



 GlobalGiving

Crowdfundamentals

A Beginner's Guide To Crowdfunding Success

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WELCOME TO

Crowdfundamentals

A Beginner's Guide To Crowdfunding Success

You're here because you want to raise money for a cause that is close to your heart, and you understand the power of crowdfunding, but you aren't sure where to start.

Crowdfunding is the practice of raising small amounts of money from a large number of people, typically online. Instead of relying on buy-in from a very small pool of wealthy donors or institutions, successful crowdfunders tap into the power of many.

In 2002 when GlobalGiving created the first crowdfunding platform for nonprofits, we turned traditional fundraising on its head and unleashed the potential of anyone, anywhere, at any time, to make the world a better place. Today, there are almost too many crowdfunding platforms to count, and the market for crowdfunding in developing countries alone is expected to top \$96 billion annually by 2025, according to the [World Bank](#). That's a lot of potential, but success requires planning.

For 15 years, we've been making it possible for nonprofits from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe (and lots of places in between) to build schools, preserve our environment, feed the hungry, and thousands of other amazing things. We're excited to share what we've learned! Each chapter offers a practical step you can use in preparation for your first crowdfunding campaign. At the end of each chapter, you will find a tool you can use, including:

1. Smart Goal Chart
2. Crowdfunding Platform Comparison Chart
3. Strong Story Checklist
4. Network Mapping Diagram
5. Sample Facebook Messaging
6. 10 Creative Crowdfunding Ideas
7. Donor Appreciation Checklist



CHAPTER 1

Be Smart

Imagine a sea of strangers who wake up determined to donate to a good cause. Somehow, they stumble across the one that is closest to your heart on the Internet, immediately understand its worth, and make a donation before the day comes to a close.

Wouldn't that be amazing? Unfortunately, that rarely ever happens. Donors need motivation to give! And you need a plan. To set yourself up for success, outline a SMART goal before your crowdfunding campaign launches. In your outline, address each point listed in the SMART goal chart on the next page.

SMART Goal Chart

QUALITY	GG TIP	Use this space to craft your own SMART goal, addressing each quality.
Specific	Describe exactly what you'd like to achieve and how. To narrow your goal, think about it in terms of who, what, when, where, how, and why.	
Measurable	Quantify your goal. How much money do you want to raise?	
Actionable	Specify what actions you will take, who you can work with, and what resources you can leverage to meet your goal.	
Realistic	Be ambitious, but don't set a goal that you can't realistically achieve in a time-bound manner with your attainable resources.	
Time-Bound	Set a clear beginning and end date for your crowdfunding campaign to create sense of urgency and motivate you and your donors. Throughout your campaign, remind donors of your deadline.	



HOW THEY DID IT

Arlington Academy of Hope, Inc.

Country: United States

Mission: Help children in Uganda reach their full potential.

Dollars Raised: \$474,418

Background: Arlington Academy of Hope, Inc. has successfully crowdfunded three projects on GlobalGiving! The nonprofit, which is based in Arlington, Virginia, had a SMART approach from the start. Its first SMART goal on GlobalGiving? Raise \$5,000 from 40 donors within one month to launch a program to prepare primary school graduates for secondary school. Having a SMART goal helped the nonprofit clearly communicate its intentions and build momentum with existing and new donors. They exceeded their campaign goal by \$2,000. Rachel, an Academy of Hope student who graduated from the Academy's primary school, credits the nonprofit with her educational success. "I just assumed that after 7th grade, I would get married," she said. "That is what all my older sisters did. That was all I knew. Now, I am in university and will have a career helping others."



CHAPTER 2

Pick The Right Platform

There are hundreds of crowdfunding platforms on the Internet! It's important to pick the right one for your campaign. Use our crowdfunding comparison chart to examine platforms in five key areas: structure, fees, features, reach and reputation. Each key area is explained on the next page. We also rounded up five important questions to ask before you commit to a platform, which may require a setup fee or contract. In the chart on page 9, you'll find answers from GlobalGiving, so you can easily compare what we offer to others.

