





BUSINESS

VOOM

20
16

CROWDFUNDING PACK

 Crowdfunder
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BUSINESS

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“The benefits of crowdfunding go way beyond the money. It brings market validation, access to new investors, promotion, community exposure, and real-time feedback.

“As well as the funds to start your business, it provides real connection with people who care about your business - that’s why it makes sense for businesses to get even more from their #VOOM experience this year by crowdfunding alongside with their entry.”

Richard Branson, Virgin Founder

Introduction

#VOOM 2016 has teamed up with Crowdfunder for this year’s competition, which offers a £1 million prize pot, and the chance to pitch to Richard Branson.

This year, you can run a crowdfunding campaign with us as part of your entry, so let’s make sure you get the most out of it, earning real support and cash pledges.

There’s also a chance to become #VOOM 2016’s champion of crowdfunding. The winner of the Crowdfunder Award will win an extra £50,000, and a package of support that includes a bespoke media campaign from JCDecaux and other prizes from partners.

This funding pack explains how to crowdfund successfully as part of your #VOOM 2016 entry, so that you can start collecting pledges as well as new customers. Through the power of advice, examples and exercises, Crowdfunder will help you put together your pitch, create excellent content and think of amazing rewards.

By upgrading your pitch to offer rewards, you’ll validate your idea, which means you’ll build your audience and reach new partners. And it’s really easy to do.

Shall we start?

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INTRODUCTION TO CROWDFUNDER

Discover how Crowdfunder can help you VOOM 2016.

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BUILD YOUR PITCH

Learn how to build the perfect crowdfunding pitch to raise funds for your great idea - alongside your VOOM 2016 pitch.

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PROMOTE YOUR PITCH

Find out how taking part in VOOM 2016 and Crowdfunding offers the chance to build huge momentum to get your pitch seen - even by Richard Branson himself.

WHAT IS CROWDFUNDING?

Crowdfunding is a way to raise money, awareness and support for a pitch from the people around you - and the people who vote for you in VOOM 2016.

This is your big chance to tap into a whole raft of money-can't-buy opportunities and:

- ✓ Raise money for your business whilst the competition is running
- ✓ Generate huge exposure for your business
- ✓ Build a big audience and marketing database that you can use
- ✓ Use your voters to gain real pledges
- ✓ Create real support to put you in the best chance of winning
- ✓ Sell your product from the word go

And if you win our Crowdfunder Award with VOOM 2016, you'll get...

- ✓ An additional £50K cash on top of your funding
- ✓ A marketing and media support campaign
- ✓ A ticket to the VOOM 2016 final!

Why you should crowdfund your VOOM 2016 pitch



VOOM 2016 - To win the Crowdfunding Award of a £50,000 cash prize and a ticket to the grand final with Richard Branson.



Validation - Crowdfunding validates your idea and proves that people like your idea and are prepared to buy your rewards as well as vote.



Funding - You can unlock other funding. When you raise funding through Crowdfunder it can potentially kick start more lending through other companies and banks, including a Virgin StartUp loan.



Advocates - Crowdfunding is for life, not just for fundraising. We can let you know about the people who support you and your great idea. They become a part of your journey and make incredible ambassadors for your pitch in the future.



Marketing - When you create and launch your VOOM 2016 pitch you have to really think about how you are going to market your idea. So Crowdfunders learn vital skills when fundraising - you'll learn how to become superstar marketers and pitchers too!

BUILD YOUR PITCH

From passion, commitment and dedication comes great crowdfunding pitches. With the experience of thousands of pitches who have raised millions of pounds, we've designed five sections that will explain all you need to know about getting your pitch and your VOOM 2016 entry built. From telling your story to creating great rewards and setting an achievable target...



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TARGET

Your team

It's important to share the load when running a crowdfunding pitch. 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 pitch. The core team behind a great crowdfunding pitch 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 for your VOOM 2016 pitch! Who's in your team? Write down who is in your crowdfunding "Dream Team". We've given you a handy form to fill out...

Who's in your team?

