

PLEDGE PARTIES – OFFLINE ENGAGEMENT

From a BBQ in your local park, to a ticketed dinner party, a live music street party, or a water/pillow fight, getting your crowd together helps your crowdfunding campaign in a multitude of ways, and some might argue it's the crucial element to every campaign.

Pledge parties serve to:

- Remind everyone of what they have to gain if the project hits its target, inciting them to tell more people about the project
- Reward your current backers (who if you're lucky might give you an extra couple of quid as a result!)
- Lock down those soon-to-be backers, who "will make a pledge later tonight", they promise, but still haven't got around to it
- Engage the offline members of the community such as the elderly or those who are simply not as comfortable paying online.
- Restore much needed momentum when your crowdfunding campaign has become flat!

OK you've convinced me... So, how do I plan one?

Before launching your campaign, choose a date. Half-way through your campaign is a good time as energies can be low having exhausted your immediate network, but they can be held at any point in the campaign after the first wave of pledges!

Select a theme and location that are fun, free and inspire people with all of the wonderful potential of your project; the event needs to give them a glimpse of the lovely benefits of coming together to help you hit your target and the project is delivered.

Create an event page where people can register using either Eventbrite or Facebook, this will make it easy for people to share the link and for you to track numbers. Start promoting early using visually engaging posters and social media posts. Use incentives such as "The first fifty pledges over £20 will get a free beer and slice of pizza at the door!".

Free stuff. A local brewery could sponsor the event or a salon could provide some free treatments to raffle off. Anything people can eat, drink or take home will work; they're handy incentives that will get people along to your event, giving you the opportunity to pitch your project to them.

Invite some local councillors and businesses so they can see first-hand how much your project means to the community. Know any famous (or kinda famous) people from the area? Get them along and ask them to share with their networks so as to increase your turnout.

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What to do on the day:

- Take lots of photos and videos! Short clips of backers explaining why they're supporting the initiative are great for putting on social media.
- Show them around the project site, offer to take questions, and hand out flyers. Make sure they leave knowing enough about the project to be able to go out and spread the word to their networks. Impress some memorable project facts on them if you can!
- Keep everyone busy with fun activities; baby photo guessing competitions, frisbee, blind tasting, raffles, sponsored scoots, even fancy dress photo booths that have your campaign name on the photo print.



GET THEM PLEDGING

Make it easy for people to give money to the campaign; set up a laptop pledging station and multiple collection boxes.

How to follow up after the event:

- The day after the event use the "Update Tool" on your project and email all your backers and attendees with photos from the event and a list of follow up actions, e.g. "Help us spread our network by accepting the #FivePledge challenge. Can you convince five of your friends to pledge? Send us their names and we'll send you a personalised thank you card!"
- Update your website and social media accounts with pictures and news from the event – share the good vibes and watch the pledges come in!
- Start planning your next event! Perhaps it will be your "YES! We did it!" celebration event!
- Remember, a pledge party can be any type of event, big or small, wacky or traditional, as long as you're showing the faces and passion behind the project. Use pledge parties to break up your campaign, to celebrate milestones and encourage backer cohesion making sure they all pull together and get you to the finish line!



CASH OR CHEQUES?

Pledging online is the easiest but if you've received cash or cheques you can still log these as offline pledges on your campaign. Check out our FAQs for details.