CROWDONOMICS

MAKE ART MAKE MONEY

CROWDONOMICS

A Comprehensive Guide to Crowdfunding Your Films and Art
By Nick Conedera

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Who am I? Why listen to me? Well, here's a little bit of what I've been up to since 2002…

- 13 years narrative filmmaking experience, over 75 film/video projects completed
- over 25 awards, including three Student Emmy Awards from N.A.T.A.S.
- B.F.A. Film Production, Chapman University, 2010, emphasis in Writing/Directing
- Marketing is in my blood – three generations of marketing/advertising professional artists – Conedera Studios since 1947 (my grandfather managed an ad agency, his life was *Mad Men*)
- 11 years video marketing experience, helping over 50 organizations market themselves with video including Girl Scouts of America, EF Tours, Vector Marketing, Front Row Foundation, Hal Elrod, Simon Lynge, Mike Keneally, David Cooperrider PhD, screened for Good Morning America and the United Nations
- Sales experience – 3 years working for Vector Marketing selling Cutco Cutlery as a Field Sales Manager, PUSH Period Champion selling $15,000 in 2 weeks, #1 Sales Rep in the Western Region Summer 2008, Assistant Manager, then recruited directly into corporate to work as their Video Marketing Director
- Over $300,000 raised for projects (mostly films) from investors, sponsors, and crowdfunding

NICK CONEDERA
Filmmaker, Artist, Marketer, Entrepreneur

- Writer/Director/Producer feature film *SHARP "The World's Finest Movie,"* $200,000 production budget, produced and distributed independently – check it out: www.SHARP-TheMovie.com Facebook.com/sharpthemovie
- Now getting my M.F.A. in Interdisciplinary Arts at Goddard College, emphasizing in documentary production, marketing, and distribution
- for more info, visit www.NickConedera.com

Ok, enough about me. Onto the money$$$…

✦ PREFACE

For over a century, filmmaking has been an industrialized process geared towards turning a profit. By its very nature, filmmaking is a labor-intensive, time-intensive, and therefore expensive creative process. Requiring high upfront costs, with fees sometimes in the hundreds of millions of dollars, films MUST be treated as a business to recoup such large investments. But this model is based on a consumer economy: upfront investment to create a product, marketing that product, a marketplace (theaters), sales, and finally consumption of that product to recoup that investment, and hopefully higher R.O.I. than just breaking even.

But our world is evolving, our economy is changing… Consumer tastes and desires are changing. What used to work in product design and advertising is no longer working. "The world is shifting from a world of transactions to a world of relationships. Nowadays, no one wants to be treated like a customer" (Trigonis, 125). The question is: What do consumers want today? Or… What will they want in the future? Well, I'm not sure anybody can answer these questions; our tastes are as unique and diverse as we are, and constantly changing. But one thing we can do is deduce consumer trends by following the money. The industries of customization and personalization are growing exponentially. Rather than corporate profit-centric schemes like planned obsolescence, more emphasis is being placed on quality, personalization, and customization, so consumers can say: "This product was made especially for me!" or even better, "I made this myself!" Wouldn't you much rather have a car or house that was designed specifically for you, that was as unique as you, that expressed your personality more accurately? I know I do. Kickstarter co-founder Yancey Strickler says, "For backers going through the site, it doesn't feel like shopping. It feels like participating. When they support a project, they're becoming part of an artists's dream. In this way it turns audiences into [co]creators" (Ryan, A Film in the Crowd). According to Joseph Beyer, Sundance's director of digital initiatives, "When you're able to watch that project come to fruition, it's incredibly rewarding. It makes you feel connected to a larger group" (Ryan, A Film in the Crowd). This is what consumers want: participation, connection, involvement, co-creation. Our world has become too isolated, separating ourselves by walls and boxes, replacing face-to-face interpersonal connection with pixelated screens.

Taking this idea to an extreme is crowdfunding, where consumers actually decide what products, businesses, or projects get made. Technology has now allowed the public easy access to this funding technique with new tools like Indiegogo, Kickstarter, Hubbub, Rockethub, FundAnything, and many others. Crowdfunding is not a new thing, though my word processor doesn't recognize "crowdfunding" as a word. Getting small amounts of money from many public sources is a funding technique that has been around forever. But what is new about these websites is the idea of pre-selling a product BEFORE it exists; convincing consumers to buy a product, sometimes without even a prototype, based on just an idea. It used to be illegal to sell a product that doesn't yet exist, and these websites do still exist in some legal grey-area. These websites allow people to "donate" money, and the creators to offer perks or rewards in return as a thank you, so some say that it's not technically taxable as income. The moneys received for the purpose of production itself are spent to create the product and therefore can be considered to be business expenses against that income (netting to zero taxable income). But when a tangible good is exchanged for money, sales tax rates do apply. Following the rise of these new crowdfunding sites, President Obama passed the JOBS Act in 2012, a law permitting crowdsourced micro-investments (previously illegal) in order to help stimulate the economy. But this is not the "crowdfunding" that sites like Indiegogo and Kickstarter allow creators to do.

It's no longer about the money, it's not about the marketing, it's certainly not about the creator, it's not even about the product itself, but it's now about the CROWD and what they want. Ted Hope of HopeforFilm.com notes that, "filmmakers mistakenly think of the crowdfunding platforms for financial purposes, but as Peter [Broderick] points out, it works to build community, involve audiences, and generate publicity and a true sense of ownership" (Maximizing Distribution Through Crowdfunding). Indiegogo has an acronym to describe this: DIWO, or Do It With Others. "This is the core of crowdfund ing – community engagement." (Trigonis, 97) Creators are now becoming more of mensches and philanthropists rather than entrepreneurs, giving the people what they want. "J. Abraham used to say, 'Don't fall in love with your product, fall in love with your customer.'" (Jeff Hays, Hal Elrod's Achieving Your Goals Podcast, 26:58) Crowdfunding is like crowdsourcing – where the people get involved with the creation of the product itself. Of course, there is still some sales and marketing involved. And many projects are still funded solely based on the clout of the creator, the coolness of the idea, or the emotions felt when a creator asks: "Please help me make this project!" But ultimately, the crowd decides whether or not the project gets funded.

This is NOT economics, though money transactions are involved. It's not entrepreneurialism because the point is not necessarily to make profit. But it's not charity either because contributors do get something in return. That means it's not necessarily even business. It's a whole new paradigm. It can be considered socioeconomics. It can be considered social practice art. I like to call it "Crowdonomics"….

> It helps to not look at it entirely through the eyes of a filmmaker, as it's far too easy to slip into the old-fashioned "starving artist" sentiment or declare that crowdfunding is not for you because you might be too proud or timid to ask others for money. On the other hand, you shouldn't approach crowd funding 100% like an entrepreneur either, as it's equally easy to fall into the chasm of the egocentric businessperson. The Tao of crowdfunding is about balance and harmony between these two seemingly opposing forces, making the process not about you, but about your contributors. (Trigonis, 24)

Jeff Hays, the world's foremost authority on crowdfunding (he can only be considered this because it's such a new thing, there really are no authorities on the subject) and award-winning filmmaker most well known for his controversial film "Fahrenype 9/11," describes this paradigm shift very well: "If we talk about crowdfund ing, the first thing is: is there a crowd that gives a crap about what you want to accomplish?" (Hal Elrod's Achieve Your Goals podcast, 6:20). "I don't make the films that I want to make, I make films that there is an audience that wants to support."

Crowdfunding Venn Diagram

Projects you want to make

Projects ppl want to see

The Sweet Spot
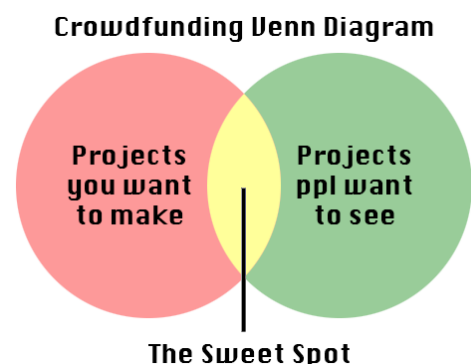
I don't think it's any coincidence that "the world's foremost expert on crowdfunding" is a filmmaker. A quick look at Kickstarter's current live projects shows that there are twice as many film(1018 live projects) and music(865 live projects) projects as there are tech projects(988 live projects), and at least twice as many tech projects as any other category (http://www.kickstarter.com/discover as of May 27, 2015). A deeper look at Kickstarter's numbers since it's launch in 2009 shows the same trend, though more money is transacted through games, tech, and design projects (http://www.kickstarter.com/help/stats). Intrinsic to the nature of filmmaking is having people actually watch your films, so crowdfunding is a good fit. Some say it's even a PERFECT fit. Paul Trigonis, author of Crowdfunding for Filmmakers (currently the only crowdfunding/filmmaking book available), says "the yin of DIY filmmaking seems to have found its yang in crowdfund ing" (13). And since filmmaking is still so expensive, it still requires much upfront cost, then many sales to recoup that cost. Crowdfunding simply cuts out a whole chunk of the creation process. Instead of coming up with the idea, getting the money for the idea, creating the product, marketing the product, placing it in a marketplace, selling the product to the crowd, getting the money, and returning the money…. The process now only consists of coming up with the idea, presenting it to the crowd, getting the money, creating the product, and giving them the product. There's virtually no marketing/sales involved, except in the pitch of the idea. But in addition to a whole chunk of the process, this paradigm also cuts out an entire industry. "Middle-men beware! Crowd-funding puts you in direct contact with your audience" (David Branin's Crowdfunding Cheat Sheet). No more studios, no more record companies, no more publishers, no more agents, no more aggregators, no more distribution channels. "All of a sudden, you don't have to sell your soul to get an album deal or to get a film out. You can own it every step of the process" (Hal Elrod's Achieve Your Goals Podcast, 9:55). And this is INCREDIBLY empowering for artists.
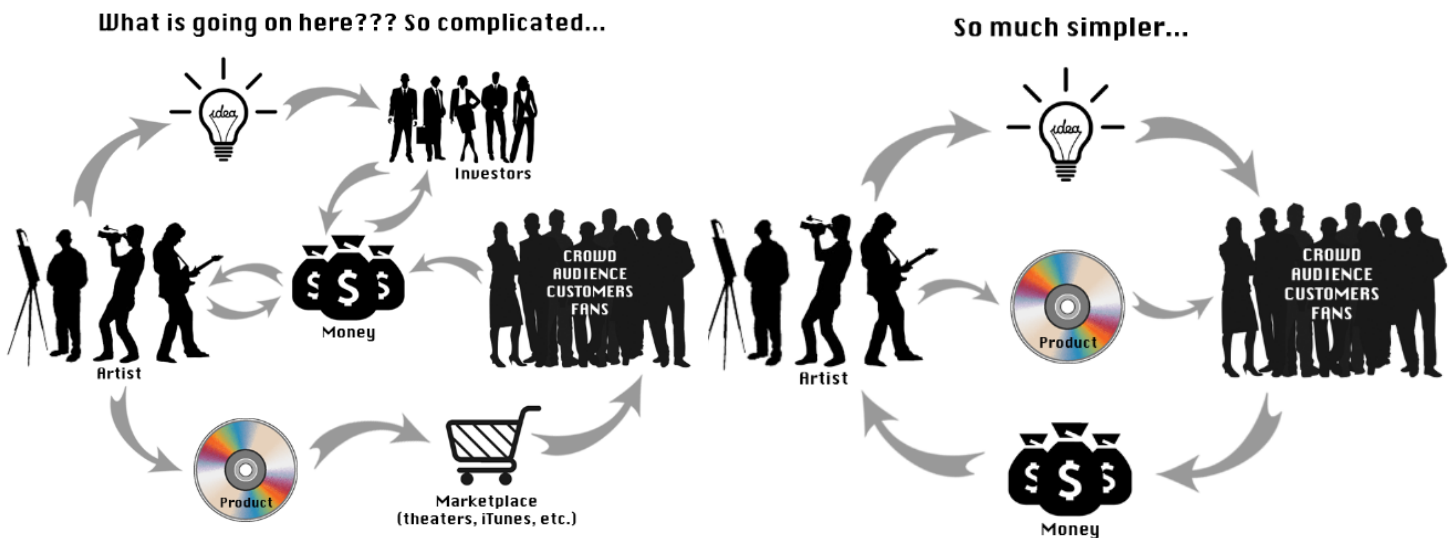
Because of Hollywood's iron grip on the entertainment industry, with all its beauties of fame and fortune, as well as its beasts of nepotism and cronyism, those dreamers didn't stand a chance at slipping a foot in the door. These camera companies [Sony, Canon, Panasonic] ushered into the world the Dawn of the Digital Camera… Now, this new incarnation of indie filmmakers, once only dreamers, has been granted the tools necessary to make their own films with newfound ease. (Trigonis, 7)

