



The Ultimate BuildHer Crowdfunding Guide

The Complete A-Z of Planning,
Creating & Launching Your Campaign
Successfully!



Chapter #1

Planning your project

Introduction

Crowdfunding is a way to raise money for ideas online. It's been around for centuries but the internet makes it possible to reach much bigger audiences than before.

Like most things in life, the more you put into your crowdfunding project the more you'll get out of it. You've done the hard bit by coming up with your idea, now the key is making sure you have everything lined up and ready to go before launching.

How crowdfunding works

1.

Create your unique project page on BuildHer explaining your idea.

2.

Spread the word to friends, professional contacts and others in your community, telling everyone you know about the project.

3.

People who like your idea donate or pledge money in return for a reward that they'll receive once your project succeeds.

Benefits of crowdfunding

Crowd validation

Crowdfunding could be a fantastic way to test your idea. A successful project proves there is demand for what you're doing, and gives you confidence in your idea.

Marketing boost

Running a project can raise your profile in a big way. Think of the funding period as an intensive marketing exercise and an opportunity to try out new ways of promoting yourselves, expanding your experience and expertise at the same time.

Advocates

Crowdfunding is for life, not just for fundraising. The people who support you become your customers, volunteers and members. Your supporters take part in the journey, meaning they make incredible ambassadors for you in the future.

Future funding

Having a successful crowdfunding campaign could help to unlock loans and investment or could be a pre-cursor to a much bigger equity crowdfunding or community shares campaign in the future. It proves you know what you're doing.

Making a Plan

This is your project, so it's up to you to make sure you have everything lined up and ready to go before launching.

You might want to use a simple checklist list or dive into the detail with a spreadsheet; it's your call.

You'll build your plan as you work through this pack, adding other tasks that are specific to your campaign.

To get you started, here's our checklist with all the essentials:

Key action

Use a calendar to prioritise and map out deadlines for each task, showing what needs to be done by when. Try your best to stick to those dates to stay on track.

Build your team and assign roles

Identify project's key points of interest

Start drawing network map

Ask your team to help expand network map

Bullet point key messages (What, Why, Who and How)

Estimate audience size

Set a realistic target

Choose project title

Add a project image

Flesh out story with subheadings

Add a variety of images

Discuss possible rewards with team

Refine reward list and add to your project page

Prepare social media accounts

Plan video

Shoot and edit video

Start marketing plan

Agree actions with team

Warm up your Crowd

Plan launch

Make a list of first 10 supporters

Go live

Keep reviewing your plan

Get funded

Skills you'll need

Think about your strengths and weaknesses – are there any gaps in your own skillset that need to be filled?

It's good idea to share the load when running a project and find people to help with specific tasks. It can sometimes feel like a lot of work for one person to do alone, so delegating can free up more of your time to focus on driving the project forward.

Run through the list of skills that you need to outsource and think about anyone you know who has experience or expertise in that area. The core team behind great projects is usually made up of 2–5 key people, so think about who you want on board and start those conversations.

Useful Skills

-  Project leader
-  Content writer
-  Industry expert
-  Creative
-  Videographer
-  Networker
-  Marketeer
-  Social whizz

