



HANDBOOK 2

Crowdfunding for Community Nonprofits



'BECA' beneficiaries campaign in Asunción, Paraguay.

MODULE 7

Promoting your campaign

Once you have created a crowdfunding campaign, you need to promote it. Whilst promoting your campaign online might seem like the most obvious place to begin, there are a wide range of other news sources you can use to boost your campaign's promotion. In this module, we will begin with the fundamental aspects of campaign promotion and then explore how you can use both social and mainstream media to drive donations. By promoting your campaign both online and through traditional TV, newspaper and radio sources, you can help increase engagement, target a broader audience and foster legitimacy around your work.

Principles of campaign promotion

Foster legitimacy

By now you know that legitimacy is a pivotal factor when trying to encourage donations to your crowdfunding campaign. Potential donors want to see evidence that your organisation is serious about your work and capable of delivering meaningful support before they will consider funding you. It is essential to highlight in as much detail as possible what exactly they will be supporting – what the problem is, how you formulated your project idea, how you are going to implement it and who is going to benefit from it. The best way to foster legitimacy is to tell the stories of the beneficiaries you support. Use honest narratives, accompanied by photos or videos that tell the story of beneficiaries who endorse your initiative. If a potential donor sees evidence that the local people you support believe in your work, they will be far more likely to believe in your mission and donate to your cause.

Inform and entertain

The truth is, you know what you want from your audience: their money. You want their money in order to use it to make the world a better place and you have a plan about how you are going to make that happen. If you are asking your audience to give you their hard-earned money, based on an instantaneous decision from seeing a social media post or news article, you need to be giving them something in return and that exchange should begin immediately. Your posts, interviews and blogs should educate them, visually stimulate them, make them feel like they are a part of something greater than themselves, or all of the above. Use a mixture of quantitative facts and qualitative personal stories to show the big picture of the need for your work and the impact that you are having.

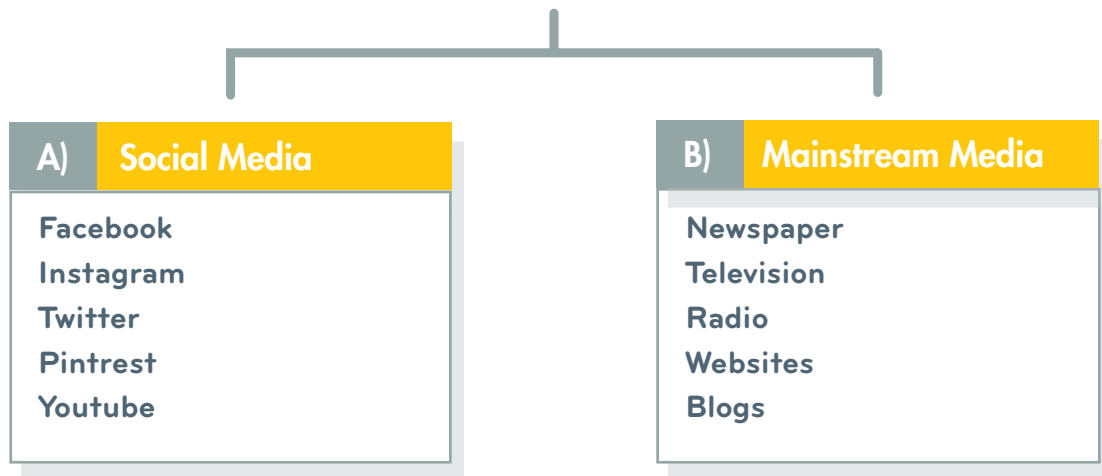
Whilst everyone has heard stories of those random crowdfunding campaigns that go viral and raise thousands of dollars overnight, unfortunately, those campaigns are not the norm. As a general rule, you can expect to get as much out of your crowdfunding campaign as you put into promoting it. However, whilst hard work is inevitable, there are some basic principles you can use to help guide your promotion across all media formats, making your efforts more efficient and effective.



Helpful Hint

Throughout this module, it will be helpful to refer to the communication strategy you created in **Module 5**. Use this to craft specific posts and refine your communication calendar.

You can promote your campaign through two distinct communication channels



A) Social Media

Crowdfunding and social media have a symbiotic relationship. Organisations can use social media to drive their audience to a crowdfunding platform where they will hopefully make a donation or become a peer-to-peer fundraiser (more in **Module 8**). A crowdfunding campaign can also be a good way to bring new life into your social media presence and get existing followers active. By using fun and engaging content, you can make your Facebook, Instagram or twitter feeds a place where people come to be entertained and inspired.

Creating engaging content

The first, and most important aspect to social media marketing is creating engaging content. The modern mantra of 'Content is King' is certainly true. Try to use a variety of different types of content (photos, video, text) and take the time to make sure that every post is directly relevant to your Communication goals and messages identified in **Module 5**. Make sure that you celebrate, thank and directly link any news articles or blogs about your cause that are hosted off social media – this will demonstrate to potential donors that there is interest in your work and will help foster legitimacy about your work.

Some ideas to help create great engaging content:

- Let those who benefit from your organisation's work tell the story of how it is impacting their life. Use videos or quotes from locals who will benefit from the project or have benefitted from your work in the past.
- Use bright, colourful infographics to hit heavy with numbers that show the effectiveness of your work. It's important to quantify the impact a donor's money will have. Free online infographic tools like [canva.com](https://www.canva.com) or [piktochart.com](https://www.piktochart.com) are great places to check out.
- Focus on the amount of difference that can be made with a certain donation. For example, a campaign to fund a local sewing training program might advertise that a \$50 donation will cover the costs of training for one woman for a week.

