HOW TO FUNDRAISE ONLINE

An original guide from EdCo

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What is online fundraising?

Online fundraising can come in many forms, but generally refers to using the Internet to raise money. Online fundraising sites harness tools like email & social media to help you get noticed by a significantly larger audience.

There are lots of sites out there, each with a different focus: Kickstarter is for creative projects, Patreon looks to help artists, and GoFundMe targets the individual cause. And of course, there’s Edco.

Edco specializes in fundraising for K-12 schools and school programs. Everything is designed with teachers and students in mind.

Online Fundraising & Schools

Many school groups have hopped on the online fundraising bandwagon - and wisely so! Instead of selling products, fundraising online works by "selling" supporters on your students’ passion, excitement, and hard work.

Here’s a fun fact: while Americans eat $20bn of chocolate a year, they give over $50bn in charity to support education! Believe it or not, people love supporting education more than they love eating chocolate! :)

Online fundraising helps school groups connect with alumni, far-away family, and community members (like local businesses) looking for ways to give back.
How does online fundraising work?

So now to address the big question: how exactly does online fundraising work? Here are the 6 key steps to effective online fundraising.

1. Set Up A Great Fundraising Goal

Setting up a good fundraising goal is crucial to your success. Your fundraising goal is going to the first thing that potential supporters see when they come to learn more about your team’s needs.

Fundraising Goal Tips:

**BE REALISTIC** - We’re all about pushing yourself to reach your financial goal, but make sure to choose an amount that you believe is attainable. The size of your community will have a big effect on the amount of funds you raise. The more you can build a community, the more you will raise! For large financial needs, consider running multiple campaigns with smaller individual funding goals.

**BE TANGIBLE** - When writing your description, be clear about where the funds are going! Your supporters will want to feel confident that their donations are not only going to be spent wisely, but also will have an important impact on your students’ success! Including details about how the funds will be spent tells supporters just how important their dollars are!

**BE CONCISE** - Details are good, but make sure not to go overboard. The average length of a page visit by a user is about 1 minute. You want to convey your needs quickly & clearly to your potential supporters.
2. Tell Your Story

The next step: tell supporters why you are raising money. Why does this fundraising goal matter to you?

Think back to why you decided to join the club. Why do you invest so much of your time and energy into your program? Letting your passion shine through will hook people into supporting you and your students.

The best part? Your Edco page is highly customizable. Here are the ways to build your story:

- **BE CREATIVE**
  When creating your giving levels, be creative! Your page will certainly stand out with supporters.

- **SHOW YOUR EXCITEMENT**
  Passion is contagious! The more fun and emotion you put into building your fundraising page, the more of a connection you will create with your supporters!

- **BE PERSONAL**
  Give your donors some background on your team and its accomplishments. What are fun or inspirational things you can share about your team members? The more personal you make this, the more people will want to be part of it.

- **ADD A VIDEO & PICTURES**
  Did you know that including a video on your fundraising page drives 60% more donations?!

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3. Build a Strong Supporter Network

Sharing the right story with the right people is the key to success. Follow these tips to get the support you need!

To Do’s in Building a Supporter Network:

**SPREAD THE WORD BEFORE YOUR CAMPAIGN GOES LIVE.** Send a pre-campaign email, post a preview on social media, or give a shout-out at events! Tell people what students are up to before the campaign goes live. Building buzz is a great way to bring attention to the start of your fundraising goal.

**REACH OUT TO YOUR STUDENTS’ NETWORKS.** You may not realize it, but your team has a large number of supporters readily available! Take a moment to think of how many people you can ask to support your fundraiser. Now, multiply that number by all of your students and parents in your group who have their own networks.

For example, imagine you ask ten students to each share the project with just ten people; voila! You already have 100 potential supporters!

**THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX.** Your group is not limited to just you & your students! Include alumni of the program, other school faculty & staff, and school community members at large (including local businesses!).

These groups are often overlooked in school fundraising - stand out and get them involved!
4. Develop a Strong Ask

There’s a rule of thumb in fundraising: the more personal you make an ask, the more receptive your potential supporter will be. An in-person, one-on-one ask will always be more effective than a tailored email, which will always be stronger than a Facebook post, etc.

Remember, you’re not simply asking people to contribute their money—you’re inviting them to be a partner in your success.

Tips for Spreading the Word:

- **POST REGULARLY** about fundraising progress (50% to goal!) to remind potential supporters of your fundraising goal. Most people are very busy and appreciate the reminders! The closer you are to finishing, the more the excitement will build.

- **SHARE FUN PICTURES** with inspiring messages throughout the campaign to keep students engaged and to remind your community about your fundraising efforts.

- **STAY POSITIVE!** Fundraising (even with Edco) takes work, and supporters don’t always give the first time they’re asked. Stay determined and stick to our tips, and you’ll find success!
5. Say Thank You

Once you create your fundraiser, and promote your cause far and wide you’ll reach the exciting stage of watching the donations roll in!

You will be surprised how many people forget the next crucial step: to properly thank their donors! Make sure each donor knows how important they are to the success of your campaign. Your current donors will quickly become your best marketers once they see how much it matters to you that they contributed.

Creative Ways to Make Your Donors Feel Special:

- Create a 1 minute thank you video with your teammates
- Send a fun postcard
- Tag your donor on social media and give them a public shout-out

Thank you!
6. Keep in Touch

Another often-missed step in the fundraising process is the follow-up with donors. The people that contribute to your campaign do so because they care and believe in you and your students. Don’t leave them hanging!

Send them regular updates about the group’s activity, accomplishments, or just some silly photos. These small acts will go a long way with your supporters, and is a crucial part of keeping your donors engaged and eager to help again in the future.

How to Keep in Touch:

- Send regular newsletters
- Share a dropbox folder of pictures
- Invite your supporters to events and team practices
Get Started

And there you have it - the 6 easy steps to successful online fundraising:

1. Set Up A Fundraising Goal
   - Choose a large, but achievable amount
   - Describe what the funds will be used for
   - Set an end date for your campaign

2. Tell Your Story
   - Be personal - let people know why your project is important to you
   - Add videos and pictures to your Edco page
   - Link your group Instagram to Edco

3. Build a Strong Supporter Network
   - Tell friends and family about your fundraiser before your campaign goes live
   - Email family and community members to ask them for support
   - Reach out beyond your close networks to alumni, local businesses, and local media outlets

4. Develop a Strong Ask
   - Send follow up emails to your supporters - they’re busy, and need reminders!
   - Email your contacts and donors updates on fundraising progress
   - Offer sponsorship and marketing opportunities to large donors

5. Say Thank You
   - Send personal thank you notes to all supporters
   - Provide sponsors special recognition on t-shirts and at events
   - Give shout-outs on social media

6. Keep in Touch
   - Send emails to supporters to show the impact of their contributions
   - Encourage supporters to follow your group on social media
   - Invite your supporters to events and team meetings

To get started with Edco, visit www.ed.co to create a free account or shoot us an email at hello@ed.co.