Will this completely replace the traditional distribution models? Probably not. It would be very sad to see studios, movie theaters, and Netflix go away completely. However, the success of Hollywood-ish, star-studded films like "Super Troopers 2" ($4.5mil raised), "Palo Alto' ($326K raised by James Franco), "Video Game High School" series (over $1mil raised), "Road Hard" ($1.4mil raised by Adam Carolla), are now being crowdfunded as well. Crowdfunding is simply another way to offer a more diverse product-line to the continually-expanding niche tastes of consumers, probably "much more the territory of the no-budget, DIY moviemaker" (Ryan, A Film in the Crowd). So this new paradigm is perfect for (1.) underserved groups of people or niche audiences, (2.) organizations with the marketing savvy to get huge coverage, but no access to venture capital, (3.) creators with a large audience already, or (4.) the DIY creator looking to build his/her own audience.

But it sure isn't easy! Many filmmakers are now learning that, "marketing your film begins when you are in pre-production." (David Branin's Crowd-Funding Cheat Sheet). Crowdfunding is indeed a powerful marketing and audience-building strategy. However, "crowdfunding is not for the weak of heart" (Pinsonneault, Networking Novice). "If you're hungry enough, you will get there. But it's incredibly time consuming and tedious." With some savvy, anybody can build an audience and crowdfund any project. Based on over twenty five articles, books, podcasts, workshops, and personal experience, I have assembled this in-depth guide to crowdfunding, pieced together from marketing and crowdfunding experts in the fields of filmmaking, entrepreneurialism, and publishing. This is not a blog post, this is not a magazine article, this is not a get rich quick scheme. This text is meant for the serious learner to be read, reread, highlighted, notated, and digested slowly. All sources I mention AND MORE are listed in the Bibliography if you want to go further down the rabbit hole. So grab a pen or pencil and take good notes. Here's how to put together a solid crowdfunding campaign. Happy learning….

�料PREPARATION

As with any project, you'll first need to prepare a few things. It is important to understand that "55% of Kickstarter campaigns fail to make their goal." (Ryan Koo, How I Raised $125,000 on Kickstarter). However, most of these campaigns fail not because of the product, the campaign, or the creator's lack of clout, but because of the campaigner's lack of preparation. Interestingly, there is quite a large gap between the funding percentages of projects that get funded successfully and those that fail. "According to a variety of analyses of Kickstarter data, campaigns that achieve 50% of their funding goal reach their final goal more than 95% of the time" (Fleishman, I Get My Kicks from Campaign). This means that campaigns are either funded successfully, or fail miserably. Why do you think that is? With a basic understanding of the preparation done for successful campaigns, one can easily see what it is that successful campaigns are doing to hit their goals. Things like strategizing, building a team, budgeting, scheduling, and research.

The first and maybe the most important preparation needed is a shift in mindset. Crowdfunding is not easy. It takes a lot of hard work, many long hours, and all your emotional capacity. "Crowdfunders need to be mindful of their own energy during the campaign and take steps to rest, relax, and nourish the spirit…. The energy required in crowdfunding must be positive, optimistic, bold, confident, and self-assured. You need to understand the energy and spiritual aspects of crowdfunding and make sure that they align with who you are and your project's purpose" (Reque-Dragicevic, The Spiritual Aspects of Crowdfunding). "But it also requires the courage to shout to the world 'I need $100,000 to make my film, and I believe that you will give it to me'" (Trigonis, 125). I love how Trigonis puts it: fighting "a war for your art" (Trigonis, 167).

After raising $125,000 for his feature film "Man-Child," Ryan Koo of NoFilmSchool.com did an in-depth analysis of the amount of work he put into his campaign. According to his data, he spent 345 hours running his campaign over six weeks. (Ryan Koo, How I raised $125,000 on Kickstarter). That's an average of 8 hrs per day, seven days per week, for six weeks straight. Begin thinking that you will need to be spending all day everyday sitting at the computer promoting for your entire campaign period, that way you will not be taken aback when this actually happens. Here are a few other things you will need to prepare…

Man-child Fundraising hours/day
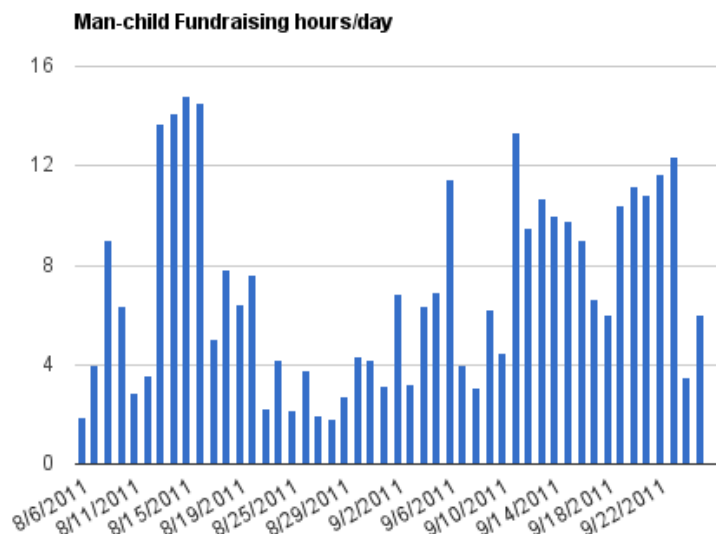
Your personal network…
Unless you have a project with a very strong core audience like Jeff Hays's documentary about vaccines, big pharma, and food called "Bought" (https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/bought-the-movie#/story), consider the fact that most contributions will come from your friends and

family. This means that you and your crew will need to have already built up your personal network on multiple platforms. "Don't attempt a massive campaign unless you have a slew of people willing to help you consistently spread the word through their social networks too" (Pinsonneault, Networking Novice). So make sure you've built up your Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, E-mail list, any other social networks (real or digital) as much as you can before you begin. It is also a good idea to begin promoting even BEFORE you launch by engaging your audience, asking people their advice, and getting them involved so people know it's coming. But don't just friend request random people you don't know! Send a private message, make a personal connection, give them a reason to connect with you.

YOUR HEALTH, NOW BROUGHT TO YOU BY WALL STREET

BOUGHT
THE HIDDEN STORY BEHIND VACCINES, BIG PHARMA AND YOUR FOOD
FROM THE PRODUCER AND DIRECTOR OF *DOCTORED*

Budgeting…
Budgeting is an important skill to have for any project. Make sure you have an excel spreadsheet of EVERYTHING you will need to make the project a success, including but not limited to craft services, catering, insurance, legal fees if you are paying crew, locations, labor, equipment rental, transportation, gas compensation, music licensing, etc. And always budget 10%–20% contingency, because there are ALWAYS expenses you did not expect. Most low budget short films are made for $5,000–$10,000, professional ones with a large professional crew can be made for $20,000–$50,000 (this is considering there are no above-the-line fees for stars). My short films have cost $5,000 shooting on HD on location with a 5-person unpaid crew, $7,000 shot on 35mm with an unpaid 25-person crew, $15,000 shooting 35mm on location with a 25-person unpaid crew, $25,000 shooting 35mm not on location with an unpaid crew, and $25,000 shooting on HD with a 25-person professional crew. In addition to budgeting your film project, also consider the costs of running and fulfilling the campaign. Jennifer of My Reincarnation's $150,000 campaign(https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/802245098/my-reincarnation), "estimates that the total costs of her campaign will be between 20 and 25% of the money raised" (Broderick, Maximizing Distribution Through Crowdfunding). "This should include the site fee, the payment processing fee, the cost of creating, acquiring, and shipping rewards, and any staffing fees." There is also an art to setting your funding goal. "Unsurprisingly, setting a larger funding target does reduce your chances of success. But don't go setting a low target, expecting to raise lots more – most successful projects raise no more than 10% over their target" (Hubbub, Crowdfunding Handbook, 10). Not too high, not too low – put some thought into it.

