Everything you need to know

How to crowdfund your great idea

❝ Raise funds to make your great idea a reality...

If you are a community group, a business, a charity, a social enterprise, a sports club, or a person with the spark of an idea that you want to turn into reality, then we can help you fund it.

We have worked with thousands of people to raise millions of pounds with the power of the crowd. We've learned a lot about how to prepare, build, create and fund successful crowdfunding projects.

Using the power of the crowd we can help make your great idea a reality. Let's get you started."

Phil Geraghty, MD,
Crowdfunder

Crowdfunding enables people with great ideas to raise the money they need, in return for 'rewards'. The public can back your idea with pledges of money and project owners can 'thank' their backers with rewards that reflect the money contributed.

Crowdfunding will enable you to raise the money you need in return for 'rewards'. Don't worry - we've got some great reward ideas for you later in this pack!

Crowdfunding is a proven way of driving community engagement around your project, and a fantastic way to raise funding from those around you. We've made it really easy to create a project and start crowdfunding.

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WHAT IS CROWDFUNDING?

Crowdfunding is a way to raise money, awareness and support for a project from the people around you.

1 First you create a simple page on our site, explaining your idea.

2 Next, you tell all the people you know – and some of them share it with their friends in turn... and so on.

3 All the while, people who believe in your idea pledge money in return for a reward that they'll receive if your project succeeds.

Why it's great - benefits

Validation - Crowdfunding validates your idea and gives you confidence, it proves that people like your idea and will pay or contribute to make it happen.

Funding - You can unlock other funding for charities and community groups this maybe grants, for businesses it could be loans, investors or a pre-curser to an equity crowdfunding campaign

Advocates - Crowdfunding is for life, not just for fundraising. The people who support you and your great idea become a part of your journey and make incredible ambassadors for your project in the future.

Marketing - When you create and launch your project you have to really think about how you are going to market your idea. So Crowdfunders learn vital skills when fundraising - they learn how to become superstar marketeers too!

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BUILD YOUR PROJECT

From passion, commitment and dedication comes great crowdfunding projects. Having raised millions of pounds for thousands of projects, we've got five sections that will explain all you need to know about getting your project built. From telling your story to creating great rewards and setting an achievable target…

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Your team

It's important to share the load when running a crowdfunding project. It can be a lot of work for one person to do alone which is why we recommend getting some people to help support you in the build of your project. The core team behind a great fundraising project is made up of 2-5 people, so think about who might be keen to help – even if it's a few key tasks.

Make use of your team for group brainstorming sessions on telling your story, offering rewards and spreading the word.

Roles and essential skills

Leader

Knowledge

Networking

Digital Superstar

Marketing

TOP TIP
The bigger your crowdfunding team is, the more supporters you'll have when you launch your project!

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Who's in your team?

Write down who is in your crowdfunding "Dream Team".

We've given you a handy form to fill out…

Name	Role	Other expertise

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Finding your crowd

One of the most important parts of your crowdfunding campaign is knowing your "network" - and that of your team. Together - imagine how many people you all know between you!

