

“Indie in DC” Successful Crowdfunding



5 Tips for Successful Crowdfunding

Many people find crowdfunding scary, dreadful, or an act of desperation.

However, the right crowdfunding campaign can be successful and open doors to getting your project produced. There are many people who are willing to support your dreams if they believe in it and are given the right incentive to do so.

- 1. People support YOU first, then your project.** Your passion surrounding the project and building supporters' confidence that you have the ability to do what you say you will do with their money is crucial. Most people want to be part of something successful and the likelihood of success is something they will consider when deciding whether to back you. Don't wait until you need money to start networking with people. Give them a reason to support you. Consider creating a professional IMDB page for yourself and list your industry experience or credits. If you don't have any credits, work on getting some.
- 2. Develop a new or unique project idea that targets an emotion or specific group.** Building empathy or commonality around something that affects many people goes a long way toward building a following. Use Twitter and Facebook to get a sense of what moves people to tweet or post about it. Get in on those comments and link your project page to them. Create a community of supporters so that when you begin promoting your campaign it is as though it is everyone's project. Try to use the word "we" rather than "I" when talking about your project and your campaign. On an emotional level, most people like to feel they are part of something bigger.
- 3. Volume is essential.** You must begin with a large, solid network base. If you believe that at least 200 people you know will support your campaign, you should begin building a mailing list of at least 300-500 people. Before the campaign begins, send emails to people you already know notifying them of your upcoming campaign. Make them aware of your plans, get them excited for you in advance, and give them an opportunity to ask questions. Show your enthusiasm before, during, and after your campaign. Bloggers, community or church groups, networking groups, friends, family, co-workers, other filmmakers are the people you should start with first. That is where you will get most of your early support. These are also the people most likely to encourage others to support the project.
- 4. Develop a social media presence and stellar campaign.** Create social media accounts for your project before the campaign begins and promote the page or account with relevant and interesting material. Use pictures and bios of the cast and crew. Tag all photos and asks these individuals to help promote the project. Some of the backers will be friends and supporters of your cast and crew. Share posts on the project page to your personal page. Friends are likely to click the link on your personal page that will lead them to your project page. Make your social media pages are interesting and engaging.
- 5. Be realistic about your campaign goal.** Create a realistic budget that includes stipends, even if small amounts, for all crew and actors. You should include the budget on the campaign page. Cast and crew are more likely to promote the campaign if they know you've included something in the budget for them. It may be best to shoot for a lower target funding goal for your first campaign. A lower goal amount will be easier to reach and may cost less in terms of what you must pay the platform if you do not reach your goal. Although the first campaign may not cover all of the costs of your production, it should be enough to get you started. Once you have made some progress on the project and have something to show for it, you could do a second campaign to raise finishing funds. People who did not give to your campaign the first time around may be inclined to give at this point. Those that gave the first time might give more.

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Free and Affordable Resources

1. **Facebook Ads.** Facebook allows you to purchase low-cost ads to promote your page or specific posts. Build this advertisement into your budget. I recommend using ads sparingly but it is worth it to gain traffic to your page. It's also a great way to reach people you would not ordinarily reach since you can set the target audience.
2. **Create an electronic mailing list.** There are several free services such as www.mailchimp.com to help manage your e-mails and send template e-blasts. This is a great way to give your communications a professional look. It also makes it easy to send one message to hundreds or thousands of people with the flexibility of scheduling the messages. These services offer analytics tools that will show you who read your email, forwarded it, or unsubscribed from your mailing list. Tip: Proofread your messages and send yourself and a few friends a test email before you send it to everyone on the mailing list.
3. **Hootsuite** (www.hootsuite.com) - This tool allows you to manage all of your social network accounts and schedule messages for future publishing. It will go a long way to ensure all of your social media contacts are receiving the same message at the right time. As study said that Tuesday morning at 10am was the time most people were on social media.
4. **Browse Indiegogo, Kickstarter, GoFundMe or other crowdfunding platforms.** This is a great way to see what works and what doesn't. You can get ideas from successful campaigns particularly with respect to what perks to offer. Most people will give in the \$10 to \$20 dollar range. Create a perk that is cost effective. Remember people are not giving to get the perk. They are backing you or the project.
5. **Join or become active with professional organization that focuses on media production.**
Here are just a few:
[Television, Internet, & Video Association of DC, tiva.org](http://tiva.org)
[Women in Film and Video, wifv.org](http://wifv.org)
[Multicultural Media and Telecommunications and Internet Council, mmtconline.org](http://mmtconline.org)
[Docs In Progress, docsinprogress.org](http://docsinprogress.org)
[DCFilm Alliance/DC Shorts, dcshorts.com](http://dcshorts.com)
[DCTV, dctv.org](http://dctv.org)