

PASSION FUELS SUCCESS. FIND YOURS.

LAUNCH LSU

PROJECT TOOLKIT

Thoughtful preparation is key to your project's overall success. The pre-launch phase begins when you submit your crowdfunding request via launch.lsu.edu.

PRE-LAUNCH

Launch LSU project leaders will provide web content for their campaign page and are responsible for managing communications and campaign promotion. The digital fundraising specialist will reach out within three business days of a crowdfunding request to get web content and confirm details.

Set a realistic goal. Your team should also set two stretch goals, or amounts that exceed your target goal, and determine what you would accomplish with those additional funds. For example, "Our target goal is to raise \$2,000 to X. If we reach our stretch goal of \$3,500, we can also Y. If we reach our stretch goal of \$5,000, we can Z."

Determine your timeline. Most successful campaigns are active for 30 days. A short timeline leverages urgency and motivates donors. When selecting your campaign dates, consider important holiday or events that may conflict with your project.

Draft your messaging. Messaging, to be used within your project page's description and throughout communications, should express your team's passion for and help your audience connect emotionally to your project. Start by defining your project's mission:

- Why are you creating this project?
- Why is it important for someone to donate?
- What will the money support?
- Who will be impacted by this project?
- What real-life stories can you share that illustrate your project's impact?

Create your project page's look. We will provide page specs and image sizes. An assigned team member will develop web graphics, per the guidance of the project leader. You are encouraged to include high-quality photographs that bring your project to life, showcasing your team and the project's potential impacts, throughout the project page's description.

Make a promotional video. A short (two minutes or less) video is a great way to *show* your audience who you are and why your project matters.

Build a communications calendar. Plan when you will send emails and post on social media. We recommend sending one to two emails throughout the campaign and making one to three social posts per week, depending on the length of your campaign.

Here are some key dates to consider while scheduling:

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- Launch
- End-of-week updates
- Goal milestones
- Three-day countdown
- Last Day
- End of campaign and thanks to supporters

Email is one of the most effective tools in driving traffic and donations. The more emails your team sends, the more likely you will reach your project's goals.

- Consider grouping your networks into audiences and identifying messaging approaches that will appeal to each. Each audience may have a different connection to your project or motivation for donating. You may also need to alter the style and tone of your writing to suit each audience. For example, your approach to students may be more casual than to professionals.
- Keep your emails between 150-200 words.
- Each email should include new graphics, photos, or videos to keep your audiences interested.
- Make your "ask" clear and personal by using personal pronouns such as *us*, *we*, and *you*.

• **Social Media:** While you are encouraged to utilize any social media platform that you feel will enhance outreach and increase sharing, Facebook may be the most effective.

- To maintain efficiency and organization, schedule posts ahead of time through tools such as Hootsuite or [Buffer](#), which has a free version.
- Create a Facebook event for your project's launch day.
- Team members should set the project page's banner image as their cover photos with a direct link to the project page in the caption.
- Each post should be brief and include an image, photo, or video; your project's unique hashtag; and a direct link to the project page.
- Encourage sharing—it's just as important as donating!
- Here is some sample language to use when posting.
 - Post #1: Calling all alumni, loyal friends, and fans. Today, until ____, we are raising money for _____. Gifts of \$5, \$50, or \$500 can help us tremendously. Click the link above/in our bio to give. On behalf of the entire organization/team/chapter, thank you to all who makes this organization so great!
 - Post #2: Don't forget we are still raising money for _____. Giving takes less than 5 minutes. Link in bio!
 - Post #3: Only ___ left! Thank you to all who have donated so far. We are _____ away from our goal. Can we make it happen? Give to the link in our bio!

Reach out to your core community. Remember that you are doing more than just raising money; you are *building a community* of Tigers who care about your project. One of the best ways to promote your project is to build a base of supporters prior to the launch. Each team member should start by compiling a list of 15-20 people who are likely to donate to your project. Send them an email or direct message with information on the project and how they can support it once it is live. Securing donations early on can help build your project's momentum. Reference the attached sample when drafting your message.

