

Ten tips to maximise your crowdfunding results:

1. Watch inspiring fellow campaigns.

Why reinvent the wheel? Check out what some of the most innovative small organisations around the world are doing with their campaigns and tweak some of the details to suit your own. Whether it's testing different funders, using images and videos, or adjusting the amount of funding you seek, copy what top campaigners do. Imitation is, after all, the sincerest and possibly most successful form of flattery.

2. Self-promote like mad.

Your crowdfunding platform isn't going to do all the marketing and PR for you—in fact, it'll be minimal in most cases. It's up to you to showcase your organisation and/or project, idea and campaign. Reach out to journalists at top publications. Seek out guest blog opportunities. Build your social media following before the campaign launches so you're ready to reach a larger group of people once it starts. Also, create images ahead of time that can be used for your posts during the campaign.

3. Create a video.

Numerous studies show that people (like your potential funders) are increasingly preferring short, quality videos over text. Make sure you include an engaging video on your crowdfunding page to lure in potential funders who prefer video over text. Tell your story and deliver the information about the project in a compelling manner.

4. Don't start too early.

There might be a peak time to pursue crowdfunding, but it's different for everyone, depending on what stage your organisation is in. In most cases there's probably not going to be a 'perfect time', so you probably shouldn't be waiting for one.

That said, if you're still in the very early stages with your project, don't have a well-developed document to show people or just hear your gut telling you 'not yet', don't go for it. A crowdfunding campaign can't be used as a shortcut. It's best used for projects and services that are developed enough to inspire people to be a part of something bigger.

5. Follow instructions.

It might sound obvious, however, what might seem like a small oversight can have devastating results. Read the fine print of the platform you have chosen. Is your organisation resident of an eligible country? Is crowdfunding appropriate for what you're trying to fund? Following the rules is a basic must, but an important one.

6. Have a action plan after the campaign.

You need a plan of action whether you reach your goal or not. If you do succeed, how will you deliver on the promises you made and how can you leverage this success for the next stage? How will you use the donor information you obtain from the campaign? How will it help inform future fundraising efforts?

If your campaign isn't successful, gauge what you learned from the experience and how you can use that knowledge for a different route - maybe even crowdfunding attempt round two. The people or organizations who did promise to donate will need information on your next steps too.

7. Pamper your project.

You can't just publish your crowdfunding page and call it good. Kickstarter recommends building a list of followers and supporters who you can tap at strategic points during the campaign. This way, you can plan that the campaign is growing steadily and not stalling out. Also, join a community that shares ideas and resources on what's worked in the past. That way you'll have some tricks up your sleeve during the course of the campaign.

8. Ask funders.

Depending on the crowdfunding platform you use, you may be able to reach out directly to well known funders. Check out what other types of campaigns they've funded, or see if yours is different but complementary. Ask for match giving, where the funders will double anything you can raise online. A personal touch can work wonders.

9. Hire a professional SEO writer.

Do you need a professional writer to create your NGO's content? Of course. Would an Search Engine Optimisation writer be better? Quite possibly. Some of the crowdfunding platforms have tremendously strong SEO, so it's safe to say your campaign may be one of the top search results for your organisation's name going forward. If possible, make sure you take advantage of this opportunity by working with an expert who can help you use the right keywords in your text and headlines.

10. Be patient.

Overnight success stories are exciting, but rare. Your platform probably has a reasonable yet challenging timeline you can follow. Don't expect miracles, and remember that slow and steady wins the race.

Most importantly, remember that this is just one of many possibilities for funding. It's not the right fit for every project or organisation. Find the best platforms for you, plan and perfect before publishing, and remember that timing is everything. Also, similar to startup-businesses, you can expect a lot of failure with your first crowdfunding campaign. It's a learning process so take note of what is happening when you stumble.