isn't charity, so keep rewards around their high-street value to attract donations. Grouping lower rewards in with higher rewards is a great way to encourage sponsors to give a little bit more. For example, include your first reward in with something else for your second reward, and both of these with an additional item in your third reward, and so on...

TIPS:

■ All the small things


Offer cool, small rewards

■ The price is right

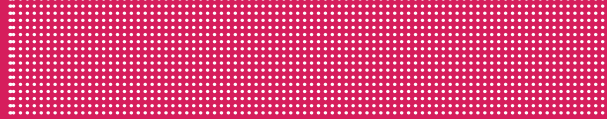
Keep merchandise-type rewards around their high-street value

■ Relevance, your honour?

The best rewards are those related to your project, such as anything you produce during or after it



Go to
crowdfunded.org.uk
to download the
CrowdFundEd Guide
to Rewards



PROMOTING YOUR PROJECT

Ask for what you want (personally)

It's not what you know...

Where can I find my first donors?

Whether you've built up your tribe or not, the best way to achieve early donations is by using your personal network: parents of children at your school, school staff, family and friends. Once you get a few donations, your project will look more credible to other donors. It doesn't matter if you call, text, email, tweet, or send messages on Facebook – the messages just have to be personal.

Who else can I contact?

With social crowdfunding there are very often related organisations, clubs, societies and companies who will help share details of your project or even make a generous donation. Meeting people from these organisations may be time well spent! Facebook and LinkedIn are great sites for finding relevant groups and organisations.

Should all my promotion be online?

No! Ask if you can talk to relevant groups that meet locally. Get contact details for anyone who expresses an interest and follow up with a phone call. Printing posters and flyers can also help spread the word.

TIPS:

■ Friends forever

Contact parents, colleagues, family and friends straight away. Plan messages to be sent every couple of weeks

■ The more, the merrier

Think hard about any other people or organisations you know who might be interested in your project. Use Facebook and LinkedIn to find them

■ Living in a material world

Talk to people who will care about your project. Put flyers in their hands and get their business cards!

■ A personal touch

Take the time to reach out to all contacts, personally

■ Be grateful!

Say thank you, and ask for help spreading the word about your project

Let's face it!

How should I use Facebook?

Facebook is a great way to find people who will be interested in your project, but simply posting on a few pages and groups will not result in automatic success. To get donations, you need to interact with relevant individuals, and get them interested in your project. Social crowdfunding succeeds when people engage with projects and their creators. It's important that some sort of relationship is formed... before asking strangers for money!

Where should I look and how should I interact?

Search for pages that are related to your project. Also think about any clubs or organisations that may be relevant. Asking questions or contributing to discussions is a great way to steer people towards your project.

What about my Facebook page?

As the number of people who 'like' your page grows, you need to continue to engage them. Share links to updates and whenever possible, use an image with a post – this is much more engaging! Your goal is to be so interesting that people not only 'like' your posts, but automatically share them with their network of friends. 'Tagging' relevant people or groups can also draw traffic to your CrowdFundEd project!

TIPS:

■ Finders keepers

Use Facebook to find relevant groups of potential sponsors

■ Stranger danger!

Engage sponsors before asking for donations

■ An image is worth a thousand words

Use images and tags with your posts!

You are what you tweet

Why should I use Twitter?

Twitter allows you to reach beyond your immediate sphere of influence, speak directly to important people who might support your project, and find people with shared interests who you didn't even know existed! If there are organisations you'd like to contact, tweeting them or their staff can be a great way to initiate a conversation. Searching for keywords relevant to your project will find people who might be interested in what you're doing.

How do I get people to follow me?

People will follow you if you tweet lots of interesting content. The majority of your tweets should be about relevant topics, and not just about your project. You have to get them interested! If there's a specific person or organisation that you'd like to retweet you, tweet them (mention their twitter handle in a tweet) and write something that their followers would find interesting. Asking for retweets explicitly has a low success rate, and is often a good way to annoy people!

How can I use hashtags?

People talking about a hashtag relevant to your project might be interested in you. Find these with the Twitter search. However, it's important not to wade in and disrupt a conversation, unless your project will be highly relevant to the participants. You need to engage people before asking for donations.

TIPS:

■ Search high and low

Use Twitter to contact relevant organisations and individuals

■ If you ain't sharin', people ain't carin'

Be active, and tweet lots of interesting content on topics around your project

■ Tag me in

Find people with similar interests by searching and using relevant hashtags. If you don't ask, you don't get!

If you don't ask, you don't get!

What's the key to getting donations?

Ideally, your donors won't be complete strangers because you've taken the time to build relationships with them. However, there is only one way to get what you want and that's by asking for it!

Approach your post with some sort of angle rather than simply asking for money. For example, highlight a particular reward, or use an extract from your project summary.

