

Before you launch your project, do these things.

Getting ready to launch a project on Kickstarter can be an exciting and busy time. Here are some tips and important things to keep in mind as you work towards your launch date.

Important First Steps

Back a project on Kickstarter

If you haven't already, backing a project on Kickstarter will help you better understand the backer experience. What does a backer look for on a project page? What catches their eye? What is essential information, what is not essential? What kinds of rewards are most appealing?

By backing a project on Kickstarter you will also gain insight into what steps your backers will take when backing your project and how the pledging process works. You'll also get insight into what emails Kickstarter sends to backers to confirm their pledge and keep them in the loop.

Account set-up

After you click the green "Start a project" button on Kickstarter and are in what we call "Project Build," skip ahead to the Account tab. This is where you will [set-up your verified identity](#) and your [bank account info](#). You may have questions about this process or run into unexpected delays (it can sometimes take a few business days to complete this step). Take care of these questions early so they don't hold you up later on.

Do your homework

There are so many guides to planning and running a successful project. We've linked to some of our favorites throughout this document. Before you launch, take some time and look around at what else is out there, and learn from other people's experience.

Check out the [Getting Started](#) and [Kickstarter 101](#) sections of our Help Center for an overview of the basics on Kickstarter. This will not only help you build and launch your project, it will help you help your backers if they run into problems or have questions. Our [Creator Handbook](#) is also an excellent guide for people first getting started on Kickstarter.

Once you start building your project, you can also check out [Campus](#), a space on Kickstarter for project creators to share tips and their experience with each other.

Your Story

Behind every great Kickstarter project is a great story. It is important that as you prepare to build your project page and launch your project to the world, you have a clear idea of what your story is.

Are you creating something entirely new? Are you funding the final phase of an idea you have been working on for a while? Are you telling a story that has never before been told? Is your project serious, whimsical or just plain magic?

The biggest mistake we see people make with their Kickstarter projects is that they don't take the time to craft a story that is personal and specific. Instead, they send generic pitches that simply announce they are funding something on Kickstarter, so come check it

out. There are literally thousands of people funding something on Kickstarter on any given day, and generic pitches like the one described above are often simply trashed.

Don't make this mistake. Take the time to craft a few key points about your project that makes it unique and stand out. Know your tone, and make sure to target the audience who will be most excited about what you are working on.

When creating your project page and reaching out to your email list, to press, and on social media this will be the story you lead with.

Further reading: Check out these short videos featuring tips on [Getting Press](#) and [Knowing your Audience](#) for some more tips on crafting a personal story. Google also offers a free app called [Primer](#) for folks just getting started with marketing that will help you find your unique story. Campus is a great place to get feedback on [how long it took to set up and launch a project](#).

Your Budget & Project Goal

How do I set my project goal? This is one of the most common questions we get, and the truth is there is no easy answer. Here are some questions for helping you find the number that is right for you.

What is the goal of your Kickstarter project?

Some projects are about the realization of the project and nothing else: printing the book, finishing the film, making the album. If the goal of your project is to realize a single creative idea, setting a funding goal that will cover all of your costs will be important.

Other projects are about launching a company or realizing a longer-term goal. In these cases, project creators might set a funding goal that represents the costs for overcoming a major hurdle in realizing a project. For example, you might just need money to create an expensive mold, do an initial manufacturing run, or pay for post-production of your film. If the expectation is that your Kickstarter project is just one small piece in the life cycle of your overall vision, and there will be other opportunities to bring in money and/or customers down the line, this might be enough.

How much money do you need to realize your idea?

Take the time to map out all the possible expenses relating to realizing your project. This number may be huge. That's okay. Now take the time to think about if there is a scaled down version of your project, or if you could possibly fund just a phase of the overall idea. It is not uncommon for creators to use Kickstarter to fund just the final phase of a project, or raise just a portion of the total cost of what it will take to realize their idea. As long as you have other resources for funding your project and are transparent about this with your audience on Kickstarter, it is totally okay.

What is most important is to have a clear sense of what your project costs, and what the funds raised on Kickstarter will represent in relation to the overall costs.

How big is your community, what is the possible reach of this project?

You created an exhaustive project budget and now know you need to raise upwards of six- or seven-figures. Wow, that's a big project! Do you have the community to help you realize that idea, or will your project be inspiring to enough people that you can reach that goal? Do you have the resources to reach those people?

Before you launch a very ambitious project, it is important to remember that people on Kickstarter are typically pledging \$25, or on average around \$80. Do some simple back of the napkin math and divide your project's funding goal by the average pledge you think you will get on your project. This figure represents the number of people you will need to get to pledge to your project to reach your goal. If that number seems impossibly high, you may have to scale your project down in some way, or take some time to craft a plan for engaging an audience big enough to realize your project as originally planned. If appropriate, you can also consider other funding sources to compliment your Kickstarter raise.

