

# Crowdfunding Is Just the Beginning: Lessons on Building Lasting Revenue and Relationships through Crowdfunding Campaigns

By Josh Stearns

## INTRODUCTION

Crowdfunding has become a big business. Just do a Google search for crowdfunding tips and you'll find thousands of blog posts, guides, and consultants ready to offer their services to take your crowdfunding project from start to success. While there are some clear strategies for running a successful crowdfunding campaign, less has been written about what you do with that crowd once they have pledged their support. Put another way, how do you turn a short-term crowdfunding campaign into a connected community that will support your work over the long term?

This question may be less important for people crowdfunding a new gadget or product, whose primary concern is delivering something at the end of the campaign. But for people using crowdfunding to support ongoing work in journalism, the arts, and social change, we should look at crowdfunding as a catalyst for community building.

From 2014 to 2016, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation supported two crowdfunding campaigns with local newsrooms and studied a number of others. This guide looks at each of these campaigns and pulls in lessons from other newsrooms that have been successful. The guide also looks at how to convert the community that supports your crowdfunding campaign into ongoing contributors, allies, and friends of the organization.

A great example of this idea is the most recent campaign run by the podcast collective Radiotopia. After two record-breaking campaigns on Kickstarter, the Radiotopia team [took to a different platform a year](#) later because they wanted to focus on sustained monthly donations instead of one-time gifts.<sup>1</sup> Radiotopia — and especially Roman Mars — had been excellent at building a super-engaged fan base before this effort, and it paid off. They received 19,500 donations, and an amazing 82 percent were recurring donations. They also built engagement into the rewards structures through small items like a [“challenge coin,”](#) which functions as a secret handshake for Radiotopia fans, and a “Pilot Fund” donation level that lets people have a say in the kind of shows Radiotopia produces.<sup>2</sup>

In the sections that follow, we'll look more closely at how Radiotopia set itself up for success through its earlier Kickstarter campaign and look at two other case studies from local newsrooms. Finally, we offer tips from other journalism projects and a checklist you can use to help plan and execute your crowdfunding campaign.

# Part One:

## 10 Crowdfunding Lessons from the Radiotopia Kickstarter Campaign

[Radiotopia's second Kickstarter campaign](#) raised more than \$600,000 from nearly 22,000 fans.<sup>3</sup>

The success of a campaign like this is a complex alchemy of passion, mission, timing, and tenacity. There are many things you can't control, and good and bad surprises abound. And yet, the Radiotopia team has run a superb and engaging campaign. Anyone thinking about crowdfunding a project — regardless of the platform you choose — should study what the team at PRX and Radiotopia did.

**Here are 10 lessons from Radiotopia's Kickstarter Campaign:**

### 1) SELL THE VALUES, NOT THE THING

The Radiotopia campaign was never about just supporting some podcasts; it was about "[remaking public media](#)."<sup>4</sup> The Radiotopia team always led with their values and vision. This is especially important for mission-driven crowdfunding efforts like journalism and documentary projects, but even with gadgets or other products, crowdfunding tends to be about selling a story not a thing. "It's not just an amazing group of podcasts, it's an amazing group of people," writes Roman Mars on the campaign's homepage. "Radiotopia is bringing a listener-first, creator-driven ethos to public radio." The team was explicit about tapping into their audience's values — a love of storytelling and public media — and made it clear that a donation wouldn't just fund a podcast, it would help you feed your passion.

### 2) THIS ISN'T JUST A FUNDRAISER, IT IS A FRIEND RAISER

Kickstarter campaigns are about raising money, but that's not all they accomplish. The best campaigns become a locus of attention and activity for a passionate group of people to come together and support a shared vision. The Radiotopia crew understood this, and they made their campaign as much about making friends as it was about making money. Early in the campaign, Roman Mars [introduced one of the campaign's key goals](#): To reach 20,000 donors.<sup>5</sup>

Yes, that goal included a financial challenge from a corporate sponsor. But what was more important for the long-term sustainability of the collective was that it presented an opportunity to introduce Radiotopia to legions of new people (and to turn current fans into donors, even if only at \$1 each). One campaign reward was a chance to be connected with other fans as pen pals. The best Kickstarter campaigns are not only financial investments, but also investments in relationships between creators and their community.

