




Part 3

Everything
you need
to know

Running your project

**CROWDFUND
BIRMINGHAM**



 /crowdfunder
 @crowdfunderuk
 support@crowdfunder.co.uk

 Birmingham
City Council +  Crowdfunder.co.uk

Marketing basics

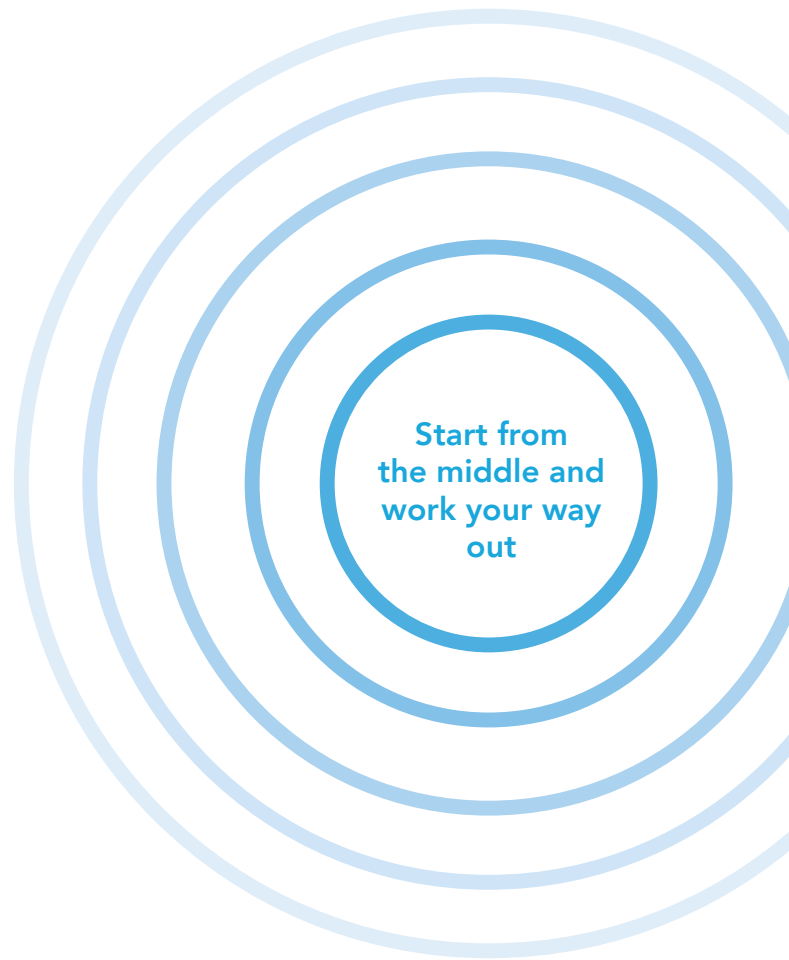
Now that your project page is looking good, you need to build a plan to connect with your Crowd.

Take another look at your network map. Now think about which communication tools are best for each group. For example, who do you usually reach via email, who's best to reach by phone or on Facebook? Add these notes to your network map.

When spreading the word about your Crowdfunder, always start with the people closest to you, before engaging with others. People who already know you are more likely to support your project than those who don't.

Similarly, people who are already familiar with you and your organisation, charity or business are also more likely to engage than those who are not. As your project starts gain momentum, it'll begin to look more attractive to people outside of your own network. Be patient – get some pledges before posting publicly on social media.

Remember that you need to win people over. Take the time to start conversations and engage with people personally. Spamming doesn't work.



Be personal. Be direct.

“Plan plan plan! Know who you're going to promote to, how and when. Ask people to review your rewards and the campaign before posting it – whether it's friends or people who've successfully crowdfunded before.”

Ilana Taub, Co-Founder, [Snact](#)

Counting down to launch



Save the date

Once you've decided on a launch date, make sure everyone has it marked on their calendar. Set up a virtual event on Facebook, send out messages or even postcards to start getting people excited.



