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Fundraising and Campaign Strategy for University Choral Tour

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Abstract

The WPI Choral Music Association sought to provide scholarship to students for the 2014 Choral Tour to London. I researched different fundraising methods and recommended that the organization launch a crowdfunding campaign to supplement their efforts. In my paper, I discuss exactly what crowdfunding is, why it’s useful for a collegiate musical organization, and best practices to provide a replicable crowdfunding methodology. Prior research along with implementation revealed that successful crowdfunding campaigns require much advanced planning.

While we didn’t attain our full fundraising goal, the campaign acquired 50 total donors and provided $2,579 in scholarship money for students. Students of the WPI Choral Music Association can utilize this paper to learn how to run an even more successful crowdfunding campaign for future international choral tours.
Executive Abstract

In past years, The WPI Choral Music Association has embarked on international tours to provide students with a culturally enriching musical experience. This year, the WPI Choral Music Association sought to provide these opportunities to a greater number of students, regardless of a student’s ability to pay. To provide scholarships for those students exhibiting financial need, it was necessary to plan more fundraising efforts. My goal was to provide a framework for a fundraising method that could be implemented in future years. In my paper, I answer the following questions

- What could be an effective fundraising method for this musical group?
- What is crowdfunding?
- What are the different crowdfunding platforms available?
- What’s the best way to set out on a crowdfunding campaign?
- Is crowdfunding an effective fundraising method for this musical group?

I examined other fundraisers that on-campus organizations and musical organizations participate in such as raffles, bake sales, events, sales of services, and directly asking for donations. While these methods are not necessarily ineffective, I pursued crowdfunding further due to the fact that it can reach a much wider audience. The previously mentioned methods focus on tapping the community that is directly connected to the cause, while crowdfunding has the potential to additionally reach online social networks and larger communities.

Upon my research, I learned that crowdfunding has existed since the late 19th century. However, online crowdfunding platforms have only begun to gain speed in 2004 (the founding year of Kickstarter, the most popular crowdfunding site according to Forbes magazine).
Crowdfunding is the practice of collecting small donations from a large number of people to raise money for a cause or project.

There are many platforms to choose from to start a crowdfunding campaign such as Indiegogo, Kickstarter, Crowdfunder, and GoFundMe. Each platform has their own advantages which correlate with the nature of the crowdfunding project. I decided to launch the campaign on Indiegogo due to the popularity of the site as well as its accomodation for projects lacking a tangible product. Before setting out on the campaign, I conducted research in order to learn about crowdfunding best practices. I learned some important tips to help make the campaign a success:

- Determine whether crowdfunding is appropriate for your project.
- Choose an appropriate platform that suits the project.
- Choose between flexible funding and all or nothing funding, depending on the nature of the project (establish whether you can still be successful even if you don’t meet your fundraising goal).
- Begin planning for the campaign one year in advance.
- Contact press outlets before the launch date to ensure both online and local media coverage.
- Contact potential backers before the launch date to ensure the campaign begins with contributions from many donors.
- Send page materials to friends before the launch date to ensure the video, project description, and incentives are easy to understand and appealing to potential donors.
- Keep donors updated with the progress of the crowdfunding campaign and the project itself.
- Enlist help to ensure incentives are delivered to donors in a timely manner.
The crowdfunding campaign raised $2,579 of its $5,000 goal. Although the $5,000 goal was not reached, the Choral Association and I raised a significant amount of money that still went towards reducing the cost of the tour for students. If given more time for this project, I would identify whether each donor was a hard connection (directly connected to the WPI Choral Music Association) or a soft connection (someone who found the campaign online that is not directly connected to the WPI Choral Music Association). Upon my own inspection, I could identify twenty-four hard connections out of the fifty total donors. The campaign analytics provided by Indiegogo did not give enough information to determine if there were any more hard connections. For this reason, it’s difficult to determine whether the campaign was successful at reaching potential donors who didn’t have a direct connection to the WPI Choral Music Association.