### 3) CREATE UNIQUE REWARDS FOR DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

Looking down the right rail of the Radiotopia Kickstarter page is actually a bit daunting. There are 33 tiers of rewards, depending on how much you give, and sometimes there are different reward packages for the same amount. For example, at the \$300 level you could get a DIY radio handbook and a pair of pro-headphones or a one-hour podcast mentoring session and a one-

year membership to PRX. The number and diversity of rewards reflected the fact that Radiotopia is a collection of different shows with their own look, feel, and audience. But the Radiotopia team also explicitly designed each tier for different kinds of stakeholders, from the lone fan to the potential corporate underwriter. Individuals could donate and get shirts and ringtones; small teams could donate a larger amount and get a storytelling workshop for their organization; and businesses could donate and receive sponsorship and underwriting opportunities.

#### **4) THINK BEYOND THE T-SHIRT: DIGITAL, PHYSICAL, AND PERSONAL REWARDS**

This point is related to, but separate from, the one above. There were cool t-shirts as part of the Radiotopia rewards, but the team was smart to offer an array of digital, physical, and personal rewards. Reward fulfillment — mailing out those t-shirts, stickers, and posters — is a significant process that [cuts into the money you make](#) on a crowdfunding campaign.<sup>6</sup> Come up with clever, fun, and engaging digital rewards for the lower tiers — Radiotopia offered ringtones, digital albums, and more. Anything under \$35–\$40 should probably be digital to make it worthwhile to mail out the rewards. But the Radiotopia team also understood that some fans want more than a coffee mug, they want an experience. Many rewards, and the campaign itself, were about making the Radiotopia producers accessible to their community. In the middle tiers, Radiotopia offered professional development opportunities, Q&A sessions, and chances to be on the air for aspiring podcasters and journalists. At the upper donation levels, the team offered special events, parties, and elite dinners with radio personalities and producers.

#### **5) BUILD YOUR TEAM FROM THE START**

Crowdfunding campaigns are an enormous amount of work. You need a team of people to do them well. Radiotopia had the benefit of being a collaboration of several shows and having the PRX team’s help to drive the campaign forward. You may not have the staff, but figure out who your team is and then recruit your fans. The first message I got after donating to the campaign was, “You are now a part of our growing storytelling revolution!” A few weeks later, the team wrote, “This is not going to be easy and we’re going to need your help to do it.” A subsequent message was, “You are a part of something really special and the world is taking notice.”

Radiotopia benefited, of course, from the huge fan base for many of its shows. But the work they did to grow and engage that base of support provides lessons for anyone. Throughout the campaign, there was an intentional, ongoing recruitment effort to keep people engaged — not just as donors but as part of the team.

#### **6) PROVIDE A MULTITUDE OF WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE AND PARTICIPATE**

By emphasizing the number of people engaged over the number of dollars raised, the Radiotopia team was able to think creatively about how they ask people to participate in the campaign. Turning fans into donors and donors into evangelists is no small feat, and Radiotopia did it well. The team amplified the best efforts on social media, celebrating not just people who gave but people who helped mobilize others to give.



“If you believe in this mission, kick in another buck or two, or just spread the word,” they wrote in one email. “You can make your investment in Radiotopia go further if you let people know you are a backer and encourage your friends to join our campaign,” said another. And throughout the process, via Kickstarter’s commenting feature and on social channels, the team answered questions, talked shop, and encouraged conversation.

## 7) LET YOURSELF GET EMOTIONAL

The Radiotopia campaign was suffused with emotion, and it was contagious. Through the public messaging of the campaign (which vacillated between carefully orchestrated and freewheeling), we saw the team celebrate, cringe, worry, laugh, and love. They weren’t afraid to talk about how much they cared about this work or about the love, trust, and admiration they have for their community. “These shows make you laugh, cry, cringe, remember, reflect, strive, despair, relax... everything,” they wrote on the campaign homepage. Those emotions drew us in. They gave the campaign intimacy, and made us feel like we were all good friends. In the end, the crowdfunding campaign itself had a narrative arc and an emotional force not unlike the stories on Radiotopia’s podcasts.