Putting the 'social' back in social media

The key to effectively using social media to promote a crowdfunding campaign is to ensure that your communication is a two-way street. Ask your followers questions and ALWAYS respond to any query quickly and honestly. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that your social media feed is a megaphone where you simply tell your followers how awesome you are and ask them for money. There is no easier way to alienate an engaged audience. Try to use interesting content that isn't directly related to your campaign, but still promotes your work and makes people want to support it. Of course, you occasionally should make a direct ask for money (no more than once or twice a week), but your main focus should be upon creating exchange with your audience. Resist the urge to make your crowdfunding promotion all about your work and instead try to foster conversation about the issues that you and your followers care about.

Engaging with relevant social media influencers

A great way to increase your reach is to piggyback onto the audiences of online 'influencers'. Influencers are individuals or groups that have large followings on social media. The idea is that you can approach them, by email or in person, and ask them to help promote your campaign to their audience. When choosing an influencer to partner with, it is important to ensure that both the individual and their audience believe in your work. This way, you will maximise the chance of donations, by having the online influencer appeal on your behalf to potential donors who fit your target audience profile.

A great place to start looking for influencers is locally – it's unlikely that David Beckham is going to support your school football program unless there is a significant amount of interest in your work locally. Reach out to local athletes, artists or musicians. Slowly work your way up the social media 'food-chain', targeting influencers that will likely have a direct interest in your work.

Recognising your follower's efforts

A great way to directly promote your campaign without making it all about you is to recognise the contribution your followers make. You need to make your organisation's social media heroes feel special, recognising their engagement and dedication to promoting your cause. If someone shares your post, be sure to like their post and comment a "thanks for your support" type sentiment. If somebody asks a question, pays you a compliment, or leaves negative feedback, make sure you respond as soon as possible. Importantly, if you receive a big donation from a group of followers or another organisation make a post saying thank you for their support. This gives you the opportunity to promote your campaign directly whilst making the subject matter of the post about others. Recognise what your followers are doing to help your cause, be generous with feedback and "thank you's".



Helpful Hint

Make sure you use a broad variety of online content to promote your campaign. Keep things interesting by switching between mediums, such as photos, videos, written stories and infographics. Also, try to host some of your marketing on other platforms and then link between them. Long-form blog posts, podcasts and news articles can help lend legitimacy to your campaign but shouldn't be 'hosted' on your social media stream, but instead should be linked to.

B) Mainstream Media

Newspapers, television, radio shows, websites, and blogs can all be great sources of promotion for your crowdfunding campaign. These outlets will generally have much larger audiences than your organisation and, if they are a trusted news source, can provide an extra level of legitimacy to your campaign simply by featuring it.

Local newspapers and radio stations in your region are a great place to begin promoting your campaign. Local sources tend to favour locally relevant stories so there is a good chance they will help promote a local organisation's work. Once you've spread the word amongst local news sources, you can start approaching larger media sources or online publishers to help reach a bigger audience. When pursuing these larger media sources, make sure you are strategic about choosing the right ones. Take the time to identify the types of audiences each newspaper, online blog or tv station has and choose the ones that have the audience most similar to your target audience - don't waste time pursuing irrelevant audiences that are unlikely to translate into donors.

Identifying and connecting with the right mainstream media sources

A great way to find (online) media outlets that might help promote your campaign is to use Reverse Google Image Search. You can use this unique search system to identify news sources that have previously promoted campaigns or nonprofits similar to yours. Begin by finding a news article that promotes a non-profit or crowdfunding campaign similar to yours. Download the photo attached to that article and save it on your computer. Then, re-upload this image to Google's 'Reverse Image Search'. This will find all of the websites, blogs, newspapers and other media sources that have used this image in an article or blog. You can then target these media outlets when trying to promote your campaign. Because they have promoted similar campaigns previously, there is a good chance they will support yours. This is a much easier and more efficient way to find media outlets that will support your work than using the usual word-based google search.

Once you have identified the media sources that will likely find your organisation's cause newsworthy, reach out to them with a pre-packaged media kit that explains your story. This should be filled with colourful photos and videos about your work. Remember, the more attractive you make your story, the more likely it is to get published. You need to make the journalists job as easy as possible. When presenting your crowdfunding campaign to news outlets, it is important to focus on stories of individuals participating in or benefiting from your work. This human element is what readers and viewers will connect with and will help make it much easier for the journalist to craft a meaningful article.

Another way to get news outlets to take interest in your work is by writing a press release. Press releases are communications which organisations can use to announce something that is ostensibly newsworthy to the media. A press release contains the who, what, when, where, and why of your crowdfunding campaign, as well as boilerplate information about your organisation. Press releases are generally distributed by a newswire to a targeted list of media outlets and publications based on your preferences, though they can be sent out individually as well. Press releases often cost money to distribute and will only be effective in promoting your campaign if the media outlets they are sent to pick them up. Smaller NGOs will want to consider cost-effectiveness of this strategy.



Helpful Hint

Remember, developing relationships with writers, editors, and other media professionals is an important part of this strategy. Be polite, courteous, and flexible when reaching out. Invite reporters to come visit your project or offer them ready-made content. Making their job easier will make them keener to cover your story.

Finishing up

By putting some care and effort into promoting your crowdfunding campaign through both mainstream and social media, you can maximise your organisation's ability to raise funds for your cause. The above techniques offer a good starting point to promote your crowdfunding campaign, but you might think of other ways. Get creative and think of new ways to reach your unique audience.

This resource was produced by Grassroots Collective.

This is module 7 of our 10-part handbook for nonprofit crowdfunding. Find the full handbook at: www.thegrassrootscollective.org/grassroots-hub

Have a question about crowdfunding for social causes or want to learn about how we can support your organisation on its mission? Contact us at: info@thegrassrootscollective.org

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