This report will be useful for students of the WPI Choral Music Association in providing a replicable crowdfunding campaign method for fundraising for future international choral tours. If the WPI Choral Association is looking to raise more than $5,000, they should not use crowdfunding as a replacement for all other fundraisers; rather, it can be used a supplement to additional fundraisers.
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Introduction to Crowdfunding for University Choral Tour

The WPI Choral Music Association is a well established organization on the WPI Campus. Alden Voices, WPI’s all-female chorus, was founded in 1978. The Men’s Glee Club dates back even further in history, founded in 1874. Involvement in the WPI Choral Music Association doesn’t end for all members after their undergraduate careers; many graduates have remained active members in the Glee Club Alumni Association. The longstanding positive reputation of these groups have allowed them numerous travelling opportunities to perform their repertoire both in the U.S. and internationally. Director John Delorey collaborated with the Gilbert and Sullivan Society in London to plan a twelve-day choral tour in Spring 2014, including performances in London’s most prestigious venues such as St. Paul’s Cathedral, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and the Royal Naval Chapel in Greenwich. Although choral tours were well attended in past years, this year, the WPI Choral Music Association aimed to make the tour affordable for all students, despite financial hardship, to embark on their biggest tour to date.

Many students leaders in the WPI Choral Music Association planned different fundraisers to make this goal a reality. Some of the methods implemented included tablesitting in the Campus Center, sending a holiday mailer to Glee Club Alumni, Zap-a-Snack food fundraiser, and a black-tie benefit event with silent auction. An an MQP student, I examined further funding opportunities that could supplement these initiatives. I identified crowdfunding as a viable method of partial funding for student scholarships. While all of the previous fundraisers mentioned all helped to bring in money for the cause, I recommended crowdfunding as a way to reach a broader audience through the Internet and social media.
Due to the evolving nature of this MQP and the shortened timeline, I experienced challenges with:

- University approval for the crowdfunding page
- Communication with press outlets
- Reaching beyond the WPI Choral Music Association’s “hard network”

Prior research along with implementation revealed that successful crowdfunding campaigns require much advanced planning. I managed to work through these challenges to help launch and manage a successful crowdfunding campaign. The crowdfunding page provided succinct information about the WPI Choral Music Association and the London Tour. It also revealed a unique and emotional perspective through the use of writing and video. Crowdfunding is a popular form of fundraising for musical groups due to the traditional, artistic, and emotional appeal.

In this MQP, I argue that crowdfunding is an effective fundraising method for a university choral tour. Thus in this report I provide 1.) a review of the research concerning on-campus organizations, collegiate musical organizations, fundraising, and crowdfunding; 2.) replicable methodology to launch and manage a crowdfunding campaign; 3.) results and analytics of this specific crowdfunding project; 4.) recommendations for future crowdfunding endeavors; 5.) conclusions for university choral groups who are considering crowdfunding as part of their fundraising efforts.
Crowdfunding is a relatively new fundraising method, spurred by the increased usage of social media and the growth of the internet. Individuals use crowdfunding to raise money for their new product, company, independent project, or even personal needs such as student loans. Before launching a crowdfunding campaign, it’s important to understand if crowdfunding is the appropriate approach for the endeavor. Do the project creators or group members have a strong social media presence and/or following? If not, it is not really feasible to create accounts on Twitter and Facebook right at the start of the crowdfunding campaign; there must first be an established audience.

Crowdfunding campaigns also require substantial planning, maintenance, and follow up. Understanding the research available and studying past crowdfunding efforts can result in the production of a successful campaign that meets, or even exceeds, a fundraising goal. There are many alternatives such as bake sales, raffles, events, grants, alumni donations, and corporate donations that may be better suited to a project. These alternatives may also be used in conjunction with a crowdfunding campaign. Launching a successful crowdfunding campaign requires the following steps: carefully selecting the right platform for the project’s purpose, creating and testing campaign materials, active marketing efforts during the campaign, and follow-through with delivery of incentives.