## 8) THE ART OF THE STRETCH GOAL: BE VISIONARY, NOT GREEDY

Every time the Radiotopia team announced a new stretch goal, I was tempted to donate again. That’s remarkable. It is worth remembering that Radiotopia itself [emerged out of a stretch goal](#), established after Roman Mars blew through the initial funding goals for his show *99% Invisible* last year.<sup>7</sup> The stretch goals for this campaign focused on its core value: “remaking public media.” Many of these goals emphasized bringing more diverse voices and stories into public media and podcasting. When announcing the first stretch goal, the Radiotopia team wrote: “As of February 2013, only 20% of the top 100 podcasts are hosted by women. That percentage is abysmal and we need give more opportunities for female-fronted podcasts to find their audience. Therefore, when we get over \$400,000, we’d like to invite three new shows — all hosted by women — into Radiotopia.” At \$600,000, the team promised to “create a pilot development fund to find new, talented producers and hosts. We will specifically seek out new voices to pilot programs that tackle subjects not well covered in traditional public media.” Again and again, Radiotopia presented compelling visions of what was possible in a way that increased the perceived value of donations and made people want to give more.

## 9) MAKE BIG PROMISES

For donors, investing in a crowdfunding campaign means that you are putting money down now in hopes of creating something remarkable in the future. Those running campaigns need to cultivate a vision of that future and get people excited about what is to come. It is one thing to layout deliverables hooked to stretch goals, as described above. It is another thing entirely to get people to buy into a vision of the future and their role in helping create it. “I’m so excited about the direction we’re going,” wrote Roman Mars in one of his updates to supporters. “You’re going to love what we have in store.” This gives people a sense that they are on the road to somewhere really exciting. I saw one tweet that said, in effect, “When Roman Mars promises, ‘We’ll make you proud,’ I have no doubt in my mind that he will.”

## 10) CULTIVATE FAITH AND EXPRESS GRATITUDE

Over the course of a four- to six-week campaign, you need to inspire a deep sense of faith from your supporters. They need to believe in you and your promises. Kickstarter now makes all campaigns discuss the risks and challenges of their project on the project page. There are, however, ways to establish your credibility and engender the trust of your network.

For example, Radiotopia has a great story to tell about the growth of its network and the impact of past crowdfunding campaigns. You need to build faith, but you also need to express humility and gratitude. On November 11, when Radiotopia hit 20,000 donors, Roman Mars wrote, “We did it! Thank you so much for being one of the 20,000 and helping us get the extra \$25,000 from Hover. Look what we did together!” Another time, he wrote “Thanks again for being there for us. We’re going to make you proud.” Throughout the campaign, there was genuine and deep gratitude for donors.

There are several how-to guides for crowdfunding that can tell you how to edit your pitch video or how many emails to send. What impressed me about the Radiotopia campaign was less the technical expertise or tactics it used and more the tone and tenor of the conversation it sparked. The lessons outlined above focus on how Radiotopia cultivated that feel for the campaign — its focus on community, passion, and excellence.

In the end, the campaign was less like a pitch and more like a story, told not to us, but with us.

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## Part Two: What Works for Crowdfunding Local News

How one local newsroom used crowdfunding to connect with their community and expand their reach.

When it comes to crowdfunding it is usually [the record breakers that make news](#).<sup>8</sup> The largest number of donations, for example, and the highest amount raised. Yet every week hundreds of small projects launch crowdfunding campaigns, and there is much we can learn from their successes and failures too.

That's why I was excited to talk with the journalism crowdfunding platform Beacon about experimenting to make crowdfunding work for small local news organizations. Local news organizations present unique challenges — their audience is much more limited than national publications, they often can't tap into national interest in a niche topic, and the smallest organizations don't have dedicated marketing or outreach staff to run campaigns.