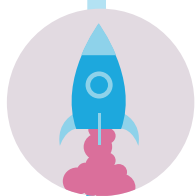
Image gallery

Check that you have plenty of new images that you can use to promote your project. Photographs of people, places, events and products are all great. Bright, bold images make creating content, flyers, posters and social media posts much easier and effective.



Review the plan

Make sure that you are clear on the plan to promote your Crowdfunder from the first day to the last. Check which messages you're sending out to which groups, when they're being sent, and how.



Getting off to a good start

Launch day can be both exciting and nerve-racking. If you've put in the work and followed your plan, it could be one of the biggest and best days of your Crowdfunder campaign.

There are three main ways of getting off to a good start. If you want to get off to a great start, do all three. Crowdfunder from the first day to the last.

Check which messages you're sending out to which groups, when they're being sent, and how.



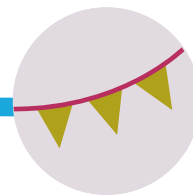
Line up the first 10 pledges

The hardest part is getting off zero, so aim to have secured at least 10-20% of your target in promised pledges before going live. Make sure those people know exactly when your project is launching and encourage them to make their pledge in the first couple of hours. Getting a strong number of backers early on will give your project credibility and make it look much more attractive to wider audiences.



Pick up the phone

Call, text, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger – all give you access to your friends and family at the touch of a button. Drop them a line to let them know that the big day is here as soon as your project goes live. Try not to stress if people don't reply immediately. Give them a gentle reminder in a day or two, be persistent and they'll probably still pledge in the first week.



Throw a launch party

The best way to get everyone excited about your campaign is throwing a party. It can be an informal affair in your living room or as lavish as you like. Ask all the key groups on your network map to come along and get them to bring a friend. Make it fun, showcase your project video, serve great food and introduce people to some of your rewards. Choose somewhere where attendees can access the internet on their smartphones or other devices and get the pledges flowing!

Key action

A project without any pledges does not look credible or attractive to people outside of your own close network. Because of this, it's important to secure your first few pledges by speaking directly to people you know before promoting your project to everyone else.

Communication check list

TOP TIP

Email and Facebook are the two biggest drivers of pledging.

Next, a quick inventory check. Run through the list below to get a better idea of which key communication tools you have ready to go and which you need to spend some time prepping. Decide which ones you need to focus your time on.

Channel	# of people	Plan
Personal emails		
Official emails		
Facebook		
Twitter		
Instagram		
Linkedin		
Press		
Blogs		
Website		
Events		
Printed materials		
Partnerships		

Sending emails

Around 40% of pledging on Crowdfunder is driven by emails, so don't neglect your inbox during your campaign.

6 email essentials

- 1** Contacting personal contacts directly with personal messages is key – nobody likes a 'Dear Sir' email. One-to-one is always more effective.
- 2** If your organisation or business has a larger email list, there are some fantastic tools like MailChimp that can help to lighten the load. It's handy to be able to check open and click rates on your emails so that you can specifically target those who didn't engage the first time.
- 3** Emailing your personal and professional contacts should be high on your list of priorities when your project goes live. If people don't respond to your first message, email them again a few days later.
- 4** When sending follow up emails to your contacts, name drop people who have already pledged on the project – don't forget to say thanks and celebrate together!
- 5** Think carefully about what to write as the subject of your emails – make it interesting and unique, avoid using lines like 'please pledge' or 'help me' as they can look spammy and will put people off.
- 6** Include an image and link to your Crowdfunder page in your email signature so that everyone will see it each time you message them!

"We built a plan knowing exactly what we were going to do throughout our crowdfunding campaign to promote it. We reached our target in less than two weeks so we didn't need to execute all of it...Contacting people directly and with personal messages was key. Starting a conversation and sharing this new exciting adventure in your life is really effective! Be personal in reaching out to people. You're asking them for money so take time to engage with people personally beforehand."

Ilana Taub, Co-Founder, [Snact](#)

Updating your website

For the duration of your campaign, your website should aim to funnel all traffic over to your Crowdfunder page. If your website has a great big image on the home page, replace it with a graphic that links straight to your Crowdfunder project.

