The DuckFunder Guide to Crowdfunding

Congratulations on starting your crowdfunding project! Running a successful project takes a good amount of preparation and planning. On average, half of all crowdfunding campaigns fall short of their fundraising goals. However, if you plan, prepare, and execute the following steps outlined in this guide, you will maximize your chances of success!

DuckFunder is the official University of Oregon crowdfunding platform. Approved projects will be posted and launched via DuckFunder for 30 days. Use DuckFunder to enhance your network and attract potential donors.
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PREPARING FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

Before you log on to DuckFunder there are some key elements to keep in mind. Your team should be actively researching, planning, and preparing for your crowdfunding project. Following these key elements will help make your crowdfunding project a positive experience!

Write and Tell Your Story

The story should be compelling, and concise. It should clearly articulate your project's value proposition to your network. Be sure to include what you are raising money for, where and what the money will be used for, how your network can get involved with promoting your project, and the difference it will make to those benefiting from the project. Get your point across by using images—include two to three images within your story's description (such as team member photos or project advocates within your network). Be sure to proofread your story and don't be afraid of asking someone to review your project's pitch! The key is to keep your story short and upbeat!

Here are four steps to follow when developing your project's pitch:

**Introduction:** Explain why you are seeking help! Why do you need funding?

**Tell your story:** Write a short description of your history and what prompted you to participate in a crowdfunding initiative. Be sure to write a compelling story—describe any unique challenges or obstacles that have affected your club or organization. Your story should be engaging but positive! Do not overwhelm your potential donors with sad stories.

**Describe your goals:** Discuss the potential impact your project will have on those benefiting from the donations. Will it help enhance the club or organization’s overall experience? Will it help underrepresented groups showcase the great work they are doing at the University of Oregon? You want to articulate your objectives and outcomes to your networks. Another way to think about this is, “How will this experience help with future career and individual goals?”

**Call to action:** Your story should demonstrate a sense of urgency to potential donors. Be sure to let them know how and why every donation will make a difference toward your project. Include a brief breakdown of the project’s budget. Be transparent with your donors and ensure you use every dollar raised toward your project’s needs. Last but not least, be sure to thank everyone whether they make a gift or not!

Create a Video

Personal videos increase a project’s chance of success by more than two times. Videos should be short (one to three minutes) and should clearly express your project’s goals and objectives. Every video should demonstrate a clear call to action. You can create simple, user-friendly videos by using an iPhone. Be sure to show your excitement and enthusiasm. These two elements are key to creating a successful and engaging video.

Build Excitement

Because you have four to six weeks to prepare before your project becomes active on DuckFunder, this is a good time to build excitement for your project through your networks, your project ambassadors and their networks, social media accounts (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter), and to promote any other events you may have planned as part of your project’s outreach efforts. Think outside of the box. Are there opportunities to create a blog? Have you thought about reaching out to the head of communications in your area to discuss the possibility of including your project in the next alumni newsletter they send out? By anticipating potential opportunities and acting in advance, the chances of expanding your project’s visibility can lead to more money.
CREATE YOUR CAMPAIGN

By now, you have created your project’s pitch, generated two to four videos you will be using throughout your campaign, gathered a few photos for your project, and generated enough buzz and excitement among your networks. You are now one step closer to launching! It’s time to build your project!

At this point, you need to contact the University of Oregon Annual Giving Program to gain access to the crowdfunding platform (DuckFunder). Please contact Rodrigo Hernandez at 541-346-6946 or send an e-mail to duckfunder@uoregon.edu.

Set Your Goal

You’ll need to set a realistic fundraising goal. Keep in mind the University of Oregon Foundation charges a 5 percent processing fee per gift. Be sure to take this 5 percent into account when setting your goal. Your goal should reflect the number of contacts within your networks. For example, if you have 5,000 contacts and estimate that half (2500) can make a minimum donation of $20, then you would calculate your goal by multiplying the number of contacts times the minimum dollar amount you estimate each of them could give. Please keep in mind that you will not be allowed to change your goal once you launch. Be specific with your funding needs. Examples include the following: $1,000 to cover hotel expenses for a certain number of members attending a conference in Los Angeles; $2,000 to cover expenses for a guest speaker; and so forth.