Scheduling…
Remember, crowdfunding requires nonstop promotion, so make sure you have time reserved for preparation and for promotion during the campaign itself. If you have a job or kids, you need to block out solid 3-hour chunks of time in your schedule where you can have no distractions. "Crowdfunding is a full-time job" (Trigonis, 21, 56). In addition to Ryan Koo's recorded work hour data, Gary King, who raised $30,000 for his ultra-low budget musical "How Do You Write a Joe Schermann Song" also said that "making his crowdfund ing campaign a success meant tireless promotion.… four to six hours every day" (Ryan, A Film in the Crowd). Deciding your time limit is

tricky. You'd think that the longer your campaign time limit, the more time you would have to raise money. But Sheri Chandler(online marketing strategist) says that one of the ways to have a sure-fire crowdfund ing fail is that "your campaign length is too long" (Crowdfunding Cliff Notes). "Shorter projects – which keep their momentum through this period – tend to be more successful" (Hubbub, Crowdfunding Handbook, 6). "While you can run a campaign for up to 60 days, that length of time doesn't put enough pressure on people to contribute now" (Conner, Crowdfund Secrets, Forbes). Kickstarter data shows that the most successful campaigns are 21-32 days long. While Indiegogo data shows that, "campaigns that set a funding deadline between 60 and 70 days raise, on average, 141% more money than their shorter or longer campaign counterparts" (Trigonis, 57). Here are some guidelines based on your funding goal:

• < $5000: 30-45 days
• $5000-$10,000: 35-55 days
• $10,000-$20,000: 45-75 days
• $20,000+: 75-120 days
  (David Branin's Crowdfunding Cheat Sheet)

Here's another cool scheduling tip: begin your campaign on a Monday, end it on a Friday. Both Twitter and Facebook data shows that peak usage is during the week in the middle of the day, and drops off over the weekend (http://www.forbes.com/sites/bruceupbin/2012/05/09/when-to-make-stuff-go-viral-online/). David Branin noted about his campaign that, "we would see a good number of backers on Fridays" (David Branin's Crowdfunding Cheat Sheet). His reasoning is that Friday is pay day, though I believe it's simply due to the fact that more people are using the internet on Friday before activity drops off during the weekend.

Peak Twitter Click-throughs

Peak Facebook Click-throughs
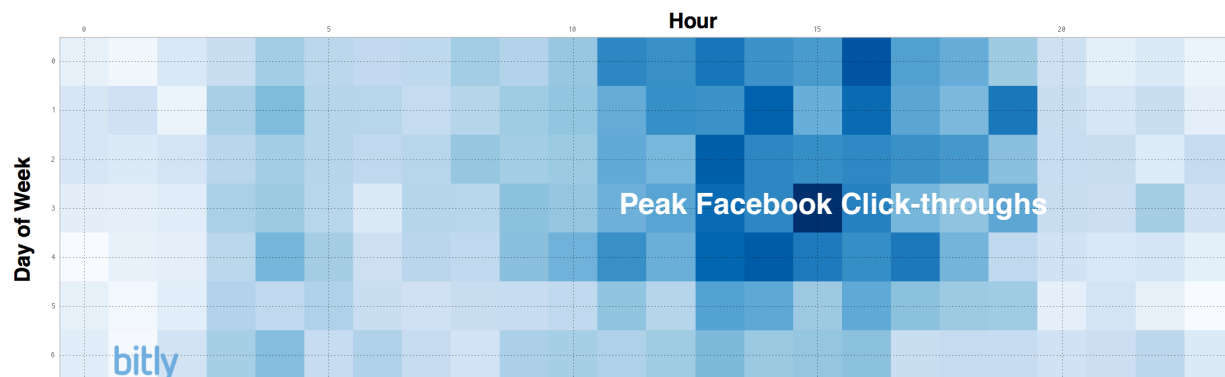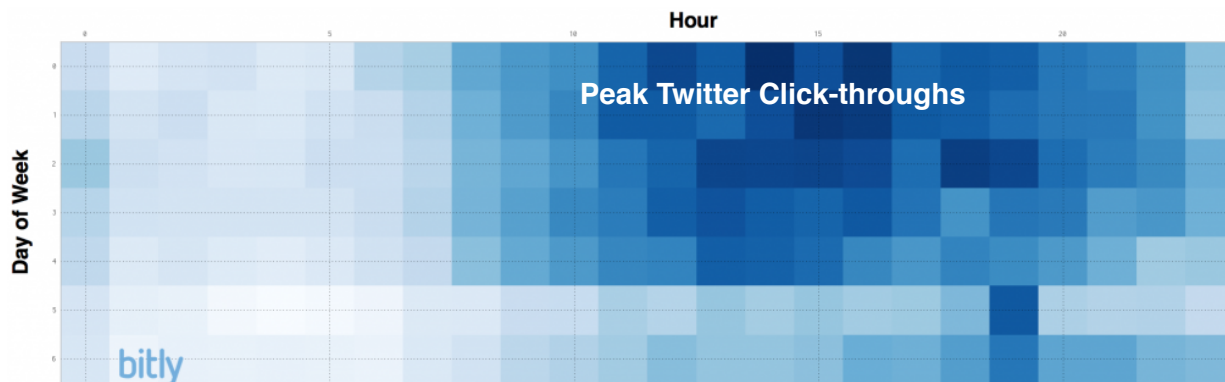
Building a team…

If you are thinking you will be doing all the work yourself, please reconsider. "The very nature of crowdfund ing dictates that you can't [do this alone]" (Trigonis, 97). If your project has a team, incentivize them to be involved in the crowdfunding process as well. According to Indiegogo, "if you have four or more members on your team, you'll raise 70% more money than if it were only you running your campaign" (Trigonis, 25). "By showing there is more than just one member of your team, you build more credibility in the minds of potential contributors, making them think that this particular project may be more serious…" (Trigonis, 26). "Strength in numbers," Ryan Koo says (How I raised $125,000). His 345 hours would have been a lot easier with multiple people tag-teaming. Even two people breaks up the workload by half – 4 hrs per day instead of 8. Depending on your funding goal, it may be worth budgeting to pay an assistant $10/hr to do some of the promotion work for you – it would only cost $1000 for 100 hours of work. But if you do enlist your crew to help with the crowdfunding, make sure they know exactly what they are doing. This requires some management skills. "When giving members of your team tasks to handle during your campaigning efforts, it's helpful to make sure that those jobs correspond with the skill set they already have" (Trigonis, 29). If you have a crew member who has some marketing experience, this is even better. Regardless, the more people you have promoting online, the larger your campaign's reach will be.
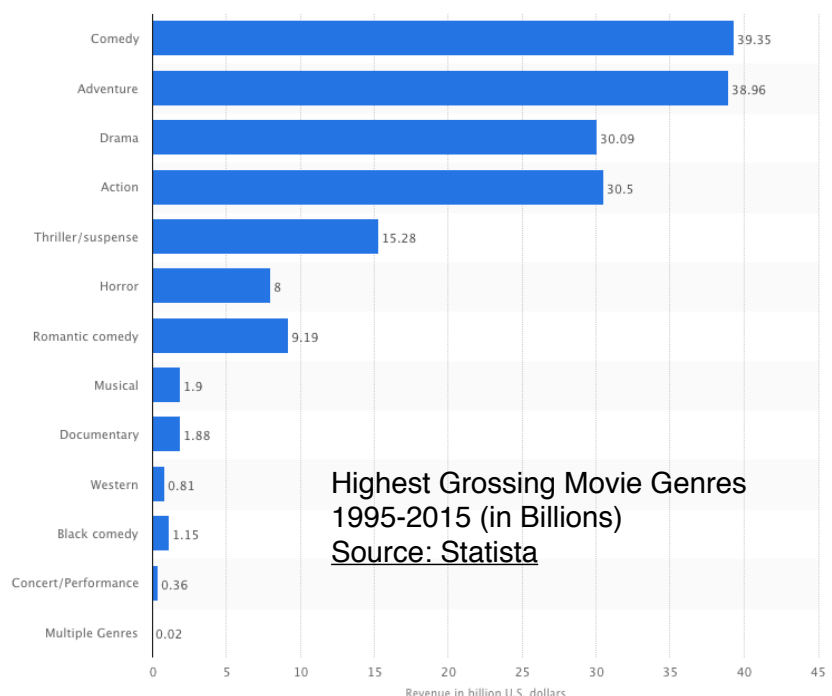

The team from *I am I,* $111K raised on Kickstarter

Research…

Probably the most time-consuming preparation task will be your research. There are a couple things you will need to research: (1.) your competition and (2.) your core audience. Start by looking at other campaigns in your category to see what they are doing. Jeff Hays says, "search for successes and failures in your category" (Conner, Crowdfund Secrets, Forbes). This will give you a good idea of what works and what doesn't. For *If There's a Hell Below*, Nathan Williams said, "seeing great ideas and bad ones were critical in informing our own strategies" (An Introvert's Guide to Crowdfunding). This will also help you piece together who the core audience is for your film. If you are trying to raise more than $10,000, you will need to be looking beyond your own personal network to people who don't personally know you. People you know will support you just because they know and like you. Beyond that, nobody cares. Why would some random person give money to somebody they don't know? Because there is something in it for them. This is marketing 101. Not only will you need to research to figure out who is your core audience (those who will be most interested in the subject matter of your film), you will also need to research how to best appeal to them. There are mountains of research data on every demographic and psychographic out there that can be helpful, but what is most important for you to figure out is:

✷ WHO IS YOUR CROWD?

"Most often, the film's success has less to do with the quality of the finished product than with the fact that the filmmakers took time to focus on a target audience. Lots of filmmakers settle for wanting to make a movie that everyone will enjoy. But who's everyone?" (Trigonis, 45). Jennifer from "My Reincarnation," believes the key to a successful campaign is "a strong, reachable core audience" (Broderick, Maximizing Distribution Through Crowdfunding). This is where the filmmaker/artist inside of you will have to take a step back to make room for the businessperson. I know they sometimes fight for creative control, but if you can learn how to make them work together, nothing can stop you. Unlike a painting hanging in a gallery that gives you the full experience immediately, your audience has to decide for themselves whether or not they will invest up to 90 minutes of their lives to watch your film (whether money is exchanged or not). For this very reason, the art of filmmaking by it's nature is half art and half marketing/sales. You don't necessarily need to change the form of your project to appeal to a more specific core audience. But you definitely should highlight the aspects of your project that will appeal more to that core audience, and SHOW them how your project will add value to their lives. "The real work about honing in on a target audience is figuring out where to find that audience by asking yourself two questions: Who will watch my movie? Who might help me promote my film and my crowdfunding campaign?" (Trigonis, 47). Then the work becomes finding where those people hang out online and figuring out how to tap into that resource. Jeff Hays prefers to look at crowdfunding from the other direction: "there is no crowd. And the sooner you acknowledge that, the sooner you can get busy about building your crowd…. What's the community that benefits by me doing this project?" (Hal Elrod's Achieve Your Goals Podcast, 15:45).

Selling entertainment is a game unto itself – stars, story, genre, trailer, movie poster. So if your project is a narrative film, you need to understand how feature films are normally marketed and how audiences normally respond to the marketing of those films. "You simply have to tap into your niche and genre and focus your pitch, perks, and promotion heavily on [those people]" (Trigonis, 23). Genres include action, comedy, drama, thriller, and western, etc. "Genres have [also] been broken down into niches, very tightly focused audiences who enjoy certain elements that mainstream movies don't always address" (Trigonis, 45). For example, "if you narrow down your audience from horror movie fans, which may be a bit too vague, to Asian-American (demographic) hardcore (niche) horror (genre), you may be more likely to build a massive awareness of your film within the population most likely to buy into your film" (Trigonis, 23).