What will it cost to create and ship your rewards around the world?

This one is important, and represents a common misstep for project creators. In addition to the costs of realizing your project, you may have to factor in additional costs for creating, packaging and shipping rewards.

Take the time to mock-up your rewards, determine what boxes they will fit in, and what it costs to ship them both domestically and internationally. Your country's postal service likely offers a free shipping calculator online, or you can even go down to the post office with your mocked up packages and ask a postal worker for help.

Further reading: An [overview of our shipping tool](#), an [in-depth guide for thinking about international shipping](#) by a games creator, a breakdown on [how to calculate shipping](#) from a UK creator, and finally an overview of how one creator [estimated reward and shipping costs](#) on Kickstarter. The services listed on our resources page can also provide shipping estimates.

Your Community

One of the most important factors for success on Kickstarter is having a promotion plan in place before you launch your campaign. This should include a list of people to reach out to, assets and content you can share to build and engage your audience, and key messages for telling your story in a compelling way.

The majority of pledges for a typical project on Kickstarter will come in via personal referrals — either people you reach out to directly, or people that are alerted to your campaign by

someone they know. Press and media coverage usually drives a lot of traffic, but doesn't always yield a lot of pledges. With this in mind, a strong email and social media campaign are as important as sending press releases.

Your network: Think about who your closest supporters are, your friends and family that are going to back your project no matter what. You should encourage them to be the first backers to throw their support in as soon as you launch, because momentum at the start is really important. You could even consider doing a kind of "soft launch" where you ask them back your project during the first few hours of your campaign, and then start promoting it to press and others after there's already some momentum.

Social media: You should have a plan in place for social media. Think about where your supporters live online and target them there. Is it Facebook or Twitter? Maybe they're all on Instagram and you can do a countdown with nice images of your product on the days leading up to your launch to build anticipation. Wherever it is, make sure that you are sharing things that are compelling about your project, like highlighting great rewards or showing cool pictures, rather than the less effective "Give us money please RT"-style post.

Personal outreach: Usually, even more important than social media is personalized, one-to-one outreach. Rather than just sending out one generic e-blast, consider reaching out individually to people you know and ask them in a sincere and personal way to help out or share your project. We find that projects that do this are much more effective in their outreach.

Press: Press can also be an effective tool to spread the word about your project. You should reach out to any relevant blogs, newsletters, papers, or other media that might be interested in your project. Think about both local press and press relevant to your industry. Keep in mind that the media will only report on something if there's a compelling story, so you should think about what's interesting about your project and pitch it in that way.

Further reading: Check out [this great blog](#) post on preparing for launch with a focus on planning your community outreach strategy. [Hacking Kickstarter](#) offers insights into how to use careful planning and insights from data to reach the best audience for your project.

Your Project Page

In addition to being the place where people pledge to your project, your project page is like the press pack for your creative idea. It includes space for a title, short description, project image and video, rewards, and also a blank box for describing your project however you wish.

Important things to know

Most of your project page remains editable all the way until your project ends. Once you launch, you will not be able to change your Kickstarter profile name and verified ID, funding

goal, bank account and campaign end date. Each of your rewards will remain editable until someone backs them.

When your project ends, you can customize your project page with our [Spotlight](#) feature, though your campaign details (the page with the project's description, rewards, and funding details) will become locked.

Project Preview

When you have a complete draft of your Kickstarter project, make sure to activate your Project Preview link and share your page with a few trusted friends and colleagues. Ask for anything from feedback on the overall story, your rewards ideas and pricing, your video, and also spot-check for typos or other confusing text.

Your project preview link will redirect to your live project once you launch.

Project Title and Blurb

The search feature on Kickstarter only looks at project's title, short blurb and creator name. Therefore, if you want your project to show up when people search for a specific term, make sure to include that term in the project title or short blurb.

Project Image

Don't underestimate the importance of a great project image. Your project image will represent you across the Kickstarter website, and likely be the image that press or other media outlets pull when talking about your project. Your project image should represent your creative idea and also be simple enough to be eye-catching at many sizes.

The Kickstarter design team made [this simple guide](#) for making a stand-out project image and Comixtribe offers [7 Design Tips for Your Project Image](#).

Project Video

People often agonize over their project videos. They worry that they have to spend a lot of money on them, or that they have to look a certain way. There are a ton of approaches for making a great project video, what is important is to make it your own.

When talking to our creator and backer community, we have learned that the most important things for a project video are that they are personal, short (1-3 minutes), and include good light and good sound. Some of our favorite project videos have been shot in [a single take using an iPhone](#). Seriously! Don't sweat it. Here's [a fun overview](#) of a range of different types of videos we have seen on Kickstarter.

Finally, if you have a multi-lingual audience or just want to make your project as accessible as possible, check out our [subtitles and captions](#) feature that you can use with your project video and any video you add to your project page.

Rewards

Your rewards are a chance to share a piece of your project with the supporters that helped you make it.