These could be your close family and friends, the people that you work with, right though to your business contacts and local community. The sweet-spot is knowing and understanding who they are. The best way to start is to sit down with your team and draw a map of your network. This network map to give you a fuller picture of what your crowd looks like and highlight any gaps. We suggest spending some time to write it all down. Understand how big your team's network is - doing this now will make everything a whole lot easier once you start getting your project out there.
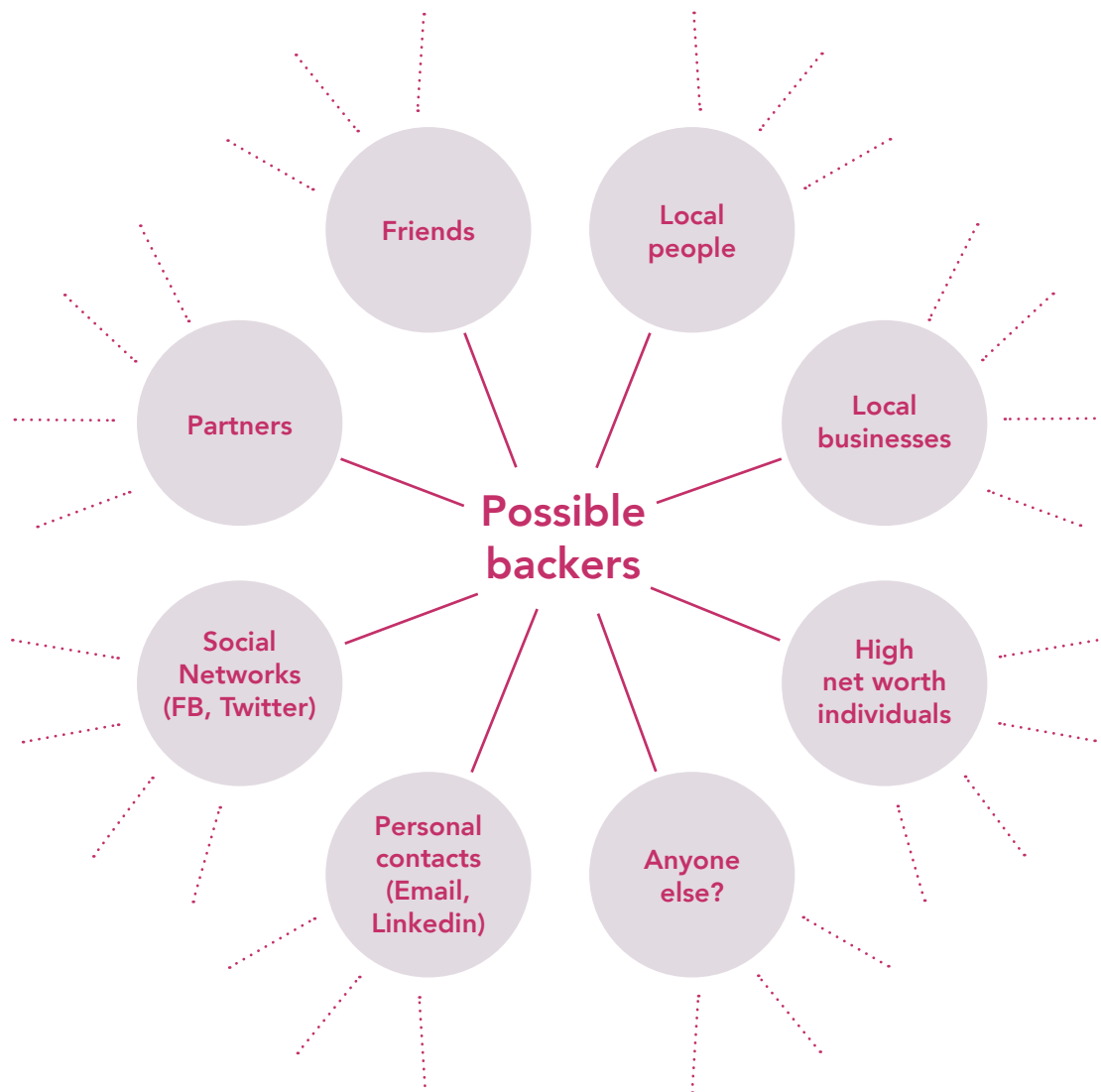
Your contacts