You also have the option of using your own unique Crowdfunder widget. This is a little piece of code that you can use to embed on web pages. If you're not sure how to do that, get in touch with a techie friend or whoever helped you to set up your website.

Embed your campaign widget on the website and disable any other donate buttons for the duration of the campaign.

The screenshot shows the Crowdfunder interface for a project titled "Raise a Toast". At the top, there's a navigation bar with "Dashboard", "Edit your project", "View project", and "Get extra funding". The project status is "Live". A yellow banner at the top says "There may be other funds that you can apply for." Below this, there's a section for sharing on Facebook, with a preview of a post from Maggie Smith. A "Stats" section is visible, showing a "Promote my project" button. On the right, there's a sidebar with options like "Promote your project", "View comments", "Embed widget", "Download post", and "Message".

PLEGGED	TRENDING TOWARDS
£10,555	£57,769
FUNDED	PROJECT VISITS
52.8%	2,078

£81	6.3%	£2,064
average pledge	This is your view to	Raised per day on


The widget features three bottles of "TOAST" beer (Craft Lager, Pale Ale, Session IPA) on a yellow background. Below the bottles, it displays the following statistics:


£10,555 RAISED	£20,000 TARGET
22 DAYS LEFT	131 SUPPORTERS


A blue button at the bottom says "SUPPORT US NOW >". The Crowdfunder logo is at the bottom.


Using social media

Social media is another heavy-weight crowdfunding tool that can hugely impact your campaign's success, if you use it well. Most of us are pretty familiar with various social media platforms and use it to stay in touch with friends, share photos, find jobs or even just stay up to date with the latest hashtag trends.

 Facebook is one of the best platforms for generating pledges

 Twitter is brilliant for generating awareness

 LinkedIn is a great place to look for corporate support

 Instagram is best suited to projects with strong visuals

Get established

If you haven't set up a Facebook page for your organisation, charity or business yet, now is the time! Add a strong profile picture, pre-load a few interesting posts, then invite everyone you know to like it. You could even run a giveaway competition to drive likes before launch.

Profile update

Change the profile picture and cover photos for all your social media channels so that every time someone looks at your profile, they'll be seeing that you are crowdfunding!

Create and curate

Share a mixture of things that you've written and things from elsewhere on the web – just make sure it's relevant content. Be sure to balance shouting about your Crowdfunder campaign with talking about other things too.

Visuals rock

Always include an image, video or link – posting with plain text alone is a big no-no in 2017. Keep to hand a collection of good quality, vibrant, eye catching images.

"Social media was the most useful tool for us. We had a large following already on Facebook (over 1,000) which really helped us get the word out there. We asked our friends and supporters to spread the word and we posted our Crowdfunding page on other forum pages too."

Claire Nugent, Co-Owner, [The Control Tower Bed and Breakfast](#)

Mix it up

Post a variety of different types of content; stories, testimonials, videos, infographics, stats, jokes, progress towards your target, behind the scenes updates and any new rewards that have been added will keep your posts interesting.

#Trends

Research relevant hashtags that are already being used on social media and join conversations to amplify the visibility of your campaign. Remember to be engage with people, don't just butt in and shout about your Crowdfunder.

Keep it fresh

A good rule is one Facebook post a day and 4-6 Tweets a day. Use tools such as [Hootsuite](#) or [Buffer](#) to schedule posts and updates so that you're always active. Look at when your audience is most likely to be online – that's the time to post!

Spotlight

Tag your backers on social media to show your appreciation and make them feel important – particularly those who have contributed larger amounts. It's a great way of get your project in front of their contacts too.

TOP TIP

Cut sections from your video into short snippets that can be shared on social media.

Press and blogs

If you're hoping to reach a wider audience, having your Crowdfunder featured in the press or on blogs should be high on your priority list. Don't be disheartened if you don't get any coverage straight away – be persistent and try a different angle.