There are generally four types of rewards:

Reward type	Description
The thing	A copy of what you're making.
Experiential	Rewards where someone gets to participate in the process or final project (a visit to the studio).
Acknowledgement	Rewards where someone gets credit in some way (your name in the credits).
Memento	Rewards where someone gets an item that celebrates the thing that's being made (a postcard, sticker, t-shirt, etc).

Most people on Kickstarter are pledging around \$25, or if there is a product being offered, most people will pledge for the product.

Projects also typically offer something at the \$1 level that invites a backer to follow along as a project unfolds. People who initially pledge for the \$1 reward might increase their pledge before a campaign ends, don't miss this opportunity.

It is important to not let your rewards get away from you. A common mistake people make is offering too many rewards that cost time and money, and ultimately negatively impact a creator's ability to realize a project in the best way possible. Mementos are fun, but be wary of tracking the expenses associated with creating and shipping them to your backers.

For inspiration, check out our blog post [96 Great Reward Ideas](#).

Project Description

There are a lot of approaches on how to use this space, here are some general tips:

- Your project description does not need to be exhaustive. In general, people want to know a bit about what it is you are trying to do, how you will do it (you can represent this as a timeline), how the funds will be used, the identities of the people working on your project, their qualifications to complete it, and how far along your project is.
- Include photographs, graphics and other media to represent the thing you are creating and also your project rewards.
- Include a rewards section where you itemize your rewards, and even consider including a graphic or a table that helps people navigate all your reward offerings.

We interviewed six successful project creators and asked them for their [tips on crafting a beautiful project page](#).



Pre-Launch Checklist

A checklist of things to do before you hit the big green launch button.

Account tab: Make sure to set up your bank account information and verified identity well before you are ready to launch.

Your project video: Upload a version of your project video early to make sure that the encoding you are using works with our system and looks good.

Campaign launch: Create a launch plan that includes a launch time, initial outreach and promotion list, and clearly identifies who is doing what when.

Campaign end date & time: When you choose your campaign end date, the end time will automatically be set for the same time of day that you launch. If you want to end at a different time, select the “end on date and time” option under Funding Duration and then use the Time box below the calendar to choose the end time you prefer.

Project title & project blurb: Make sure that your title and blurb include keywords that people will use to search for your project on Kickstarter, and do not include any special characters.

Funding goal: Double check that your funding goal is set to the correct amount. You will not be able to edit this once you launch.

Copy edits: Go over your project page with a close eye for typos or missed dummy copy, especially your reward tiers since these cannot be edited once someone pledges to them.

Make sure all your links work: Go through your project description and click all your links to make sure they work.

Preview: Share your project using the preview link for feedback and copy edits before you launch.

Final URL: You won't know your project URL before you launch. You can create a short link with your project preview link before you launch, and it will redirect to your live project.

Shipping: The international shipping options for rewards can be complicated. Take the time to make sure that you have set the correct options for each of your reward tiers. We recommend that you include domestic shipping in your reward price—make sure that this is selected. There's more info [here](#).

Project image: Make sure it looks good behind the play button, and in different sizes.

Continue button: Our website uses an algorithm to review projects and allow some to launch without approval. To make sure that you are not held up in our project review queue, hit the green “Continue” button at least two business days before you are ready to launch. If your project gets sent to project review, get in touch with your contact at Kickstarter and let them know. You can still make changes to the project while it's being reviewed and after it's been approved for launch.

FAQs: You cannot add project FAQs until you launch. Have these ready ahead of time and be prepared to add them once you launch your project.



More Resources

The Basics:

- [What is Kickstarter?:](#) Simple and straight-forward language describing Kickstarter.
- [Kickstarter Rules:](#) We have three basic rules, and also a list of prohibited items. Get familiar with this list before you launch.
- [Kickstarter Help Center:](#) Have a basic question about Kickstarter? It is likely answered here.

Tips from Kickstarter:

- [Kickstarter Tips:](#) Our Twitter feed sharing advice and tips for project creators.
- [Creator Handbook:](#) Our guide to creating a successful Kickstarter project.
- [Creator Basics:](#) A series of short videos sharing advice on common questions related to Kickstarter projects.
- [Campus:](#) Our Q&A space just for creators.
- [Creator Hangouts:](#) Bi-monthly 30 minute chats with creators from the Kickstarter community. Drop in, ask questions, or just hear how they approached their campaign.

From our community:

- [A gamemaker shares what he learned from running two campaigns](#)
 - [10 creators share what they wish they'd known before launching a project](#)
 - [How To Kickstarter:](#) An in-depth blog post covering almost everything from five-time project creators, Studio Neat.
 - [Q&A with successful Kickstarter creators on Shopify:](#) For entrepreneurs and creators with a retail idea in mind, a useful round-up of do's and don'ts from some of Kickstarter's biggest projects.
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