You must learn to ask people for donations, whether they are parents of children at your school, Facebook acquaintances, or company executives. Remember, you're not begging – you're giving sponsors back something of value... rewards!

I've asked, but I haven't heard anything back!

Most of us are very busy, so you will have to send reminders. We don't mind – a message every couple of weeks will be welcomed. Say thank you, and ask us to share your project with our networks.

TIPS:

■ **Always be closing**

Ask for donations! And use an angle

■ **Perseverance pays off**

Send polite reminders every couple of weeks

■ **Spread the word**

Ask anyone you've interacted with to share your project with their networks

Stop press!

Is my project newsworthy?

Crowdfunding is still relatively new and so your local newspapers may well be interested in what you're doing. Send them a short press release or give them a quick phone call, to tell them what you're doing and why, and what makes it newsworthy. They may well write a story and include the link to what you're doing.

In any article or radio interview, remember to let people know why your project is relevant to them and what they can get out of it, such as the feelgood factor of supporting the next generation, and rewards! This is the key to engaging them in your project.

How else can I reach out to the local community?

Contact popular local blogs, radio stations, or even community interest groups. This doesn't have to be too time-consuming – a quick phone call or short message are all that's needed to gauge initial interest.

TIPS:

■ **You get what you give**

Let people know why your project is relevant to them and the impact their support will have

In good company

Will companies donate?

Yes, but you will normally need to offer some (fairly unique) benefit to them. Due to the relatively small donations typically made in crowdfunding, the types of companies that will donate are those relevant to your project, and of an appropriate size. You will also need to offer rewards that are appropriate for them, although they will also be seen by parents and other supporters, so let them know about any publicity they will receive as a result of supporting your campaign.

How should I contact companies?

Phone, email, social media - anything! But it is important to know who you're trying to contact, or at the very least, which department. You may find more success by making a phone call – it's easy for busy people to ignore emails.

What info should I give to companies?

If you're sending an email, you don't want to overwhelm them with information. Writing three short bullets at the top of the email is very effective. They should be:

- What you are doing
- Who you are
- How their support can help them

TIPS:

■ Failing to prepare...

Try to find corporate sponsors based on your project's area of interest

■ Short and sweet

Send a concise email with three bullet points

Update, update, and away!

Should I use updates?

CrowdFundEd lets you add 'updates' to your project. This is an important part of your fundraising campaign. Donors who have contributed to your campaign will want to know how your project is developing – do this and they will be more likely to promote your project to others. Potential new supporters will also see the activity and see that you are a motivated project creator. This should guarantee support for future crowdfunding projects.

What should I post as an update?

Absolutely anything related to your project and its progress. Make it interesting – use images to bring your updates to life! You can also ask donors to promote your project to their networks, or give you details of their relevant contacts, which could lead to many more donations.

TIPS:

■ Be regular

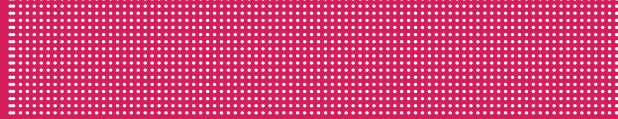
Post frequent updates about your project

■ An image is worth a thousand words

Use images!

■ Ask nicely

Don't be afraid to ask for more help from your sponsors - they want you to succeed!



AFTER YOUR PROJECT

Say thank you

CROWDFUNDED.ORG.UK
@FUNDED4SCHOOLS

CrowdFundEd

Thanks a million

Your project has finished. What now?

Whether your project was successful or not, it's important to say thank you to the donors who placed their faith in you. You can do this with an update, but it's also important to send emails – the project dashboard on the CrowdFundEd platform enables you to do this. It's a nice touch to continue to add updates to your project to let donors know how you're getting on.

Delivering rewards

As part of your thank you messages, let donors know when they can expect to receive their rewards. Delays do occur, and donors won't mind this as long as you let them know! It's better to use emails, rather than updates, for this, as you'll be sure they have seen it. A brief hand-written 'thank you' with each mailed reward is a great way to bring your successful crowdfunding campaign to a close.

TIPS:

■ **Do unto others...**

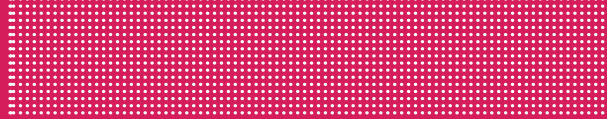
Say thank you!

■ **In the know**

Update your project as you carry it out

■ **A stitch in time...**

If you will be late delivering rewards to donors, tell them!



One more thing...

**LET US KNOW HOW YOUR
CAMPAIGN WENT!**

Email info@funded.org.uk

CROWDFUNDED.ORG.UK
@FUNDED4SCHOOLS

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