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# TIPS AND TRICKS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CROWDFUNDING

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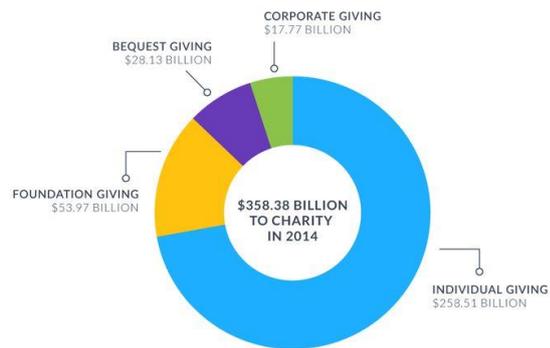


# Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is, in its essence, receiving donations from a greater amount of people. It is not a new phenomenon, although we now have the means to reach a far greater mass of people with a relatively smaller amount of work. Organisations for the most part do it already – for instance organising runs, fundraising through call centres, SMS donations, etc. Even if we think of religious institutions, like monks collecting offerings of food, priests passing out the tithe, all of these are forms of crowdfunding. But now, in the age of the social media and internet accessibility we can reach, not only people in our local community, but on a national or even international level.

Always remember that the power of crowdfunding is not only in the “funds”, but also in the “crowd”. By engaging people we will do far more for our current campaign and for our future ones if we include everyone in a community. This means that we must try our best to make them feel involved in our cause, try to get them to help if they can, not only with funds but also to keep them informed about the status of our project.

## RECORD GIVING IN 2014 \$358.38 BILLION TO CHARITY



Picture 1 - Source: <https://blog.everyaction.com/nonprofit-fundraising-strategic-plan-guide>, data from USA

# Research and planning



Get organised and plan your project and campaign. There are two main phases you'll be going through for this – the research and the planning. Do not underestimate either of them as both are highly important. Never forget that even though the planning stage is rarely seen and seldom appreciated, it is the cornerstone of any project. If we do this part right it will save us a lot of headache in the future.

The first thing to do before devising a plan is research.

- Find out what platform is the most suitable for your country. This includes previous success, legal issues and suitability for your cause. Ask yourself:
  - Who is your audience?
  - What are the transaction and platform fees?
  - Does the platform provide support for campaign strategy, capacity building?
  - Does it have the features for my strategy (video, audio, images, text, customisation of donor levels, ...)?

- What kind of a back-end does it have (technical support, ease of use, ...)
- Can I receive money with them even if my funding goal wasn't met?
- When choosing a platform, look for their guidelines. Do not be afraid to ask them for advice, especially if they have a branch in your country.
- Inspect previous successful campaigns in your region and in other countries as you can learn a lot from them – what works and what doesn't. By engaging in this activity, we are entering a market – there is no use pretending we are not, and it is far more beneficial for us to act like it. To this end we can learn a great deal from for-profit endeavours and previous successful NGO campaigns.

Then comes the planning stage. Fundraising is part of the project as a whole and should be treated as such.

- Ask yourself what do you want to achieve and how to do it
  - Set your goals realistically
  - Make a strategy about how to achieve these goals
- Determine how many people you need for the implementation
  - A larger team means greater success. Even two people do better than one (campaigns run by two or more team members raise 94% more money than campaigns run by single individuals)<sup>1</sup>
  - The benefits of having more people involved are a diversity of skills, greater focus, greater combined network, ...
- Assess the costs of the project and fundraising campaign
  - The costs do not include only money, but also items and time
  - This will not only help you with the campaign, prevent you from running out of money, but will also give you more confidence when presenting the idea to potential donors
- Set a timetable for the planned activities
  - Stick to the timelines, even though this sometimes means putting in more hours or pushing your team
- Organise and inform your team with clearly defined tasks and goals for everyone
  - Everyone on the immediate team should know what they are in charge of and what is expected of them
  - This will prevent confusion and will make the whole operation run smoothly
  - Be sure to explain as much as you can to everyone

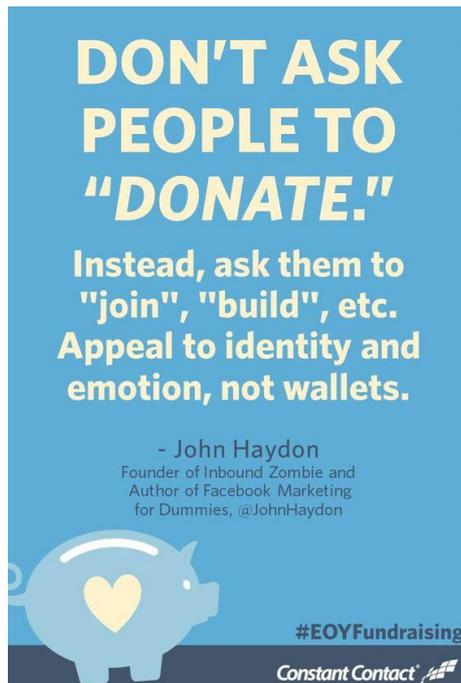
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<sup>1</sup> Source: Fundly.com

## Constructing your message

For a successful campaign we need to have a brief and short message that represents it, informs the people and organisations in the network chain, gets them involved, and transfers our enthusiasm to others as well. This stage is crucial for all kinds of fundraising, especially crowdfunding. After all, a message constructed in the right way will convince people to donate to your cause.

