



Eat My Lunch

Case Study

They've been around:
2 years

Area:
Food & Beverage

Annual Revenue:
NZD \$2,689,000

Amount crowdfunded:
\$129,848 (PledgeMe.
Projects) &
then \$817,601
(PledgeMe.Lend)

Number of investors:
2,507 (PledgeMe.
Projects) & then 250
(PledgeMe.Lend)

Who are Eat my lunch?

For every lunch bought from Auckland-based social enterprise Eat My Lunch, they gift a lunch to a child in need.

The company was co-founded by marketers Lisa King and Iaan Buchanan, and chef Michael Meredith, in response to the growing number of children going to school without lunch. Sadly, in New Zealand, over 28% of kids live in poverty.

In the first year of operation Eat My Lunch sent over 200,000 lunches to 33 schools around Auckland and Hamilton.

Since then they've been rallying a wide network of supporters who believe in their social mission: to ensure that no child at school goes hungry, starting with kids right here in our own backyard.

They have crowdfunded twice, first through [project crowdfunding to move out of their home kitchen and into a commercial kitchen](#), and then as New

Zealand's first [crowdfunding campaign to scale their tech and launch in Wellington](#).

For both of their campaigns they activated their pool of supporters, and together raised almost \$1 million from their engaged crowd. This case study covers some of the things that worked (and didn't) for them.

How does crowdfunding work?

Crowdfunding is when you offer your crowd a loan note. You need to be an organisation of some kind (company, charity, or even school) and you have to be able to show that you can repay the loan. You set the interest rate, your minimum and maximum goal, and the timeline in which you'll repay the loan.

Learn more about how crowdfunding works at: pldg.me/howtolend



Running their campaign

We first met Eat My Lunch in August 2015, a few short months after they had launched. The morning we met them, Lisa, Iaan and their team of lunchmakers were feverishly prepping hundreds of sandwiches in Lisa and Iaan's "adapted" home kitchen. They were really clear about what they wanted to do next: move into their own commercial kitchen.

In our first meeting, we shared the golden rules of crowdfunding. We told them that it was all about their crowd, setting a clear goal, and that most pledges would happen in the first and final few days of their campaign. For their project that's pretty much what happened, 2,507 people collectively pledged \$130k, almost 1,000 of those pledges came through in the final 48 hours.

We caught up with Lisa again at the start of 2016 when they were planning their next big move: launching in Wellington. We were on the verge of kicking off PledgeMe.Lend and we were super keen for them to be our first lending campaign.

At our next meeting the idea for the Lunch Bonds came to life: an investment that offered a mix of financial and social return - interest earned on your pledge plus kiwi kids filled with good lunches every month for the five years of the bonds.

The blueprint for a successful campaign was set the first time around: an involved audience, great media presence and a really clear purpose that resonated with their crowd. Over the month, 258 folk pledged to lend \$818k and their dream of opening in Wellington came to life.



August

17,000 sandwiches gifted & announced project campaign in media.

2015

June

Eat My Lunch starts up.

September

PledgeMe.Project campaign raises almost \$130,000

2016

January – February

PledgeMe.Lend campaign planning & the Lunch Bond idea comes to life.

March – May

Campaign prepared for launch, including Pitch Kitchen.

June

First birthday party, where they told their closest crowd about the upcoming campaign launch.

June

180,000 sandwiches gifted milestone. PledgeMe.Lend campaign launched.

July

Raised \$817,601 from 258 lenders.

October

Wellington kitchen opened.

December

325,000 sandwiches gifted.

2017



January

First Lunch Bond repayment made to their lenders.

What worked well

- **Online channels** – They had a supportive & active crowd who they communicated with in the lead up to their campaigns through their own newsletter and then through their social media during each of the campaigns
- **Point of sale flyers** – Small but memorable campaign notes were included in their lunch boxes to catch their customers' eye. An effective way to build awareness of what they were doing and how everyone could support.
- **Face to face time** – In Auckland they hosted a dinner and a couple of breakfasts, in Wellington they put on a meet & greet, and at their one year old birthday party they gave their crowd a glimpse of what was to come.
- **Having a clear vision** – They had a really clear goal of launching in Wellington and their crowd knew what every dollar was going to create.
- **Getting famous folk in creating lunches** – They had everyone from Anika Moa to the co-leaders of the Green Party in making lunches which helped drive publicity.
- **Getting media coverage** – Their co-founder and head chef, Michael Meredith, got the front cover of Canvas magazine during their project campaign, and Lisa got an Op Ed on Stuff.co.nz during their lending campaign. They also had Duncan Garner in helping them make their lunches, and got some great coverage on his show.
- **Pitch Kitchen** – We helped them pull together a diverse crowd for insight, from lawyers, accountants, techies, social entrepreneurs and comms folk. It gave them the chance to get feedback, and refine the focus of their campaign by getting good honest (friendly) feedback.
- **Co-creating your First 50** – They got their team to contribute names of heavy hitters and influencers within their personal crowd who they believed would be keen to support the campaign and approaching them early on for momentum.
- **Support skills from outside the team** – They assessed what their team did well and found support where needed. Beat Communications helped with PR, Chapman-Tripp with legal, and PWC with the numbers.



What they'd do differently next time

- **Underestimating the time it takes** – You need to give a lot of information to your crowd in the lead of a lending campaign. Build extra time in, to get the final information prepared, designed, and sent out. People need to have a sense that something exciting is coming, and want to get involved from the get-go. Even the best shindig in the world needs invites.
- **Providing updates during the campaign** – You should be sending out regular content to your crowd while the campaign is going. Make sure you have weekly updates planned into your schedule, as well as being ready to share content when certain milestones are hit.
- **Follow on coverage** – Once the first push was done, it was hard to get further pick up. A fresh slant on the story could have been held in the back pocket for a mid-campaign push. Have a few angles up your sleeve!
- **Final week rush** – As the campaign draws closer, the tasks can start to pile up. Gradually chipping away at all of the small tasks over six weeks, to get the campaign ready and crowd excited, is a good way to stay chill in that homestretch.

