

A Crowdfunder's Strategy Guide: Build a Better Business by Building Community

Jamey Stegmaier

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A crowdfunding expert shares his secrets in this breezy book full of words of wisdom.

Crowdfunding is a phenomenon that has helped launch countless businesses. It basically involves conceptualizing a product and sharing the idea with potential online investors. If enough investors pledge money at various levels and the project's funding goal is met, the creator of the product receives the funding.

Jamey Stegmaier, who has run six successful projects on Kickstarter, the leading crowdfunding platform, started blogging about crowdfunding to share his experiences with others. This led him to create *A Crowdfunder's Strategy Guide*, which, in addition to drawing on his blog's content, offers a more in-depth look at numerous successful crowdfunding projects.

As one might expect, Stegmaier is unfailingly positive about crowdfunding: "crowdfunding democratized creativity," he writes. "It provided a platform for people to vote with their money on the things they want." However, Stegmaier acknowledges the mistakes he made along the way (he made a lot of them, he says) and offers plenty of advice to help prospective crowdfunders set realistic expectations. Most important, writes Stegmaier, is understanding the core concept of crowdfunding: "Make it about them. ... The philosophy of focusing on others instead of yourself will significantly increase the chances of success for your crowdfunding campaign."

The stories Stegmaier tells in his breezy, informal narrative are engaging, but woven throughout the examples are words of wisdom born from experience. Sections such as "The Top Five Ways to Treat Backers as Individuals, Not Numbers," "Top Ten Ways to Prepare Your Product for Worldwide Fulfillment," and "How to Quit Your Day Job in Four Easy Steps" convey specific suggestions that are sure to help minimize the risk for anyone who launches a crowdfunding campaign.

The material Stegmaier includes at the end of the book is equally valuable. For example, he summarizes his blog posts in a section called "125 Crowdfunding Lessons in 125 Sentences," and he appends a "One-Week Checklist" that details the steps to take before launching a project.

A Crowdfunder's Strategy Guide is authoritative and comprehensive, yet easy to read. This book should do much to answer basic questions about crowdfunding and provide those interested in using crowdfunding with a valuable playbook.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (Winter 2016)

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