People they know

People they know

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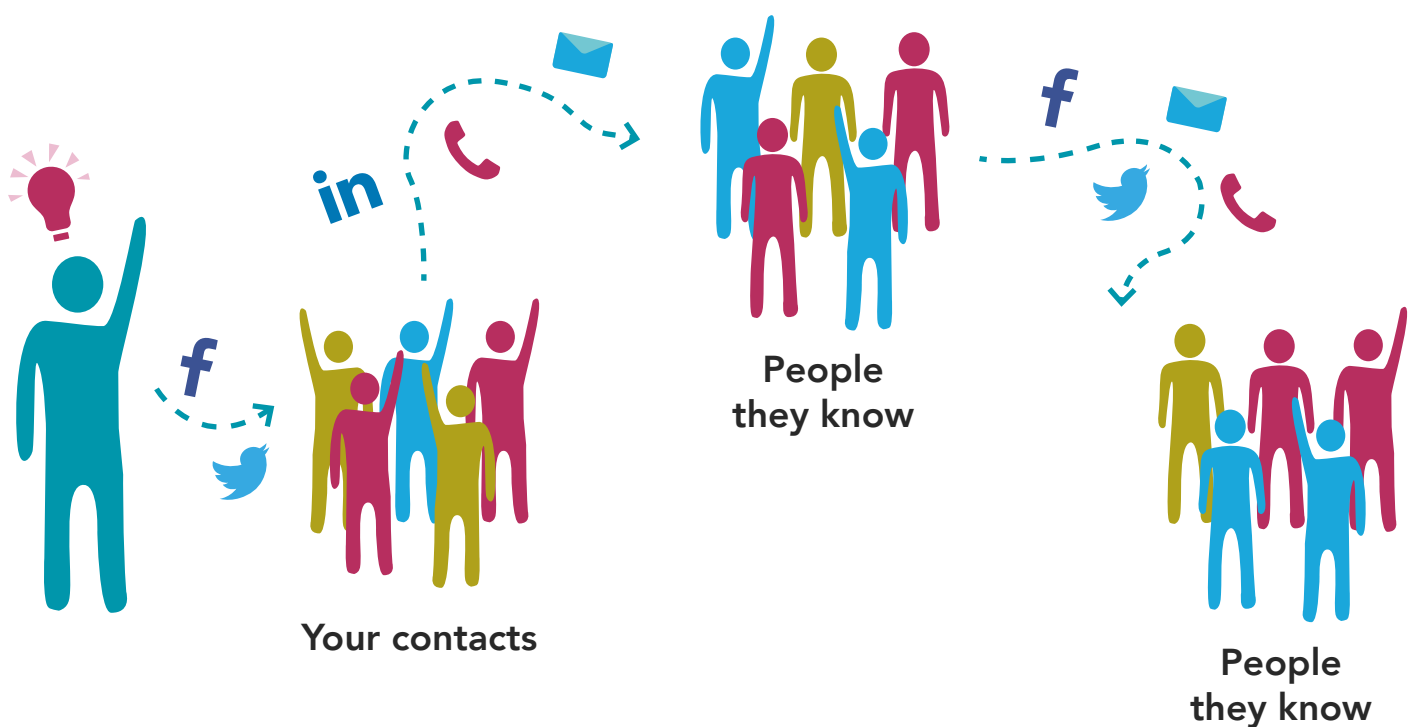
Let's map out your network

This will give you a few ideas for people who maybe in your crowd.
With your team, brainstorm and list the groups/segments of people and organisations who may be interested in supporting your project. Once you have a top level drill down into each segment and identify the individuals, organisation or number of individuals within each group.

Friends

Local people

Partners

Possible backers

Local businesses

Social Networks (FB, Twitter)

High net worth individuals

Personal contacts (Email, Linkedin)

Anyone else?

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Taking names

Use the template below to jot down your ideas on the individuals and organisations within each group that may back your project. Note who they are, how much you think they might pledge and how you are going to reach out to them.

Group	Name	Pledge amount	Contacted

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Tell your story

One of the most vital aspects of creating a great crowdfunding campaign is about how you tell your story. We've pulled together some great advice on how to let everyone know why and what you are crowdfunding for. Don't forget to fill out the "key messages" section to really bottom out your story…

1.

Images
Use images to make your page more visually appealing and get your message across clearly. It's a good idea to include maps too, if relevant.

2.

Introduction
Introduce yourself and your work so far. Mention any collaborators or partners that are involved with your project.

3.

Testimonials
Ask for a testimonial from your partners, clients or supporters. Testimonials let people know that your project is worthwhile and that you've already got some great support.

4.

Rewards
Show off the rewards you are offering with images, graphics and more details when needed – you can do this on your project dashboard.

5.

Format
Use the formatting tools such as subheadings to highlight your main points and break up the text to make it easier to read.

TOP TIP

Ask people from your network for feedback on your page by sharing the link to your campaign before you launch it.

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Key messages

With your team have a big think about the really vital messages of your project - and how you get them across.

Write them down below so it's really clear…

What do you want to achieve?

How you will use the funds raised

Who you are and what you do

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Creating your video

Projects with great videos are twice as likely to get funded – so it's important you get yours right!

1. Short and sweet
Less is more when it comes to video. Keep it short, 2-3 minutes maximum. Make sure you get the key information into the first 30 seconds - who, what, why, how?

