

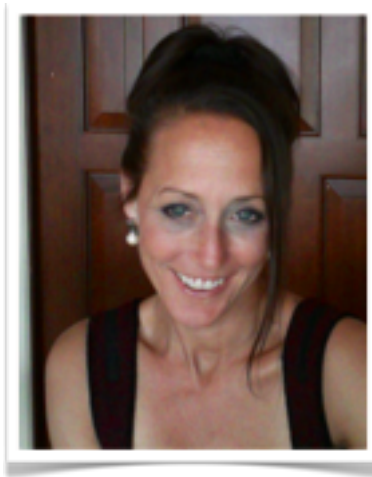
# How to Run a Successful Kickstarter Campaign



**by Beth Rosen**

copyright © 2012

The Back Door to Hollywood  
Signature Beth Productions LLC



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Beth Rosen is a producer and a writer. As a filmmaker, she co-produced and acted in *Scavenger Killers*, a horror film starring Academy/Emmy/Golden Globe winners and nominees Eric Roberts, Charles Durning and Robert Loggia. The film was written by critically acclaimed Producer/Director Kenneth Del Vecchio. She also worked as an associate producer of three other Del Vecchio films: *The Life Zone* (a pro-life abortion suspense thriller which prompted a media frenzy), *An Affirmative Act* (a pro-gay marriage film), and *O.B.A.M. Nude*, a satire of President Obama. All three films are available on VOD (and DVD) through NBC/Universal and Screen Media Films. In 2012, Beth served as the Assistant Director of the Hoboken International Film Festival after her short film *Photo Finish* (co-written and co-produced with Emmy-award winning writer, Mort Scharfman), was nominated for “Best of the Festival Audience Award.” She also created, wrote, directed, produced, and acted in two Television Web Series: *Chasing Fairy Tail*, a comedy which pokes fun of fairy tales, and *Between Two Firs*, a holiday parody of *Between Two Ferns* with Zach Galifianakis. The films were subsequently invited into several prominent film festivals.

Beth is also a #1 best selling author of “Living Proof: Celebrating the Gifts that Came Wrapped in Sandpaper” with Lisa Nichols (co-author of “Chicken Soup for the African American Soul”). She has written and illustrated several children’s books and books of wisdom which are currently in development as potential television series. She is a Principal Member of Osprey Point LLC, a business consulting and capital sourcing company for mid-cap and start up companies in the entertainment industry, and Owner of Signature Beth Productions LLC, where she is currently in development and preproduction on a variety of media projects for television and film, including scripted and unscripted comedy, drama, suspense-thrillers, animation and reality docudramas, with award winning talent/producers/writers and composers attached.

Beth is an Ivy League graduate of the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia Law School, with over 25 years of legal experience, having worked as an international corporate, banking and insolvency attorney at top NYC law firms, including Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP, Shearman & Sterling LLP and Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP.

IMDb link: [http://www.imdb.com/name/nm4225105/?ref\\_=fn\\_al\\_nm\\_1](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm4225105/?ref_=fn_al_nm_1)

Website: [signaturebethproductions.com](http://signaturebethproductions.com)



## INTRODUCTION

No matter how talented you are or how wonderful your ideas, the reality is that it takes money to implement your creative endeavors, especially if you want to position yourself as a star.

Crowdfunding campaigns are a great way to fund your creative projects. There are three types of crowdfunding: (i) reward crowdfunding where you raise funds from supporters who receive a gift or product sample for their pledged contributions, (ii) debt crowdfunding, where you receive a loan that you pay off within a specified time period, and (iii) equity crowdfunding

where you give a percentage of the company ownership to your financiers.

There are some very popular websites that facilitate running such campaigns. These sites provide a forum for gathering money from the general public, which provides budding new artists with an alternative to the more traditional and burdensome avenues of financing. Many people successfully raise enough funds to finance their films, music projects, music videos and other creative endeavors through such sites.

This e-book is designed to give you the nuts and bolts of running a successful crowdfunding campaign. The business of raising funds, even through crowd funding, involves a sincere and dedicated marketing effort on your part with continuous follow-up emails and social network postings. The good news is that if you do it right and offer people incentives for investing in you and your projects, even if it's a small amount from a lot of people, you may be pleasantly surprised to find your project funded at the end of a specified period of time, sometimes well beyond your projected goals.

