

## Week #0: Gearing Up & Getting Ready

So, you've been working hard getting your project page ready to launch, and it's all come to this. The week of the launch. In just three short weeks, your project will come to an end.

Today, though, don't focus on when the project closes. Focus on the potential of these upcoming weeks and the hard work you've put in to make your project a reality. This is *your chance* to share the passion you have with your personal and professional networks.

Yes, you are raising money during this time, and that is the important thing. However, one of the main vehicles you're using to do this is storytelling. Storytelling is what engages your audience and leads to donations.

Refer to the CougStarter Student Handbook for the two storytelling models for detailed examples and how-tos. Those two models are only the examples that we offer, but you can do a quick google search for other examples if you like. The most important thing to remember when telling your story, though, is *your unique voice*. Your experience in this organization and at WSU is unique to you, and what you're doing with crowdfunding is inspiring people to invest (time or money) in that experience. That authenticity, paired with consistency, is what will help bring you success.

So, to bring it back, here's the final checklist to help you prepare for the next three weeks:

- All ScaleFunder content is completed to the best of your ability.
- You have your launch-day social media posts drafted, both for your personal account and your organization account.
- You have a plan to send texts/emails/phone calls to those in your network to either give or sign up to be an ambassador.
- Your ambassadors have everything they need to be successful this first week.
- You and your organization members are aligned in your message and are prepared to share your story over the next three weeks.

Remember, the CougStarter Team is here to support you should you feel stuck or need help.

### **Social Media Marketing Tips:**

- Plan a color scheme and stick with it throughout the remainder of your campaign.
- Plan out social media posts a week or two in advance.
- Switch up which templates you use – this will keep your audience engaged and know that what they are seeing is different from last week's post.

## Week #1: Starting Strong!

Good morning student fundraisers!

With campaigns going live in just two days, it's time to talk about making the ask. Last week, we focused on the importance of storytelling and how that can guide you toward success in your campaign. Good storytelling also anchors your campaign in your unique voice, which is very engaging to donors.

This week, we're going to focus on solicitation, or asking for money. I understand how uncomfortable and awkward this can be, and it can even be that way for professional fundraisers. Making the ask is the hardest part, but hopefully we can provide you with some helpful tips.

One way you can shift your perspective here is remembering that you're asking your network to *invest* in your project, to help make it a reality. It's more than just asking for a donation. This also implies that you'll be showing a *return* on that investment, otherwise known as stewardship (showing gratitude, saying thank you). It's important to show the impact these gifts have made on your organization. We'll cover more on stewardship in a few weeks.

You can translate this idea into your social media posts by saying things like, "Your gift to **[my organization]** will \_\_\_\_\_," or "Did you know that a gift of \$10 to **[my organization]** would ensure that \_\_\_\_\_," or "Thank you for giving to **[my organization]**. Your support \_\_\_\_\_." These examples pair the behavior that *you want* (giving) with behavior the *donor wants* (demonstrating impact).

Another approach is considering the urgency of your campaign. You'll be actively fundraising for three weeks, just 21 days. Realistically, that's not a lot of time. Urgency is a powerful motivator – just think of all the times you've procrastinated on something until the *very last minute*. This tactic works for soliciting too!

You can translate this idea into your social media posts by writing things like, "X days down and still **[amount of goal remaining]**! Donate to **[project]** here: **[link to your CougStarter page]**" or "Thank you to all who have helped us reach **[x% of our goal]**! With **[days remaining]**, we still have **[percentage or dollars of goal remaining]** to go. Make your impact today **[link to project page]!**"

Finally, remember that we're here if you need us! Should you feel stuck, don't hesitate to reach out to [wsuf.cougstarter@wsu.edu](mailto:wsuf.cougstarter@wsu.edu).

## **Social Media Marketing Tips:**

- Simplicity is key. Don't put too much text in a post – utilize captions.
- Use all aspects of your social media (links in bios, Instagram stories, re-tweets).
- Tell your story over the course of the next couple weeks – you don't want to repeat the same content multiple times in a row.

## Week #2: Knowing Your Audience

Good morning student fundraisers!

Congratulations on making it to this point! To align with your goal, you should be about 50% of the way there by the end of this week, and if you're not, the CougStarter Team will be reaching out for coaching. As a friendly reminder to you all, remember that you're the fundraiser. Your projects will be successful when you make them successful – your efforts will be a direct cause to the results of your campaign. Please refer to pages 3-4 of the CougStarter Handbook for more information and definitions regarding your roles.

Last week, we focused on making solicitations and how to make it a bit less awkward. This week, we're going to focus on knowing your audience. After all, these are the people who will ultimately donate and bring your project to life.

Let's start with breaking down *how* to identify your audience. Remember that this is generalized, and keep in mind that these audiences likely intersect, but not always.

- **Those who care about you, the individual:** You automatically have a solid start right here. This group of people consists of your family members, close friends and community members you're close to. The important thing to remember here is their connection to *you* and not so much their connection to the project. An investment in this project translates to an investment in *your* success. For example, your grandfather may have no idea about what it takes to send a satellite to space, but he loves that you're doing it and wants to support you.
- **Those who care about the project, the cause:** You likely know who these people are, even if you can't identify them. A good way to think of these people are your *professional* connections opposed to your personal ones. This segment would be composed of professionals in your field, other professors in your department, regional chapters of your organizations – think LinkedIn community. This group is likely more interested in your project than you. An investment in the project translates to an investment in your *cause/research/event/etc.* For example, a professor in your department understands how big of an impact a Coug satellite in space will be for the students and the University, so she decides to invest to make this project a reality. She is supporting the cause and student experience but not necessarily you as an individual.

Now, let's think about how to reach these audiences. In other words, let's look at *where* to find them and touch on *how* to engage them.