2. Get in front
Get in front of the camera - people like to give to people. Don't be afraid to get others on camera too. Testimonials are a great way of giving your project credibility.

3. Script
If you're struggling to think of what to say, write a rough script but let people ad-lib and speak from the heart, honesty will always win people over.

4. Setting
Choose a place where your voice can be clearly heard on record - wind, traffic and crowds will drown you out.

5. Be clear
Have a direct ask and be clear on 'the story' behind your project - the history, your motivations and the future.

Watch examples of good videos by visiting our guides section here

TOP TIP

Your video can be engaging and entertaining – so don't forget to have fun when you are making yours!

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Rewards

Rewards are a great way of increasing the amount of money a supporter will pledge as well as a great way for generating excitement around your project. Think about the kind of people who will be making the pledges and offer rewards that you yourself would want to get.

7 top tips - creating great rewards

1 Before going live, spend some time asking people from your crowd for feedback on your rewards.

2 The average pledge on Crowdfunder is £50 so make sure you've got some great rewards set to that value.

3 Offer good value for money. If one of your rewards is being sold elsewhere, a discounted price would be a great way of getting attention.

4 Don't make life too difficult for yourself - remember you're going to have to give lots of them out so choose reward that are easy for you to deliver.

5 Have at least five rewards, consider starting at £10 and adding rewards in amounts all the way up to 10% of your target figure.

6 Think about things that people won't be able to get anywhere else and offer them as 'money-can't-buy' rewards.

7 Reach out to your connections when creating rewards, as you never know who will be willing to offer you something you can give away. Why not collaborate with other businesses that share your ethos to offer unique rewards that will be relevant to your audience.

Example rewards

Some great example rewards from a local food kitchen, Made in Hackney

£15

Large MIH organic shopping bag, name on donor mural and an invite to our celebration party.

£50

Meal for two at Tibits Vegetarian restaurant, name on our donor mural and invite to our celebration party.

£300

Dinner party for four at your house cooked by the brilliant Cult Events supper club chef Ian Ballantyne, name on donor mural, invite to our celebration party.

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Reward ideas

Thank yous

Products

Events

Partners

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Target

Setting a fundraising target is a balancing act between what you need to raise and what you think you can raise from your crowd. Be realistic - remember that you can always set a stretch target once you hit your initial target.

Calculate the minimum costs you need to deliver the project and fulfil rewards. Make some room for the 5% fee Crowdfunder applies if your project is successfully funded and the additional credit card processing fees.

To work out what might be a realistic target, there are a couple of facts worth having a think about…

Did you know...

**£50** The **average pledge** on Crowdfunder is **£50**

5% The **average conversion rate** of people who view your page to pledging is **5%**

Length of crowdfunding project

Your campaign can last anywhere from one day to eight weeks, but more time doesn't necessarily mean you'll raise more money.

A four-week campaign gives you enough time to mobilise your supporters whilst maintaining a sense of urgency.

When picking a launch date, be aware of the calendar and factor in all the external events that might slow down or promote your campaign. When picking a launch time, keep in mind that whatever time you launch the project, it will end at the same time of day. So choose a time that will allow you to have a big push at the end.

PLEDGERS / TIME
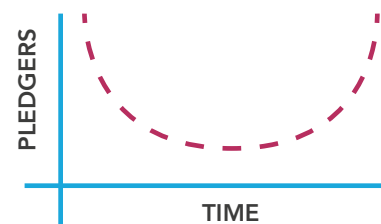
TOP TIP

Most pledges will come in at the beginning and the end of your project - so you'll want to make sure you've got a great plan to keep engagement high the whole way through.

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PROMOTE YOUR PROJECT

You could have the best idea in the world, an amazing video, description, rewards and images but unless you put it out there you are unlikely to get funded! It has to be you and your team! You have the passion, enthusiasm and the ability to turn your great idea into reality.

TOP TIP

Remember to keep an eye on your Crowdfunder analytics dashboard - follow the data

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Warm up

Great crowdfunding projects are the ones that get off to a really great start. This is why the warm up phase is vital. Make sure you've got people ready to pledge as soon as you go live and get that momentum going.