Genre	Revenue (billion U.S. dollars)
Comedy	39.35
Adventure	38.96
Drama	30.09
Action	30.5
Thriller/suspense	15.28
Horror	8
Romantic comedy	9.19
Musical	1.9
Documentary	1.88
Western	0.81
Black comedy	1.15
Concert/Performance	0.36
Multiple Genres	0.02

Highest Grossing Movie Genres 1995-2015 (in Billions)
Source: Statista

© Statista 2015

But when it comes to documentary, the star of the film is it's subject matter – this is what you should sell. "Most documentaries do extremely well [crowdfunding] because many times documentaries can reach out to particular groups, organizations, and institutions for further support and contributions. Campaigns for narrative films may require more innovative and creative tactics to appeal to random people" (Trigonis, 22). If it's a documentary about a legal subject, then your first instinct should be to find where attorneys hang out online. But we need to get more specific than that. If it's a documentary on real estate law, then the audience you need to find would be real estate attorneys. If the documentary follows a specific real estate court case in Miami, then the core audience might be real estate attorneys in Miami. But if the documentary follows a specific real estate court case in Miami in which the city is suing a real estate developer for developing on protected land that provides a habitat for an endangered species of birds, then the specific audience would probably be bird activists rather than real estate attorneys. You see how you can hone in on your core audience? If you then look at all the large online communities in existence (millions) who are lacking films specific to them, then you can see how much potential there is to create successful and profitable films.

✳DESIGNING YOUR PITCH

Now it's time to put all that preparation work to good use. I've noticed that the more well-crafted the campaign (story, marketing, video, etc.), the higher the average order. Just to clarify… When I say "design" I don't necessarily mean visual aesthetics. I mean marketing; more specifically, I mean positioning and branding. This is the real meat and potatoes of this guide. The rest is all technical stuff, but this section will make or break your campaign. First, you need a crash course on marketing. The point of marketing is to make selling nonessential. Peter Drucker, one of the most respected business thought leaders ever, often referred to as the father of business management, once said, "The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well the product or service fits him and sells itself." Understanding this, it is easy to see that sales is not about tricks or pushing. I like to think good marketing is simply good art. In this case, "Creativity and marketing become one and the same" (Trigonis, 73).

When designing your campaign, it is important to remember the basic elements of fundraising: pitch, perks, and promotion. And by enhancing each with "the fourth P – personalization – the chances of achieving one's goal increase significantly" (Trigonis, xv). To apply these basics to a crowdfunding campaign, observe the elements that every campaign page has: title, log-line, pitch video, description, perks, and the ticker. When I personally look at a campaign page, I first look at the ticker to see how much they've raised so far and how much time they have to hit their goal. This already gives me a sense of their credibility – are other people contributing? Then I watch the video. If I'm sold by the end of the video, then I look at the perks. If there is a perk that interests me, I click the contribute button. I don't even read the long description, but it can help increase your closing percentage for people who are on the fence. So think of your campaign page as an obstacle course that you must lead your viewers through. Your goal is to make each element as tasty as possible to lead them from the top of the page all the way to the bottom to click on that "contribute" button (or wherever it is on the page). Here are some things to think about when designing your campaign….

Appeal to the emotions…
Marketing is always about appealing to peoples' emotions. This is how you get their attention. Why do cat videos spread so virally? Because they're freaking adorable and make you go "Aawwwwwwwwww so cute!" So "make your movie stand out from the crowd by connecting with

people on an emotional level" (Joke and Biagio, How to Build an Emotional Connection with Your Audience). How does one do this?

1. Start with a project that makes you emotional…. You'll never move an audience if the project doesn't move you.
2. Connect to others with your film's story [the story behind the scenes]… What extraordinary circumstances in your own life gave you no choice BUT to make this movie?

(Joke and Biagio, How to Build an Emotional Connection with Your Audience)

I spoke to producer Akira Chan about how his production company *Elevate* helped with the campaign for the documentary "Be Brave," which raised $184,000 on Indiegogo. "Be Brave" is the INCREDIBLE STORY of a deceased filmmaker's sister embarking on an international journey to fix something that was believed to be the reason for her brother's death. "We just had a great trailer," Akira told me. The campaign went viral because of it's emotional story and because of the emotional attachment the filmmaker had to her brother's death.

Real footage captures this haunting and inspiring story of filmmaker Daniel Northcott's dying wish to share his message of unity with the world.

http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/be-brave-the-true-story-of-daniel-northcott#/story

Show how your product will improve their lives…
When it's just your friends and family, they'll support you in whatever you do. But beyond that, you must give viewers a reason to contribute to your project. "People will be compelled by what the project will do for them, not what it will accomplish for you [the creator]. This is Marketing 101" (Conner, Crowdfund Secrets, Forbes). "As you think through the copy, what you gotta ask yourself as the reader is: 'what's in it for them?' The key to your video and the key to good copy is to paint a clear picture of what this viewer's life is like before your product, and what their life is like after your product. What is the transformative thing that will happen because of this? It can be belonging, it can be greed, it can be social prestige, 'how will this make me look better to my social group?'" (Jeff Hays, Hal Elrod's Achieve Your Goals Podcast, 32:30). A great example of this is the "Coolest Cooler" campaign. In his video, Ryan did a great job of showing what your life is like without the Coolest Cooler, and what it will be like with the Coolest Cooler. And it worked – the Coolest Cooler was so successful at first that it attracted a ton of media coverage which drew more attention and stimulated even more sales. Once the campaign ended, the Coolest Cooler had raised over $13million!

COOLEST COOLER: 21st Century Cooler that's Actually Cooler

$13,285,226
pledged of $50,000 goal

http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/ryangrepper/coolest-cooler-21st-century-cooler-thats-actually/description

Visual aesthetics…
It has to look nice. "Appearances can weigh a little heavier on the decision-making process" (Trigonis, 42). Hire a graphic designer to do your marketing materials if you don't have much design experience. And hire a filmmaker to do your video if you are not a filmmaker. You only have one chance to make a first impression. The better it looks, the better you look. The better you look, the higher your average order and closing percentage. Kickstarter is chosen as the preferred crowdfunding platform more often than Indiegogo, not just because of brand awareness, but also because of it's aesthetics. Kickstarter has a sleek look. Conversely, Indiegogo has better customer satisfaction, it's more flexible, open, and inclusive.

Have a strong why…
Beyond just marketing, this tidbit of wisdom may be the most important lesson in leadership: "People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it" (Sinek, 42). In his book, Start With Why, Simon Sinek does not mean "to make profit." This is not a compelling why, it is a result. This will not inspire action. The point of business is not to make money, it is to create goods and services that connect us together, that raise the quality of human life, that move us forward. What Simon is referring to is "your purpose, cause, or belief. Why does your company exist? Why do you get out of bed every morning? And why should anyone care?" (Sinek, 39). If your message is, "Please help me achieve my dreams," then your why is to follow your own personal dreams. Some people may appreciate the noble pursuit of your dreams, but this is not super compelling. If your message is this: "I believe we are addicted to fossil fuels, and I believe that we have the technology, expertise, and will to create clean, green, energy-efficient transportation. But I believe nobody is doing it because the oil companies are in bed with the car companies. I believe consumers are aching for a change in transportation, and I will fight to get quality electric cars on the road. It is time for change. No more oil, no more gas, no more insurance, no more car salesmen, no more immediate depreciation of value, no more carbon emissions. Let's kick our country's addiction to fossil fuels. By the way, my name is Elon Musk, and I started a company called Tesla." Not sure about you, but if Elon started a war, I would die to fight for that cause. And my first electric car is going to be a Tesla. "Ideally, if you bring the concept of a profound mission, a strong 'why,' a coolness factor and the creation of a product that people want all together, the result forms a diamond, and you have the inherent makings for a potential crowdfund home run" (Conner, Crowdfund Secrets, Forbes).
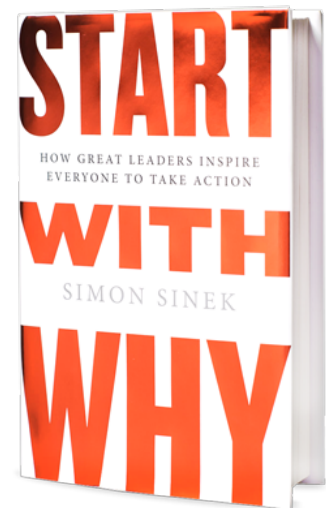
✳ PITCH VIDEO

Why does every crowdfunding site require a video? Above anything else, your video will sell your audience on your project. People are much more willing to watch a video than read a few paragraphs of copy. But it must keep people's attention – if you lose them halfway through the video, then you've lost the sale. "A pitch video, therefore, should be as short as possible, and I would suggest a runtime between two and three minutes at most." (Trigonis, 68). It is difficult to cram the entire campaign into one video, so it is important to highlight just the essential selling points. The rest of the details of the campaign information should be in the copy below the video for people to read further if they are so inclined. John Trigonis says that a crowdfunding video should contain an introduction, your pitch, and a showcase of your work (65).

First three seconds…
"View" statistics show you the number of views your video has garnered. A view is usually defined as a person staying with your video for at least 3 seconds, so the first three seconds are in many ways the most important part of the video. It must draw people in, intrigue them, keep them watching, keep them wanting more. "Attention spans are rapidly diminishing." (Trigonis, 68). In order to hook your viewers, YouTube suggests you, "Make the first shot fascinating; Address the audience immediately; Tell them what they're watching; Spark their curiosity; Ask a question; Tease the rest of the video; Keep branding to less than five seconds, unless it's hilarious" (https://www.youtube.com/yt/playbook/captivate-your-audience.html). John Trigonis says that your "introduction is your opportunity to make the acquaintance of your potential contributors and let them know a little about who you are not only as a filmmaker, but as a person, too. It's your chance to quickly make a connection with your future contributors" (Trigonis, 65).

Sell yourself…
"Investors invest in projects while people invest in people" (Trigonis, 78). "Essentially, your pitch video is the one and only chance you have to really sell yourself…. tell them why you want to make this film and why they should help make it happen" (Trigonis, 65)."Backers may be drawn to contribute to your campaign by the sheer force of your personality or past accomplishments" (Trigonis, 175). During my direct sales career, I learned that out of ten appointments, one will automatically not buy, two will automatically buy, and the other 7/10 depend on YOU – if people like you, they will buy. Although these statistics are specific to direct sales and to the product I was selling, it's still an important rule of thumb to remember: sales is largely influenced by the salesperson and how they gel with the potential customer.