Set Your Project Stop Date

Target your campaign to last 30 days max. Be sure to give the UO Foundation a minimum of two weeks to disburse your funds upon completion of the project. Studies show supporters make donations during the weekend. Try to end your campaign on a Sunday.

Creating Your Perks

Perks, also known as rewards, are a key component of crowdfunding projects. Be sure to develop a few simple and inexpensive perks to create buzz. For example, your first 30 donors giving at the $500 level will receive a video and a postcard from the alternative spring break members who went to Guatemala and benefitted from the project’s financial contributions. Donors who contribute toward your crowdfunding project should receive an immediate and personal e-mail upon making their gift. Personal thank you letters or phone calls are also a great way to stay in contact with your donors! If you are unsure about your perks, please contact Rodrigo Hernandez at 541-346-6946.

Here are several good examples:

- For $50, you will send a notepad and a set of pens
- For $100, you will send them a group video from the alternative spring break trip to Guatemala
- For $200, you will invite them to be a guest speaker at your next club meeting

Make sure you are able to follow through on your fulfillment promises at the end of your project!

Set Up to Receive Funds

Project leaders need to identify a UO Foundation account. If you are unsure about this process, please contact your department head or call the UO Annual Giving Program at 541-346-6946. Please allow a minimum of two weeks for the UO Foundation to disburse your funds. Contact the UO Foundation accounting team when requesting to use funds from your crowdfunding project. They can be reached at askaccounting@uofoundation.org.
SPREAD THE WORD

E-mail
Using e-mail is a great way to create buzz and excitement for your project. Be sure to clearly articulate your project’s pitch, create a sense of urgency, and don’t forget to include the link to your project’s page via DuckFunder. Most of your supporters will be busy throughout the day. Don’t forget to send out reminder e-mails! There should two messages going out during the first few weeks of your project. Keep your friends and family in the loop via e-mail and ask them to share your campaign with their networks.

Social Media
Social media is an ideal platform to generate awareness for your crowdfunding project. Reach out to your current networks, but also to individuals and organizations that you don’t know but who might play a part in helping spread the word about your project. Be sure to post and share pictures to social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn), and don’t forget to include a link to your project! Ask your friends and family to share and forward your posts through their own networks. Use social media to share milestone information. For instance, let everyone know when you’ve raised 50 percent of your goal or when you receive a gift from your 100th donor! Create a sense of urgency and build last-minute momentum to close out your project.

Updates
It is crucial to provide weekly updates to your donors and potential supporters. Make sure you tell them what you are doing to prepare for your team’s conference or trip. Use voices from your team, such as project ambassadors or students who will benefit from financial contributions. Images are a great way to provide updates to your donors. Post pictures of the items you have purchased for your project—a great way to show donors the direct impact they have had on your team. Updates also create a sense of urgency and keep the project’s momentum and buzz going. Be sure to always thank donors for their time and support.
AFTER YOUR CAMPAIGN ENDS

Show Appreciation
Thank everyone who contributed to your project. At this point you should be sending personalized e-mails to each donor. Include the timeframe for delivery of perks to donors.

Follow Up on Perks
Even though your project has ended, you are still responsible for your donors! You should stay active for up to a year with donors upon the completion of your project. Be sure to communicate and provide regular perk updates with donors! Where are you in the process? Is there a delay? When can they expect their perks to be delivered?

Think Ahead
Your project has ended. Take a moment to reflect on it. What worked? What didn’t work? What could be done differently? Was it a success?

Cultivate Relationships and Build a Network of Support
Reflect on the number of new donors you obtained through your outreach efforts. How many new contacts did you generate during your project? This is a great opportunity to build and expand on your current network of supporters. You never know when you might need their help again for future crowdfunding initiatives. Send regular updates with your accomplishments and successes.

For questions or concerns, please contact the Annual Giving Program at 541-346-6946 or send an e-mail to duckfunder.uoregon.edu.