Key Areas of Platform Comparison

STRUCTURE

Who does the platform serve?

Some crowdfunding platforms were created to help individuals meet a personal need (e.g., a parent who needs help to pay for her sick daughter's healthcare). Others were created to help entrepreneurs launch an innovative idea (e.g., a fashion designer who wants to start a new eco-friendly clothing line). Read the platform's mission statement and scroll through existing projects to learn about its structure.

FEES

What fees will you incur?

Some platforms charge set-up fees, ongoing subscription fees, and/or fees per transaction. Be wary of platforms that are not upfront about their fees.

FEATURES

What benefits and features will you get?

Make a list of features that matter most to you and find out whether the platform offers them (e.g., one-on-one customer support, social media integration, campaign customization options, donation disbursement process, ability to process different currencies).

REACH

Will the platform promote your project through its channels?

Check out how many of your peers (nonprofits, entrepreneurs, or individuals) are using the platform, and consider what kind of donors and corporate partners you may be able to connect with through the platform. Take a look at social media for clues about how the platform will promote your project.

REPUTATION

What do people say about the platform?

Ask existing users about their experience, and read reviews from independent and trusted sources, such as Charity Navigator (if the platform is a nonprofit), the Better Business Bureau, and GuideStar.

Crowdfunding Platform Comparison Chart

	GLOBALGIVING	OTHER CROWDFUNDING PLATFORM
STRUCTURE	<p>GlobalGiving's purpose is transforming aid and philanthropy to accelerate community-led change. Did you know that GlobalGiving is itself a 501(c)(3) registered nonprofit? That means donations made through our platform are tax-deductible.</p>	
FEES	<p>There's no fee to join GlobalGiving. Instead, GlobalGiving retains a 5-12% nonprofit support fee plus a 3% third party processing fee for each donation. GlobalGiving works hard to keep our costs low! Although our support fee may vary due to a number of factors, it is typically 5-7%. This covers our vetting costs and enables us to deliver even more money (and many other benefits) to our partners. Because we drive money back to our partners in the form of new donors, matching funds, and corporate partnerships, the net cost to most of our nonprofit partners is actually zero!</p>	
FEATURES	<p>GlobalGiving offers gift cards, peer-to-peer fundraising tools, specialized training, one-on-one and in-person fundraising support, and matching campaigns.</p>	
REACH	<p>GlobalGiving is the oldest and largest crowdfunding community for nonprofits, companies, and donors. Since our founding in 2002, we've raised \$300+ million for 18,000+ projects in 170 countries. We promote projects tirelessly, and we've partnered with 200+ companies, including Nike, Ford, and Microsoft, to accelerate community-led change.</p>	
REPUTATION	<p>Charity Navigator gives GlobalGiving four-stars, its highest rating. We are also accredited by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance.</p>	



HOW THEY DID IT

DAKTARI Bush School & Wildlife Orphanage

Country: South Africa

Mission: Inspire, motivate, and educate underprivileged children to care for their environment through a wildlife orphanage.

Dollars Raised: \$10,755

Background: DAKTARI Bush School & Wildlife Orphanage was on the verge of closure when its founders came to GlobalGiving. The husband-and-wife team chose to crowdfund on GlobalGiving because of its training and one-on-one support for nonprofits new to crowdfunding and its vast network of American donors. In 2008, DAKTARI joined a GlobalGiving [virtual crowdfunding training program](#), which took it step-by-step through its first crowdfunding campaign. “We had no strategy heading into the challenge,” says Michèle, but, “GlobalGiving was very present and gave us the support to help us develop the technique and knowledge of fundraising that we didn’t have.” GlobalGiving is now a crucial funding source for the nonprofit, which celebrated its 10-year anniversary with GlobalGiving by its side in 2016.



