

UBC Crowdfunding Handbook



a place of mind

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Crowdfunding UBC: Campaign Handbook

Getting Started

Congratulations on starting your Crowdfunding UBC campaign! Here are a few tips to get you on your way.

Find your Voice

- How would you describe your project in one minute or less? Practice your elevator pitch; highlight the main points of your campaign.

Know your Audience

- Segment your audience to tailor communication and narratives that appeal to them. Identify the “champions” and “influencers” within your audience:
 - **Champions:** These are typically people who are close to you and likely to support your cause. This could include family, friends, colleagues or mentors who will help to share and tell your story.
 - **Influencers:** People with shared interest in your cause who have a large audience base. Getting influencers on board will enable you to access their networks and increase your potential to raise funds.
- Choose your tone and communication method for your project. Will you be using online platforms such as email and social media, versus physical mail-outs and posters? Messaging will look different on different platforms.

Build your Cause

- Add engaging content to your Crowdfunding UBC page. This is the first online impression many people may see and you have less than 30 seconds to grab the audience’s attention!
- Highlight the impact of your project. How can supporters’ donations help you reach that goal?
- Emphasize the importance of your cause. Avoid the implication that your audience *should* donate and instead accentuate that they *can* make a difference by supporting your project. Empower your audience to take action.

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The Campaign: A Game of Five Phases

Your campaign can be broken down into five different phases. Here are some ideas and suggestions to make the most of your time.

Phase I: Pre-Launch (4 Weeks)

Create a Communication Plan

- Write a press release that announces your campaign and gather a list of outlets you can contact. Consider local blogs and student-run newspapers or magazines.
- Create media content to promote your campaign: sticker decals, posters, postcards, pamphlets. Distribute these to friends and family to help spread the word.
- Ask local businesses if you could put up a poster or leave pamphlets at their stores. Local coffee shops usually have a community board for announcements. Make sure to **ask before you post!**
- Create a communication calendar to plan when you will communicate, how and to whom. You can also use this to track your communications, to avoid sending multiple messages to the same person.

Crowdfunding Landing Page

- Gather and prepare media (such as videos and images) for your landing page to draw in supporters.
- In addition to the media you provide, your online page will also display a fundraising thermometer and a recent donor scroll. Please note these will only include donations made online.

Social Media

- Reach out to your audience and gain traction on your campaign by creating buzz.
- Promote your campaign through Facebook posts and encourage friends to share and like your project.
- Share pictures of your project on Instagram with relevant hashtags. Or, better yet – create your own customized hashtag to use throughout your campaign.
- Share your links and short updates on Twitter; let your supporters see the brilliant mind(s) behind the project.

Email

- Create a list of supporters to reach out to; this can include family, friends and acquaintances.
- Avoid overly stylized emails that can look like spam. Keep messages short, direct, somewhat personal, and avoid attachments and images. Most mobile phones are not optimized for emails that contain a lot of graphics. Make sure there is a link to your campaign in the email, to make it easy and simple for supporters to donate.

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Phase II: Initial Launch

Promote

- Send emails to pledgers and supporters, remembering to include the donation link. The idea is to drive people to your campaign and make it easy for them to support your project.
- Keep promoting through social media platforms. Get friends to repost, retweet, use your hashtag and share your content.
- Reach out to influencers who are active on social media or in the community to help you spread the word to a wider audience. You never know who will take an interest in your project.
- Create buzz around your project by highlighting what you want to achieve and how that can make a difference in the world. Remember to highlight the impact supporters will make by donating to your project.

Pitch

- Contact local clubs, societies and businesses that may be interested in your project.
- Approach businesses that you frequent. If you have a relationship with employees at a business already, it is likely they will be willing to back your project.
- Take advantage of community events and social gatherings to talk about your campaign. Now is the time to use that elevator pitch! Make sure you have a way to send new contacts the link to your project page, whether it's through email or by handing out business cards. Be genuine in your approach.

Pace

- Be mindful of how often communication is going out. It will be more effective if each message differs slightly to avoid redundancy. Make sure any communications carry a sense of urgency to encourage your audience to donate.
- Don't be afraid to prompt contacts more than once to make a donation. Oftentimes, contacts have the intention to support a project, but get sidetracked and eventually forget to donate. A second email call for action may be all it takes! Typically there is a lull after the first push and before the last – recognize the break and act at that time.
- Be concise with your points; don't list out all the reasons why contacts should support your project right away. Save some points to use for later communication efforts to avoid redundancy.

