

CROWDFUNDING

Crowdfunding Introduction:

So you have an idea to start or grow your business, but you want to test the market before making a big investment or going in debt... Not a bad idea!

Crowd funding might be for you. Crowdfunding is a way to test the market's response to an idea, service, or product before producing it.

It's a growing industry, over \$16 billion raised crowd funding in 2014 up from \$9 billion raised in 2013. That trend is expected to continue, with some estimates predicting \$32 billion will be raised through crowd funding in 2015.

The "build it and they will come" mentality will not work with crowdfunding. Generating revenue through crowd funding is *more difficult* than after a product or company is operating simply because consumers like instant gratification - which they do not get when they support or pre-order from a crowdfunding campaign. Remember the need to do pre-marketing before you even launch your campaign if you want to be successful.

That said, it is a great low-risk tool for starting or growing a business. I suggest keeping in mind, "What is in it for the customer?" For me, that is offering my products to them before they're available anywhere else, and at wholesale prices (30-40% off). You can also get more creative by making something enticing and exclusive to your backers.

Here is a general, bare-bones outline that I hope will help you plan your crowdfunding campaign. Most of the outline is specific to online marketing. There are other ways of crowd funding without using an online platform such as Kickstarter or Indiegogo - You can just build a list of local contacts that may be interested in pre-ordering your new product or service.

Best of luck,

Craig Kasberg
TidalVisionUSA.com

Planning a Crowdfunding Campaign

Phase 1: Plan your pre-campaign

Use a program to plan all aspects of my campaign, I use "Trello".

Conduct Initial feasibility and research study - bit.ly and kicktraq.com are useful tools I explain in my presentation.

If online marketing is involved, set up social listening dashboard - netvibes.com is the best I've found.

Build list of related niche bloggers

Build out list of mainstream PR contacts (personal emails, direct phone, twitter accounts)

CREATE LANDING PAGE - If not a full website, at least have a landing page before you start marketing or it is all a wasted effort. I used kickofflabs.com because it makes it easy to add referral features.

Set up an autoresponder for emails

Phase 2: Get the word out

Make sure you have at least a landing page build! Getting coverage months before your crowdfunding campaign will not do you any good if you do not generate a way to follow up with that potential backer/customer.

Start posting to forums, sharing related and engaging content on social media sites, maybe try guest blogging.

Build a "press/media kit" - maybe build more than one, one for press and one for bloggers, or maybe focusing on different aspects of your product/service/business/cause. Lots of examples online, look at companies you hope to be like in some way and what they have in their press kits.

Build templates for reaching out to bloggers and journalists. Customize the emails or don't expect responses though. "WHY IS YOUR PRODUCT INTERESTING TO THEIR READERS"

Keep building your email list in whatever way is working... marketing, social media, PR, blogger outreach, forums, word of mouth...

While building your email list keep A/B testing your landing page - kickofflabs makes it easy.

Start scripting your campaign video and copywriting.

Send out 3 weeks before you Kickstarter campaign goes live a press release with photos to the journalists and bloggers you've built relationships with previously, embargoed for the date of your launch.

TIPS

Remember to make your rewards for backing enticing

***Set up analytics, see what is working for getting emails and traffic. Do more of what is getting results and less time on what isn't working.**

***Try to make your email list want to back your project on day one, make the launch almost an event they're looking forward to... Such as "Early Bird" specials.**

***There are more ways to get the word out, including joint ventures, cross promotions, paid ads, hosting or sponsoring an event, doing a "contest" to giveaway a prototype, or doing a raffle to fundraise for a good cause by raffling off one of your products... And many many more ways to increase your reach. Don't forget to start with your friends, family and community either.**

***You can offer to give bloggers your product/a prototype if you have extras, in exchange for a review and post when your campaign goes live.**

Phase 3: Launch

Reach out more and more... You're live now, the clock is ticking. Better be organized for efficiency now.

(You should have already A/B tested the headlines and copywriting in your campaign)

Reach out to mainstream press that has written about similar crowdfunding campaigns and in general - hopefully you're first day is so successful that there is momentum, journalist would rather write about momentum than a slow start usually... Same with bloggers.

Communicate well with your backers, answer questions/concerns in a timely manner. Some people are still not familiar with how crowdfunding campaigns works.

Use GreenInbox.com - auto contacts all your social media connections, some whose emails you probably don't have collected yet.

Look at your analytics and do more of what is working best for you... GOOD LUCK!