In this literature review, I will discuss 1.) research on why fundraising is important for on-campus organizations; 2.) associated challenges with fundraising; 3.) fundraising for a musical group; 4.) why crowdfunding makes sense for musical groups; 5.) emergence of crowdfunding as innovative viral fundraising; 6.) available crowdfunding platforms; 7.) an example of a successful crowdfunding campaign. This
literature review provides a in-depth perspective on the many aspects of crowdfunding and why it’s useful for a collegiate musical organization.

**Part I: Why Fundraising is Important for On-Campus Organizations**

On-campus organizations use different strategies to satisfy their annual budgetary requirements. Greek organizations solicit dues from their members to cover the cost of their activities; fundraising may be focused on philanthropic endeavors. Other organizations that do not require the payment of dues from their members rely on fundraising to host social events, go on trips, and attend conferences (“A Parent’s Guide,” 2014). Traditional fundraising opportunities include

- bake sales
- raffles
- sales of services
- alumni donations
- corporate donations
- events

Alumni and corporate donations generally draw larger contributions. Bake sales, raffles, and sales of service may not necessarily generate huge donations, but they require less time for planning. Events require much more time and advanced planning but have greater potential to bring in larger donations; ideally, events center around the main mission of the fundraiser and of the organization. Some of the other methods may not allow for a great platform to describe exactly what the money will be going towards.
While these fundraisers can, and have been, effective, they all tap a community that is directly connected to the organization.

Some clubs may wish to provide scholarship money for their members to attend trips to cover the cost of transportation, housing, and food. To fully grasp the importance of fundraising for these groups, it’s first essential to understand how budgeting works under the auspices of the campus’s Student Government.

At WPI, all clubs must submit a budget to the Student Government Association at the beginning of the school year (SGA Budget Process, 2014). In October, a club will submit a budget asking for 105% of their necessary funding. This extra 5% serves as a buffer in case prices of required services or goods change during the year (SGA Budget Process, 2014). WPI organizations usually budget for things like apparel, events (on and off-campus), live event services such as music, and food/catering (SGA Budget Process, 2014). Virginia’s Old Dominion University provides guidelines in their Student Organization Handbook for funding requests such as internal/external apparel, food, event DJs, conference registration, airfare/mileage, event advertising, as well as charitable donations (Old Dominion University 2012-2013 Student Organization Handbook). Their unapproved requests include the following: alcoholic beverages; fundraisers, scholarships, and donations strictly for the organization’s profit; requests that can be satisfied free of charge by the university such as certain room reservations, sports and technical equipment that can be rented; mail sent by post that could be distributed via e-mail (Old Dominion University 2012-2013 Student Organization Handbook). A campus’s Student Government can provide funds to assist in an organization’s budget, but as shown by the guidelines, they can not comply with every request.
The amount of funding a club receives from WPI’s Student Government Association, as well as the process to acquire funding, depends on the club’s classification (SGA Budget Process, 2014). WPI organizations can fall into one of six categories:

- Class 1: Special interest
- Class 2: Club sports
- Class 3: Campus-wide organizations
- Class 4: Professional Societies
- Class 5: Greek life
- Class 6: “Recognized by SOC but have not reapplied for reclassification” (SGA Budget Process, 2014).

Only Classes 1, 2, and 3 are eligible to receive funding from the Student Government Association (SGA Budget Process, 2014). Since Classes 4-6 are not open to all members of the WPI student body, they can not submit a budget. However, in some circumstances, these organizations can apply for an SFR (Special Funding Request). For organizations in Classes 4, 5, and 6, fundraising is especially important due to lack of funding from the Student Government Association (SGA Budget Process, 2014). From year to year, more than half of the Student Government Association’s budget goes towards Class 3 organizations such as Social Committee, Student Alumni Association, and VOX Musical Theater. These clubs tend to host more events on campus that reach a larger number of students (SGA Budget Process, 2014). Class 3 events are defined as “programs which educate, entertain, and/or expose students to the arts (Title 7)” (SGA
A club that serves the greater WPI community is more likely to receive funds from the Student Government Association.