Other Ideas

- Host a launch party fundraiser that ties in with the theme of your project. Invite everyone you know to learn more about your project and encourage friends to help you spread the word!
- Consider a self-donation to kick start your campaign. Your self-donation amount can set the tone for supporters for what level to give.

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Phase III: During the Campaign

Update

- Let donors know what is happening with the campaign. Tell them you appreciate their support and remind them of the impact of their donation*.
- Continue to manage social media content, post relevant and interesting materials on your outlet (blog posts, videos, images).
- Celebrate successes and milestones with your supporters! Create a sense of community with everyone who has invested in your project. Building positive relationships is a large part of crowdfunding campaigns and your backers are your best promoters/sales team.

Keep the Momentum Going

Lulls in donations can happen during the middle of your campaign. It is normal to experience a lull after the first push. There could be multiple reasons for this, with the main one being market saturation – you have already reached everyone in your immediate environment who will donate. When this happens, it's time to think outside the box and reach a wider audience.

- Encourage your core supporters to be your ambassadors and tap into their social network.
- Be proactive! Post in relevant forums, blogs and online communities to build connections.
- Try experimenting with different ways of advertising/promoting your campaign. Keep track of how different communication methods and schedules drive traffic to your page.
- Continue building rapport. Remember to describe your project and include an impact statement. Let prospective donors know how they can be a part of an amazing project.

Keep it up

- Stay engaged with supporters and post updates, photos, videos and links to your campaign page.
- Take a look back at what communication pieces have generated the most or the least traffic, and revise your communication and messaging efforts as necessary.
- Draft up email templates and messaging to make it easy for ambassadors to reach out to their social resources and spread the word about your project.

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Phase IV: The Final Push

Final Push

Now is the time for one last push for donations. Use this to your advantage to encourage prospective donors to take action.

- Send out messaging that carries a sense of urgency with a deadline. Now is the time to act. This is especially effective at targeting prospects that have pledged or shown interest in your project but have yet to donate.
- Recap on your campaign's progress and show how everyone's support is crucial. Remind supporters that this campaign and project would not be possible without their backing.
- Make it easy for supporters to donate again! Your supporters want to see the campaign succeed; encourage them to make another donation to help reach your goal.
- Host fundraiser events. Similar to a launch party, host a party celebrating the end of your campaign to encourage final donations from guests. This is also particularly effective if there is an upcoming holiday or your birthday celebration. Ask guests to donate to your cause in lieu of presents.

Connect

- Keep supporters in the loop about the progress of your fundraising. Remember to thank them for their support! By thanking donors while the campaign is still running, you are also encouraging others to join them.
- Give recognition to major donors and/or community groups that are supporting the project. Prospects that have ties to the community groups or donors are more likely to donate if they see that message.
- Use positive words such as "*make a difference*" and "*support*". This triggers the *feel good* part of the brain of the person you are speaking with.
- Don't be afraid to make follow-up phone calls.

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Phase V: Post Campaign

Thank You & Recap

- Remember to send follow up thank you emails to supporters*. Let everyone know the progress of your project and recap on the crowdfunding campaign. It is important to keep communication channels open to maintain good relationships with supporters.
- Highlight the impact of your supporters' donations and the importance of funding for your project. You want your supporters to feel like they are being recognized and that they are making a difference by contributing to your project.
- Reflect on your campaign. What were some highlights and challenges? What are your next steps? Make sure to share these with your backers.

**Donor information is collected under the authority section 26(c) of the British Columbia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. UBC will use this information to process the gift, maintain contact and keep donors up to date with University information and events. UBC does not sell, rent, or trade donor lists, and it will treat the gift as confidential, except as follows: (1) UBC will disclose donor's contact information to the project organizer for the purpose of recognition and communication; (2) UBC will publicly display donor's first name and donation amount on the donor scroll of the project page.*

If a donor wishes to make an anonymous donation, or has questions regarding the privacy of donations and donors' information, please contact annual.giving@ubc.ca or 604.827.4111.