Your pitch…
John Trigonis states that your pitch should include: the précis, purpose, and perks. "The shortest form of a précis, or summary, in filmmaking is the log-line… This is followed by the purpose, where you can quickly tell your potential contributors why you're raising funds for your film through crowdfunding, and what those funds will be used for… After that, it's usually a good idea to briefly mention some of the perks that people will get in exchange for their monetary contribution…" (Trigonis, 65). Make sure to include all value propositions and selling points of your project to show why viewers would want to contribute – more tips under "Designing Your Pitch" above.

A thought on film trailers…

"The trailer for your film is a sales tool geared to get people to want to see your film, not a pitch tool, which exists to convince them to come aboard and help get it made" (Trigonis, 63). I disagree with John here. Many successful campaigns have used the trailer to sell the idea of the film – it's a great way to convince people to contribute because the film is ultimately what they are supporting, so you better make sure it's a film they want to see. But only if the trailer is good; using the trailer can backfire if it's awful. And this does not mean you don't have to show up in the pitch video yourself – the pitch video should still include you and your pitch. It is indeed difficult to include a trailer if the film has not yet been shot (this is usually the reason you are raising funds), but if the film is already shot, a trailer is a great way to raise finishing funds. I'd highly suggest you add a concept trailer or sizzle reel to the campaign copy at the very least in order to show what the film will be like, but a pitch video combining your pitch and trailer elements is a great compromise in order to show what the film will be like.

Credibility…

Here's a quick crash course on sales: handle all objections beforehand and ask for the sale. You will get a lot of no's; sales is a numbers game. In fact, on average, only 1% of strangers who visit your crowdfunding page will contribute. Your friends and family already know and trust you, so credibility is not an issue with them. But for strangers and acquaintances, one of their biggest objections to clicking the contribute button will be that they don't know you and therefore cannot trust you. Trust is a big deal, especially in sales. How do you build that credibility? In digital marketing, credibility is built by presenting your credentials: your experience as a filmmaker, any awards or festival recognition, testimonials or critic reviews. "The final part of a personalized pitch is the showcase, in which you build your credibility as a filmmaker by showing samples of your prior film work and highlighting any awards or recognition you or your work may have received…. Now you need to show them you know your way around a camera and film set" (Trigonis, 67). If you are a first-time filmmaker, then the credibility of your project can be built with your cast/crew, or any previous experience that makes you the ideal person to make this specific film. In the 1980's, Jordan Belfort (referred to as The Wolf of Wall Street) began a sales training program called "Straight Line Persuasion." Yes, he and his team of fired-up Wall Street brokers lied their way into acquiring hundreds of millions of dollars from thousands of Americans eager to jump on the Wall Street stock bandwagon, and he did go to prison for it. But this goes to show how powerful his sales strategy was – it can be used for good or bad. "Straight Line Persuasion" is a sales theory that says: every sale follows a specific path through the mind of the potential customer. So get inside the mind of your ideal viewer who does not know who you are, and handle all their objections: Does this guy/girl really know what he's/she's doing? Have they ever made a film or product before? Are they
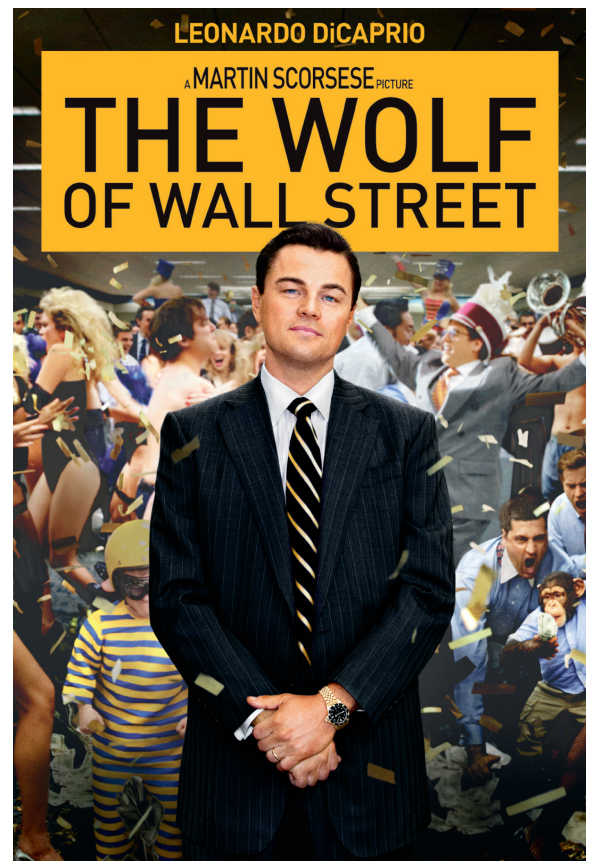
good at it? Is this film/project going to be high quality or crappy? Are they going to actually complete the project successfully or are they going to flake? And most importantly they are thinking… Why do I care??? At the same time, you are battling the ever-shortening attention span of the American consumer sitting at their computer. So keep your video fun and exciting. Don't bore them with just your talking head – make it entertaining to watch. For filmmakers, "You have no excuse to make a boring video. This is the one thing you're best at. If you can't grab my attention in a 90-second video, I certainly don't want to watch your 90-minute film. So don't treat the video like a grant application letter. Use the skills that make you an exciting filmmaker to make an engaging, aesthetically compelling, sharply edited video" (An Introvert's Guide to Crowdfunding).

�֍ P E R K S

"The real muscles behind crowdfunding are the perks and the fundamental concept that if you give me money, you get something in return" (Trigonis, 69). "Many times, people contribute to a campaign because of what they will receive in return, and we as crowdfunders should be sensitive to this fact." (Trigonis, 61)

Swag vs. Memento
What is a memento? Noun: An object kept as a reminder or souvenir of a person, place, or event. This can include swag like t-shirts or hats, but mementos have a quality of specialty and uniqueness that swag does not; swag is too impersonal and not special enough. "Rather than spend big money on swag, spend mucho time coming up with a creative, inexpensive item your potential audience might actually hold on to – even cherish" (Joke and Biagio, How to Build an Emotional Connection with Your Audience). The example that they use is their dream button that they came up with for their campaign. It is simply a blank button that fans would interact with by writing their dreams on them with a sharpie.
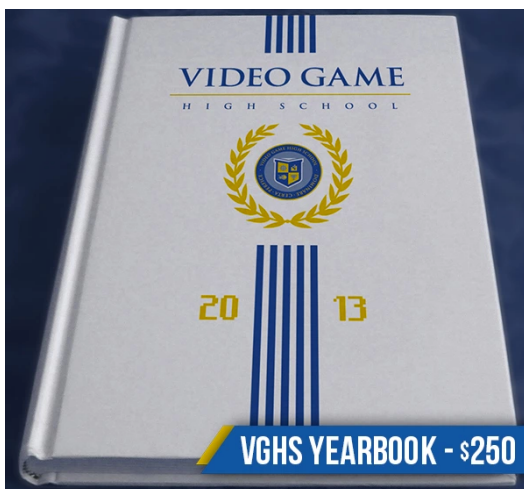
Click to check out more
Video Game High School Perks

Tie it in to your project…
"When strategizing your campaign, think about the important themes and motifs that are running through it" (Trigonis, 53). Starting here will give you a good idea of how to present the various elements of your campaign. Try to make everything about your campaign self-reflexive, meaning make it "relevant to your film's content. People like details. Tie your crowdfund ing tactics directly or indirectly into your campaign" (Trigonis, 23). This will make it thematic, succinct, artistic, and thoughtful. A great example of this is Freddie Wong's campaign for "Video Game High School Season 3." He designed the entire campaign like a high school with perks like personalized school ID cards, varsity jackets, pennants, and yearbooks. So cool! This is the best example of campaign design I've ever seen. And it worked – he's raised a total of $270,000, $800,000, and $900,000 for each consecutive season of Video Game High School.

Put yourself into your campaign…

Audiences love when you put yourself into your campaign. "Personalization means more than simply giving a piece of yourself to your film campaign; sometimes it means giving a part of what's yours – your time, energy, passion, and oftentimes sleeping hours – to your campaign" (Trigonis, 79). Going above and beyond shows your contributors that you care. You can include perks like autographing merchandise with a personal thank you note, screaming their name at the top of a building, posting recorded video thank yous on their Facebook wall, hanging out with them for a day, giving some of yourself to them – these things mean a lot to contributors. "By going that extra mile and showing your potential contributors the real person behind your campaign, you become the very definition of integrity, a real mensch, and open yourself and your film to a brave new world of possibilities far exceeding the limits of the amount of money you'll ultimately raise" (Trigonis, 62).

Personalization

The term *personalize* means "to design or produce something to meet someone's individual requirements" or "to make something identifiable as belonging to a particular person, especially by marking it with their name or initials." Many marketers agree that the future of content marketing will be personalizing content. Wouldn't you much rather have a t-shirt with your name on it? Instead of an autographed poster, wouldn't you want one that was signed, "Hey (your name here)! We couldn't have done it without you." "While there's nothing wrong with offering the more typical perks like T-shirts, DVD copies of the finished film, signed posters, pages from the script, and associate executive producer credit in your film, it's much better to think outside the money box and get personal with your perks" (Trigonis, 69). "Everyone knows a simple DVD isn't worth $50, but a DVD signed by the writer/director of the film and a T-shirt that tells others you supported a cool indie film project are a steal in exchange for a Ulysses S. Grant" (Trigonis, 70). Personalization can even be as simple as a social media shoutout or shooting and posting a personalized thank you to a contributor's Facebook wall.

Pricing

Pricing is an art unto itself. There is a reason why prices are labeled $9.99 instead of $10 – it's not sales tax, that's for sure. It's psychology. Before you begin pricing your perks, it is important to understand some crowdfunding pricing statistics. "The most common Kickstarter pledge is $25. The average pledge amount is $71" (Crowdfunding Cliff Notes). Other data suggests that "the average donation on Kickstarter is $50 (which takes into account some very generous donations, averaged out by more common $5 and $10 backers)" (Ryan Koo, How I Raised $125,000 on Kickstarter). But after his campaign, Ryan Koo found that "with $125,000 raised from 2,336 backers, the average donation worked out to be $53" (How I Raised $125,000 on Kickstarter). Another aspect of pricing that you should understand before you begin pricing your perks is the concept of dropping down. The point of offering a product line with various pricing options (rather than one single product with a specific price) is to increase the closing percentage by offering customers more options. In direct sales, the salesperson would try to close the most expensive option first, then slowly drop down to each less and less expensive option. In internet marketing, the product line is presented simultaneously, but the concept still remains: the higher the price levels, the higher the average order. Theoretically, if the perceived market value of a product is equal to or greater than it's price point, one can increase the average order by pricing perk levels more expensively. Then the most common perk would be the mid-tier option. Perhaps they do not want the most valuable perk because it is too expensive, but they don't want to give just $1, so they choose the mid-value, mid-priced option – which should be the perk you are trying to sell the most. Offering various price levels will

ensure that you will sell more of the medium-priced perk/product. "Research shows that when people are offered the chance to donate 1 dollar they will be more likely to donate $10 or $20" (Dunn, How to fund a successful Indiegogo/Kickstarter Campaign in 5 Easy Steps). But others believe that "the first reward should be your primary reward" (Fleishman, I Get My Kicks from Campaign). Indiegogo does this with "featured" perks in which some campaigns can select a perk they want to feature at the top of the list.