One of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation partner sites, [New Brunswick Today](#), successfully [completed its Beacon campaign](#), raising \$15,000 in one month.<sup>9</sup> *New Brunswick Today* is an amazing five-year-old digital news start-up that publishes in English and Spanish and prints a monthly newspaper. It specializes in great watchdog reporting focused on local government and civic institutions and has built up a loyal community following. As part of its [journalism sustainability project](#), the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, with support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, offered \$5,000 in matching funds and spent \$2,000 to hire Beacon staff to coach the *New Brunswick Today* team on managing the campaign.<sup>10</sup>

### LOCAL PASSIONS VS. NATIONAL TOPICS

Prior to this campaign, many projects funded on Beacon covered broad topics of national concern, like climate change and net neutrality. Those issues benefit from a large base of passionate advocates and concerned citizens. However, in my interview with Beacon's [Catherine Hollander](#) after the *New Brunswick Today* campaign, she commented on the deep passion of people for their local news outlet. Hollander usually encourages groups to focus their campaigns on a specific, tangible project, but *New Brunswick Today's* team focused their pitch mostly on general support of their reporting. With that funding, they hoped to hire more translators and expand their use of video. Those themes, however, were secondary to a more general appeal for support. Hollander said that the response *New Brunswick Today* received was a testament to its cultivation of a very loyal community.

## CROWDFUNDING FORCES YOU TO FIND YOUR VOICE

Like many journalists, staff of New Brunswick Today weren't used to talking about themselves and promoting their work. But the campaign forced them to explain what they do and why they do it. *New Brunswick Today* Editor Charlie Kratovil told me, "We needed the crowdfunding campaign to help us find our voice."



By the end of the campaign, you could see a shift in how staff described their work. "We are working to empower the New Brunswick community to have a voice in the important decisions that affect their lives," wrote Sean Monahan, the publisher of *New Brunswick Today*, in an email to Chris Daggett, the president and CEO of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. "Without critical coverage over the activities of decision makers and the powerful, every person feels like an island

trapped alone in a raging river. But when we shed light on a story, we can help those islands unite and ultimately change the course of that river."

Asked if there was one thing they would have done differently, Hollander said that they would have encouraged *New Brunswick Today* staff to put more of their voice into the fundraising appeals. "The advice I'd give going forward is that news organizations should inject their news personality and voice into the outreach they do during a funding campaign," Hollander wrote in a follow up email. "One way to do that is to highlight recent coverage or talk about past successes you're proud of, and to personalize the outreach you do so readers feel like they're getting to know you — and the people who work in your newsroom — even better during your campaign."

One way *New Brunswick Today* did weave the staff's voice into the campaign was by [doing profiles of its freelancers and contributors](#) on Facebook as a way of keeping the crowdfunding campaign front and center.<sup>11</sup>

## SIX MORE LESSONS FOR LOCAL JOURNALISM CROWDFUNDING

- 1) **Local Journalists Should Mine Facebook During Crowdfunding Campaigns.** Facebook obviously plays an important role in outreach for any crowdfunding campaign. Hollander told me in an email, "The fact that it was so important here was less a surprise than the degree to which it was important. In the case of *New Brunswick Today*, the conversion rate from Facebook was much higher than average, suggesting that there's an even larger role for Facebook to play in local campaigns."
- 2) **Two Bursts and a Long Haul.** The pace of the *New Brunswick Today* campaign was typical of many crowdfunding efforts. There was a spike in donations at the start and end of the campaign with a lull in weeks two and three. But those middle weeks are critical for outreach and momentum building. Editor Charlie Kratovil told me "Most of the money comes at that

beginning and the end, but a lot of the hard work happens in the middle.”