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

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

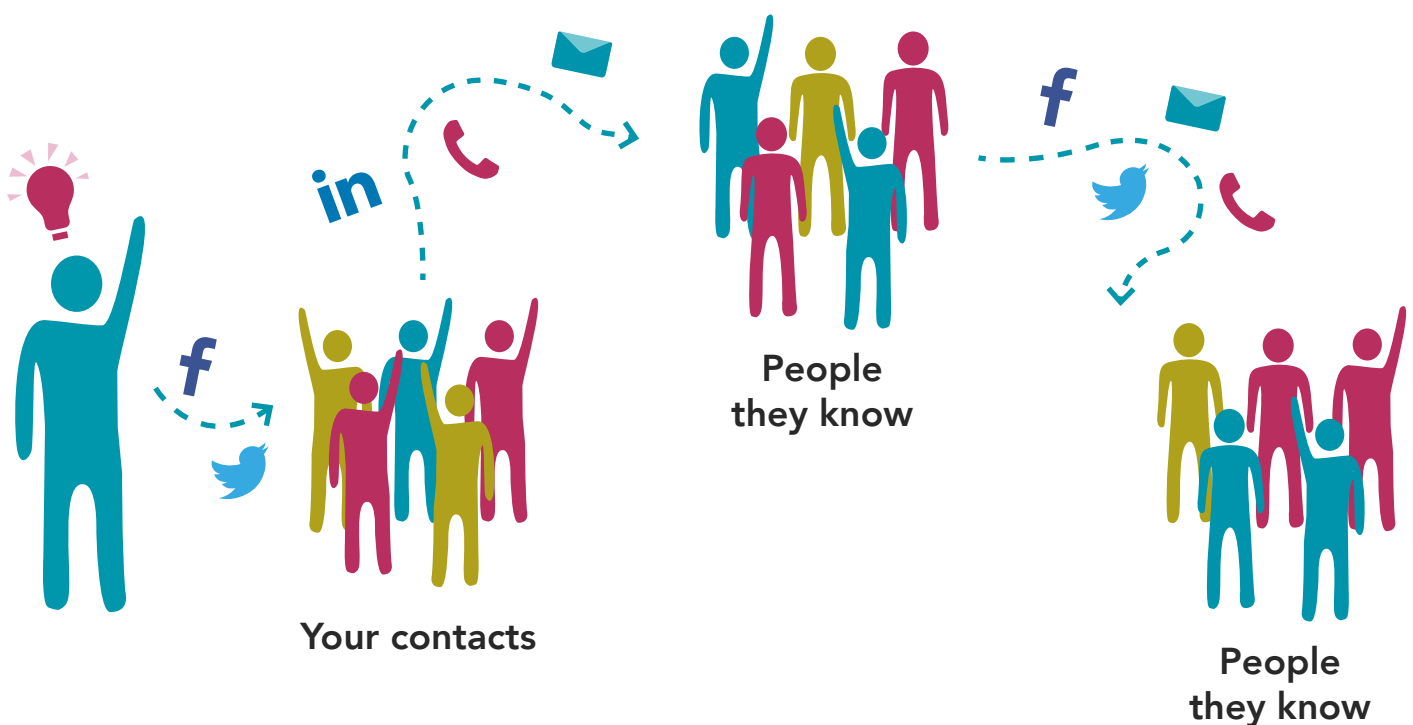
Name	Role	Other expertise

Finding your crowd

One of the most important parts of your crowdfunding and VOOM 2016 campaign is knowing your “network”. Together with your team, figure out all of the people you think could support you.

These could be your close family and friends, the people that you work with, your business contacts, current customer base or social media networks. The best way to start is to sit down with your team and draw a map of your network. We suggest spending some time to write it all down. Understanding how big your team’s network is will make everything a whole lot easier once you start getting your pitch out there.