Identifying your Crowd

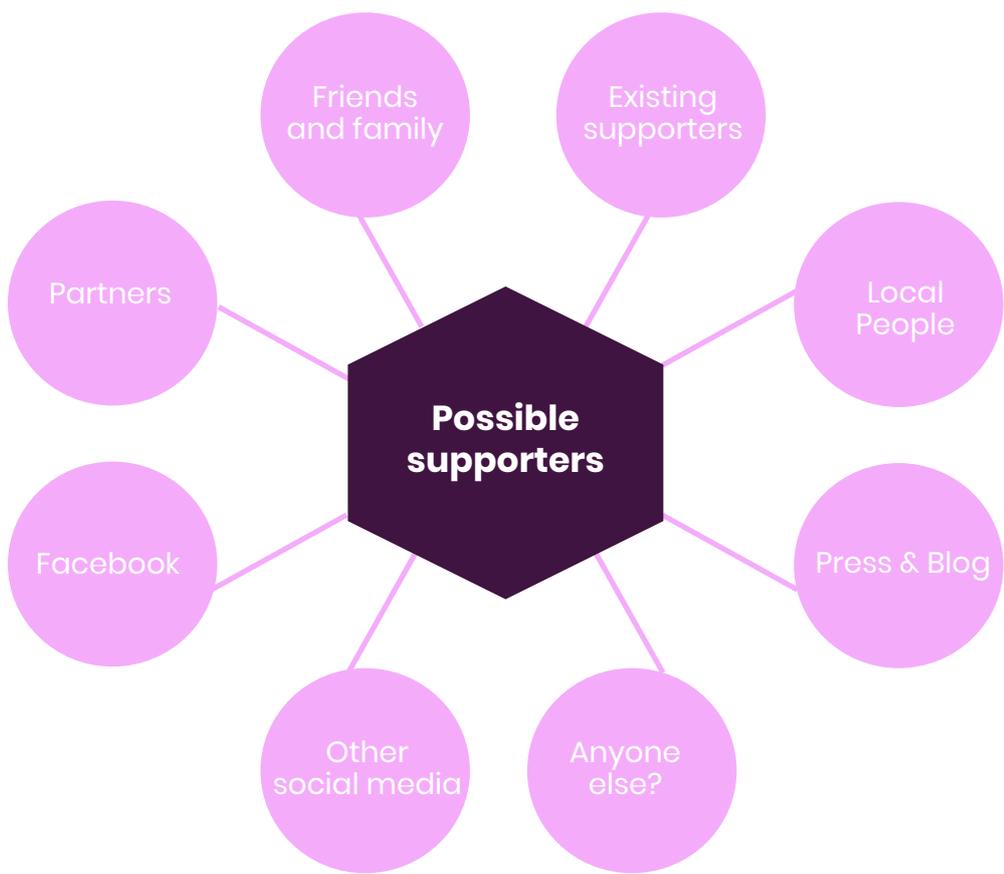
You'll need to engage with your personal and professional contacts to make your project a success. Usually your friends and family will be the first to pledge, with new audiences coming later. Let's look at the big picture first.

The best way to start is to gather your team together and start drawing a map of your network. Using this network map template will give you a much fuller picture of the shape and size of your Crowd. Your unique network map will be the basis for all the key elements you'll be creating next, so leave nothing out.

Local

Relevant

National



Identifying your Crowd

Now that you've worked out the different groups of people who might support your project, you can start to identify the key influencers and 'super-backers' in your network.

Influencers

People whose pledge or endorsement will most likely trigger other support. They might be a well-connected local hero, social media guru or even a celebrity. Get them on board before launching your project and make sure they understand the role they can play in your success.

Group	Name	Influence	On board?

Nurturing your Crowd

Who's missing from your network map? Identify any groups or individuals you'd like to reach, but haven't yet connected with.

It's also important to make sure you engage with everyone already on the list, so your channels of communication are open and active. If you haven't spoken to a particular group in a while, now is the time to get back in touch.

Personal contacts

Speak with your friends and family to tell them about your upcoming project launch. It'll make them feel valued and will save you time explaining what you're up to later.

Social media

If you don't have a Facebook page for your project, set one up as early as possible. Get active and build your audience on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram before going live – don't wait until you launch to start engaging. You could even run a competition and give away some sort of prize to reach new audiences.

Local people

If your project is targeted towards a specific location, spend some time attending events and talking to local people to raise awareness. Collect business cards and email addresses, get networking!

Existing supporters

As these people have already engaged with your project, they're a fantastic group to nurture. Giving them an 'exclusive' early opportunity to see your new idea is a good way to keep them on board.

Relevant groups

Become active in forums and online groups that are used by your target audience. You can find lots of groups on Facebook and LinkedIn. Remember to engage with comments and ask questions, don't just talk about your project.