- **Where to find your audience(s):** Your personal connections are likely very easy to find. You can scroll your phone's contact list, your followers/following on social media or even the other students you see every day. The people who care more

about the cause are likely found on platforms like LinkedIn or similar. Another way to find this group is by connecting with your faculty adviser. Perhaps they can post on your behalf, but remember, this is purely professional in nature. Keep posting frequently on your personal and group pages, but also, get creative! Is LinkedIn a part of your strategy? What other outreach sources could you utilize? Are there any channels you could use better?

- **Engaging & growing your audience:** The best way to engage and grow your audience is to regularly post content about your project. Will this feel annoying if you don't typically post this often? Yes. However, that frequency will help lead your campaign toward success and will help you raise funds. The key here is *polite persistence*. Stick to your communication plan, and remember, you only have two weeks left to raise money. Keep your content focused on impact – the *how and why* of your project. How will the money impact you and your organization? Why should people care about it? Providing answers to those two questions can help guide your content over the remainder of the campaign.

Thank you for the time and care you took in reading this week's offering. You've all been working hard, and it's rewarding to see your hard work pay off! Keep it up. As always, should you feel stuck or need help please reach out to the CougStarter Team.

### **Social Media Marketing Tips:**

- Be honest with your audience – tell them why you are fundraising and how it will benefit the community.
- Make your individual content resemble one another, but don't make it identical.

## Week #3: The Final Push!

Good morning student fundraisers!

You've come so far – thank you for all the hard work and effort you've put in these past few weeks. In this final week, you should be hitting your goal or even your stretch goal. You've only got 9 days left of active fundraising! As always, if you feel stuck or really in need of help, please reach out to the CougStarter Team.

Last week, our coaching focused on identifying and finding your audience. This week, we're going to focus on the importance of ambassadors. They're going to be key in your last week of active fundraising.

Why?

Well, it's likely that everyone who was planning on making a gift to your campaign already has. So, your challenge this week is acquiring new donors or following up on the "maybes" you've likely gotten from your networks. Ambassadors help you find new donors by utilizing their reach and networks. The best way to describe this, honestly, is a pyramid scheme. Of course, you're not scamming anyone, but the idea of you asking five people and then each of them asking five people and so on is the idea.

All that being said, let's learn about connecting with our ambassadors.

- Show gratitude! Take a moment to send your thanks, either through the ScaleFunder platform or your own means, to all of your ambassadors. Their efforts have helped get the word out about your campaign and have helped bring in dollars.
- Promote a little healthy competition!
  - You can track how much each individual ambassador raises here: [Ambassador → Ambassador List](#)
  - Offer a prize to the ambassador who raises the most!
- Make sure your content in the Ambassador Dashboard is up to date or put some new content there for ambassadors to use.
- Lead by example. You're setting the tone for your ambassadors throughout this last week. Yes, you're probably getting tired, but this is the final push. You can do it!

Thank you again for your efforts. Next week, we'll cover stewardship and beyond. In other words, it's time to start thinking about how to thank your donors and show the impact they've had on your organization.

## **Social Media Marketing Tips:**

- Thank your supporters and commenters – staying engaged will keep people interactive with your page.
- Come up with ways for your audience to engage – have them ask questions, post fun questions in the caption.

## Week #4: Stewardship & Beyond

Good morning student fundraisers!

Well. Here we are. The end of your campaign. You've still got two days of active fundraising, but our focus now is stewardship. In other words, how are you going to be thanking your donors for their contributions? Today, we're going to cover how the CougStarter Team will support your stewardship strategy and offer some guidance for your organization's stewardship strategy.

First, let's talk about *why* stewardship is so important. Remember when we were talking about solicitations, and we covered investment and return on investment? As a fundraiser, you have a responsibility to show donors the impact their gifts make on your group and project. Saying thank you is important, but from a strategic perspective, saying thank you well can lead to continued support of your project.

Think of it this way – you're getting your supporters involved in your project in every way except actually doing the work. You're excited about your project, and your donors are too! Otherwise, they probably wouldn't have given. Even if they have no understanding of your project, your donors care about *you and your successes*. Invite them in.

What does this look like?

The CougStarter Team utilizes a software called ThankView. A member of the team will invite you to record a short thank you video that they will then email to your donors. For legal reasons, you cannot have access to the private information of your donors. ThankView is how the CougStarter Team will support your stewardship strategy.

Other than that, thanking your donors is up to you. I understand that is a tall order, and if you've never thought about this kind of work, it's challenging. This week, we're offering some tips to guide you over the next several weeks. Project updates are the focus of this conversation.

Let's start with a definition. A "Project Update" showcases the progress of your project. While this does sound straightforward, it can be difficult to write something concrete for your donors. To help with this, think about progress and process. Your donors want to be a part of the progress of your project as much as you do. Below are some ways you can invite them to the conversation.



- Utilize the Updates feature in ScaleFunder! The updates you write will automatically be emailed to your donors, without you needing to access their email addresses. The updates will also be posted to your project page in the “Updates” section.
  - Updates → Project Updates
- Keep utilizing your social media! Stewardship is active and ongoing, and keeping your donors updated about the progress of your project will keep them engaged.
- Say “thank you” and show gratitude. Doing this well can mean more gifts in the future.

There are no limits to your stewardship – have fun and be creative! As a note, your stewardship efforts will be a consideration if you apply to crowdfund with CougStarter in the future (FYI, you’d be able to apply again in Fall 2024 to comply with our one-semester moratorium).

### **Social Media Marketing Tips:**

- Remember to tell your supporters what their donation means to the advancement of your project.
- Have fun with your posts this is your time to be creative and share your ideas with everyone.
- What are your steps from here – update ambassadors and donors about what’s next for your organization.