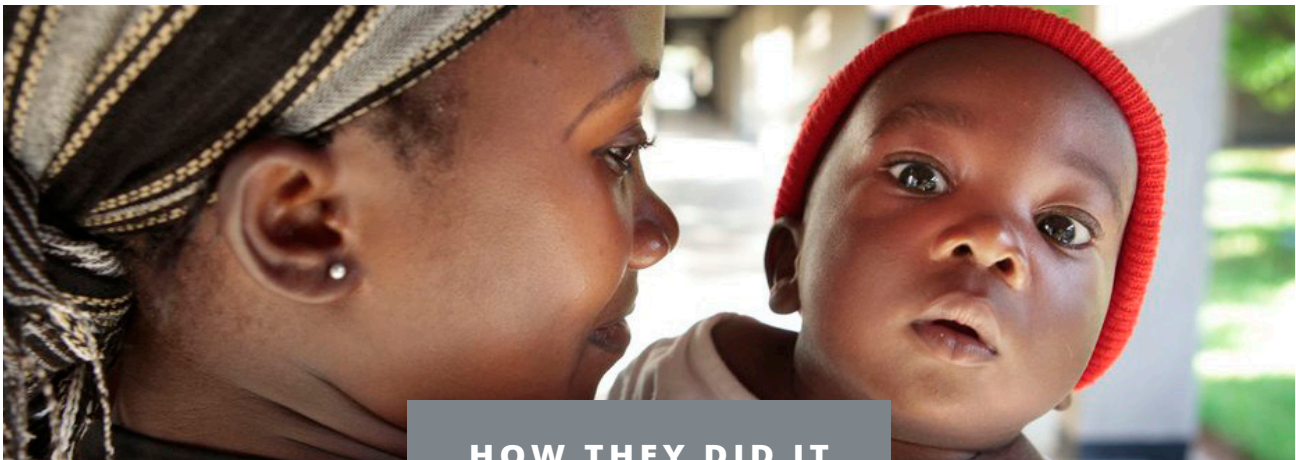
CHAPTER 3

Make It Personal

Once you've selected the best platform for your crowdfunding campaign, craft a story about your campaign that has the power to drive donations. Most crowdfunding platforms come with a project page where you can direct donors and tell your story. Our research shows that stories about single individuals [told in first-person](#) are more powerful motivators than statistics or stories about groups of people. As you write content for your crowdfunding project, focus on why the project matters to you or explain the impact of reaching your goal on your life or someone else's. Use our checklist on the following page to maximize the impact of your crowdfunding story.

Strong Story Checklist

DOES YOUR STORY INCLUDE:	
	Your reason for getting involved with the cause or a first-person anecdote about your nonprofit?
	A clear ask? (e.g., please make a \$25 donation today)
	Specific examples of what a donation will do? (e.g., a \$50 donation will give a hungry child enough food for one day)
	A high-quality photo?
	A prominent donation link or button?



HOW THEY DID IT

Kupona Foundation

Country: United States

Mission: Prevent disability and maternal and neonatal mortality.

Dollars Raised: \$2,474

Background: It took Alison five days and six nights to bring her daughter into the world. “Not for a second did I worry about access to medical help if I needed it. One year later, I can’t help but think of other moms—those with high-risk pregnancies—who don’t have access to the life-saving care they need.” Alison relied on her experience as a new mother to motivate her friends and family to help build a maternity ward for at-risk mothers and babies in Tanzania, one of the most dangerous places in the world to give birth. She created a [fundraising page on GlobalGiving](#), and she asked her friends and family to donate \$1 for every hour that they (or a loved one) labored, or give a dime for each of her 131 hours in labor. Her candid story about her labor of love inspired 55 donors to give to her cause!