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SAMPLE: Pre-launch Email to Core Community

Friends,

As many of you know, I have been involved with LSU Service Breaks for the past three years. Service Breaks gives LSU students like me experiences learning and volunteering around the globe. We create dialogues, build relationships, and spark positive change.

On Friday, Aug. 10, we will launch a crowdfunding campaign to [support Service Breaks](#). I know that community service is dear to your heart, so I am inviting you to be one of our first supporters.

This year, Service Breaks will host three domestic service experiences and three international service experiences. We will travel over 20,000 miles and complete more than 2,000 hours of service focusing on issues such as low-income housing, wildlife conservation, and human trafficking. **Your [gifts](#) will help defer the travel, housing, and food costs of these trips.**

Through Service Breaks, I have learned more about who I am and my purpose in life. I hope you will help me continue my journey and offer this invaluable experience to more Tigers. Please **spread the word** by sharing my [Facebook](#) posts, or by creating your own with the campaign [link](#) and #LSUServiceBreaks.

Thank you!

Mary Julia

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Execute. Project leaders are responsible for ensuring the project page is managed and all communication materials, including the communications calendar and digital media plan, are executed effectively throughout the campaign. The digital fundraising specialist will provide you with a checklist.

Stay active. Project leaders should be readily available to answer any questions from and engage donors and potential donors daily. Leverage social media to communicate directly through responding to comments and sharing posts. Regular updates keep donors informed on your progress and provide additional information to those who are considering donating to your project.

USE THE CROWDFUNDING PLATFORM

Share. You can share social posts and send text messages and emails directly from your campaign page. On your page, at the far right, you will see icons such as the ones below. By clicking them, users can share from the platform.

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Utilizing campus. Campus is home to most students and organizations. Use this space to tell other students and faculty about your crowdfunding efforts.

- Free Speech Ally
- Designated promotional boards in buildings
- Ask professors if you could speak before class begins. This is a great way for new member acquisition as well.

POST-PROJECT

When your project ends, supporters should receive information about your project's outcomes and the impact of their support. When drafting post-project communications, ask yourself how you want a supporter to feel after making a gift to your project.

Follow up. Communications should be centered around thanking supporters, emphasizing the outcome of their support and informing them on how to stay engaged. This is also your opportunity to influence supporters to participate in future Launch LSU projects.

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Continue social media updates. Posts should continue for at least 60 days to send additional updates to donors. Suggested dates include:

- Project-end date to announce total raised
- 15 days post-project to convey impact
- 30 days post-project to express thanks and encourage support of future Launch LSU projects

Recognize your donors. Thank donors who made large gifts with a handwritten, personal note signed by every team member.

NEXT STEPS

The digital fundraising specialist will schedule a meeting with the project leader to discuss successes and opportunities of the project. All team members will also receive a brief survey to evaluate Launch LSU strengths and weaknesses.

ACCESSING YOUR FUNDS

Any payment requests would need to go through the Office of Student Affairs for processing and approval. Please contact Emily Hester at ehester@lsu.edu with questions/pending approval. Funds can be accessed by processing a check request through the LSU Foundation – linked below. You can either have the vendor submit an invoice and then a check request would need to be prepared and approved and sent into the LSU Foundation.

Another option is that an individual purchases the item up front and then submits a check request for reimbursement. All vendors or individuals seeking reimbursement must be enrolled as a vendor in our vendor system. See link below for enrollment form. I have also included a link for the check request. Also keep in mind when paying directly through the Foundation sales tax must be included.

If you need clarification on anything, please contact Emily Hester at ehester@lsu.edu or Felicia Jennings at fjennings@lsufoundation.org.

[LSU Foundation - Vendor Information Submission Form](#)

[updated check request form 022514.pdf \(lsufoundation.org\)](#)