

Kickstart Your Music Project with Crowd-Funding

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What is crowd funding?

- Many people contribute smaller amounts to fund a project, rather than one person.
- Can be traced to the 18th century practice of *praenumeration*, an early form of the subscription business model.
- Modern platforms range from Kickstarter, GoFundMe, and IndieGoGo (websites which host projects).
- A “way to fund creative projects.”

Role of Technology

- The internet and social media have a significant impact on the success or failure of the project.
- It is recommended to incorporate Facebook, Twitter, and email into the project as much as possible.
- Media can also write articles on the project (blogs, local news stations, etc.).
- There are many ways to pay through the various websites with credit / debit cards, as well as third-party processing companies (PayPal, Amazon, etc.).
- A registered bank account is usually required to link with the project.

Platforms

[Kickstarter](#) -

- Since Kickstarter launched in 2009, almost 5 million people have pledged \$796 *million* dollars towards projects through its website.
- Only offers an all-or-nothing approach. In other words, if the project fails to reach the monetary goal, no backer is charged.
- Processes payments through Amazon.

[IndieGoGo](#) -

- Began in 2008 in the independent film industry then expanded to all industries in 2009.
- Offers two different funding options: the all-or-nothing or the flexible funding approach (fees vary).
- Many different payment options including PayPal and major credit cards.

[GoFundMe](#) -

- No deadline or limit to your goal.
- Can use a personal goal (medical expenses, youth sports, education costs).

	Platform Fee	Credit Card Processing Fee
Kickstarter	5%	3-5%
IndieGoGo (Fixed Funding)	4%	3%
IndieGoGo (Flexible Funding)	4% if you reach your goal; 9% if you don't.	3%
GoFundMe	5%	2.9% + \$0.30 per transaction

Fee Structures as of September 29, 2013

Guidelines for creating the project

- Design the project by having a goal in mind. Look at other projects and pick the designs that stand out to you most.
- What is the total cost? Factor in reward tiers and fees associated through the website and payment processing (two different fees).
- Have a plan for getting the word out about your project.
- Launching the project can be quick if you are ready to go. However, the creative part of designing the project can sometimes take longer than anticipated.
- Once your project has been submitted for review, it can take up to a week to get a response.
- What happens if your project is denied? You can appeal the decision once, and then you are not allowed to submit.
- Maximum deadline on Kickstarter is 60 days, but they highly suggest shorter durations. You need to create a sense of urgency.
- When generating the project, be as transparent as possible. State your goal, how you are accomplishing it, how the funds will be used, your qualifications, as well as how far along you are in your project.
- Should you include a video? I personally did not in one project, and the other two I did. The statistic Kickstarter uses to entice the inclusion of video: 50% of projects with videos succeed, as opposed to only 30% of projects without videos.
- Rewards should be something tangible from the project. Good ideas are thank you notes, social media shout-outs, a recording, video, etc.

Guidelines during the project

- Post project updates as you go through the project. It keeps backers informed on your project's development. You can use text, pictures, audio, or video to update your backers.
- Use social media to help drive traffic to your project. I used Facebook and Twitter in addition to email blasts.
- Encourage friends to continually post about your project. My goal was to get five of my closest friends to back the project, then have them get their closest five friends to back the project, and so on.
- Include links in your posts / emails!
- Speak to bloggers about writing on your project. I had two blogs (DrumChattr and Jeff Sass) post about my last marimba project.
- Peak social media times are 7am-9am, 11am-1pm, and evening. Most people will check their social media at those times.

Guidelines after the project

- Follow up soon after the deadline passes with a thank you email posted to the project.
- Continue to post updates about the project's progress. Keep backers informed.
- Follow through with reward tier commitments as soon as possible. Stick to the deadlines you selected when creating rewards.
- You can create a survey post-deadline to collect information like t-shirt sizes and addresses.

Personal Projects

[New Works for Percussion: Dwayne Rice Commission](#)

- First project was a marimba solo commission from Dwayne Rice.
- Successfully raised \$2,805 from 56 backers.
- Funds were used to cover commission cost in addition to flight, hotel, and per diem for the composer to attend the premiere performance.

[New Works for Percussion / Part Two](#)

- Second project was a marimba commission from five composers: Dan Welcher, Ryan George, Martin Blessinger, Scott Ward, and David Maslanka.
- Unsuccessful attempt to raise \$13,500.
- Total amount was just to cover the basic commissioning costs.
- 67 backers helped towards to goal, but only \$5,563 was pledged.
- I ended up personally funding the project.

[Lone Star Wind Orchestra is going to Chicago!](#)

- Third project was to help the Lone Star Wind Orchestra attend the 2012 Midwest Clinic in Chicago, Illinois.
- Successfully raised \$18,360 from 114 backers.
- Funds were used to defray costs of airfare and hotel rooms.

Influential Projects

[A Feast for the Ears: Conundrum Records New Works](#) – Raised \$8,261 from 142 backers to record new music.

[JORDIS UNGA is making her debut record!!](#) – Raised \$75,949; great design of the “About This Project.”

[Amanda Palmer: The new RECORD, ART BOOK, and TOUR](#) – Kickstarter’s first music project to break \$1 million.

[Double Fine Adventure](#) – Kickstarter’s first project to break \$1 million.

[Kronos: Under 30 Project / #5](#) – A successful commissioning project from a well-established string quartet.

[So Percussion’s Where \(we\) Live – recording and performance](#) – Raised \$13,005 to record an album and fund performances.

Final Thoughts

- The best projects create excitement and a buzz in the community. Spend time looking through many different projects and noting which aspects caught your attention immediately.
- Feel free to send messages to creators of projects you liked. The creators will often respond.
- Launching the project can be intimidating. Stress is natural, especially if the projects do not raise their funds as quickly as originally hoped.
- Avoid stretch goals at the beginning. If the project reaches its goal quickly, then consider adding additional reward tiers.
- Consider the tone of your ask. Positive wording will work better than pleading or frustrated remarks about progress. Create the buzz!

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