- Check what content - text and images - you already have and what new content you need to create.

- Great planning will help you to visualise the whole campaign and allows you to spread activity evenly.

- Make sure you've collected plenty of good images for your project. Strong images make creating content, flyers, posters and social media posts much easier and more successful.

- Save the date! Send out messages, emails or cards to start getting people excited before you launch your project.

- Contact people you know well in advance to tell them that you're launching a crowdfunding project. Then keep them informed throughout the campaign by sharing your success and providing regular updates.

- If you're going to hold a launch event, remember to get your invites out early to raise awareness and ensure more people are able to attend.

- If you have a database of customers/supporters make sure they are aware of the project before it goes live - it'll make them feel valued and will help to secure some early pledges.

- Get active and build your audience on social media before going live - don't wait until you launch to start engaging.

- Reach out to as many people as you can before the campaign starts, network and collect email address, twitter handles etc. Attend as many events as you can and collect people's feedback and business cards. Get networking!

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The Launch

Launching your project is an exciting phase! Make sure you are ready to start with a bang…

First pledges
Have first pledges lined up for the first hours of the campaign to assure a great start and secure the social proof that encourages your wider network to pledge. Aim for 10% of your target.

Pick up the phone
Call or text people you know well to tell them about your project as soon as it goes live.

Launch party
Ask your supporters and contacts to come along to **your launch party** and get them to bring a friend. Why not invite local musicians, serve great food and introduce people to all of your rewards.

TOP TIP

Don't get stressed if not all of your contacts remember to pledge immediately or don't have time to do it. Give them a gentle reminder, be persistent and they'll probably still pledge in the first week.

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Emails

The majority of pledges on crowdfunding campaigns come from emails... and we all love to hear from our contacts. We've got some great advice for creating an email plan to support your project....

Emailing people you know well should be one of the very first things you do when your project goes live. You can email these people again later on to share the latest news and remind them to pledge.

Think carefully about what to write as the subject of your emails - make it interesting, avoid using lines like 'please pledge' or 'help me' as they can look spammy and might put people off reading the email.

Contacting people directly and with personal messages is key - nobody likes a 'Dear Sir' email. One-to-one is more effective than bulk emailing.

When sending follow up emails to your contacts, it's a good idea to mention people who have already pledged on the project - don't forget to say thank you!

TOP TIP

Include an image, call to action and link to the campaign page in your email signature – that way – everyone will see it each time you email them!

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Updates

On your Crowdfunder dashboard – you've got the opportunity to send "updates" to your supporters. This is a brilliant way to keep in touch with everyone – and keeping everyone engaged with your project, here are some top tips on making the most of Crowdfunder updates…

1 Use updates to keep your supporters in the loop. Include thank you messages and news, but also a clear call to action such as news about an exciting reward that they can share with their friends.

2 Try to keep to sending one or two updates a week for the majority of your campaign, but at the start and the end it's common to use updates more frequently as things can change quickly and it's a good idea to build on that excitement.

3 Use a mix of text and images to encourage your backers to share the message.

Example

08/Jul/2015

Thank you co-owners! Together, we will change the news for good.

WE'VE DONE IT!
1525 PEOPLE
#OWNTHEMEDIA
THANK YOU VERY MUCH! #OWNTHEMEDIA

Dear co-owners,

Today, we've made history together. We've shown the world that an alternative model for media ownership is possible. We've highlighted the demand for a more positive media. But most of all, we've exposed the power of people coming together to make things happen.

30 days, 1,525 people, 33 countries, 303 cheques and more than 1,200 online investments led us to a total of £263,422. Since meeting our original target of £200,000 on Friday, nearly 400 new co-owners still

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Press

We've all seen great crowdfunding projects in the press and local media – and this is because project owners are great at shouting about their ideas and why they need funding!

Find out how to get some great coverage - which in turn will help drive more pledges on your project…

Find out if anyone in your network has any contacts in the press (local or national!) - getting an introduction can really help you to get coverage.

Check the spelling on your project URL carefully and ask for it to be included in the piece. Timing is key!

A crowdfunding project is interesting to journalists just after it launches, hits target or closes. Make sure you've got some great momentum on your project with some great pledges on board when you get your project featured in the news.