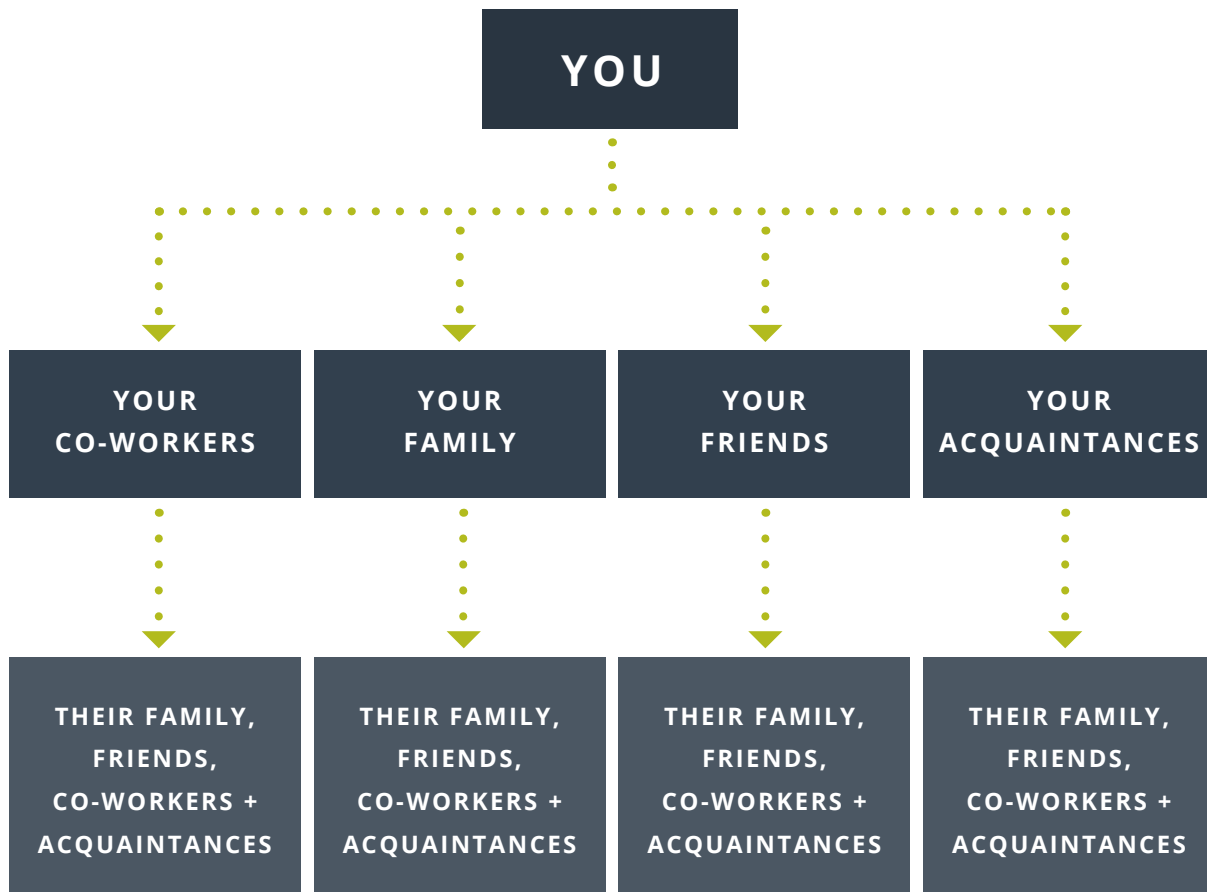


CHAPTER 4

Get By With Help From Your Friends

Here's the good news: You already know the people who are most likely to donate to your cause—they are your friends, family, colleagues, and acquaintances! Focus on how to inspire the people around you to donate to your cause, and invite them to reach out to their networks on your behalf. Successful crowdfunders often pair up with friends or assemble fundraising teams to amplify their reach. To get started, create a list of people you know. Begin with the people who are closest to you and expand. The bigger your list, the better (so don't overlook people like your doctor or a neighbor). Write down names, phone numbers, emails, and mailing addresses, and plan to reach out to each person in a few different ways throughout your crowdfunding campaign. Crowdfunding experts sometimes refer to this step as network mapping. Remember to include a clear ask for a donation, no matter the method of your outreach.

Network Mapping Diagram





HOW THEY DID IT

Instituto Mexicano de Investigacion de Familia y Poblacion

Country: Mexico

Mission: Create and implement programs that allow individuals to take control of their own health, productivity, and lives.

