Cleveland Clinic

Crowdfunding at Cleveland Clinic:
Guide and Application

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Cleveland Clinic Crowdfunding Overview

Crowdfunding involves financing a project with relatively modest contributions from many individuals, typically via the Internet. The funding campaign and transactions are conducted online through a dedicated website. Crowdfunding sites are called platforms because they provide a venue for all aspects of a campaign, including the public interface, campaign and project tracking, payment collection, and disbursement of funds. Success relies upon the project's ability to canvass a sufficiently large group of potential contributors, often via marketing to a network of contacts and strategic use of social media.

Cleveland Clinic's Philanthropy Institute (PI) coordinates the enterprises's crowdfunding activities and ensures that they adhere to fundraising policies, crowdfunding guidelines, and gift-processing procedures.

Cleveland Clinic's Crowdfunding Platform
Cleveland Clinic has a licensed crowdfunding platform from Ruffalo Noel Levitz, the recognized leader in strategic fundraising management software and services in the US, Canada, Australia, and UK. The Power of Every One is the only crowdfunding site approved by Cleveland Clinic leadership to raise money for Cleveland Clinic projects. The platform is branded to match Cleveland Clinic's online look and feel and helps foster the organization's relationship with the donor. The dynamic platform features multimedia opportunities, optional giving levels and perks, social sharing and project update capabilities, and a donor wall. Upon departmental approval, the Cleveland Clinic platform is available at no cost to caregivers. One hundred percent of the money raised directly benefits the project, regardless of whether the campaign's revenue goal is achieved. The platform also is integrated with PI's gift processing and donor stewardship procedures.

Cleveland Clinic Crowdfunding Guidelines

Successful crowdfunding is not simple. Posting your project on a crowdfunding platform is relatively straightforward, but effectively reaching donors and communicating through networks – and raising a reasonable amount of money – takes substantial time and effort, such as producing compelling narratives and engaging videos. The PI office has experts available who can help you develop a fundraising strategy, campaign materials, and a communications plan.

We require that all crowdfunding activities be coordinated through the Philanthropy Institute. PI helps ensure adherence to the Cleveland Clinic's policies on fundraising campaigns and gift-processing procedures.

Crowdfunding Platform Basics

The Power of Every One

- The Power of Every One is Cleveland Clinic's internal crowdfunding platform, licensed from Ruffalo Noel Levitz.
- The platform's template supports traditional crowdfunding campaigns for internal Cleveland Clinic projects ONLY, and not team-based challenges. Gifts are dispersed regardless of whether the campaign goal is reached, and the campaign timeline can be adjusted.
- Prospective users must submit an application to PI with manager signature(s).
- There is no fee for the service.
- Gifts are integrated into development operations; i.e., donors receive receipts from PI and are included in PI stewardship programs.
- Offline donations can be added to the campaign webpage.
- Only major credit cards are accepted.

Campaign Planning

Before you begin a crowdfunding campaign, please review the following questions. If you are unable to meet these basic requirements, crowdfunding may not be your best option for raising funds.

1. **Audience: Who is your crowd?**

   Project leaders and their teams must reach out to their own networks for support. Whether these contacts are social (friends, family, acquaintances) or professional (current and past colleagues, industry connections, the media), you should personally know who you will be asking for support! Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) is useful, especially with large followings, but email and the old-fashioned phone call also should be employed to engage your crowd.

2. **Outreach: Who are your campaigners?**

   Multiple campaigners generating enthusiasm, connecting with diverse constituencies, and sharing their passions will result in a much higher level of success than a lone campaigner. Before launching your campaign, each person on the research or project team – including directors, physicians, researchers, support staff – should be assigned a specific role.

3. **The Pitch: What is the impact of your project?**

   Focus your pitch on the impact that your fully funded project will have on patients, families, advocates, and our understanding of the related disease or problem. Your pitch should be PERSONAL and PASSIONATE: People should be *motivated to act* after seeing your pitch! **A pitch video is essential!**

4. **Commitment: Are you ready to go the distance with your campaign?**

   Fundraising campaigns are a lot of work! Be prepared to communicate regularly with your networks and contributors throughout a **30- to 60-day campaign**. Scheduled updates should include fundraising progress, trivia and news items relating to the project, requests for support, and personal anecdotes. Keep people engaged, and they'll contribute more and share with friends.

5. **Stewardship: How will you stay in touch with donors to your project?**

   Donors need to know about the impact of their gifts. Be prepared to keep in touch with donors about their giving by working with PI and developing a plan to follow up with donors throughout the year. In some cases, PI will recommend soliciting donors in the future to renew their support of your work at Cleveland Clinic.

Campaign Setup

Write your pitch
Make your written pitch to potential contributors clear and concise. Introduce yourself, then describe your research or project and your project's expected outcome and impact on health. **How does your project contribute to Cleveland Clinic's mission to be the world's leader in patient experience, clinical outcomes, research and education?** Make your pitch personal! Tell a compelling story about why you are passionate about your work and this project in particular. Put yourself in the shoes of your target audience: Would you be moved to support this campaign?

Create your pitch video
Your pitch video should also be short (1-3 minutes) and personal. It should clearly express your goals and intentions, give potential contributors a sneak peak of your project, use appropriate media (slides, photos, background music to set the tone), and end with a call to action. You're not just asking for money, you're inviting people to join you in solving a problem.

Set your goal
Set a realistic goal. Seek to raise 30% of your goal from within your own network (friends/family/ colleagues/advocates) in the first two weeks of your campaign. Strangers will need to see some traction in order to get excited about your campaign, and your network can provide that. Setting a lower, more realistic funding goal may mean you'll raise more money in the end than setting a lofty goal. People want to support a winner!