You need to check for fees and whether it's an all or nothing site where if you don't raise the specified goal within the allotted time, you lose everything you raised. Many crowdfunding platforms take a processing fee from contributions and the overall raise. Some sites allow flexible campaigns where you can keep some of the funds if you don't reach your goal but the platform takes a higher percentage. You need to check their rules and read them carefully before you pick a platform that is right for you.

Regardless of which platform you go with, the campaign has a time limit and so it puts the pressure on you to really market and push your project and get people as excited about it as you are, especially at the end when the deadline for donations is almost up.

So if you're serious about moving forward with your dreams and getting the financing to do it, it's time to get started.



## **KEYS TO RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN**

So how do you run a successful kickstarter campaign? Set forth below are some essential elements which increase the likelihood of getting the full amount of your projected budget funded with enough donations.

### **Plan Ahead**

The planning stage is critical if you want to finance your creative projects with kickstarter campaigns. You must have a specific game plan before you start. Be able to succinctly describe your project in an exciting way to entice potential backers. Do research ahead of time so you know what it takes to bring your vision to life. Find out how long it will take and identify each step of the production process, who you will need on your team, how much money you will have to pay each person and how much the pre-production and post-production costs will be.

### **Post a Professional Video of Yourself**

You should have a good professional video when you launch a kickstarter campaign that includes (i) an introduction to who you are, (ii) the creative idea/endeavor you want to finance, (iii) the people involved in your project, (iv) a clear description of the product to be created, (iv) why your audience should get involved and help you finance the project, and (v) how your backers may benefit from the project.

- Build rapport and trust with your video.
- Give them a taste of your talent.
- Write a professional script and be natural and engaging when you speak.
- If you have clips that show how professional you are or how professional your movie or project will be, then include it.

### **Model Successful Campaigns**

Do a Google search for successful kickstarter campaigns to see what worked for projects similar to yours so you can model their campaigns and tailor it to your needs. Watch videos of successful kickstarter campaigns, particularly those that are within the same category (art, film, design, technology, etc.) as the one you want to target. You will quickly notice that most of the successful campaigns have more or less professional quality videos that introduce you to the idea and the person/people behind them.



### **Propose and Disclose Components of Your Budget:**

You must have a specified donation goal that matches your projected budget. Don't use an arbitrary dollar amount. Do some research to make sure it's accurate and disclose the components of the budget so people know where their money is going. It does not have to be a line item budget but a general disclosure to satisfy your potential funders.

Nonetheless, it's always good to get in the habit of doing a line item budget for any creative endeavor so that you know all the costs to produce what you want. Taking time to research the elements of producing a creative project will help you plan ahead and ask for enough financing to actually finish your project. Remember, the planning stage is critical. The last thing you want is to get half way through your project and realize you have no more money to finish it.

Remember to include the following items in your budget so that you do not have to go out of pocket: (i) 5%-9% crowdfunding fees, depending on which site you choose, (ii) 3%-5% transaction processing fees and (iii) product costs and shipping charges for the products that you promise to your backers.

### **Presell Your Project:**

Offer a copy of your MP3 or Film when it's done if they make a specified donation. You can also offer promotional items such as t-shirts, autographed photos, coffee mugs, bandanas, hats, tote bags, and even a big thank you on social media.

### **Offer Credit to Big Backers:**

Offer credit on the project to people who offer large donations. People love to see their name in print and call themselves producers or contributors to a successful creative endeavor. You can offer credits such as executive producer, co-producer, associate producer, special thanks, etc.

### **Offer Limited Editions and Sneak Previews/Screening Passes:**

Offer sneak previews, free screenings, VIP red carpet passes or your pre-sold copies as a special limited edition with personal signatures from you. Offer a limited number of personally signed copies to entice backers to chip in large amounts early in the campaign.

### **Share Your Story:**

Give them photos and tidbits from the creative process to bring them along for the ride so they feel involved and an integral part of the project. Let them know what you are doing during the kickstarter campaign so they know you are a go-getter who finishes what they start. It helps to build confidence in your abilities.



### **Create Custom Experiences:**

For your largest contributors the ones who invest thousands, offer them a custom experience like an opportunity to be on set or in a recording session with you. Rarely does anyone get to experience this and the chance to be a part of your creative experience and see it first hand may go a long way in getting large contributions. You may even offer them a walk on role or a cameo appearance. Invite them to the cast party.