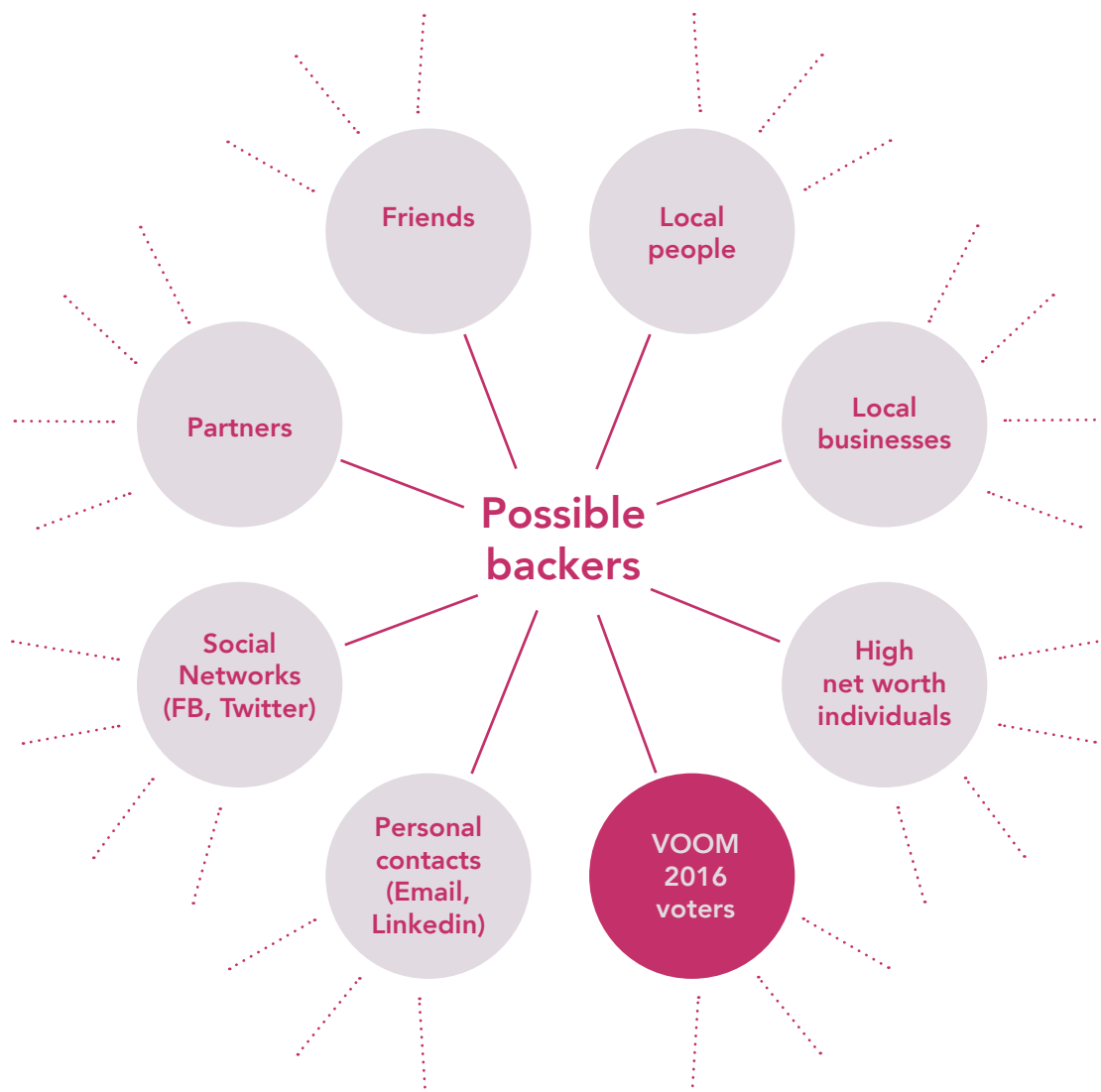
Best of all, you’ll have a ready made database of supporters who have voted for you on VOOM 2016. Imagine, if every voter pledged £10.... you could have thousands from the word go.