Website

If you're really tech-savvy, you could build a landing page on your website with a 'coming soon' message to capture interest with an opt-in box. It's a good idea to offer something in return for an email address, such as exclusive offers or free content.

Chapter #2

Creating your project

Getting started

Now that you're ready to start building your project page, it's a great idea to look at some examples of other projects who have raised money by crowdfunding.

These projects have all been successful, so take a look and get inspired. Be a critic. What do you like? What don't you like? What would you have done differently?

Key messages

You will probably already have a clear idea of your project's personality, core values and unique selling points.

Think of words that you would use to describe your project. Cross out or circle our suggestions, then add some more of your own. Keep referring back to these words to check that your finished project page reflects them all.

Next, use this space to work out the key messages that you need to get across on your project page.

Smart	Simple	Active
Adventurous	Vibrant	Mature
Slick	Cool	Fun
Innovative	Youthful	Urban
Classic	Beautiful	Fresh
Compassionate	Rugged	Sweet
Timeless	Traditional	
Empowering	Luxurious	

What are you trying to achieve?

Key messages

What makes your project great?

Who are you and what's your experience?

Writing your description

Structure

When visitors land on your project, you need to make a connection quickly and get them excited about your project.

To do this well you'll need to make sure your description is structured, concise and engaging. Add some images and testimonials to give it a professional-looking finish.

Opening

Briefly summarise your key points in two or three sentences. Keep it simple.

What are you trying to achieve?

Explain the problem that your project solves and why it's important. Does it address social exclusion? Does it give people training or skills? Does it build a sense of community?

What makes your project great?

Introduce your project and all the key facts. Focus on what makes it unique. Why is it different? Why should people support it? Why is it important?

Who are you and what's your experience?

This is your chance to show off your expertise and build credibility. Demonstrate clearly that you are the right people to make this idea happen

Tell your story

Explain how your idea was started and why you decided to make this project happen. Talk about your journey and inspiration. Don't forget that your story is still unfolding – what does the future hold, where are you going?

How is the money being spent?

Outline what the money raised will enable you to do. Create a pie chart to show that you're making smart decisions with your spending.

Rewards

If you have chosen to give rewards, use this section to highlight the strongest rewards and draw more attention to them. Give any extra information that will make them more attractive to potential backers.

FAQs

Anticipate common questions that people might have about your idea, organisation or crowdfund.

Writing your description

Visual content



Project images

Use images that show everyone what your project involves.



Team photos

People fund people. Show that you are a real person and make sure your page shows off your personality.



Infographics

Can you show data in a more visual way?



Headings

Use snappy subheadings to help separate each section.



Testimonials

Add in some real quotes from people who like your project to build credibility.



Maps

Use diagrams or maps to add context to your project.

Creating your video

It's becoming more and more important for organisations, charities and businesses to use video to connect with their Crowd.

Stay ahead of the curve and create something bespoke for your project. It doesn't have to be professionally made, shooting it with your phone or camera is fine.



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?



Get personal

Getting in front of the camera will help you to build a rapport. Don't be afraid to include others too.



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.



Setting

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



Avoid using animation video makers or image montages

They often come out tacky and won't get across your unique personality.

Giving rewards

Whilst crowdfunding you can offer rewards in return for pledges, as well as simply collecting donations.

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. Consider the four main types of reward that you can offer:

 Products and services	 Experiences and events
 Sponsorship	 Thank you

7 top tips for rewards

1 Rewards should be good value for money. If one of your rewards is available elsewhere, 20-30% discount it a great way of making it attractive to your Crowd.

2 Offer exclusive 'behind the scenes' experiences, tickets to events, masterclasses or special editions – things that aren't available elsewhere.

3 Limited rewards are a fantastic way of securing early support. Having just a small number available is a good way to get your Crowd motivated.

4 Offer authentic mementos or opportunities to leave a legacy in some way.

5 Have a few rewards priced at around £20 – this is where a good chunk of pledges are made.

6 Spread your rewards evenly across different price points from £10 to £100 and include some sort of sponsorship at the top end to attract support from businesses or large organisations.