✴ PROMOTION

"We're fortunate to live during a time that's made promotion as easy as sending an email or updating one's Facebook status" (Trigonis, 133). But some creators play in to the "false myth that potential funders actively scavenge the internet searching for projects to throw bundles of cash at" (Trigonis, 75). Unfortunately, people are not sitting at their computers with credit card in hand. After preparation, the biggest key to a successful crowdfunding campaign is going blind… from staring at the computer screen 12 hrs/day, 7 days/wk. "It's no secret that a successful crowdfunding campaign demands around-the-clock promotion" (Trigonis, 75). Every contribution will be from your efforts. "In today's technocracy, this translates to constant Tweets, relentless Facebook status updates, email blasts, sleep strikes, the occasional hunger strike, and any other means by which to keep your film campaign on the minds of your friends, family, supporters, contributors, and potential contributors" (Trigonis, 75). Remember Ryan Koo's campaign? He kept track of his hours and found that he spent 345 hours running his campaign over six weeks in order to raise $125,000 (Ryan Koo, How I raised $125,000 on Kickstarter). That's an average of 8 hrs per day, seven days per week, for six weeks straight of "constantly blogging about the campaign here [on nofilmschool.com], doing interviews and writing guest posts for other sites, as well as social networking around the clock" (Ryan Koo, How I raised $125,000 on Kickstarter). His in-depth analysis of his campaign also highlights the strategies he used and their results. Besides blogging and social media-ing daily, his campaign started with (1.) an e-mail newsletter, (2.) another e-mail newsletter, (3.) a twitter outreach campaign, (4.) Kickstarter featured his project while he added some new perks that created (5.) individual backer upsells, and (6.) one last e-mail newsletter. Not surprisingly, his contributor data shows how each specific promotion activity created a spike in pledges. Every contribution will be a direct results of your efforts!!!
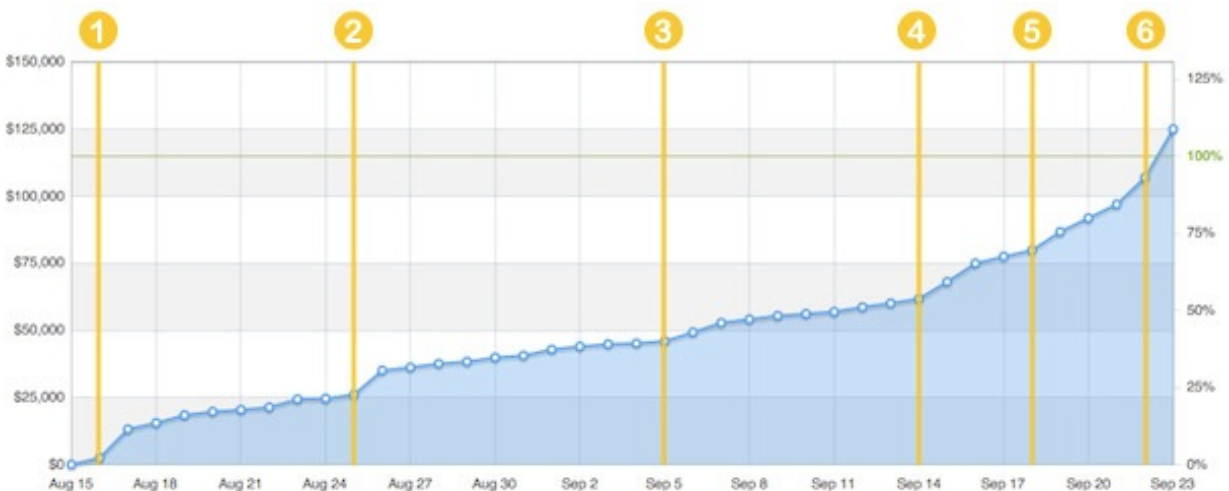
So work your ass off. Why? Because of the…

The 1%
This is another important concept to understand in any kind of internet marketing. Generally speaking, only 1% of internet traffic converts to sales. So don't worry about the other 99%, focus only on that 1% who will support you. This is a rule of thumb used by internet advertisers, content creators, YouTubers, and social media-ers. Ryan Koo knew this before his campaign: "1% of people who saw the campaign would back it.… Why? Because I've tracked every statistic over the past year and a half of running this site [nofilmschool.com]" (Ryan Koo, How I Raised $125,000 on Kickstarter). "With a 1% overall backing rate and a $50 average donation, to make my goal I had to get the campaign in front of 250,000 people — in 38 days." With 140,000 unique visits to his website every month, this was definitely possible for Koo. What he was able to do with his campaign based on accurate predictions he made after tracking his statistics was impressively accurate. Glenn Fleishman, from his campaign *The Magazine: The Book*, also says, "I used to work with and around direct marketing, and knew that a 1% to 2% response rate from those you can reach directly is a baseline" (Fleishman, I Get My Kicks from Campaign). Therefore, by calculating your average order and sticking to the 1% rule, this will give you a good idea of how much traffic you need to generate in order to reach your fundraising goal.

Early adopters...
Remember, one of the very first things people see is the funding percentage ticker to see how much you have raised so far. This creates a bandwagon effect, so if viewers see that nobody has funded your campaign, they will join in not funding you. "According to data from Indiegogo, if a campaign reaches 30% or 40% of it's crowdfunding goal, strangers will start contributing to the project" (Trigonis, 106). In fact, Hubbub finds that projects that achieve 23% of their target go on to be successful, while Kickstarter finds that projects that reach 30% of their target have a 90% chance of success. So it's important to get to that 30% as quickly as possible. Here's a sound strategy to do so: make sure you have the first few backers already signed on to contribute BEFORE you even launch your campaign. These are called your "early adopters." Some call them your "evangelists," but they don't have to promote for you, they just need to log on the first day to get your funding percentage up to that 30% so strangers who fall on your crowdfunding page can jump on the bandwagon (CoLab Co-U crowdfunding workshop). Your early adopters will usually be friends, family, and your most fired-up supporters. So focus on reaching out to them first, but make sure they understand this 30% rule and the importance of contributing THE VERY FIRST DAY.

Early Majority
Early Adopters
Late Majority
Innovators
Laggards
2.5%   13.5%   34%   34%   16%
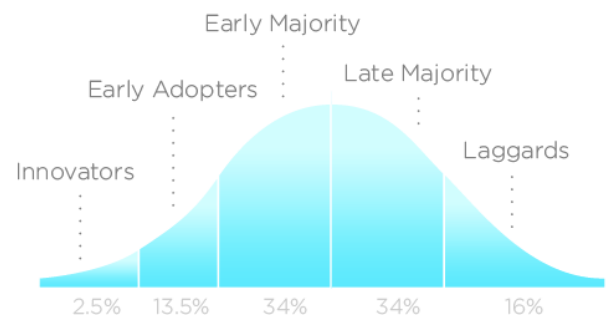
INNOVATION ADOPTION LIFECYCLE

Digital content marketing...
Content marketing has now become a must. Rather than being bombarded with advertisements, I'm sure you prefer to digest free content that interests you. Content marketing is all about adding as much value as possible through easily-digestable content, and there are many digital content platforms one can utilize: blogging, vlogging, social media, podcasting, video podcasting, web presence with SEO. Ryan Koo's daily strategy was blogging and social media

– very effective. But e-mail is the most powerful. According to one crowdfunder, "Whenever we sent direct emails to fund-raise, there was a huge spike in donations. Facebook blasts… not so much. I think that people who rely on Facebook completely often fail. Almost 70% of people who backed our project were from email" (Crowdfunding Cliff Notes). Seth Godin's Icarus Deception campaign is another example. He magically hit his goal and raised $40,000 in the first 3 hours, and ended up raising a total of $287,000. Pretty impressive, though Lucas McNelly of Turnstyle disagrees. He speculates, "The easiest solution here is that Godin sent out an emil to his 'True Fans' and they responded" (Crowdfunding 201: Seth Godin's Miracle Campaign is No Miracle). Raising $40K in three hours is impressive by any means, and Seth has the following to do it.

Social Media
Social Media is a jungle. Whether it be Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram, social media will undoubtedly be one of the marketing platforms you put MOST of your promoting time into. Why? Because that's where most people are ALL DAY LONG. But there are some tried-and-true social media strategies you should utilize. "Leslie Poston, author of Social Media Metrics for Dummies, coauthor of Twitter for Dummies, and the head of Magnetic Media, a company that specializes in social media and business branding, said that a person should be active on no more than five social media sites in order to maximize one's content output" (Trigonis, 107). So it is smart to "designate different social networking sites for different purposes" (Trigonis, 112). But which social media sites should you choose? When people mention social media, most think of Facebook – that's where most of your friends, family, and supporters are. But "Facebook is for people you know and Twitter is for people you don't know who share common interests. The filmmaking community on Twitter is vast and loyal." (Pinsonneault, Networking Novice to Social Media Maven). This is important to understand if you have a film or project that focuses on a specific topic or core audience. "Twitter has become one of the most powerful tools for marketing your crowdfund ing campaign since it forces you to be concise" (Trigonis, 133). A few things to remember when promoting on social media:
(1.) Every post you do only infiltrates about 1%-10% of your following. This percentage changes with how active you are. And each post becomes more visible the more it garners likes, comments, retweets, favorites, etc. So the best strategy to being more visible is POSTING CONSISTENT GOOD CONTENT that resonates with your following.
(2.) Frequency – post multiple times per day. People are constantly checking in to their social media throughout the day, and hundreds of active users are competing for their newsfeed. So most people will not see your posts. To gain visibility, post several times throughout the day – 3 is a good number.
(3.) Repost continually. Remember, each post will only infiltrate a small percentage of your following. So if you post ONCE asking for contributions, not everybody will see your plea. To ensure that all your friends/followers know that you are doing a crowdfunding campaign, you must post several times per day for at least a couple weeks. To ensure that the highest percentage actually contribute, they must hear about it at least three times, preferably three different ways (e-mail, social media, blog, word of mouth, etc.).
(4.) Balance. "When companies attempt to engage their customers too frequently or forcefully, it ultimately leads to disengagement…. you need to maintain a solid line between getting the word out about your campaign to potential contributors and being a pest" (Trigonis, 111)
(5.) 2 value adds for every call to action (Vaynerchuk, Jab Jab Right Hook). This means you should not continually ask for people to contribute to your campaign. You must switch it up – post funny videos, content that adds value, interesting articles, BEFORE giving an opportunity to contribute.
(6.) Peak usage hours are 12PM-4PM, weekdays. Weekends are not as active.