### **Conduct a Social Media Campaign:**

Contact everyone you know, especially friends and family and ask them to do some campaigning on your behalf. It's fairly easy to get a lot of people to donate \$1 to \$10 or \$15 to \$25. Don't be shy about strutting your stuff and asking for help. Conduct an intense social media campaign.

- Blog about it.
- Post it on your website. If you don't already have a personal website, get one immediately.
- Search for Backers of similar campaigns and seek them out.
- Post it on Facebook. Create an Event and a separate page for the Project.
- Post it on Twitter.
- Post it on LinkedIn.
- Post it on Instagram.
- Post it on Snapchat.
- Post it on WhatsApp.
- Ask others to share it on their platforms, pages and groups.
- Post it other social networking sites. Make a list of sites and reach out to the contact person for each site so you can generate buzz and get picked up by the press.

### **Press Releases**

Do online press releases with links to your fundraising site.

### **Radio/Television/Podcasts**

Try to get on a radio or television show and be interviewed about your project and plug your kickstarter campaign. You can offer something valuable like priceless tips to their audience in



order get the interview spot. If you have a podcast, promote it on your own podcast and then be a guest on other people's podcasts and ask for contributions.

### **Sample of your Work**

Be sure to give the listening audience a sample of your work. Impress upon them why they should contribute to the project (i.e. sure to be successful, entertaining, social value, educational, etc.)

### **Marketing Timeline**

Make sure to create a marketing timeline of when and how often you will tweet, post on Facebook, email friends and family and blog about your campaign. Follow your marketing timeline for social media posting to create buzz and drive traffic to your site. Stay ahead of the gifts that you will give your contributors so you know how soon after the campaign they will arrive.

## **WHERE TO CONDUCT CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGNS**

You can do a Google search for kickstarter campaigns to find websites that facilitate crowdfunding. Two of the most popular crowdfunding sites are [kickstarter.com](http://kickstarter.com) and [indiegogo.com](http://indiegogo.com). There are many more platforms.

### **Kickstarter:**

You must apply to [Kickstarter.com](http://Kickstarter.com) before posting a project on their website. Research their guidelines ahead of time so you make sure you meet their requirements. Kickstarter takes 5% of the funds raised and charges between 3-5% per transaction. It's an all-or-nothing funding site. If you don't reach your projected goal, you do not get any of the money pledged and your contributors will not be charged anything. Kickstarter does not claim any ownership over the projects on their site but projects launched their are permanently archived and accessible to the public. Once funding is completed, projects and uploaded media will remain on the site and may not be edited or deleted. There is a 14 day waiting period to receive the funds if you meet your goal.

<http://www.kickstarter.com/>

### **Indiegogo:**

[Indiegogo.com](http://Indiegogo.com) has flexible and fixed rate fees that range from 4-9%, depending on whether you get your full project funded. There is a 5% funding fee for flexible funds and a processing fee of 3% and 30 cents per transaction. There is also a minimum goal for fundraising. There is an option to pay a higher fee and retain all the money pledged if you do not raise your projected goal but you must decide this ahead of time.

<http://www.indiegogo.com/>

### **Causes:**

Causes is the world's largest online campaigning platform focused on nonprofits which target social, political, and cultural issues. If you want to make a difference quickly and effectively, you should look at this site because it has over 180 million users in over 150 different

countries.

<https://www.causes.com/>

**Gofundme:**

Gofundme site collects a 2.9% processing fee and 30 cents for every donation. As it's not an all or nothing fundraising site, you keep everything that you raise. Plus, there are zero personal campaign funding fees for those based in the United States.

<https://www.gofundme.com/>

**Patreon:**

Patreon is a membership platform that provides business tools for creators to run a subscription content service. It allows creators and artists to earn a monthly income by providing exclusive rewards and perks to their subscribers. It's used by YouTube videographers, bloggers, podcasters other digital creators who post regularly online. It allows artists to receive funding directly from their fans on a recurring basis or per work of art. Patreon charges a commission of 5 to 12% of creators' monthly income, in addition to payment processing fees. Memberships are billed on the first of each month. You need to share work often or your pledgers can cancel their subscriptions. Patreon collects a 2.9-percent fee and 35 cents from each pledge.

[www.patreon.com/](http://www.patreon.com/)

You can do a Google search for crowdfunding campaigns and other websites that support such campaigns. Always check the rules, percentage fees on funding and per transaction processing fees as they may change from time to time, and account for those in your budgets.

I wish you the best of luck in getting your projects funding!



THE BACK DOOR  
TO HOLLYWOOD