Dollars Raised: \$21,443

Background: IMIFAP raised \$21,443 from 136 donors in less than one month! They key to IMIFAP's success? Its 35 staff members. Before IMIFAP's launched its crowdfunding project, Shoshana, a project leader, helped her co-workers' map their networks and coached them on how to ask for money. This process yielded many small donations. The president and vice president of IMIFAP also contributed by asking for higher-level donations from their networks.




CHAPTER 5

Be Prepared To Share


Prepare to ask for donations from your target audience in multiple ways throughout your crowdfunding campaign. To determine what and where to share, know your audience! It will be much easier to motivate your donors if you know where they spend their time and what type of content appeals to them. Do they shop at a specific store or socialize at an annual workshop or festival? Try a joint fundraising event.

Be sure to develop a digital outreach plan, too. Think about what time of day your target audience is likely to read emails, and craft email subject lines that will catch their attention. Also, know which social media platforms your audience uses. Facebook? Twitter? LinkedIn? Instagram? Spend a few weeks listening to what resonates with your target audience on social media before you map out what you'll share about your crowdfunding campaign.

Sample Facebook Messaging

 **Marpha Foundation** added 2 new photos. ▼
 September 26 · 🌐

Global giving makes donating online super easy. Visit the page with the link below and click the donate button-- the site will guide you through the rest. \$2,308 left to go! www.globalgiving.org/.../hands-on-minds-on-creative-learning.../



This project has to **raise \$5,000 from 40 donors** by September 30, 11:59 PM EDT to earn a permanent spot on GlobalGiving.

Donations: \$2,692 raised (\$5,000 needed)

Donors: 31 (40 needed)

 **Marpha Foundation** ▼
 September 27 · 🌐

Almost there! 3 days left and \$1,640 to go!
 Donate today: <https://www.globalgiving.org/.../hands-on-minds-on-creative-.../>



 **Marpha Foundation** added 2 new photos — with Surabhi Chowdhury and 3 others. ▼
 September 28 · 🌐

SOOOOO CLOSE!
 2 days left
 \$775 to go
DONATE TODAY! <https://www.globalgiving.org/.../hands-on-minds-on-creative-.../>



GlobalGiving ▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶
Accelerator

This project has to **raise \$5,000 from 40 donors** by September 30, 11:59 PM EDT to earn a permanent spot on GlobalGiving.

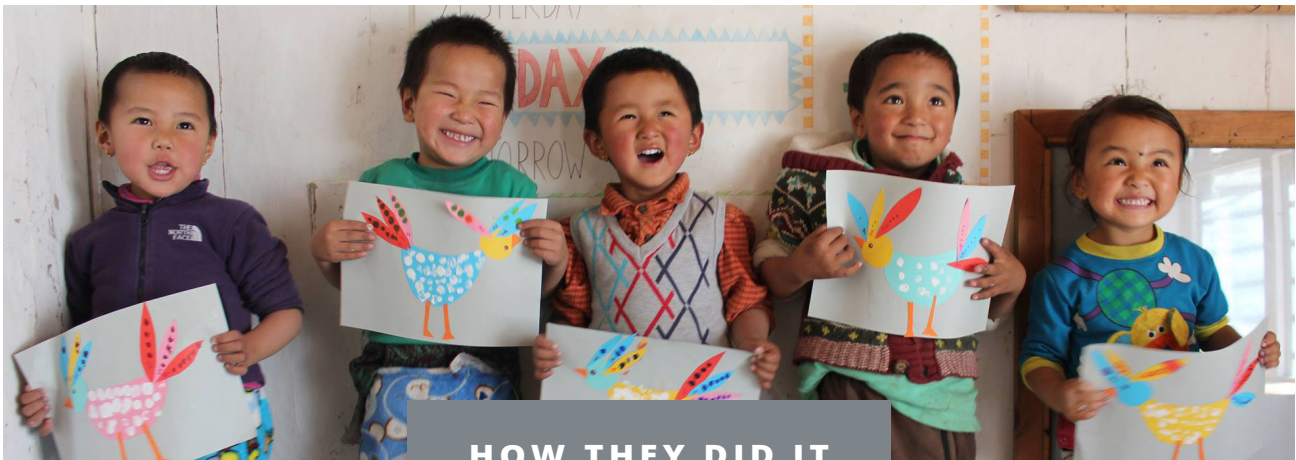
Donations: \$4,225 raised (\$5,000 needed)