(BONUS TIP.) Utilize the social media platform's ad product for your best content. Paying Facebook $50 to boost a post or sponsor an ad will ensure that your post will come across 10,000 people's timelines, and you can get as specific with your targeting as you want.

If you are too busy or too cool to be involved with social media this much, then use a service like HootSuite to schedule and post your content for you.

Don't solicit, elicit…
Getting people to act is an art, especially while they're sitting in front of a computer, distracted by cat videos and naked ladies. In order to get them to actually push themselves through the grueling task of punching in their credit card numbers, you can't just ask. "Remember that we're selling here. Not, 'Please support me, this has always been my dream.' Nobody cares. You have to be thinking, 'How does my audience, how does my read/viewer, how is this transformative for them, and how do I communicate that to them?" (Jeff Hays, Hal Elrod's Achieve Your Goals Poscast, 33:15).

> The prime difference between soliciting and eliciting is that when you solicit something, you simply ask for it head on, whereas when you elicit something, you're evoking a reaction from another person. You want to evoke in them the feeling that they need to help you and your campaign in some way…. When you elicit help, on the other hand, it makes the community want to support you and spread the word about your project [for you]. (Trigonis, 100)

So the last line in your pitch video should not be, "Please help me bring this vision to a reality!" "A successful request communicates a message of 'Join me and together we'll do something spectacular we couldn't do individually'" (Conner, Crowdfund Secrets, Forbes). Also, "never appear like you're desperate. You're not begging people to give you money, you're offering the once in a lifetime opportunity to be a part of a film" (How to fund a successful Indiegogo/Kickstarter campaign in 5 easy steps). Here's an example of how to craft this message:

Do not do this: "Good morning! Please make a donation today for @TrailsofGray. Help make it happen at @Indiegogo."
Do this: "Sure, we could have put the script on the shelf, but we believe in #Musket and #IndieFilm! Every buck helps!"
See the difference? (Trigonis, 100)

Get your audience involved…
Advertising is dead. Being bombarded with thousands of advertising images everyday, people no longer respond to traditional advertising techniques. But it goes beyond just advertising. The way we consume media is changing. The traditional socioeconomic process of exchanging value is still the same, but we are no longer exchanging goods and services for money. That consumer/producer relationship is getting old. People are now exchanging knowledge and entertainment for a "like" or "subscribe" or "follow" on social media which has become the new marketing channel. The consumer's roles is shifting to more of an active role. Clicking "like" is still not a super active action, but what this relationship is moving towards is consumers getting involved in the creation of the product themselves. And crowdfunding gives them a unique opportunity to be able to say, "I helped make that movie happen!" Kickstarter co-founder Yancey Strickler says, "For backers going through the site, it doesn't feel like shopping. It feels like participating. When they support a project, they're becoming part of an artists's dream. In this

way it turns audiences into [co]creators" (Ryan, A Film in the Crowd). It brings people together and creates a sense of community, even without any face-to-face social interaction. It will be interesting to see this idea taken to the extreme – I would love to see a 100% crowdsourced film co-created by thousands of people together rather than just a few auteurs and artists. The more you can get them to feel like they're involved creatively, the more onboard and passionate they will be about the project. There are many ways to do this in your crowdfunding and promotion. You can ask the audience's advice, engage your audience with games, host audience votes, start a competition for your film's artwork. It can even be as simple as customizing perks to your audience. Video Game High School Season 2 & 3 did a great job of this with their personalized Video Game High School ID cards with your picture and name on it! More on personalization in the perks section…

The Lull
Beware of the lull. "Most crowdfunding projects follow a profile of three distinct phases: Quick out of the blocks, the dry months, better late than never" (Hubbub, Crowdfunding Handbook, 6). "The greatest activity is in the first and last 24 to 48 hours. In fact, those two periods often account for more than 50% of the cash raised" (Fleishman, I Get My Kicks from Campaign). Ryan Koo's campaign for *Man-child* raised over $18,000 in its last day (Ryan Koo, How I Raised $125,000 on Kickstarter). The intermittent time is a chance for you to experiment, have fun, reflect, see what works. But most importantly, you must keep going! "Treat everyday like a launch day. Evaluate what has worked, what hasn't, and continue to innovate. Try something new everyday." (An Introvert's Guide to Crowdfunding). "You have to keep the flow of your campaign moving forward, and sometimes that means changing your approach to it" (Trigonis, 122). You can't just focus on promoting during the launch and end of the campaign. By promoting throughout, you are still building an audience who will contribute later because of a sense of URGENCY created with a time limit. But you have to keep reminding them. So keep putting energy into it. That energy will come back. "In the event of a lull, be creative and innovative, and wake that lull with promotion that will engage your community. These innovations may not always work, but they will keep the flow of your campaign moving constant and on the minds of potential contributors and supporters" (Trigonis, 123). "Other ways to stream your way around the rocks of the lull include contests, giveaways, special incentives, and limited-time perks. Everybody loves to receive things, so if you're constantly promoting and aren't seeing a substantial rise in your funds, set up a contest that's somehow related to your film project" (Trigonis, 123). Don't freak out when people aren't contributing during those dry weeks. "It's really just a stepping-stone that can help you think more creatively about your campaign" (Trigonis, 124).

Advanced Audience-Building Tactics
First of all, use kicktraq.com analytics on Kickstarter campaigns to analyze your results real-time. This will help you see what tactics are working and what are not.
(1.) Guerilla Street Teaming (I think it was Jon Reiss who first coined this term in his book Think Outside the Box Office) – create a database of online organizations, blogs, Facebook pages, Twitterers, YouTube channels, internet publications, and podcasts who may have an incentive to support your film based on subject matter, genre, or niche. Reach out to them before you launch your campaign with a website or short pitch of your project and simply ask for their support by explaining how your film would add value to their organization or followers. Then reach out again during your campaign – pleasant persistence. Gary King of *How to Write a Joe Schermann Song* said, "I reached out to various film blogs and news sites to see who would help spread the word" (Ryan, A Film in the Crowd).

(2.) P.R. – press is a great way to get eyeballs. You might consider hiring a P.R. person/agency to get coverage in a few publications, but make sure these publications are ones that appeal to your core audience. WARNING: If you hire anybody, don't sit back and think that they will handle it for you because they won't. You must still need to be doing your daily promotional activities.

(2.) Getting featured on your platform's front page. "Indiegogo, for instance, has something called the 'gogofactor,' an algorithm that measures a campaign's activity. If your gogofactor is high and steady, you'll eventually be rewarded for all your hard work and dedication to your campaign by being featured on the Indiegogo homepage" (Trigonis, 49). In other words, "the more sharing and social 'buzz' you get about your campaign project, the more likely they will feature you" (Pinsonneault, Networking Novice).

(3.) Adding new perks – but don't forget to message contributors to inform them of the new perks in order to influence upsells.

(4.) Digital canvasing – like canvasing a city, this involves pm-ing and posting on other organizations' and people's timelines. But beware, this tactic can be too intrusive and can cause some negative branding.

(5.) Shoutouts – super effective! Thanking people for their contributions online is a great way to get eyeballs in a positive way. "I suggest posting public thank-yous and updates about the most current donors every day or so, always including the link back to the campaign… Inevitably each thank-you post will yield another donation, and so on" (How to fund a successful Indiegogo/Kickstarter Campaign in 5 easy steps).

(6.) Influencers – incentivize people to promote for you, like those blogs, Facebook pages, Twitterers, online publications, etc.

(BONUS TIP.) Use your contribution funds to pay for social media ad campaigns to drive traffic. Documentary filmmaker Jeff Hays does this brilliantly. In Hal Elrod's podcast on "Crowdfunding Your Goals," Hays explains… "About 20% of my [Indiegogo] donors are paypal, so if I get $10,000 today, $2,000 of that will be through PayPal that I get the next day. Well, that money, I use to fund my Facebook ad campaign. And so, we go through and create a custom audience on Facebook of people who match our list…. Today, I have a Facebook ad that has a 7.8% conversion rate – on a Facebook ad. That's astounding" (Jeff Hays, Hal Elrod's Achieve Your Goals Podcast, 35:00). He also creates a forwarding domain "to use for speaking and radio, and to create bonus campaigns to catch trailing donors" (Conner, Crowdfund Secrets, Forbes). In other words, if his campaign ends but is still being promoted by other influencers, he'll set up a mirror campaign on another crowdfunding site and promote a URL that redirects to that crowdfunding page to catch additional contributions after his campaign ends. Whoa! This is pretty advanced stuff!

✳AFTER THE CAMPAIGN

So you've prepared, researched, designed, launched, promoted the heck out of your campaign, and you finally hit your funding goal at the final hour (or maybe not). You're exhausted. You want a vacation. You never want to look at a computer or hear the word "Kickstarter" again. You celebrate and wake up with a hangover. Thank gosh it's finally over, right? Well, you're not done yet. There's still a lot of work to be done….

Thank You's
Make sure you thank EVERYBODY. Thanking them individually by doing shoutouts(previously mentioned) is best, but if you have too many contributors to do so, then at the very least send a message through your crowdfunding platform. "Sending an email, a message on facebook, and/or a direct message on Twitter is fine, too, though in today's multifaceted social network, the more out in the open your 'thank you' is, the better" (Trigonis, 87). This shows credibility, social proof, clout, and manners. It makes you look like a real mensch, "making people feel appreciated by publicly acknowledging them" (Trigonis, 91). Remember, you couldn't have done it without them!

Keep people updated
"The next and more important part becomes how to keep them engaged and checking in on your project's status long after your campaign has ended" (Trigonis, 51). It is going to take a while to create your project and fulfill orders, so it is very important to keep people updated. Trust me, you will get angry messages from people asking, "When is this going to be done? When is this going to arrive? Why haven't I received my DVD yet?" You can keep contributors informed with fun videos, pix, and updates of the progress of the project. They love that stuff.

