

# \$**SIX** **FIGURE** **CROWD** **FUNDING**

**THE NO BULLSH\*T GUIDE TO RUNNING  
A LIFE-CHANGING CAMPAIGN**

**THE GURU BEHIND SOME OF THE MOST FUNDED KICKSTARTERS OF ALL TIME**

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## Introduction

Backers and creators have been through a whole lot of hell since Kickstarter's launch in 2009.

After years of failed projects, untrustworthy creators, missed deadlines, and lawsuits, backers have been burned, and they haven't forgotten. Not every creator can hack it, unfortunately, leading many backers to question the fundamental concept of crowdfunding itself.

The truth is, running a campaign is equal parts excitement and narrowly avoiding being hit by a car. Your future is on the line with every decision. Choices on tiers, stretch goals, marketing, and how to communicate with your community during the campaign can have ripple effects that earn you hundreds of thousands of dollars, or give you recurring nightmares for years.

I recognized the need for this book after I ran my first Kickstarter in 2013 for *The Cyanide & Happiness Show*. It took in \$770,000 in pledges, briefly setting the record for funding in Kickstarter's animation category. Despite having a huge amount of support, we proceeded to make a mountain of mistakes. What we thought were simple, mid-campaign decisions ended up costing us months of additional work and more funds than we had initially budgeted.

*Shit.*

Thankfully, after a few years of consulting, education, and good ol' fashioned duct-tape solutions, we learned from our mistakes—or at least from some of

them. By the time C&H launched the Joking Hazard campaign in early 2016, we were far more prepared, and the results showed as we drew in a solid \$3.2 million in pledges.

Crowdfunding is a whole hell-basket full of hand-work. If money is all you want, crowdfunding isn't for you. Investors, loans, begging, limbo competitions, turning tricks, tricking turns, turntable tricks . . . there are better options out there if all you want is that sweet, sweet cash.

Crowdfunding today is more competitive than ever before. Super Crowdfunding—raising over \$100,000 on a single campaign—has become increasingly common, and you can bet your rooty tooty fresh and fruity breakfast it doesn't happen by accident. Every day, new companies sprout up with huge budgets and massive teams, using Kickstarter as a marketing strategy for new products or riskier endeavors. These companies have their own art departments and dedicated customer service staff that can devote every waking hour to keeping fans from staging a mutiny.

*"Long gone are the days when you can have a crazy idea for a tabletop game, literally post your rough sketches and production estimates, and have folks back your project with little more than your idea and their willingness to follow you along on the journey," says Adam Clark, superbacker and founder of the Kickstarter analytics site Kicktraq.*

What started primarily as an avenue for the little guy to get a leg up on their career has grown into an entire industry overflowing with Super Crowdfunding campaigns, predatory third-party marketing companies, and schadenfreudelicious stories of catastrophic failures.

If you want to be heard above all the noise, you must either out-spend or out-work all the other Super Crowdfunding campaigns out there. And out-spend is the much less fun option so let's focus on out-work.

I've enlisted the minds, memories, and manatees of friends and colleagues who have all run at least one Super Crowdfunding campaign to give you the no-bullshit truth on what it takes to run a massive, life-changing campaign. Combined, all the interviewees from this book have raised over \$180 million on Kickstarter.

This book is centered around Kickstarter as it is the crowdfunding platform we use and trust.<sup>1</sup> That being said a majority of this book can be applied to any crowdfunding marketing event you plan on running as the fundamentals are the

same. Find eyeballs, send them to your campaign page, and convince them to back you.

This book will teach you everything you need to know to raise a shit-ton of money (legally), from pre-launch planning all through final delivery.

It's going to be hard. Really hard. Like getting out of bed when it's rainy and cold outside and you've got that pocket of warmth underneath your duvet but you've got to pee and you're wondering whether or not it's worth getting out of bed to go because it's really that damn comfy.

That hard.

But with enough hustle, caffeine, research, planning, alcohol, caffeine, and caffeine, you can have your very own Super Crowdfunding campaign

This book focuses on the three M's of a crowdfunding campaign:

## **MESSAGE**

## **MECHANICS**

## **MARKETING**

Get one wrong, and your campaign might succeed but it will be rough. Get two wrong, and you're sunk. Get three wrong and well, damn, don't do that. There's also a short Post-Campaign section to ensure you follow through correctly, as well as a recap outlining all the most important concepts you'll learn in the book.

Ready?

Let's start off gentle with lesson one:

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<sup>1</sup> Kickstarter is still currently the largest site by traffic and raw dollars pledged. As of the writing of this book, Kickstarter's Alexa Rank is the 450th ranked website worldwide. Other platforms simply don't command as many eyeballs and press coverage: Indiegogo ranks 1,228th worldwide, Gofundme ranks 1,235th, RocketHub ranks 357,138th, Razoo ranks 113,908th, and Fig ranks 73,160th globally).

“No one gives a fuck  
about your career.”

—**James Ashby**