Go local

Unless your project has a big national impact concentrate your time on local media. Local news outlets love publishing stories local angles, so make the connection clear in your press release

Timing

Wait until your project has started to gain some momentum before pushing out a press release. It needs to be 'newsworthy' to catch journalists' attention, which is usually just after launch, when it hits a key milestone or closes successfully.

Images

Attach a selection of vibrant high resolution photographs with your press release. Include real people, not just product images and a mix of portrait and landscape.

Focus

Make sure all press coverage mentions your Crowdfunder campaign specifically. Include your project URL and check the spelling carefully – ask for it to be included in the piece.

[View our press template here](#)

Make connections

- Ask if anyone you know has any contacts in the press or blogging world. An introduction can massively improve your chances of getting coverage.
- Bloggers are contacted every day by strangers who only want publicity, without offering much in return. To stand out, think about out how you can help them out – don't rush straight in with your request.
- Look through newspapers to find the name of journalists who are writing about stories like yours – address your press releases to them personally and follow up with a phone call. It's usually quite easy to find journalists on Twitter too.

Google tool

Use Google's image searching tool to find blogs and news outlets that might be a good fit for your project.

1. Look for successful crowdfunding projects that are similar to yours.
2. Save a couple of images from their page.
3. Drag and drop the image file into the [Google Images](#) search bar.

You'll be able to see every website that has ever posted that image, including any news sites and blogs. These sites are a great place to start.

ADVANCED TIP

Use an online press release distribution service like [PR Log](#) to get your story out to a worldwide audience. Even if it doesn't result in lots of coverage, the backlinks will be great for improving your project's search ranking.

Going offline

Although most activity will take place online, you can still go out into the offline world to share your idea in person. This is particularly important if your project is rooted in a particular place – a restaurant or shop for example.

Conversation

Talk to people face to face. Drop it into conversations. Let people know that you're working in something super exciting at the moment.

Events

If your project is super relevant to local people, attend as many community events and networking opportunities as possible to meet more people and spread the word. You can also research industry events or conferences and be sure to attend.

Flyers

A good old-fashioned flyer can go a long way. Dish them out in your office, hand them out in person and take a few to a local cafe, shopping centre or university.

Posters

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

Party time!

A launch event is a great way to showcase your idea, bag a few pledges and generate some interest, but it's not the only opportunity for a knees-up.

- Celebrate the half-way point of your campaign with a few drinks or nibbles. Invite along everyone who has pledged on your project so far to make them feel valued and give everyone a fresh burst of energy.
- Gather everyone for an event an hour before the campaign closes. You can rally for some more pledges from around the room and get to celebrate the moment with your Crowd.