Let's map out your network

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This will give you a few ideas for people who maybe in your crowd - ready and waiting to help with your VOOM 2016 pitch. With your team, brainstorm and list the groups/segments of people and organisations who may be interested in supporting your pitch. Once you have a top level drill down into each segment and identify the individuals, organisation or number of individuals within each group.



Taking names

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Use the template below to jot down your ideas on the individuals and organisations within each group that may back your pitch. 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

Tell your story

One of the most vital aspects of creating a great VOOM 2016 pitch and Crowdfunder 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. Don't forget to fill out the "key messages" section to really tell 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 involved with your pitch.

3.



Testimonials

Ask for a testimonial from your partners, clients or supporters. Testimonials let people know that your pitch 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 pitch dashboard. Including crowdfunding gives you a real chance to show off the product, and not just your overall business.

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.

Key messages

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With your team have a think about the really vital messages of your - and how you get them across. This will also help with your VOOM 2016 entry, where you get the chance to pitch to Richard Branson.

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

Creating your crowdfunding and VOOM 2016 pitch video

Pitches with great videos will attract more VOOM 2016 votes and are twice as likely to successfully crowdfund – 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 of the camera**
People like to give to people and it builds trust between your supporters and you. Testimonials are a great way of giving your pitch 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 and transparency 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 out your voice and if there your supporters can't hear you they won't know what they are backing!
- **5. Be clear**
Have a direct ask and be clear on 'the story' behind your VOOM 2016 and crowdfunding pitch - 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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YOUR PITCH](#)

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VOOM 2016

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 VOOM 2016 pitch. 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.

Reward ideas

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Thank yous



Products



Events



Partners

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 pitch and fulfil rewards. Make some room for the 5% fee Crowdfunder applies if your pitch 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...



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



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



Start with a low and **reachable target** because then you have a success story.

Length of crowdfunding pitch

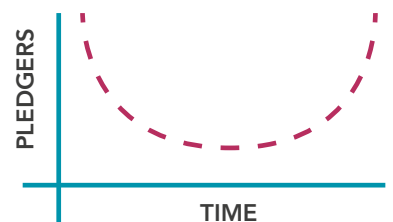
You have until the VOOM 2016 vote closes on May 24th to get as many votes and pledges as you can to be in with a chance of winning - not only the share of £1,000,000 of money can't buy opportunities, but also the chance to take the Crowdfunder Award crown and win £50,000 along with a partner support and media package.

Remember your Crowdfunder campaign will run alongside your VOOM 2016 entry - getting votes and pledges.

The quicker you get started the greater your chance of delivering a fantastic eye-catching pitch to Richard Branson.

And of course you can continue crowdfunding pitches - with the help and support of the Crowdfunder team - after the VOOM 2016 competition closes at the end of June.

Momentum is really important so plan to get off to a good start and market to your audience through the duration of your pitch.



TOP TIP

Most pledges and VOOM 2016 voters will come in at the beginning and the end of your pitch - so you'll want to make sure you've got a great plan to keep engagement high the whole way through.

PROMOTE YOUR PITCH

You could have the best VOOM 2016 idea in the world, an amazing video, description, rewards and images but unless you put it out there you are unlikely to get crowdfunded! It has to be you and your team. You have the passion, enthusiasm and the ability to turn your great idea into reality.

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THE LAUNCH

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**WIDGETS/
WEBSITES**

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OFFLINE

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**RAISE MORE
MONEY**

PG 27
**POST
CROWDFUND**

TOP TIP

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

Warm up

Great crowdfunding and VOOM 2016 pitches are the ones that get off to a really good start. This is why the warm up phase is vital. Make sure you've got people ready to pledge and vote to get that momentum going.

And remember all your marketing and promotion can link to the VOOM 2016 competition - with a huge audience ready and waiting for you to tap into.

- 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 VOOM 2016 and Crowdfunder campaign and allows you to spread activity evenly.
- Make sure you've collected plenty of good images for your pitch. 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 pitch.
- Contact people you know well in advance to tell them that you're launching a crowdfunding and VOOM 2016 pitch. Then keep them informed throughout the campaign by sharing your success and providing regular up-dates.
- 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 pitch before it goes live - it'll make them feel valued and will help to secure some early pledges and more VOOM 2016 votes.
- 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!