Download Press Template
here

TOP TIP

When your campaign is picked up by the press, post it on social media and ask your followers to share.

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Social media

Where do lots of people hang out all day? On social media of course! Plan in advance how you are going to get people online to come and look at your crowdfunding page – and pledge to support you…

Social media platforms are all different:

f Facebook is one of the best platforms for generating pledges

Twitter is brilliant for generating awareness

in LinkedIn is a great place to look for corporate support

- Make sure to have your early pledges on your project before you go wild with updates on Facebook and social media. It's great to have some pledges showing you've already got people supporting you and your great idea.

- Share a variety of content such as stories, pictures, stats, jokes, progress towards your target, messages of support, behind the scenes updates and any new rewards that have been added to keep your posts interesting - you can always recycle copy that you have used elsewhere.

- Make a plan for how often you will post on your social channels. A useful rule of thumb is to have one Facebook post/day and 4-6 Twitter messages/day.

- Prepare a bank of good quality images about your project to use as part of your social media messages. A post with an eye catching, vibrant image is much more likely to be shared on social media than one with text only.

- Start individual conversations on social media and tell people your story before you ask them to pledge. Always be personal when reaching out on social media. You're asking them for money so take time to engage with people before hand.

- Change your profile picture and cover photos for all of your social media channels so that every time someone looks at your profile, they'll be seeing that you are crowdfunding! Don't forget to tag @crowdfunderuk in your Twitter posts.

f We're crowdfunding our great idea! Support us in return for exciting rewards
[Link to your project]

We're crowdfunding! Help us smash our target @crowdfunderuk
[Link to your project]

TOP TIP

30% of pledges on crowdfunding projects come from Facebook…

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Widgets/Websites

On your Crowdfunder project page you've got the option of getting your very own "widget". A widget is a little piece of code that you can use to "embed" your project on other web pages – such as blogs and websites. Find out how to make your widget work for you…

Embed your campaign widget on the website and disable any other donate buttons for the duration of the campaign.
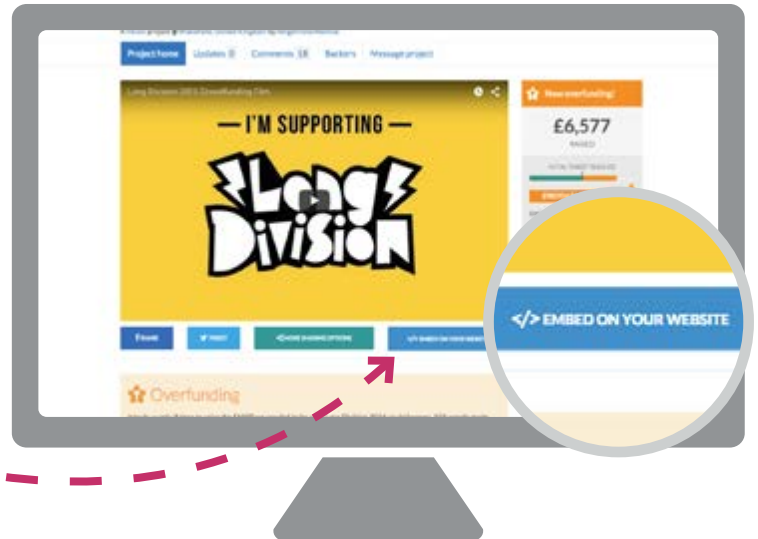
- Make sure all references on your website to your project include a link to the campaign so people have the option to pledge (better still – embed your widget so everyone can pledge direct!)

- If you have a website with a great big image on the front page – see if you replace it with a "call to action" to pledge on your project.

TOP TIP

Don't fancy using the widget? Instead use the link and a photo and post that on blogs and websites driving traffic to your project.

Get it in as many places as humanly possible... the more the merrier.

Long Division 2016 are crowdfunding now

— I'M SUPPORTING —

£6,577	£6,000
RAISED	TARGET
16	111
DAYS LEFT	BACKERS

PLEDGE NOW >

Crowdfunder.co.uk

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Offline

It's not all about getting online and sharing your project – you can't beat some good old fashioned marketing – find out how you can reach out in the offline world…

Running a crowdfunding event is a fab way to get extra support. Getting everyone together to celebrate, share and pledge on your project is a great reason to have a party – plus, it's a brilliant way to share your story, get everyone messaging about it on their own social media accounts, getting your local press along and most importantly, getting those pledges in…

Talk

Talk to people face to face. Although your project will be online on the Crowdfunder website, you can still go out into the world to share your idea in person. You're asking them for money so take time to engage with people personally before hand.