7 Don't just stick to numbers that end in zeros – odd numbers imply that your rewards have been thoughtfully costed.

**No rewards?
No problem.**

You can run a project with donations only.

Example rewards

Some great reward examples from Organic Blooms

Pledge £15

Cream tea and tour of organic blooms. Spend the afternoon relaxing at our organic cut flower farm. This is a perfect gift for friends or family. This reward includes a tour of organic blooms and a cream tea.

Pledge £50

A cutting garden plug plant kit and box of stems. Create your own cut flower garden with a selection of our favourite varieties grown for you (in certified organic compost). You will receive a box of 30 well rooted plug plants – 5 plants of 6 different hardy annual species, suitable as cut flowers.

Pledge £500

Sponsor a compost loo! What greater accolade is there than to have your name (and even your company logo) hand painted onto one of our new compost toilets! Our bladders will be eternally indebted to you as the toilet queue is reduced.

Setting your target

Your crowdfunding target needs to be a balance between what you need to raise to make your idea happen and what you think you can raise from your crowd.

Be realistic - remember that you can always raise more and stretch your target to a bigger number once you hit 100%.

Calculate the minimum amount of money you need to deliver your project and fulfil your rewards. Don't forget that if your project is successful, there will be platform and payment fees that you'll need to account for. Our fees are published in the Crowdfunder terms and conditions.

Choosing your project duration

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

Choosing a short and sharp campaign means you can get your crowd excited and maintain a sense of urgency.

Longer campaigns can start to lose steam and might actually end up becoming annoyingly repetitive.

When picking your launch date, be aware of the calendar and factor in any events that might slow down or promote your campaign.



How big does your Crowd need to be to reach your target?

Here's some facts to note:

£50

The average pledge on a crowdfunding project is £50

1/20

On average, one in twenty people who view a project page will make a pledge

Funding method

You have two options to choose from:



All or nothing

This method means you need to raise 100% of your target to receive any money. If your project does not reach its target, no money is taken from your supporters and your project will not be funded.

This option is the best motivator for you and your crowd.



Keep what you raise

This method does what it says on the tin! This is a flexible funding method where you still receive the money, even if you don't reach your target.

This is a good option for ongoing projects or charities, where any contribution can be put to use.

And finally...

Funding method Finish off by giving your project a strong title that's unique and catchy. Avoid using words like 'help', 'support', 'project' or 'fund' which are too generic.

Finally, upload a strong project image - something that captures the essence of your project, make sure it's inspirational, high resolution and good quality.

Chapter #3

Running your project

Marketing basics

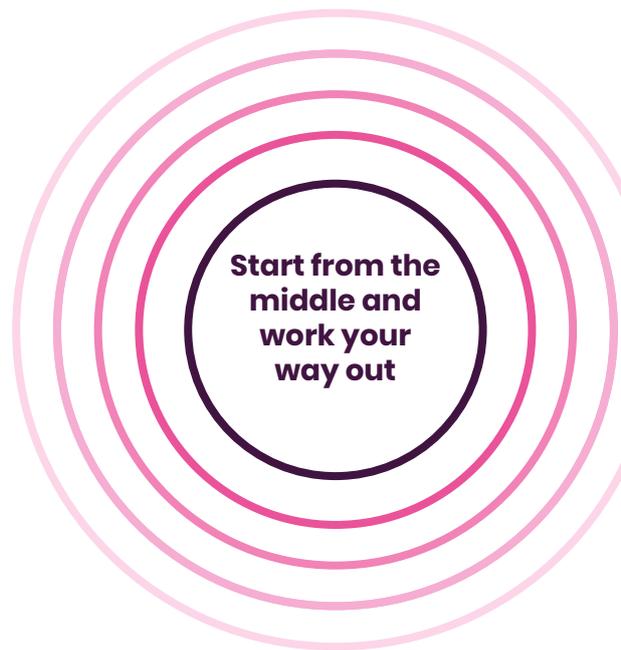
Now that your project page is looking good, you need to build a plan to connect with your Crowd.