The main story, that is the story you will post and distribute the most, must be short and precise. This is the story your whole campaign will be based upon and everything else will relate to.



Picture 2 - Source: [https://blogs.constantcontact.com/end-of-year-fundraising/?CC=SM\\_PIN](https://blogs.constantcontact.com/end-of-year-fundraising/?CC=SM_PIN)

The main two kinds of the presented stories are:

- **The issue story:** This story talks about the field or fields within which you work and how your project solves a larger social issue.
- **The people you serve story:** This is the story of how the people you serve through your project will be transformed.

Both of these stories serve a specific purpose, and should be chosen according to your overall strategy. Of course, there is still an option of combining the two into one coherent message.

([example here](#))

Here are a few pointers for making your story have a greater impact, in ways that can be easily relayed.

- **Be clear and precise**
- **Use simple language**
- **Be brief**
  - When writing texts and scripts always be aware that you only have a couple of seconds to get the attention of the person you're communicating with.
  - On sites the average time people look at an individual project is 5 seconds, so think of ways for them to take an interest in yours.
- **Pictures gain more funds, videos gain even more funds** – on average 115%<sup>2</sup> more
  - If there is an option, do this professionally. If not, we can do it ourselves. With modern technology we can produce great material in pictures for free (example: canva.com), even if we aren't especially talented. Even video material with modern phones, cameras and software can be made to help us with our campaign. If not as the main material, it can be used as supporting material.
  - Do not overdo the video – the maximum length should be around 3 mins
- **Be up-front**
  - Tell how much of the funds will go for administrative costs. No one likes this, but it is better to be up front than losing credibility when they later find out.
- **Make sure that the aim and approach are in line with SCI values**
  - e.g. transparency towards the funders about how their money is used
- **Personal stories will have a greater impact on people**
  - We respond better to individual stories or specific problems, so construct the message in a way that it is specifically relatable. For instance, if fundraising for a workcamp, focus more on the impact it will have on the people rather than the abstract notion of bringing people together.
- **In the end, there are only emotions**
  - An emotional approach will have a greater effect. After all, donating is based more on empathy and emotions than on rationality.

## Ambassadors and network

The network of the campaign is the connections through which we spread our message. These are our friends/followers on social media, in the street, media outlets, etc. Each of these presents another link in our network and through that, an opportunity for spreading the network through them.

Crowdfunding works by spreading the message through our network and expanding it. To this end “the ambassadors” are a very important part. These are the people and organisations that spread our message and spread our network.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: fundly.com

There are four stages of potential “ambassadors” of the message, each further away, so we must make sure that our message is clear and easy to understand for all. The four stages of the ambassadors are:

- **Stage one**  
*The team* involved has the most knowledge about the project and therefore can give the most information about it as well as transfer the most enthusiasm. In this stage we have complete control over the message.
- **Stage two**  
*Our supporters* are the people who we have on our side already (be it with ties to us personally, to our organisation, to the cause, ...). Still highly invested, but the knowledge and enthusiasm are slightly diminished. In this stage the control over the message is also diminished as the supporters are not briefed as well as the team.
- **Stage three**  
These are the people who we reach through our channels and our supporters. The information and enthusiasm are still there, but not in a great manner. The control over the message is gone.
- **Stage four**  
These are the people we reach who are not invested or connected to the project. The enthusiasm and inside info is greatly diminished. The control over the message is gone.



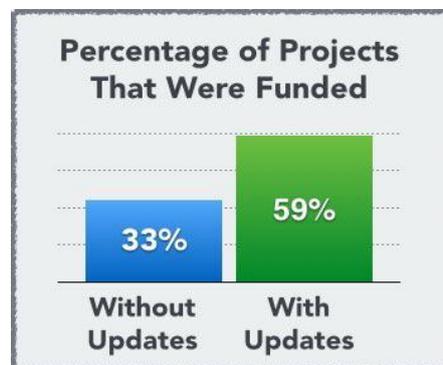
When we let the message out of our hands into the world we should be aware that we do not directly control it anymore, so it is crucial that we construct it carefully. As we can see above, our control over the message stops after stage 2, so we must make sure it still conveys what we want it to even after we are not involved anymore. So, keep the message clear and brief so it doesn't get lost in the communication and keep it appealing, so it keeps its momentum.

## Campaign launch and legwork

Posting the campaign on a crowdfunding site isn't the end of the work. It continues through outreach, promotions and support.

