Kickstarter Project

Ecommerce 2014-2015

Template

***About this project OUR STORY***

* Your project page is where you’ll share your story.
* What are you looking to create with the help of your community?
* Use your video and description to quickly and clearly communicate what you’re trying to do and why you’re doing it.
* Choose a captivating project image that represents what you're trying to create.
* Inspire excitement for your idea, and also make potential backers confident in your ability to see it through.

***Video***

* Your video doesn’t have to be super pro looking. Some of our favorite project videos have a very DIY feel. To give you an idea of how to approach yours, check out this video we made:
* Introduce yourself and any teammates involved with your project.
* Tell the story behind your project. Share any progress you’ve made so far, any photos of early prototypes, any research you’ve done. Potential backers appreciate these kinds of details.
* Share a timeline for how you plan to complete your project and send out rewards. Be open and honest about whatever you’re still trying to sort out.
* Include your budget — even if it’s just a rough one. A budget is proof that you’ve planned ahead.
* Most importantly, have fun with it! This is your chance to shine.

***Rewards***

Rewards are what you share with the folks who helped you bring your project to life. Some rewards are straightforward, like a copy of the album you made. Other rewards are more creative and unique. The best projects tend to have a mix of both! Here are some pointers to help get you thinking about your rewards.

***What to offer***

As a creator, you know what will make your community most excited. Trust your gut, and offer rewards that you yourself would want. Here are five common reward types:

* **Copies of the thing** The album (physical or digital!), the DVD, a print from the photo exhibition.
* **Limited editions** Backers love limited editions. They celebrate the special role backers played in helping the project come to life.
* **Collaborations** A backer appears in your comic. Every backer gets painted into your mural. Two backers do the handclaps for a song on your record.
* **Experiences** A visit to the set. A phone call from the author. Dinner with the cast. A concert in your backyard.
* **Mementos** Polaroid’s sent from location. Thanks in the credits. Meaningful tokens that tell a story.

***How to price***

The most popular pledge amount on Kickstarter is $25, and the site-wide average for all pledges (big and small) is about $70. Small rewards are where it’s at! Here are some other things to think about when pricing:

* **Offer a wide variety**: Some of your backers might be able to contribute $100, but others might only be able to pledge $10. Every backer counts, so be sure to offer an array of rewards that can appeal to all different kinds of people.
* **Consider the costs**: Remember that you’ll be producing and delivering the rewards that you offer. Presumably you’ll use some of the money raised on Kickstarter to make that happen. Plan ahead and budget accordingly for these costs.
* **Estimated delivery dates**: One piece of information you’ll be asked for while building your project is an “Estimated Delivery Date” for each reward. This is your best guess for when you expect to deliver that particular reward, or set of rewards, to those backers.

Choose a delivery date that you feel confident about or will be working towards. Don’t be afraid to give yourself some breathing room. Under promise, over deliver.

If you do run into setbacks with timing, let your backers know. Tell them what happened and give them an updated time frame. They’ll appreciate it!

***Funding***

Your funding goal should be the minimum amount needed to complete the project and fulfill rewards. The first step to setting that goal is to estimate a budget. Here are a few tips for putting together yours.

* **Make a list** Write down every possible expense, even less obvious ones like the cost of packaging and shipping rewards. For larger expenses, research your options and see who can give you the best deal based on the quantities you expect you’ll need. Total it up. The number might be bigger than you expected, but that's okay. Think of this rough budget as your ideal budget. If it feels too high, consider different aspects of your project you might be willing to compromise on to cut costs.
* **Consider your reach** Kickstarter is a great way to share your project with new communities. (There are over two million repeat backers!) That said, most of your support will come from your core networks and the folks who are most familiar with you and your work—family, friends, etc. You’ll want to have a good sense of how much support you can reasonably expect from them.
* **Choose your goal** Once you’ve researched your budget and considered your networks, you’re ready to set your funding goal. Because funding is all-or-nothing, you can always raise more than your goal but never less. Figure out how much money you need to complete the project—while considering how much funding you think you can generate—and select an amount close to that.
* **Set your project deadline** Funding can last anywhere from one to 60 days, but a longer duration is not necessarily better. Statistically, projects lasting 30 days or fewer have our highest success rates. Shorter projects set a tone of confidence and help motivate your backers to join the party.
* **Give yourself a cushion** If your project is successfully funded, Kickstarter applies a 5% fee to the total funds raised. There are additional credit card processing fees too (about 3-5%), and every project’s tax situation is different. Check out [Kickstarter and Taxes: a guide for your accountant](https://www.kickstarter.com/help/taxes) to learn more.