- 3) **Design Your Campaign for Many Funding Levels.** When we think of crowdfunding, we often think of lots of little donations. But Beacon staff told me that *New Brunswick Today* had a bit more high-level donations than many other campaigns. Other news organizations include higher funding levels for local businesses too.
- 4) **Pick Up the Phone.** *New Brunswick Today* reached out to people via email, Twitter, Facebook, and more, but both Beacon and *New Brunswick Today* spoke about the value of phone calls. For *New Brunswick Today* staff, it was a chance to listen to their community and talk about their work, as well as solicit donations. It also helped motivate people who had already given to spread the word. After the campaign, staff called many of the donors to thank them. (When you don’t have a phone number, other kinds of one-to-one outreach — Facebook chats, for example, and Twitter messages — can be important.)
- 5) **Put Your Campaign Everywhere.** *New Brunswick Today* had a prominent box on all its websites, with a strong call to action linking to the crowdfunding campaign for the entire month. Beacon staff said that it was one of the better performing calls to action they had seen, attributing this to its front-and-center position on the website throughout the course of the campaign. It was impossible to visit *New Brunswick Today*’s website without seeing it.
- 6) **Don’t Worry About Over Asking.** Don’t be afraid to frequently Tweet, Facebook, and email your fans about the campaign. Crowdfunding is part of our online lives today, and people recognize that campaigns are short and intense. Most successful campaigns share information about the campaigns multiple times a day and send out regular emails. *New Brunswick Today* saw nearly zero unsubscribes from its email list due to campaign-related appeals. In fact, the editor said that people liked getting the updates about how the campaign was going — they were excited to be supporting the journalism of *New Brunswick Today*.

There is a final point that Catherine Hollander really drove home to me. “Your readers want to hear from you, and they want to support you,” she said. “But they also want to feel inspired to support you and reminded about why that support is so important.”

The journalists at *New Brunswick Today* are doing great work, and their crowdfunding campaign helped them expand their reach, hone their marketing, and encourage deeper investment from their community. They grew their subscriber base, people who they stay in touch with on a monthly basis, and have used events to further engage their donors. They also launched Harken — a community engagement tool — on their site to give the community new ways to participate in the reporting process.

One year after its first crowdfunding campaign, *New Brunswick Today* launched a new, smaller crowdfunding effort to support bilingual immigration reporting before the 2016 presidential election. The campaign was successful, with many repeat donors who came back to support the organization the second time around.

## Part Three:

# A New Crowdfunding Campaign Connects Community, Small Businesses, and Solutions Journalism

*The Lo-Down*, a six-year-old community news site and monthly magazine on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, launched [a very smart crowdfunding pitch](#) in 2015.<sup>12</sup> *The Lo-Down* team asked their community to help fund a one-year reporting project on the struggles of small businesses in their neighborhood. Here is why I think this was clever:

### LISTENING TO COMMUNITY

The project was sparked by feedback from local residents who were worried about preserving the unique local character of their area. “Small businesses are the heart and soul of the Lower East Side, but they are endangered,” the team writes. By listening carefully to their community, Ed Litvak, Traven Rice, and *The Lo-Down* team were able to tap into the passions of their readers while meeting specific needs. Thus, the crowdfunding campaign was also a community-building effort, inviting more people more deeply into the reporting process.

### CONNECTING WITH ADVERTISERS

At the same time, this work helped shine a spotlight on the small businesses across the Lower East Side, many of whom were also advertisers on the site. The editors were not giving advertisers any preferential treatment or coverage, but by shining a spotlight on the challenges of local entrepreneurs they were helping connect residents and businesses. In addition, Litvak and Rice have structured the crowdfunding rewards with both residents and local businesses in mind. A number of local shops donated rewards for donors, and other businesses have been stepping up to contribute to the campaign.

### BUY LOCAL (NEWS)

Finally, the focus of the campaign gave editors a chance to talk about themselves as a small business, reminding local people about what it costs to do great journalism. Building on the interest in buying local, they illustrated how small businesses across their area — including themselves — need community investment to survive.

### SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The project builds on years of terrific reporting by *The Lo-Down* on changes in the neighborhood. Since its founding in 2009, *The Lo-Down* has been documenting contentious real estate, land-use, and housing debates. But with this project, Litvak and Rice were applying [a solutions journalism approach](#) to the reporting. This project helped strengthen their capacity to do ground-level reporting and gave them the flexibility to test events and engagement activities with local residents.

The project struck a nerve quickly — [they raised 40 percent of their goal in the first two days of the campaign](#)— and went on to exceed their fundraising goal.<sup>13</sup>

*The Lo-Down* is part of the [journalism sustainability project at the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation](#), and The Democracy Fund provided \$5,000 in matching funds for the project.<sup>14</sup> If your community is facing similar issues and challenges, this crowdfunding model could easily be duplicated.