Donors: 58 (40 needed)

Time left to give: 02 : 13 : 36 : 32

TERMS & CONDITIONS

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share



Marpha Foundation

Country: Nepal

Mission: Equip rural youth in Nepal with lifelong learning skills, design educational resources, and foster equal-opportunity environments.

Dollars Raised: \$7,064

Background: Marpha Foundation raised \$7,064 from 87 donors within one month to enrich its kindergarten education program in mountainous Mustang, Nepal. The nonprofit relied on email and social media to reach donors. On its Facebook page, the nonprofit paired high-quality, colorful photos of its students with short, urgent fundraising updates. "SOOOOO CLOSE! 2 days left, \$775 to go. DONATE TODAY," read one update. The strategy paid off: 39% of the donations to the foundation's kindergarten project came through Facebook.



CHAPTER 6

Be Creative And Courageous

Successful crowdfunding fail (it's true), but they have the courage to experiment with bold, creative ideas (continuously), collect feedback about what's working (and what's not), and change course (if needed). There are so many fun ways to fundraise! One [Atlas Corps](#) volunteer promised to ride his bike from Washington, D.C., to Great Falls, Va., in his underwear if 100 of his friends donated to his project. Thousands of women all over the world have raised more than \$1.5 million to end human trafficking through the [Dressember](#) campaign. The women wear a dress every day in December and ask their friends to support their commitment with a donation.

Experiment with creative tactics that will appeal to your network. Once you settle on a tactic, track your results and test new ideas. Be prepared to adjust if necessary to achieve success. Try varied email subject headlines, social media content, and fundraising approaches to identify what works and why. Use what you learn to improve your current and future crowdfunding campaigns. In short, never settle!

10 Creative Crowdfunding Ideas

- 1. Host a fundraiser at a local restaurant.** Ask the owner to donate a portion of proceeds to your crowdfunding campaign.
- 2. Challenge yourself to an athletic feat.** Ask your friends, family, and co-workers to make a donation to support your endeavor.
- 3. Host a dinner at your home.** Ask each guest to make a donation to your campaign.
- 4. Organize a film festival in your neighborhood.** Show films that relate to your crowdfunding project. Instead of an admission fee, ask for a donation.
- 5. Host a chess tournament.** Ask losers (and winners) to make a donation to your campaign.
- 6. Ask local businesses to donate items to your nonprofit.** Auction the items online or at an event and donate proceeds to your campaign.
- 7. Assemble a book club.** Ask each member to make a donation to your cause.
- 8. Make custom T-shirts, bracelets, or other promotional merchandise for your campaign.** Direct all proceeds from sales to your cause.
- 9. Ask a prominent member of your community** (mayor, celebrity, church leader) to publicly support your campaign and pass along donation information to their network on your behalf.
- 10. Invite five of your friends to serve as “fundraising captains.”** Give a prize to the captain who raises the most money for your collective cause.



HOW THEY DID IT

Conservation Volunteers Australia

Country: Australia

Mission: Attract and manage volunteers to participate in projects that protect or enhance the Australian environment and heritage.

Dollars Raised: \$3,885

Background: Conservation Volunteers Australia wants more people to care about what happens to Eastern Barred Bandicoots. The rabbit-sized marsupial is critically endangered—only 1,500 remain on mainland Australia. The nonprofit connects the crowd with bandicoots through creative videos [like this one](#), which brings viewers along for the release of 20 adorable bandicoots into newly protected grasslands. The video has more than 7,700 views. Conservation Volunteers Australia has now raised enough money on GlobalGiving to protect 77 acres of bandicoot habitat!