TOP TIP

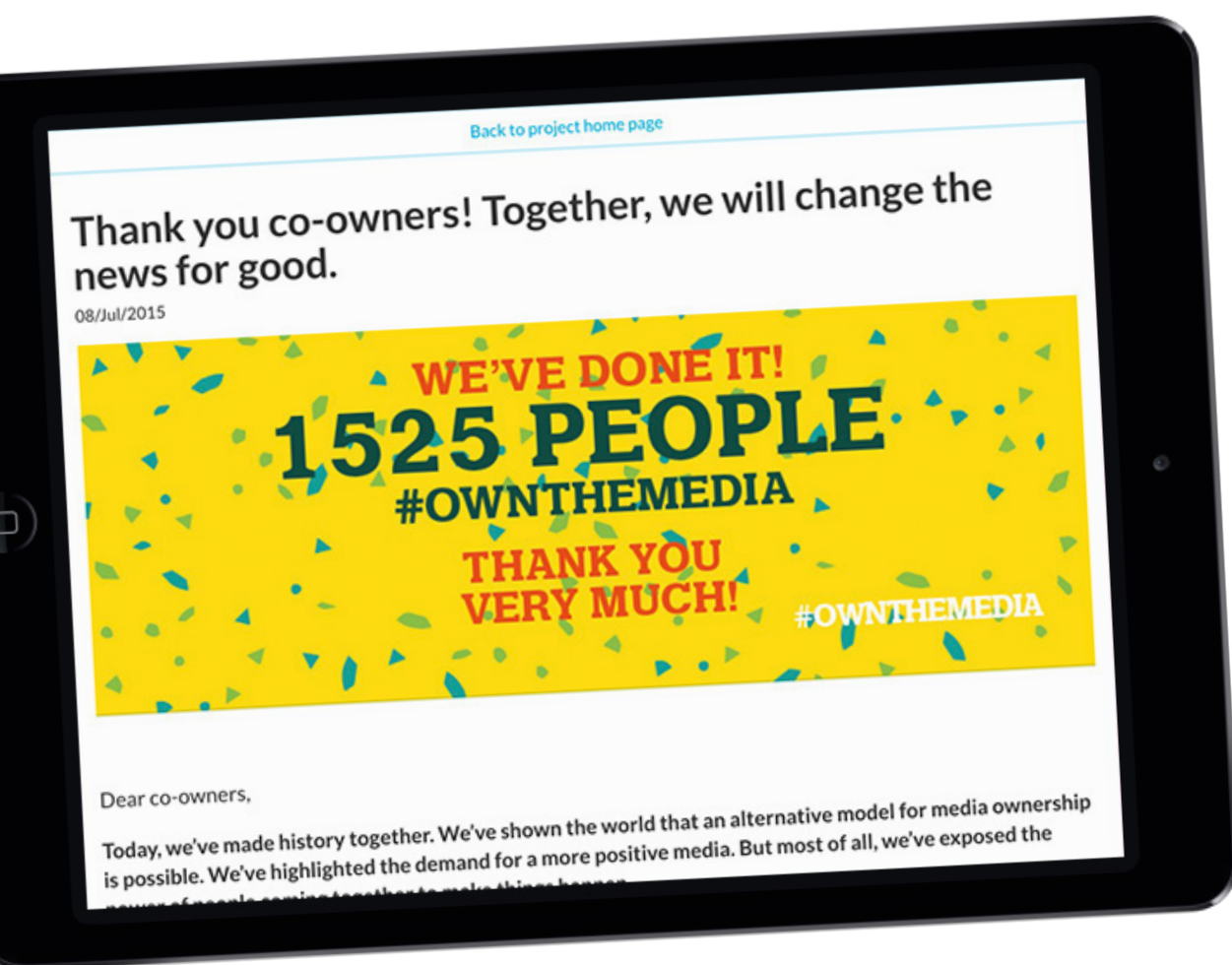
Have business cards printed with details of your project and the URL. They're easy to keep on you at all times – remember to give them out whenever you talk to someone about your campaign.

Sending project updates

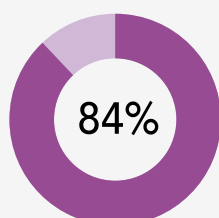
From your Crowdfunder project page you can send 'updates' to keep your supporters in the loop. It's the best way to keep in touch with everyone, make them feel valued and excited about the campaign. Include a shareable graphic or bit of text that you can ask your backers to re-post to their own contacts.

It's also a brilliant way to show newcomers that you're active and engaged – make them want to join your crowd!

Each project update you send out will land in every backer's email inbox, so try to keep to sending just one or two updates a week. It's fine to send a few more at the end when things can move very quickly – keep on top of the excitement. Use a mix of text and images to encourage your backers to share the message.