## Part Four:

# Crowdfunding Tips from The Tucson Sentinel and Charlottesville Tomorrow

*Originally presented at the Local Independent Online Publishers Association conference in Philadelphia in June 2015. Reprinted with permission.*

- 1) Back other people's Kickstarter projects via the same account you will use for your organization's campaign. You will get new ideas, and your account will look more credible to potential donors.
- 2) A video is essential. It should be short and sweet (2–3 minutes). It doesn't have to have great production values. It is nice if it looks great, but don't let that be an obstacle to doing the campaign. Audio should be good quality. Try online resources like [PowToon.com](http://PowToon.com) or [Wideo.co](http://Wideo.co) to create smart-looking animations.
- 3) Allow up to five days for your project to be approved. The financial back end has been streamlined to allow a business bank account to be the recipient of the funds raised instead of Amazon Payments.
- 4) Don't put someone's job on the line for a campaign. In other words, if you are raising money for a new employee or staff position, don't have that person identified and stressing out about the campaign. It's better to have a project you can afford not to do if your campaign is unsuccessful.
- 5) Rewards. Pick items that are not very expensive or complicated to fulfill. Many of your backers (43–47 percent in our experience) will not want a reward so don't buy a million t-shirts you don't need (yes, that happened)!
- 6) Get a short punchy URL. Submit your project with a compelling title. After it's approved by Kickstarter, change the title to something even shorter and punchier. This is the title Kickstarter will use to create your campaign hyperlink, and you cannot change it after launch. Then after launching, switch the title back to the longer text you had in mind.
- 7) You need an audience to recruit to your campaign. Having a robust social media following and email list are very helpful to recruiting supporters.
- 8) Gifts outside the campaign. Some people just can't handle Kickstarter; they'd rather hand you a check. Take it and treat them like every other valued campaign contributor. Send them updates, a thank you note and rewards. Don't sweat the details that their amount isn't reflected in the Kickstarter system.
- 9) Have some "friends and family" on standby to make larger gifts as the end of campaign nears. Board members of a nonprofit can be particularly helpful here. You don't want to take a chance your project won't get funded.
- 10) Multiple gifts. Some people will give a little at first, then increase their pledge as the deadline approaches, and they worry you will fail. This is good.
- 11) Most of your money will come in the last few days. That's just the way it works. Prepare for the anxiety.

- 12) Charitable gifts. If you are a nonprofit, treat these contributions just like any other donation. If a donor gets something of value as a reward, subtract that from the value of the gift in the acknowledgement letter.
- 13) New supporters and subscribers. You will recruit brand new donors via Kickstarter. Subscribe them to your email list. Add them to your contact database. Track these as a cohort to see if they become repeat donors (e.g., to your annual fund drive campaign).

## Part Five:

# Journalism Crowdfunding Checklist

### PREPARE

- Develop a project idea rooted in your community's needs. Start early with local stakeholders, use this R&D time as a chance to build allies and get buy-in from people and groups with a potential interest in your project. They will help you expand your reach later.
- Build your outreach list. Clean your contact list to make sure it is up-to-date, and segment it into a few simple categories to better target your outreach — for example, big donors, small donors, influencers, and partner organizations.
- Draft your case statement and project description.
- Write your video script and film your pitch.
- Test your project description and video with potential audiences before finalizing them.
- Try to line up support in advance. Get a few commitments, especially for a few bigger gifts, if possible, and have those people ready for strategic moments in the campaign — for example, to give a big boost at launch or come in at the end to get you over the finish line.
- Create creative and cost-effective rewards.
- Pick big sponsors and supporters for potential matching grant opportunities or other challenge grants based on dollars raised or number of contributors.
- Choose your platform — for example, Beacon, Kickstarter, Indiegogo, and Patreon.

### LAUNCH

- Flood the zone at launch. Get messages out on every channel possible and encourage sharing within your network.
- Get early gifts to show momentum and enthusiasm.
- Find an interesting angle in your project or rewards that might get press attention and create buzz.
- Use cascading emails that build on each other to give people a full picture of your project in the first week.
- Be available to answer questions from potential donors and engage with early supporters.
- Line up external validators who can talk about your work and give the project a shout-out in specific targeted communities and sectors.