The Launch

Launching your VOOM 2016 and Crowdfunder pitch is an exciting phase!
Make sure you are ready to start with a bang...



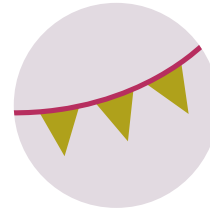
First pledges

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 VOOM 2016 entry and crowdfunder pitch as soon as it goes live - attracting more votes and pledges.



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.

Dates for your diary

Voting opens:
5th April

Entries close:
10th May

Voting closes:
24th May

When voting closes on 24th May, the top VOOM 2016 pitches on Crowdfunder with the most pledges will be shortlisted. These pitches will then be judged by a panel of experts and the winners will be chosen.

TOP TIP

Don't get stressed if not all of your contacts remember to pledge or vote immediately or don't have time to do it. Give them a gentle reminder and be persistent.

Emails

The majority of pledges on crowdfunding campaigns come from emails.
We've got some great advice for creating an email plan to support your pitch...



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



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



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.



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

TOP TIP

Include an image, call to action and link to the VOOM 2016 campaign page in your email signature – that way – everyone will see it each time you email them!

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 VOOM 2016 pitch. Here are some top tips on making the most of Crowdfunder updates...

- 1 Use updates to keep your VOOM 2016 and Crowdfunder 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



Press

We've all seen great crowdfunding pitches in the press and local media – and this is because pitch 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 and votes on your VOOM 2016 pitch...

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 pitch URL carefully and ask for it to be included in the piece. The call to action's got to include how to get to the pitch, aka your link.

A crowdfunding pitch - alongside VOOM 2016 - is interesting to journalists just after it launches. Make sure you've got some great momentum on your pitch with some great pledges on board when you get your pitch 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.

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 and VOOM 2016 page – and pledge to support and vote for you...

Social media platforms are all different:



Facebook is one of the best platforms for generating pledges and votes



Twitter is brilliant for generating awareness



LinkedIn is a VOOM 2016 partner and a great place to look for corporate support

- Make sure to have your early pledges and votes on your pitch 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.
- Prepare a bank of good quality images about your pitch 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 and votes so take time to engage with people before hand.
- 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.
- 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 part of VOOM 2016 and crowdfunding! Don't forget to tag @crowdfunderuk and #VOOM in your Twitter posts.



We're taking part in VOOM 2016 and crowdfunding our great idea! Support us in return for exciting rewards #VOOM
[Link to your pitch]



We're crowdfunding and taking part in VOOM 2016! Vote for us and help us smash our target @crowdfunderuk #VOOM
[Link to your pitch]

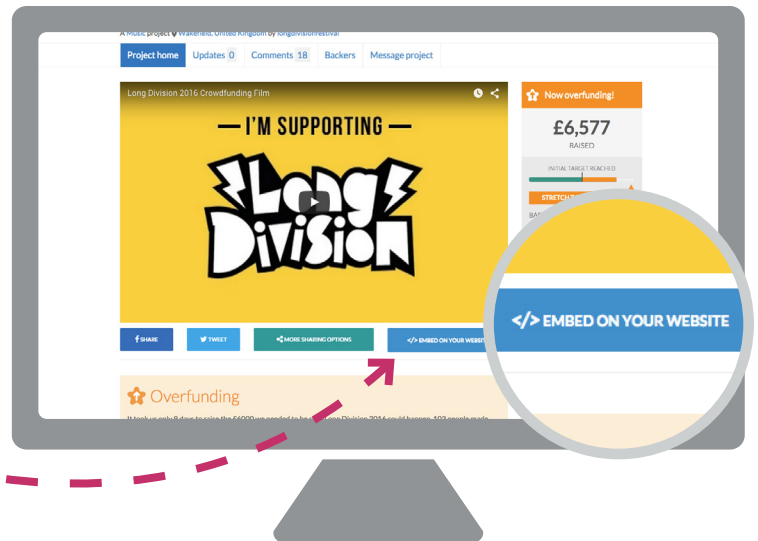
TOP TIP

30% of pledges on crowdfunding pitches come from Facebook...