TOP TIP



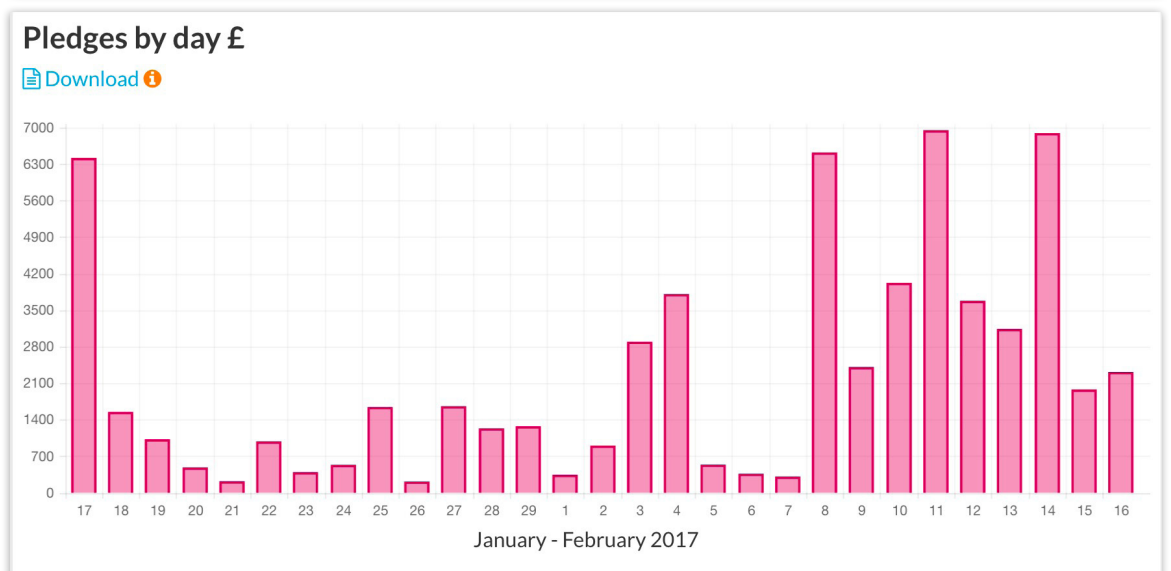
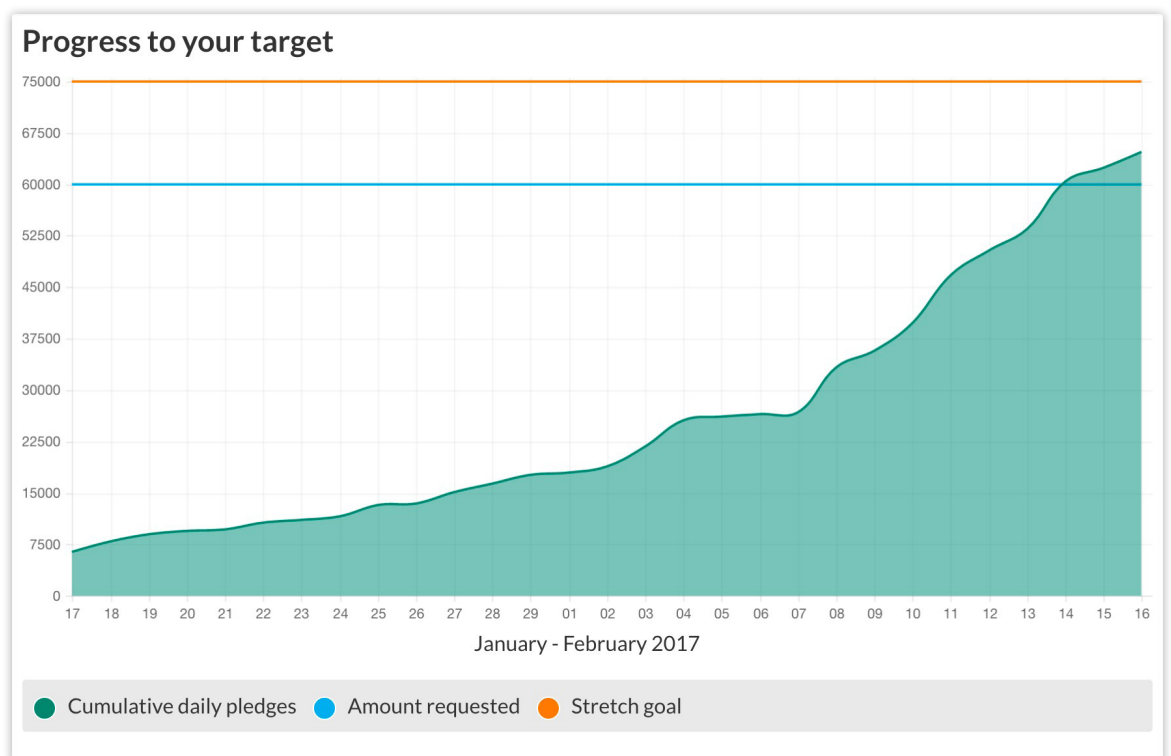
In a recent survey, 84% of Crowdfunder supporters said that receiving project updates is important to them. Keep your supporters up to date and build stronger relationships for the future.