## MAINTAIN

- Crowdfunding campaigns tend to have peaks of activity at the very beginning and very end and two weeks of slow time in the middle. It is important to keep momentum up during the middle time because it will set you up for success later.
- Use the middle part of your campaign to reach out quietly behind the scenes to encourage people to give. This is a great time to make phone calls and line up support.
- Introduce new rewards. New giving levels and rewards provide a reason to keep talking about the campaign and can add excitement to a slower part of the campaign.
- Celebrate milestones. Create artificial goals and get your early donors to help you reach them. Focus on dollars raised or number of people giving.
- Announce a matching grant. You can add buzz and encourage giving in mid-campaign by introducing a new matching or challenge grant from a sponsor.

## FINISH STRONG

- People love deadlines. Prepare to go all in during the last week of your campaign.
- Don't worry too much about sending too many messages. Your followers and fans will understand that this is a short-term push for a big goal.
- Focus on closing deals with people you've been cultivating during the entire month.
- Consider a modal pop-up on your website if you haven't yet. It can really help convert people to donors.
- Consider targeted Facebook ads.
- Keep making calls to potential donors.
- Give people a taste of what success looks like — for example, point to your best reporting or release a podcast episode. Plan to show people how their donations will help you create more great journalism.

## IT'S NOT OVER

- Even when the campaign is over, it is not really over.
- Be sure to thank your donors soon after the campaign ends. Use all your channels (platform, social, email, website) to thank people and share the good news.
- Be sure you and your crowdfunding platform are ready for disbursing the funds.
- Begin planning how to fulfill your rewards to donors.
- Set a reminder for following up with your donors as you begin to create the journalism they helped fund.

## Part Six:

# Journalism Crowdfunding Reading List

- “Here’s a Recipe for Successfully Crowdfunding Journalism in 2015” — *NiemanLab*. Available at: <http://www.niemanlab.org/2015/02/heres-a-recipe-for-successfully-crowdfunding-journalism-in-2015/>.
- “Want to Crowdfund Your Journalism? Here Are 10 Tips for Launching a Successful Campaign” — *Poynter*. Available at: <http://www.poynter.org/2016/want-to-crowdfund-your-journalism-here-are-10-tips-for-launching-a-successful-campaign/413789/>.
- “13 Ways to Get Your Journalism Project Crowdfunded” — *Poynter*. Available at: <http://www.poynter.org/2013/13-ways-to-get-your-journalism-project-crowdfunded/214913/>.
- “Crowdfunding Enables Diverse New Frontier for Journalism Projects” — *Pew Research Center*. Available at: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/01/27/crowdfunding-enables-diverse-new-frontier-for-journalism-projects/>.
- “Crowdfunded Journalism: A Small but Growing Addition to Publicly Driven Journalism” — *Pew Research Center*. Available at: <http://www.journalism.org/2016/01/20/crowdfunded-journalism/>.
- “Crowdfunding for Journalists” — *Global Investigative Journalism Network*. Available at: <http://gijn.org/resources/crowdfunding-for-journalists-2/>.
- Through the Cracks. Available at: <http://throughcracks.com/>.
- “The Year in Journalism” — *Kickstarter*. Available at: <https://www.kickstarter.com/pages/journalism>.
- “Why Kickstarter Is Not the Entire Story of Crowdfunded Journalism” — *MediaShift*. Available at: <http://mediashift.org/2016/02/why-kickstarter-is-not-the-entire-story-of-crowdfunded-journalism/>.
- “Why Pay Attention to Crowdfunded Journalism?” — *Nonprofit Quarterly*. Available at: <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2016/02/02/why-pay-attention-to-crowdfunded-journalism/>.
- “A Short Guide to Crowdfunding Journalism” — *Medium*. Available at: <https://medium.com/de-correspondent/a-short-guide-to-crowdfunding-journalism-b495ecba710#.v3hazi4gk>
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## ENDNOTES

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