- **Launch with a bang**
  - For the launching of the campaign it is advisable that we organise a bigger “event” – with greater postings on social media, internet and media outlets, traditional media, or even live events
  - Consider launching around certain holidays or seasons when people are more charitable (ex. before Christmas)

- This will portray a greater image of the campaign as well as attract more people/donors
- **Never start a campaign with no funds in the account**
  - As the sites have a public display of funds gathered, employ this psychological trick – put some money in the account already, as this will get the ball rolling.
- **Thank your benefactors publicly**
  - Even a tag on social media is already a great thank you, and it also spreads the message further
  - Try to find creative ways within your funding capabilities (preferably for free), but do not spend too much as this will be seen negatively – funds should go to the cause.
- **Continue the community engagement**
  - Ask supporters to tag or call out people in their network to donate
  - Encourage sharing of your content or stories
- **Keep everyone updated and expand your story**
  - Post behind the scenes clips and stories
  - Post stories from supporters and benefactors (why they donated)
  - Post stories of the project, if it is already ongoing (including the people impacted)
  - Post photos of the team, program, beneficiaries, ...
  - Share statistics (how many people donated, how much, ...)
  - Share posts from supporters (repost, retweet, etc.)
  - Update them about the money raised, or when you're reaching your goal. This will motivate additional people to donate



Picture 3 - Source: <https://conversionxl.com/blog/crowdfunding-campaigns/>

- **Monitor your progress and adapt**
  - Most sites give you a demographic of the donors. Keep an eye on this and adapt accordingly
  - If, for example, you see that the campaign attracts a certain demographic (e.g. men from 18-40) think about shifting the continued content, or at least some posts, to them.
- **Continue sharing**
  - Make a strategy of how to do it and a general timetable when to do it
  - Do not "fall asleep", meaning use the above methods (or others) to keep the campaign alive on the channels you're promoting it. For further tips also see [this link \(https://blog.fundly.com/crowdfunding-examples-nonprofits-charities/\)](https://blog.fundly.com/crowdfunding-examples-nonprofits-charities/)

As noted, there are many opportunities to raise funds for our causes and internet connectivity gives us the means to reach a larger audience. There is no one true way to do this as every campaign is unique involves a different cause and different people we want to reach. Using the above tips can help you better achieve your goal, and you can use the below links to get some more ideas, inspiration and practical advice to reach your goals. And always keep in mind the fact that the main reason people give is simple – because they were approached.

## Resources:

The piece was written according to lectures given at the IFC Asia in Bangkok, 27.-28.6.2017 by Beth Kanter, Tharum Bun (Crowdfunding strategy and best practices for beginners), Derek Humphries (Inspiring connections: unlocking your cause's stories to move people to action), Michael Gale and Kavita Mathew (Crowdfunding in Asia), Martin Paul (Fundraising strategy in seven steps)

### Read and watch more

#### Examples of successful campaigns

[20 more successful NGO campaigns](https://blog.fundly.com/crowdfunding-campaigns-examples/) at FUNDLY: <https://blog.fundly.com/crowdfunding-campaigns-examples/>

#### Preparing your plan and strategy:

[Lecture, giving instructions step-by-step](#) by Non-profit Ally

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmTJL3Mf5iU>

#### Communication strategies and tips

[A blog post with useful advice](https://blog.fundly.com/crowdfunding-examples-nonprofits-charities/) on how to maintain the momentum of your campaign and reach your goal <https://blog.fundly.com/crowdfunding-examples-nonprofits-charities/>

#### General advice and tips

The non-profit guide to successful fundraising - <http://ernestbarbaric.com/non-profit-guide-to-crowdfunding/>

3 Questions every non-profit needs to answer before crowdfunding

<https://ignitiondeck.com/id/crowdfunding-nonprofits-questions-organizations-need-to-answer-first/>

A highly recommended montage of interviews with successful crowd-founders and founders of sites - Are you sure that crowdfunding is right for you?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0452NA7OnzU>

7 crowdfunding tips - <https://blog.fundly.com/crowdfunding-tips/>

Best tips for running a fundraising campaign at FUNDLY - <https://fundly.com/how-to-fundraise>

### Examples of an issue story

<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/caigirlseducation/>

<https://pencilsofpromise.org/seasonofpromise/>

### Examples of a people you serve story

<https://www.globalgiving.org/microprojects/diapers-for-children-kenya-medical-defects-education/>

<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/inspire-the-youth-of-ritsona-refugee-camp/>

<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/inspire-the-youth-of-ritsona-refugee-camp/>

### References

<https://www.charitycharge.com/crowdfunding-platforms-nonprofits-should-be-aware-of/>

<https://www.crowdcru.com/top-10-crowdfunding-sites-for-nonprofits/>

<https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2012/10/10/crowdfunding-101-a-comparative-look-at-kickstarter-indiegogo-and-razoo/>

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