Reading dashboard stats

Your project dashboard is packed full with useful data that tells you how well your campaign is performing. What's working well? What's working less well? Which rewards are most popular? Where are your pledges coming from?

Use this information to make decisions on where to focus your time and energy.

Expect a lull in pledges in the middle – stay positive, it's normal. Some people will always wait until the end to contribute and most projects see a big surge in pledging in the final two days.

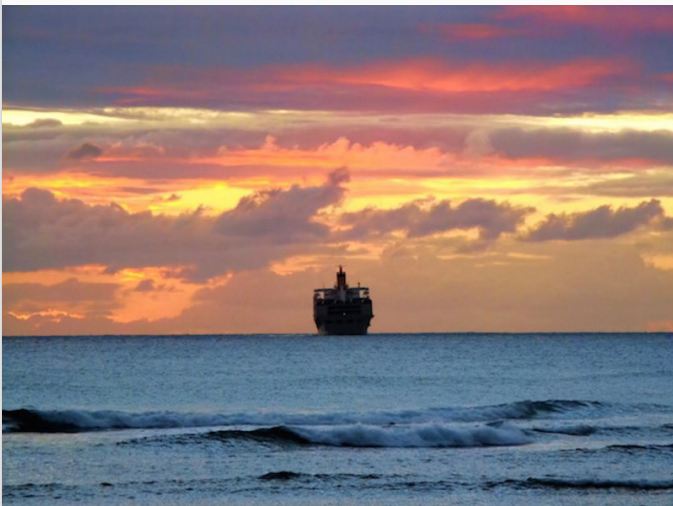


The aftermath

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 thank everyone as loudly and publicly as you can.
- Send out Tweets and Facebook posts with the results and acknowledgments.
- Keep your backers updated with any developments, firstly when they can expect their rewards and later how the business is progressing.
- Make sure you deliver on your rewards.

Crowdfunded Elephant Boxes arriving January!



Dear Elephant Box supporters

We just wanted to let you know that the first batch of boxes are now at sea and on their way to the UK. So, they won't be coming to you in time for Christmas BUT you will be able to take your healthy January lunches to school or work in them as we will be posting them out to you early January. We are very excited to be able to get your pledges to you..finally!

Thank you again for your patience and support.

Joy & Liz

Important

If later there are hitches along the way, make sure you let everyone know. It's important to be transparent. If rewards are going to be delayed, keep your backers updated.

Summary

Let's recap what we've covered in this pack:

- ✓ Marketing basics
- ✓ Counting down to launch
- ✓ Getting off to a good start
- ✓ Communication checklist
- ✓ Sending emails
- ✓ Updating your website
- ✓ Using social media
- ✓ Press and blogs
- ✓ Going offline
- ✓ Sending project updates
- ✓ Reading dashboard stats

Next step

You're now ready to launch your project on Crowdfunder and start collecting funds. **GOOD LUCK!**

Start crowdfunding

www.crowdfunder.co.uk/birmingham

Have any questions? You can reach us at support@crowdfunder.co.uk

We always love to hear feedback, so let us know how we can make this pack better.

"Be clear, and concise. Use images. Trial different sorts of social media such as shortform video and live streaming apps such as Periscope or Meerkat. Variety is the spice of life. Aggregate the conversation under one hashtag. Don't bore your followers with unnecessary posts. "Wise men speak because they have something to say; Fools because they have to say something." Plato. Understand your audience, and where you can find them. Target your messaging. 50 interested people are better than 50,000 people who don't care."

Murry Toms, Organiser, [Cheltenham Town Billboard](#)