***Promotion***

An exceptional project can lead to outpourings of support from all corners of the web. But for most projects, support will come from the people you know. The goal in any case is to get people as excited as you are about your project—to make them feel like they will be taking part in something special.

* **Announce your project** Send an email to your close friends and family so they can be first to pledge, then share the project on social media. You don’t want to overwhelm people with e-blasts and group messages, but make sure you remind your networks throughout your project’s funding. It can also help to break down your contact list into smaller groups and tailor your message to each audience. Give a short description of your project and highlight some of your project’s rewards. Be concise — and don’t forget to include the link to your project page!
* **Follow up individually** A nice, personal message is the most effective way to let someone know about your project. After you’ve sent out your big emails and posted your project to social media, you can follow up with people individually. Try highlighting very specific things about the project you think each individual might like.
* **Pitch the press** Writers are always looking for new stories and ideas. There’s no magic script to get them to write about you or your project, but your best bet is to focus on who you are and what you’re trying to create. Find venues that cover work like yours. How does your project fit in with the broader context of your community? Pitch your idea, not just that you’re funding.
* **Reach out to communities** If you are making a new kind of espresso machine and there’s an organization for baristas, it’s not a bad idea to tell them about your project and ask them to share with their crews.
* **Host an event** Throwing a small party is a great way to rally close fans and friends. Many creators will set up a computer right at the party to make it easier for less computer-savvy relatives to back the project.
* **Line up help if you think you’ll need it** For projects with ambitious goals, you might need more than yourself to get the word out. If you’re making a film, for example, make sure your entire cast and crew is involved with the effort.

***Updates***

Throughout the life of your project, you’ll be communicating with backers and keeping them updated on your progress. That’s where project updates come in. They’re your project’s blog, and how backers can follow along with you from start to finish. Being part of this journey is one of the best things about Kickstarter!

**Here are three kinds of project updates:**

* **Updates that build momentum** While your project is live, keep your backers informed about new developments and funding milestones. It’ll inspire them to help you spread the word.
  + Treat your project like a story that’s unfolding before their eyes. Detailed updates like “Pics from last night’s show!” or “We found a printer for our book!” are fun for everybody to follow along with.
  + Once you launch, you’ll begin to receive a steady stream of comments and messages from backers. Remember to check in frequently and respond to individual concerns. If you notice that certain questions come up more frequently than others, consider adding this information to your project’s FAQ.
* **Updates that share the process** Once your project is successfully funded, keep backers updated with your project’s progress and all the creative decisions you’re making. If it feels right, you can even use updates to ask your backers for feedback. Keeping backers informed is an essential part of Kickstarter. Even if things aren't going according to plan, you should definitely keep your backers in the loop!
* **Updates that celebrate success** The story of your project doesn’t end after it’s shipped. Share reviews, press, and photos of your project out in the world, whether it’s opening night of your play or your book on someone’s bookshelf.

***Fulfillment***

Fulfillment means getting your rewards to backers and communicating with them as you complete this process. Like every other step, this one requires planning and budgeting. But fulfillment can be fun too.

* **Tools** We have two tools to help you fulfill rewards:
  + The first is the Survey tool. You can use it to collect your backers’ mailing addresses, shirt sizes, or any other information you need to fulfill their rewards.
  + The second tool is your Backer Report. All the survey responses end up neatly organized in your Backer Report, which you can export as a CSV file and open in pretty much any spreadsheet program.
* **Shipping** For any physical reward that you offer, you’re responsible for delivering it to your backers. Unless you plan on hand-delivering rewards, this means shipping.
  + Plan ahead for how you’ll send each reward, how you’ll package them, and how much they’ll cost to ship.
  + Don’t forget hidden costs like bubble mailers and packing tape (and hand cramps from filling out custom forms!).
  + Adding shipping insurance might cost a little bit more, but might also give you peace of mind. The best way to get started is with some research online.
  + Start with the basics like mailing guides, checklists, and bulk mail information from your postal service.
  + Don’t want to handle shipping on your own? There are lots of great fulfillment services out there that can handle shipping for a cost. If you decide to work with a fulfillment partner, do your homework and figure out which one can best handle your project’s needs.
* **Communication** Have fun with fulfillment! Take pictures of your packing party. Tell funny stories from the post office (backers love seeing photos and videos of their rewards being packaged). Ask your backers to let you know when their rewards have arrived. Cherish these last moments of a job well done!
* **The finish line** When you’ve completed your original goal and fulfilled your project’s rewards, post a celebratory update and give yourself a pat on the back! If your project develops or you start on new ones, keep up with your backers and share your stories as they unfold.