Establish giving levels or perks
Create giving levels to help prospective donors understand what gifts of $25, $100, $500 or more will accomplish. You can set the levels, create playful names for them, and describe what the collective power of such gifts can help accomplish.

Or if you prefer, you can choose to recognize donors of varying levels with "perks" that you and your project team will deliver. Many crowdfunding platforms rely on perks to encourage giving to campaigns. These incentives should be personal and/or useful to the contributor and relevant to the campaign. Personal acknowledgements, meetings and tours of your lab, acknowledgements in a published work, or the opportunity to use or see firsthand the device or research being funded are effective ways to say thank you and engage contributors.

Determine campaign length
With few exceptions, Cleveland Clinic recommends that campaigns last no longer than 60 days. Campaigns communicate a sense of urgency, and donors understand that their gifts are vital to the success of the project and will be put to work immediately. Identify the milestones that you can use as "natural moments" to initiate or end campaigns. Campaigning successfully is a lot of work, and building and maintaining momentum is crucial.

Build a team

Crowdfunding campaigns are most successful when there is a team of campaigners. Recruit colleagues, lab mates, advocates, and your personal network to support your campaign. You will be the face of the campaign, but you can assign specific roles for campaigners, including content editor (video, photos, etc.), media outreach, social media engagement, and donor stewardship coordination.

A great way to find early funding for your campaign and build social media momentum is by identifying like-minded individuals or organizations willing to spread the word about your campaign. Seek them out in the planning stages, and ask if you can count on their support when your campaign launches.

Campaign Marketing and Communications

Pre-campaigning

Before your campaign goes live, let your networks know that your campaign is on the horizon. You may want to plan a soft-launch event. Encourage your inner circle to contribute as soon as you go live, so your campaign gains instant traction. Hold events and remind attendees when you are launching. Remember, you're not simply asking people to contribute their money. You're inviting them to collaborate with you.

Inner network

When your project is live and accepting contributions, get people excited about your campaign, and collect commitments from your closest allies to spread the word for you through their various networks online and offline.

Consider throwing a launch party to engage with your colleagues, friends, and family about your campaign, express your gratitude, have fun, and encourage contributions *at the party*!

For your best potential contributors or marketing partners, seek one-on-one meetings – on the phone or in person – to describe your project and how they can support you by contributing or spreading the word throughout their networks.

Email

Email is the most efficient way to directly reach out to people in your network. Make sure you explain the project succinctly, make a personal ask for their contribution, include a link to your campaign, and ask them to spread the word. **Avoid spamming your email network**. People are *far* more receptive to a one-on-one personal ask. Though this may take a little longer, it will likely result in more contributions. Also, be sure to add your campaign link to your email signature.

Offline

Spreading the word for your campaign doesn't only have to happen online. Think of ways

you can spread the work locally and offline. Seek support from your division or department head to promote your campaign in the department or clinic, including hanging posters. Local media outlets – print, TV, and radio – are always hungry for good local content, and your campaign is a great story!

Social media
The very definition of crowdfunding implies that engaging audiences online is crucial to gaining awareness, momentum, and funds for your campaign. While not the only way to do so, social media is a great way to not only get your preexisting network excited but also connect with individuals and organizations that you don't know but who might be interested in your campaign. The ability to easily post and share pictures and video also makes social media a dynamic channel on which to share your campaign! Use your social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc. to create a buzz.

Social media tips:
- Leverage existing accounts. If you do not already have a presence on Twitter, or do not plan to use it following your campaign, do not create a new account for the sole purpose of campaigning.
- To save time, create and schedule your social media posts across platforms using a product like HootSuite.
- Work with PI Staff to ensure you are adhering to Cleveland Clinic's social media guidelines.

Campaign updates
Keeping your constituents engaged throughout the campaign – especially donors who have already given – is essential. Most contributors will share the campaign with their networks, and many will give second gifts to get the campaign closer to its goal.

Updates made on the platform will be emailed to past contributors, but be sure to use your other email and social media tools to engage those who have not yet given.

Weekly updates are sufficient and should include campaign progress (e.g., "We're 35% of the way to our goal," etc.), new content (photos, videos), news features (if your work or campaign has been published in a journal or in the news media), and new campaigners who have joined your project.

The middle of the campaign is when contributions slow down. New media content or recognition opportunities are good ways to counter this.

Continue to seek sponsors and partners
It's never too late to connect your campaign with like-minded individuals and organizations that can help propel your campaign, so think about who you can connect with throughout the campaign to take it to the next level or reach your goal.

Donor stewardship

A key component of effective fundraising is expressing gratitude to your donors and making them a part of our community. This means consistent, personal communication from the primary beneficiaries (you and your colleagues) and the institution. PI acknowledges and sends receipts for all gifts to Cleveland Clinic, but we will work with you and your team to develop other ways of saying thank you.

Scoring Criteria

Upon submission, your project will be reviewed based on the "SMART" criteria: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely. These criteria will help the reviewers determine the strength and depth of your project idea and how likely it is to be successful:

Specific: Is the project specific enough to be easily understood by a mass audience? Will there be a relatively quick, demonstrable impact once funds are accumulated?

Measurable: How will the project define success? Is there a simple way to track its progress?

Attainable: Is the project goal reasonably attainable within the 30- 60 day timeframe? Is it attainable via large amounts of small donations by individuals?

Relevant: Is the project ideal for a crowdfunding strategy? Is the message ideal for sharing via social media?

Timely: Why now? Is the project ripe for this moment in time? Is there a better time of year to launch a fundraising effort?