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 project, 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 aware of your business are also more likely to engage than those who are not. As your project starts to 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.

Counting down to launch

1

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.

2

Prepare images

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.

3

Review the plan

Make sure that you are clear on the plan to promote your project from the first day to the last.

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

4

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 crowdfunding 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. From the first day to the last.

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

5

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.

6

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.

7

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 'from' people you know before promoting your project to everyone else.

Communication check list

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.

Email and Facebook are the two biggest drivers of pledging.

Channel	# of people	Plan
Personal emails		
Business emails		
Facebook		
Twitter		
Instagram		
Linkedin		
Press		
Blog		
Website		
Events		
Printed Materials		
Partnerships		

Sending emails

Around 40% of pledging on crowdfunding projects 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 business has a larger email database, 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 business 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 crowdfunding page in your email signature so that everyone will see it each time you message them!

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 news.

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 businesses with strong visuals

Get established

If you haven't set up a Facebook page for your 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. Encourage your friends to all like and share your page.

Ground rules

A good rule to stick to is one Facebook post a day. Look at when your audience is most likely to be online – that's the time to post! Your Facebook posts should always include an image, video or link – posting with plain text alone is a big no-no. Prepare a bank of good quality, vibrant, eye catching images.

Content

Post a variety of different types of content; stories, testimonials, videos, infographics, stats, progress towards your target and behind the scenes updates. You could also highlight your best rewards with a stand out post.

Share

A great way to reach people outside of your existing audience is by asking your friends to share your posts on Facebook.

Boost your posts

Boosting a post may help you get more likes, shares and comments. Boosted posts are also a way to reach new people who are likely interested in your idea but don't currently follow you on Facebook.

Competitions

Running competitions through your Facebook page is a great way to build your audience and create a buzz around your project.

Events

It's a good idea to hold at least one event either before, during or after crowdfunding. You can easily create an event on Facebook to connect with your online audience in an offline way.

Facebook Live

Facebook Live is the best way to interact with your audience in real time. Answer any questions they may have. The engagement levels on Facebook Live is much higher than a generic Facebook post, so be sure to plan a few of these through the duration of your project.

Press and blogs

If you're hoping to reach a wider audience, having your project 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 with 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 crowdfunding campaign specifically. Include your project URL and check the spelling carefully – ask for it to be included in the piece.

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 (www.google.com/images) to find blogs and news outlets that might be a good fit for your project.

1. Look for successful projects that are similar to yours.
2. Save a couple of images from their page on to your desktop.
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.

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 – if you're opening a new cafe or upgrading a community space for example.

Conversation

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

Events

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

Posters

Design your own or download a poster from your project dashboard, in the 'promote my project' section. Then you can put it 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.

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 shop, cafe, co-working space or university.

Sending project updates

From your 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 supporter's email inbox, so try to keep to sending just one or two updates a week.

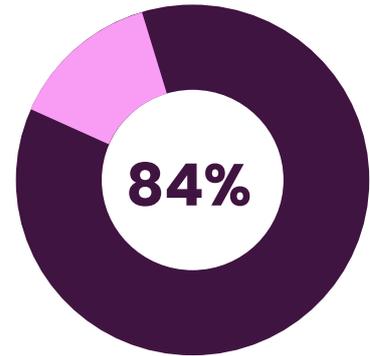
It's fine to send a few more at the end when things can move very quickly – keep on top of the excitement. Use a mix of text and images to encourage your backers to share the message.

Updating your website

For the duration of your campaign, your website should aim to funnel all traffic over to your crowdfunding page.

If your website has a great big image on the home page, replace it with a graphic that links straight to your project.

You also have the option of using your own unique 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.



In a recent survey, 84% of crowdfunding supporters said that receiving project updates is important to them.

Keep your supporters up to date and build stronger relationships for the future.

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

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.

If you offered rewards, make sure you deliver on them.

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.

Next step

You should now be ready to launch your project and start collecting funds.

Good luck!



www.buildher.co.uk