Flyers

A good old-fashioned flyer can go a long way. Distribute in your office, hand them out in person and take a few to a local shop, cafe, co-working space or similar.

Phone

Pick up the phone! Call or text people you know well to tell them about your project

Posters

Design a simple poster that you can put up anywhere and everywhere, including noticeboards, local shops, libraries, community centres, universities etc..

Event ideas

- A launch event is a great way to showcase your idea, bag a few pledges and generate some interest around your crowdfunding project.

- If you're going to hold an event, remember to get your invites out early to raise awareness and ensure more people are able to attend.

- Gather everyone for an event an hour before the campaign closes. You can receive more pledges from around the room and get to celebrate the moment with your crowd.

- Make your event fun, include an activity, showcase your video, have a live link to the total so people can watch it grow, make announcements about large donations, create a buzz!

TOP TIP

Attend as many community events as possible to meet more people and spread the word. Ask local groups or organisations to be included in their next newsletter or if you can give a three-minute presentation at the next group meeting.

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Raise more money

If you've worked super hard on your campaign and you've reached your target early (well done!) you'll want to think about "overfunding" and setting what we call a "stretch target" - this means that you can raise more money than you'd originally intended and have an even bigger impact with your fundraise! Find out how important it is to think about your stretch target…

Now overfunding!

£6,577
RAISED

INITIAL TARGET REACHED

STRETCH TARGET : £10,000

BACKERS
111

DAYS LEFT
16

PLEDGE

This project will only be funded if at least £6,000 is pledged by 4:30pm 21st October 2015

- Stretch targets are a great way to keep your crowd motivated after hitting 100% and gives them something to aim for.

- Think of a new specific aim for your stretch target. Give a clear reason for wanting to raise the extra funds, share what you'll achieve with their ongoing support and detail what the extra money will be spent on.

- Set a stretch target that seems achievable based on how quickly you were able to reach 100%. It's important that your supporters fell they can help you reach it.

- Share the impact all current pledges have - use numbers and images - and invite people to keep growing it.

TOP TIP

Have a second stretch target in mind ready to update if you reach your first one to make sure that you keep everyone engaged.

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Post crowdfund

Wow. Once you've made it through your successful crowdfund, it's time to pat yourself on the back and think about what's next…

- Take a breather and celebrate with your team, you deserve it!

- Remember to say thank you as loudly and publicly as you can.

- Thank as many people as possible personally, it takes time but it's worth it.

- Send out Tweets and Facebook posts with the results and acknowledgments.

- Keep your backers updated with your developments, firstly when they can expect their rewards and later showing the impact of their pledge. If there are hitches, make sure you let everyone know. It's really important to be transparent.

- Make sure you deliver on your rewards.
  If they are going to be delayed, keep your backers updated.

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We've given you all of our top advice to get a really good crowdfunding campaign live and funding. We've got plenty of more advice for you here in the guides section and from our Crowdfunder community here.

If you know anyone who has crowdfunded before – speak to them, their advice will be invaluable.

We are going to finish up with your master checklist – get started, get ticking and get ready to go…

Checklist

Build your team	Brainstorm rewards
Assign roles	Refine rewards list
Draw your network map	Ask your audience for feedback
List your backers	Set your target and duration
Bullet point key messages	Make a plan to spread the word
Write description	Warm up your Crowd
Add images and testimonials	Plan your launch
Plan your video	Line up your first 10 pledges
Shoot the footage	**Get funded**
Edit your video	

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95 Tips for Crowdfunders from Crowdfunders

For more advice on exactly how to run a successful campaign we teamed up with our Crowdfunder Community to offer top tips directly from the people who've been there, done it and crowdfunded the T-shirt (literally).

crowdfunder.co.uk/95-crowdfunding-tips

❝❝ These 95 tips are an absolute must read for crowdfunders!

Tallie, Turning Earth

Feeling inspired?

➕ Start crowdfunding

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