



How To Create A Successful Online Fundraising Program

An InkSoft Guide

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With limited funding and tight budgets, many schools, organizations and nonprofits are desperate for innovative and simple ways to raise money. Selling customized, printed goods in an effort to fundraise isn't new and novel; however, selling these same customized goods in an online, fundraiser-store format is innovative and has a very profitable and exciting future.

Online fundraising, also commonly referred to as 'crowdfunding,' leverages the power of the Internet, social media and ecommerce in an effort to raise money online. Crowdfunding has exploded with popular crowdfunding platforms such as Kickstarter and Indiegogo. These platforms make it easy for anyone to create and deploy an online fundraising campaign. According to Forbes, in 2013 the crowdfunding industry grew to be over \$5.1 billion.

Now, titans in the printing industry are innovating and redefining fundraising with printed goods by leveraging crowdfunding technology and strategy. Take for example CustomInk's Booster offering, or Teespring who recently received \$20 million dollars in funding from the venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz, and now CafePress with their Tfund product.

The bottom-line? Crowdfunding with printed goods is here to stay. As a printer, there is a gold rush opportunity to develop new business and drive more sales. Now is the time to stake your claim.

This guide was created with the goal of providing some strategies to help you create and launch successful, online fundraising campaigns. These strategies in conjunction with InkSoft's Fundraising eStore technology makes for a winning recipe.

What's In It For Me?

Understanding The Benefits

Before we get into the details of creating and launching an online fundraising campaign it is important to understand the benefits of this offering from two perspectives: The client and the printer. Understanding these benefits will help you to best convey the value proposition to your prospects and clients and this understanding will also serve to motivate you to invest in the opportunities available in offering online fundraising.

The Client

- **No cost, no liability**

Generally, printers offer free online fundraising stores and no inventory commitment.

- **Fast**

An online fundraiser can be created and launched in minutes. The online store can be shared rapidly via email blasts and social media promotion.

- **Free PR & Marketing**

Clients can use their fundraising effort to generate free PR, all while promoting their cause and identity.

- **Engagement**

An online fundraising store allows the client to engage and interact with their current and prospective audience.

- **No Inventory**

The client doesn't have to stock, distribute and worry about dated or unsold merchandise.

- **Physical Products**

So many fundraising campaigns seek money and contributions with nothing tangible in return for the donor. With printed goods as the fundraising vehicle, the donor receives a tangible item for their contribution, thusly increasing the likelihood of soliciting more contributions.

What's In It For Me?

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The Printer

- **Cash Flow**

With an online fundraiser store shoppers pay at checkout. This means you get paid in full for each order before you have to order blank goods, supplies and go to print production.

- **No leftover, dated and aged merchandise/ product / inventory**

Printers can bulk and batch produce printed goods after the fundraiser ordering window/timeline expires as to avoid excess and unsold inventory.

- **Competitive differentiation**

Offering a premium, innovative and unique service that solves problems is a perfect way to win new business.

- **Efficient**

No 'old-school' tedious spreadsheets, order entry, payment collection and merchandise processing.

- **Viral & Virtual Word of Mouth Marketing**

You can cross promote your business and your fundraising store offerings at each launched, fundraising campaign store.

1. Presenting The Plan

You **MUST** deliver a simple, demonstrable plan for executing a successful fundraiser. This plan is what you present to customers when pitching and presenting the fundraising program you offer.



While everyone loves the idea of staging a fundraiser and having the money to support the cause, most people are either extremely busy or do not want to be bothered with the all the details that are required. As a business that supplies this service, you want to emphasize that by using your company and creating an online fundraising store, all the work is done for them.

From setting up the fundraising store, to processing and printing all the orders, to collecting the money and delivering, all the client has to do is provide some basic information and be willing to participate in promoting and marketing the fundraiser to help maximize the results.

1. Presenting The Plan

InkSoft has created professionally designed, interactive marketing flier templates available in CorelDRAW (.CDR), Adobe Illustrator (.AI) and EPS file formats. These marketing fliers will help you present the concept of a fundraising store in a professional manner. This will aid in providing an understanding of your fundraising capabilities and offerings while establishing credibility and professionalism.



Your plan should describe from 'cradle to grave' the program and process. Whenever there is uncertainty, there is doubt. You need to eliminate all doubt in order to earn and be trusted with the fundraising effort.

2. The Message Matters

When working with a client to set up a fundraiser, the first step is to help them come up with a message that communicates the intention and the value of the fundraising program and compels the target audience to take action. Ideally, the message will speak to consumers' emotions and cause them to make a connection.

