



Crowdfunding

A Guide for Screen Directors



If you are considering crowd funding for your film/TV show there is a lot to think about. We have done the work to give you an overview of the successes of crowdfunding and what the different sites offer to help make the decision if crowdfunding is an option for your project.

Good things come in lots of small transactions

Crowdfunding is based on the simple principle that there are more creative people in the world than there are wealthy patrons of creativity, crowdfunding allows creative minds to fund their own projects by way of individual donations, or pledges from people all over the world and works by leveraging multiple people for “smaller” amounts of financing.

Simply put, how many people do you know who are ready, willing, and able to contribute €50,000 or more to back a creative project? It is probably not so many, but how many people do you know who could contribute €10, €50 or €100 toward the same project? It's bound to be a lot more. And now we see the power of the crowd, often all the financial backing filmmakers could ever need is already available to them, if they know how to leverage it.

Your Audience

When it comes to crowdfunding it's necessary to have a middle person, the one who puts the fans in contact with the director and that's where the sites come in. Where regular funding options have failed or prove too difficult, crowdfunding sites offer a new route into raising finance for film production, one that allows directors to put the film/tv show together independently, on their own terms. The success of these crowdfunding campaigns suggests this is something people want to see. With a project funded by the crowd you don't need to hand over ownership or shares the people who are backing you are doing so because they want to see *your* film as *you* intended it to be; it is essentially fan-funding. So if you as a director have a strong following this could be something to consider. With crowdfunding, not only do you raise funds for your film but you raise awareness and get a real sense of the viability of your project.

Pitch

Now while all this seems different to the regular methods, it's not entirely, you're still making a pitch, you're still presenting the crowdfunding equivalent of a grant proposal, and it is still a lot of work. Posting a project is just the beginning of the journey; it requires active involvement, engagement, and



promotion. The projects work on the basis of give and take. Those seeking funding post the basis of their project and their financial goal, then people can pledge money to the project in exchange for different rewards. These rewards range from an invitation to a screening getting merchandise to being an extra in the film itself or receiving an end credit. Most successful projects are further strengthened with an eye-catching video. These come in all shapes and sizes, check out Anomalisa's quirky and smartly produced video for their "once in a lifetime opportunity" to make a film without studio interference. Alternatively the makers of 'My Name is Emily' appear themselves in their video and make a personal appeal outlining the merits of and difficulties faced by their project. There's no right way to attract funders so long as you connect with the audience, and there we have the real advantage of crowdfunding. Before a trailer is even released, the audience already has a sense of involvement in the film, they're a part of its very production.

Although which crowdfunding site you ultimately go with will largely depend on the specific needs of your film, there is a huge variety of options with over four hundred crowdfunding sites to choose from. But fear not! To help you with this crucial decision we have picked what we deem to be the best five platforms to launch your film project.

Five to Consider

- **Fundit.ie** – Fundit.ie is the Irish equivalent to its larger American cousins; it's designed the same way but is exclusively looking towards Irish creativity. Fundit was created by *Business to Arts*, a not for profit organisation, and is committed to giving to the creative sector and facilitating pre-sales of creative projects. A 5% fee is charged to support the running of the site and a further 3% that includes all other costs. They boast one of the highest success rates of all crowdfunding sites at 71% and also offer assistance with the project itself. Fundit is particularly popular when it comes to funding shorts or low budget films and, although there's not as much money available as with indiegogo and Kickstarter, it can also act as a means to attaining future funding. It was through Fundit that Risteard Ó Domhnaill raised €56,000 to fund his documentary 'Atlantic.' While the funding itself was hugely significant, the success of Risteard's crowdfunding campaign also meant he had significant leverage and, in Risteard's own words, "it allowed me to argue my case with the Irish Film Board who matched what we raised with crowdfunding."
- **Kickstarter** - Kickstarter is the biggest of the crowdfunding sites and operates on the ruthless premise that should a project not reach or exceed the goal set out, it receives nothing. As a result, any campaign run on Kickstarter requires constant attention and effort to succeed, however it also means that a director won't be expected to deliver his project if its underfunded. Not that this should worry you, as Kickstarter themselves recognize, of the projects that have reached 20% of their funding goal, 81% were successfully funded. Kickstarter allows for projects to run from 1 to 60 days, but recommends 30, and if successful will collect a fee of 5% from the projects funding goal. The appeal of Kickstarter is obvious; it's the biggest of the crowdfunding sites and has funders from all over the world, but this also means the site is saturated with films to the extent that it can be hard to stand out (although



the Kickstarter film festival goes some way to alleviating this and allows Kickstarter funded films even further exposure). So who has used it? Zack Braff used Kickstarter when he garnered over \$3 million dollars for 'Wish I was Here;' the die hard fans of Veronica Mars contributed a staggering \$6 million to having the Veronica Mars project funded, Anomalisa's Kickstarter campaign raised twice the \$200,000 budget that they had hoped for from 5,770 backers, while 'What We Do In The Shadows' turned to Kickstarter to help fund the film's distribution in America. However it's not just the big names that use Kickstarter. In 2012, the documentary 'Inocente' raised \$50,000 with Kickstarter before winning the Oscar for Best Documentary (short subject) the following year, the first ever crowdfunded film to win an Academy Award. Ultimately, when it comes to film crowdfunding, Kickstarter has the most success stories, the most films made, and the most money raised.

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- **RocketHub** - RocketHub is a crowdfunding site for everyone, a diverse community of musicians, scientists, filmmakers, and philanthropists with projects ranging from Duck Dynasty Camouflage Shoes to spacecraft interaction. Their core mission is to "liberate creativity" and thankfully this also includes film funding. Like Indiegogo, you don't necessarily need to reach your target to acquire funding; if you do succeed you're charged 4% on your project but if not, 8% (on top of a 4% charge for payment processing fees). The particular appeal of this site is 'A&E Project Startup,' an initiative where the RocketHub site is scoured and chosen projects are put on A&E TV and projectstartup.com. The exposure achieved from featuring on this would go a long way to having your project funded.
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- **Indiegogo** - Indiegogo is similar to Kickstarter but with two crucial differences. The first is the option to launch "Flexible Funding." What this means is you get to keep all the money you raise even if you don't reach your target amount. Consequently, this allows filmmakers to acquire funding from a number of places and perhaps supplement their crowdfunding campaign with revenue from more traditional avenues. The crowdfunding campaign for Simon Fitzmaurice's 'My Name is Emily' did precisely this. In addition to funding from the Irish Film Board, the campaign raised €120,000 for the film in 30 days from both direct and Indiegogo donations. The second key difference between Indiegogo and Kickstarter is that Indiegogo only collects a 4% fee from a successful Fixed or Flexible Funding campaign, however that fee rises to 9% if the Flexible Funding Campaign fails to reach its goal.
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- **Seed & Spark** - Unlike the previous sites, Seed & Spark is a crowdfunding site that deals with film and film alone. With one of the highest success rates of all crowdfunding projects (75%), one of the lowest fees on cash raised (5%), combined with the fact you get to keep your funds when you reach 80% of your goal, Seed & Spark is a great bet for independent filmmakers. They even use their site as a platform to view funded films and will help with distribution after the film is created.

And there you have it, the knowledge and power to go forth and crowdfund. While it's a lot of work, previous crowdfunding success stories have demonstrated its worth and the fact that people do give to people. There's no reason your film should be different. After all, the accountants have no longer taken the movies, they're in the hands of the crowd now.