Widgets/Websites

On your Crowdfunder pitch 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 pitch 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 pitch include a link to the campaign and the VOOM 2016 page so people have the option to pledge and vote. (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 pitch.

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 pitch.

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



Offline

It's not all about getting online and sharing your pitch – 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 pitch 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 pitch will be online on the Crowdfunder and VOOM 2016 websites, you can still go out into the world to share your idea in person. You're asking them for money and votes 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 pitch and your VOOM 2016 entry.

Posters

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

Event ideas

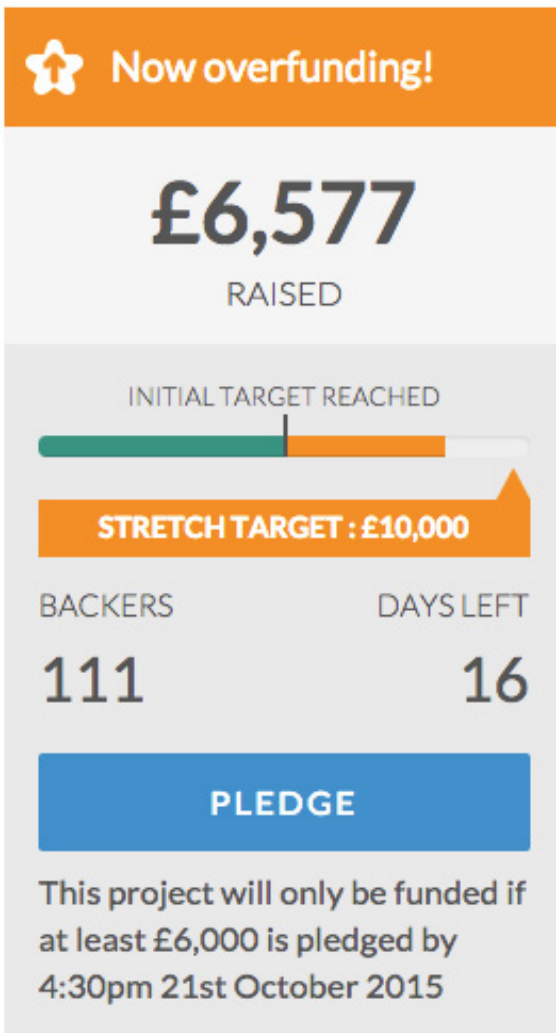
- A launch event is a great way to showcase your idea, bag a few pledges and generate some interest around your crowdfunding and VOOM 2016 pitch.
- If you're going to hold an event, remember to get your invites out early to raise awareness and ensure more people are able to attend.
- Gather everyone for an event an hour before the competition 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, spread the word and canvass for VOOM 2016 votes. 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.

Raise more money

If you've worked super hard on your VOOM 2016 and Crowdfunder 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 fundraiser! It can also continue after the VOOM 2016 competition has closed. Find out how important it is to think about your stretch target...



- 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 feel 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.

Post crowdfund and VOOM 2016

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 pledges and votes.
- 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.



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. 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...

And of course all this will be really useful for helping you secure more VOOM 2016 votes - getting you closer to the £1,000,000 worth of opportunities money can't buy.

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



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?

Want to raise money at the same time as winning votes for your VOOM 2016 entry - plus the chance to win £1,000,000 and pitch to Richard Branson?

+ Add your pitch now






VOOM

2016

**THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO PITCH
YOUR BUSINESS TO RICHARD
BRANSON WITH VIRGIN MEDIA
BUSINESS AND CROWDFUNDER.**

Don't forget, applications close on 10th May,
and then voting and crowdfunding end
on 23rd May. Or, in other words, the time
to #VOOM is now.

vmbvoom.com

 Crowdfunder
 crowdfunderUK
 support@crowdfunder.co.uk