Fulfillment
"You should give them something more immediate than a signed copy of the DVD when the film's finished several months after your campaign has ended" (Trigonis, 90). Again, it will take you a while to complete the project and fulfill your orders, so it is smart to send something immediately just to keep people happy. It can be pricey, but as soon as you get addresses, send a simple thank you postcard or something that you know you can fulfill immediately with a message informing people that their products are being made and they will receive updates through the crowdfunding platform. Be careful what you offer… perk fulfillment is VERY time-consuming, so if you are only raising $10K or so, I think it's fine to offer really cool things like taking a contributor out to dinner, leaving a voicemail message, recording a personal thank you and posting it on your timeline, etc. Even DVD fulfillment is extremely time-consuming (unless you have a fulfillment service like Amazon or Whiplash through which you can send your database and they can pack and ship for you). But if you are raising $30K or more, you may want to stick to just digital fulfillment. "Getting help on Kickstarter order handling is key. I did all the information handling for addresses and rewards myself, and I regret it" (Fleishman, I Get My Kicks from Campaign). By the way, Discmakers.com is the way to go for DVD duplication. They are the best and the cheapest.

Integrity
Do what you say you were going to do, and do it in a timely manner. Artists don't have the best rap – they are sometimes lazy, flakey, lucid, and usually time-challenged. DON'T BE LIKE THIS. When it comes to personal branding and public persona, your audience's happiness is everything, especially on your first major project. Yes, things always change, no you can't

control everything, yes unexpected things happen. Plan for these obstacles, and if unexpected delays happens, make sure you make up for it by giving something extra, going above and beyond. These initial supporters will be your core audience/fans for life if you treat them right.

Distribution
Now that you have an audience, the money, and a project in the works, you have a leg-up on distribution. In addition to fulfilling to your contributors, you should DEFINITELY put your film up on a Squarespace or Wordpress website to be bought and watched through VHX, Vimeo On Demand, Distrify, or some other awesome free service like that. Also, make your DVD available for purchase through your website (Squarespace, Shopify, PayPal, Amazon Createspace, and Whiplash are all great online store and fulfillment services). If you are seeking traditional distribution(theaters, foreign, DVD distribution, cable/satellite, VOD, Streaming), just understand these few facts: 95% of independent filmmakers are dissatisfied with their distribution experience; most do not see any money from a traditional "distributor"; it takes a LONG time to go through these routes; they take at least 25% of all sales (in addition to whatever % the platform takes); and the fact that a distributor will come along to put your film on all the major VOD and streaming websites and magically get even 1,000 people to discover your film and bring you a fat check is a MYTH. The only people who will see your film are the ones who will come as a result of the promotion YOU did yourself. No independent distributor in existence will make your film a Facebook page, do a P.R. campaign, and build an audience for you. So you are better off just doing it yourself and learning everything along the way – your own education is the best investment you can make. However, there are amazing aggregator-type services like Distribber.com that allow independent filmmakers like YOU to submit to the big platforms like Hulu, Netflix, iTunes, cable/satellite, Wal-Mart DVD, and Redbox. It is pricey to submit, but if they accept your film, you are treated as the distributor and keep 100% of the profits. This is the future. If you don't care about the money because you already got paid from your crowdfunding campaign, and you want the MOST people possible to see your film, then just throw it up on YouTube (smart and effective). Jennifer from *My Reincarnation* said that their crowdfunding campaign facilitated the distribution of *My Reincarnation* in these key ways: "Build awareness among core audiences, grow a network of support, accelerate efforts to build partnerships, generate significant press coverage, expand and refine their mailing list, improve the film's online presence, release the film theatrically, boost interest among distributors, stimulate semi-theatrical and educational distribution, facilitate television dvd and digital distribution" (Broderick, Maximizing Distribution Through Crowdfunding). Remember, having an audience is the golden ticket.

So.. now you have all the knowledge and tools to go make an amazing project. The only thing that is stopping you is yourself. Don't wait until "someday" or until it feels right, because that day will never come. Just do it now – massive immediate action. No excuses. Now go out and make your art. I will leave you with a quote from one of the most meaningful articles I read…

> Money is energy. When someone backs a project, they are expressing their support with their financial energy. It is not one-sided, it is an exchange of energy…. You are asking people to become part of your project's energetic DNA…. And to share energy, we have to connect. Crowdfunding is about connecting…. We have to be willing to receive energy from others – and that's not always easy to do… you have to have faith in your project's worth and value and your worth and value. An exchange of energy is always about connecting, but in crowdfunding it takes it to a deeper level.
> (Reque-Dragicevic, The Spiritual Aspects of Crowdfunding)

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Blue Like Jazz
(Zack & Johnathan)
$346K, 4495 backers = $76.97 avg. order
https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/2128223578/save-blue-like-jazz-the-movie-0/description
non-christian thoughts on religious
video – great message "let's save blue like jazz using fans funding", nobody in the actual video,
just VO, using the story of the film/campaign (not being made because of funding)
not much text in the body of the campaign
personalized perks
CTA: asking for help beyond just pledging, but also asking to share

Video Game High School
(Freddie Wong)
$273K, 5,661 backers = $48.22 avg. order
https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/freddiew/video-game-high-school/description
Huge following on YouTube, rocketjump.com 5secondfilms.com
great personal perks, $5 = name in the credits, personalized video thank you recorded by
Freddie Wong
No shoes! bare feet! They look like they don't care!

Video Game High School: Season 2
(Freddie Wong)
$808K, 10,613 backers = $76.13 avg. order
https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/freddiew/video-game-high-school-season-two/description
Capitalizing off of the success of the first season web series
SICK PERKS! amazing personalization, bringing Freddie Wong into the perks, amazing
customization, brining you into the world of the story/film
amazing product placement, tons of gaming products included
Freddie Wong will do your birthday

Fat Kid Rules the World
(Matthew Lillard)
$158K, 2218 backers = $71.24 avg. order
https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1499648032/fat-kid-rules-the-world-0/description

based on a book, Matthew lillard (famous actor) shot the film, premiered at SXSW Film Festival
all distribution offers were terrible, so self-distributing the film
$50K money to go on Vans warp tour, $100K to release the film in select theaters
sharing beliefs in pitch video
great customization and personalization of perks

Palo Alto
(James Franco)
$326K, 1137 funders (not fully funded $500K) = $286.72 avg. order
https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/palo-alto-stories-by-james-franco#/story
It's James Franco (incredibly high average order) showing the clout of the celebrity effect
no video
first perk = $10
donating profits of the film to Non-prof
asking for money on indiegogo to fund the movie while still maintaining artistic control
great personalized and customized perks - be a featured extra on set, get a voice message from james franco, james franco art, capitalizing off of his celebrity,
maybe not fully funded because the perks are expensive, there is no DVD, and it's sold as 3 films instead of 1 feature film

Jens Pulver: Driven
(Gregory Bayne)
$27K, 410 backers = $65.85 avg. order
https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/gregorybayne/jens-pulver-driven-a-documentary-film-about-a-le
video has no director, just a snippet of the film
nice core audience, fighting in general has a core niche audience (UFC etc.)

I am I
(Jocelyn Towne's)
$112K, 902 backers = $124.17 avg. order
https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/2115598587/i-am-i-feature-film/description
How did they do that???
Narrative film, ok video, charming video, but not that great of a personality, I am not that intrigued or impulsed to contribute…

Man-Child
(Ryan Koo)
$125K, 2336 backers = $53.51 avg. order
https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/ryanbkoo/man-child-feature-film
capitalizing off of his built-in audience from nofilmschool.com
great video, very personal, great personality, he seems like someone I would want to support
credibility – the film script got support from prestigious organizations (IFP Project Forum, Film Society Lincoln Center), showing his history of filmmaking, awards, etc.
interesting customization of perks – selling the film by frame
giving everything for free from nofilmschool.com, and now asking for help – very clever
also made a great look book in video form to show

The Icarus Deception
(Seth Godin)
$287K, 4242 backers = $67.66 avg. order
https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/297519465/the-icarus-deception-why-make-art-new-from-seth-go/description
for his book The Icarus Deception
Seth Godin personally in his video, pretty mediocre campaign, plain perks, expensive perks, only one perk personalized
He explains his WHY – "we are doing this to undermine the publisher"
But he has a HUGE dedicated following

I'm Fine, Thanks
(Adam Baker)
$116K, 4477 backers = $25.91 avg. order
https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/cranktank/im-fine-thanks
Documentary on "complacency" and the err in "the 9-5 system" go to school, get a degree, get a good job, buy a car, get married, buy a house, have kids, go into debt, white picket fence, etc.
pitch video alright – "please help us" "if it resonates with you, please consider pledging"
GREAT TRAILER! great theme, great message, resonates very loudly
great story – on the road for 42 days, etc.
good personalized perks, long description in body of text

My Reincarnation
(Jennifer Fox)
$150K, 518 backers = $289.58 avg. order
https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/802245098/my-reincarnation/description
a twenty-year journey
really shitty video, very long video(5min), starts with too many testimonials, then goes to the trailer
credibility - opens with testimonials,
great niche audience - buddhists, etc.
valuable one-of-a-kind perks
very high average order (≈$290)

Road Hard
(Adam Carolla)
$1.4mil, 14,000 contributors = $100 avg. order
https://fundanything.com/adamcarolla?locale=en
Adam Carolla has a large audience – Adam Carolla show most downloaded podcast according to the Guinness book of world records

Bought
(Jeff Hays)
$410,000, 5351 backers = $76.62 avg. order
most are probably repeat customers due to four total campaigns:
July 10, 2013 – $162K, 1809 backers = $89.55 avg. order
https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/bought-the-movie/x/632049#/story
Oct 31, 2013 – $39K, 626 backers = $62.30 avg. order
https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/bought-the-movie-phase-ii/x/632049#/story

Jan 31, 2014 – $112K, 1346 backers = $83.21 avg. order
https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/bought-movie-matching-funds/x/632049#/story
May 18, 2014 – $97K, 1570 backers = $61.78 avg. order
https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/bought-the-hidden-story-behind-vaccines-big-pharma-your-food/x/632049#/story
important issue that people are passionate about
campaign geared to "let's change this!"
perks geared towards "let's make the world better"
first perk $35 for DVD
He did some MAJOR marketing for this to build his audience

Range 15 Movie
(Range 15)
$500K from, 3644 veterans = $137.21 avg. order
https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/range-15-movie/x/632049#/story
great core audience
great personality
great funny video
captures the personality of veterans – veterans making a movie for veterans

Life Itself
(Steve James)
$153K, 1657 funders = $92.33 avg. order
https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/life-itself-a-feature-documentary-based-on-roger-ebert-s-memoir/x/632049
video = story of how the film came to be
video features Martin Scorsese
lots of exclusive perks

Be Brave
(Erin Northcott)
$184K, 2117 contributors = $86.92 avg. order
https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/be-brave-the-true-story-of-daniel-northcott#/story
By Elevate, Akira Chan's company
really good trailer, really great story, touches you emotionally, good story BEHIND the story