A good example of this is demonstrated in a fund-raising campaign organized by Ink The Cause in Indianapolis, IN. A policeman responding to a call was shot and killed in the line of duty. Within days, the decorator had designed a shirt with the tagline "Indy Strong-Help Stop The Violence."

Obviously, this is a message that everyone will relate to, and many citizens will be motivated to donate to support the widows and children of fallen officers.

Help Stop The Violence in Indy

Help us reach our goal

12 Days left
Ends July 31, 2014

1534 Sold
Goal of 1,000

Indy Strong Tee - \$15.95

Stop the violence in Indy with this Indy Strong tee. 5.5-ounce, 100% pre-shrunk ring spun cotton for a soft, comfortable feel.

Select Size

Add To Cart

Support Indy Officers and Help Stop The Violence

Help support stopping the violence with this Indy Strong tee. 100% of the proceeds will go back to the families of Indianapolis Metro police officers either injured or killed in the line of duty through the Indianapolis FOP. #StopTheViolence #IndyStrong #InkTheCause

Gabe Peters
@gjpeters

Follow

Absolute pleasure to be able to give \$10,009+ check to Indy FOP today. Humbling experience! #IndyStrong @InkTheCause pic.twitter.com/isq0jd2zCf

Retweets: 5, Favorites: 4

2:33 PM - 23 Jul 2014

Don't miss any updates from Gabe Peters

Full name: Email: Password:

Sign up for Twitter

2. The Message Matters

An essential part of any message will include a call to action. So include some type of statement, ideally with an incentive to respond right away.

The message and graphics are really what will ultimately drive supporters to take action and purchase.

Act as a trusted advisor here and help refine the message and design. This is also a perfect opportunity to discuss the 'message vehicles' or products with your client. Stickers, decals, temporary tattoos, headwear, aprons and various promotional items might be more effective than a t-shirt. Or, perhaps a mix of products might be the right formula.

3. Motivate

To run a successful fundraising program, you need to motivate the organization AND its members. This is a tall order, but fortunately there are some powerful strategies you can employ. The most effective strategy is instilling a sense of urgency. Consider this: The speed at which you drive to the emergency room is dictated by how much you are bleeding. The greater the urgency, the faster AND more likely a consumer will take action.

There are a variety of proven techniques for urging patrons to act immediately including:

- **Goals and Benchmarks**

Let patrons know how much money needs to be raised or how much product need to be sold to satisfy the cause. Conveying a goal and its progress can motivate participants by either fear or aspiration.

For example, if the fund-raiser does not generate enough money, the church ministry cannot send the youth group on its mission trip, or a church member may aspire to support its youth, and the work students will do as part of the trip and contribute for that reason.

- **Scarcity**

Scarce or rare items have more perceived value. The result? You can charge more. One way scarcity is created is by offering limited quantities. *"Only 500 signed shirts will be created and will never be available again. Get yours now."*

- **Set a deadline**

April 15th represents a deadline that most Americans are familiar with: The IRS filing deadline. *"These shirts will be available for a limited time only. Don't miss out, order now."* As an added emphasis, consider using the countdown clock feature that notes how many days are left for ordering. *"Only 18 days left!"*

- **Special editions**

Deluxe features or unique attributes are incorporated into the shirt to make it stand out from the norm and create another reason to buy. This could include adding special effects or foil, creating a multimedia piece or having the artist sign and number a limited quantity.

4. Promote

In order to generate the best possible outcome and results the fundraising effort must be promoted aggressively and actively during the defined fundraising-ordering period. Your fundraising plan and program is intended to motivate and guide your customer to promote their campaign directly to their audience.

If you provide a simple plan, then you will have confidence when asking for commitments. Here is an example of asking for a commitment:

“We will offer this fundraising program at no cost to you IF you promise and commit to doing your part to making your fundraiser a success. Here is what we need from you...”

You will need to clearly communicate what is needed and expected in terms of promoting and marketing the fundraiser. It is helpful to ask questions to understand how the organization communicates with its members.

Consider the following ways that an organization might communicate with members:

- Organization’s primary website
- E-newsletters
- Posting to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram & other social media outlets
- Announcements at gatherings or meetings
- Posting signage in gathering places

4. Promote

- Including a mention in any printed literature that is distributed
- Advertisements
- Message boards and intranets

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Conclusion

There are almost endless events, organizations, causes, and groups in search of better ways to fundraise. These groups represent excellent selling opportunities. Big printing titans like CustomInk and CafePress have recently invested in developing their own proprietary online fundraising store technologies in an effort to grow their sales in this territory.

InkSoft has added online fundraising store technology to its robust software platform in an effort to help printers take advantage of the business potential available through online fundraising. It is our hope that the strategies proposed in this guide, together with this new technology from InkSoft, can help printers become more successful.