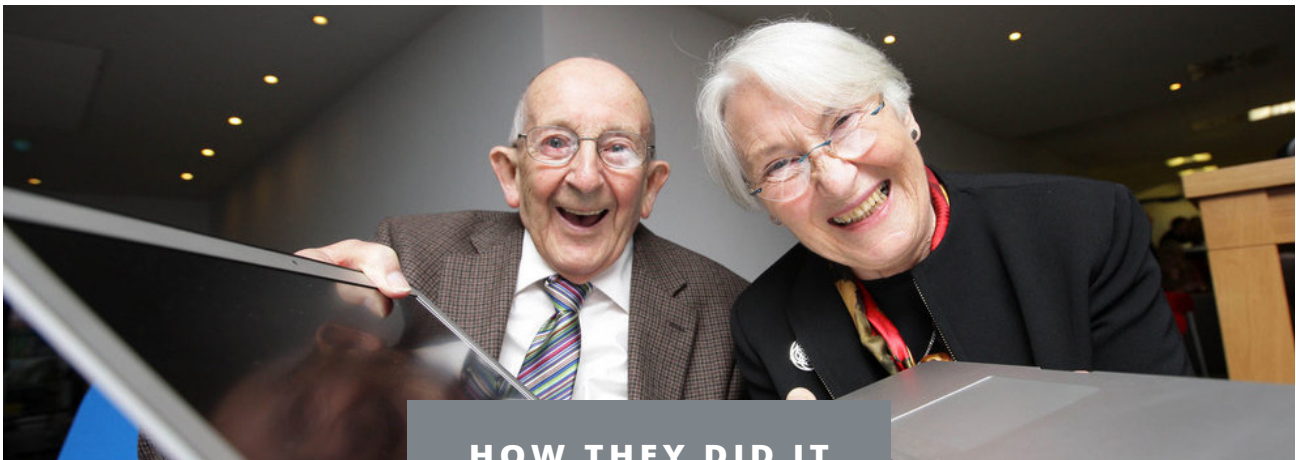
CHAPTER 7

Show Your Gratitude

Thanking and appreciating your donors is absolutely vital. [One study](#) found that 45% of donors said that an “outstanding thank you letter” inspired them to give again; 23% said that the quality of the acknowledgement they received encouraged them to make a larger donation the second time. After you receive a donation, follow up with a thank you as soon as possible. Make your thank you as personal as possible, and illustrate the impact of the donation in your life or the life of someone your donor sought to help.

Donor Appreciation Checklist

	Send an email, a handwritten note, or a personal video message to thank your donor. Make it a goal to thank every donor within 48 hours!
	Mention your donor's generosity on social media. Tag your donor to maximize your reach.
	Invite your biggest advocates to get involved beyond a single donation. Ask if they can offer time-bound matching donations to encourage others to donate or reach out to their networks on your behalf.



HOW THEY DID IT

Age Action Ireland

Country: Ireland

Mission: Achieve fundamental change in the lives of all older people by empowering them to live full lives as actively engaged citizens and to secure their rights to comprehensive, high-quality services.

Dollars Raised: \$14,615

Background: Age Action Ireland doesn't just tell donors about their impact. They show them. In a project report on GlobalGiving, the nonprofit shared photos of handwritten notes from students of its IT course for senior citizens. "I arrived terrified—yes really! And am now confident I can use my home computer. Wonderful! A new lease on life," one graduate wrote. Enough to make any donor's heart melt!



Conclusion

Thank you for reading GlobalGiving's seven steps to crowdfunding success. We hope it's helpful as you crush crowdfunding for a cause that's close to your heart.

Want one-on-one support for your nonprofit's crowdfunding campaign? Join GlobalGiving's Accelerator program! Learn more at www.globalgiving.org/accelerator/.



To learn more about the topics found in this document,
visit GlobalGiving.org/Learn.