The Student Government Association expects an organization to spend allocated funds in the areas they have dictated on their budget. For instance, if an organization wants to buy pizza and soda for the first term meeting and they end up spending less than they expected, the organization must return the extra money to the Student Government Association; the money may not be reallocated internally (SGA Budget Process, 2014). On the contrary, if an organization needs additional funds that were not originally in the budget, they can request this additional amount. The Student Government Association is more likely to assist the organization if they have already made efforts to fundraise on their own or ask other academic departments for assistance, if applicable (SGA Budget Process, 2014). These efforts show that the club is serious and dedicated to their cause and will use the funds responsibly and as promised.

The Student Government Association provides great financial support for on-campus organizations. However, they can not satisfy all monetary needs for every organization. It’s up to the organization to supplement the Student Government Association’s budget with their own fundraising (SGA Budget Process, 2014). Knowing this information from the outset gives club members a chance to plan their budget alongside their fundraising efforts. Last year, the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, known as SHPE, hoped to attend the SHPE National Conference in Indiana. They displayed initiative to the Student Government Association by first embarking on fundraising endeavors to provide scholarships for the students (Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers Growing Steadily, Full of New Ideas). After the completion of
this fundraiser, they later asked for additional funding. Setting out on fundraising shows
the Student Government Association that a club is serious about their cause and is
pursuing multiple opportunities to acquire funds.

Fundraising Challenges and Why Crowdfunding Makes Sense

Fundraising for a cause on a college campus provides valuable access to resources,
networks, and large audience of students. However, with this accessibility come rules and
regulations that organizations must adhere to. Each university has their own set of
guidelines. Fundraisers at Colorado College must be sponsored by an officially
recognized campus organization and obtain approval from their supervising college
administrator (Colorado College, “Fundraising”). If the organization is planning a
fundraising event off-campus, they must additionally obtain permission from the annual
giving office. The fundraisers must also “have an educational, charitable, cultural, or
social purpose consistent with the purposes of the college and its status as a tax-exempt,
not-for-profit institution (Colorado College, “Fundraising”).”

MIT provides students with the opportunity to create a “project fund”
(Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Priorities”). “The school provides an MIT
account for those projects that are fundraising for an MIT cause (Massachusetts Institute
of Technology, Priorities”). Projects that fall under MIT’s top priorities for fundraising
are most likely to receive support. These areas include the following; unrestricted giving
(allow the university to allocate the donation wherever is needed at the time); MIT
Energy Initiative; David H. Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research; MIT’s global
initiatives (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Priorities”). Depending on the
university, these guidelines may differ; the students in charge of the fundraising must make sure to contact the appropriate university officials before proceeding with their plans.

Universities often ask for donations from parents, alumni, and current students (Albion College, “Fundraising Guidelines”). They also may host their own fundraising projects and/or events. Although a group of students may believe that they are aiding the university by embarking on their own fundraising campaign, their efforts may actually hinder the university from acquiring the maximum amount of donations (Albion College, “Fundraising Guidelines”). For this reason, it’s essential for the students to contact the university’s advancement or alumni office to make sure that their organization’s fundraisers do not coincide with university efforts. Albion College in Michigan encourages students to contact the Office of Institutional Advancement to help in coordination of fundraising efforts (Albion College, “Fundraising Guidelines”).

Concerning fundraising outreach through mail, the office staff “can advise on the timing of mailings or fundraising initiatives, can help with data needs, and can share samples or design ideas that have worked well for the annual fund (Albion College, “Fundraising Guidelines”). This preparation will ensure that alumni, parents, and/or students will not be approached on multiple occasions in a short span of time, being forced to choose where to donate their money.

With the current state of the internet and social media today, crowdfunding has emerged as a popular fundraising avenue for several reasons: crowdfunding pages are easy to share via e-mail and social media; donating to a page requires a few simple steps; incentives provide a reward system for donors and may encourage them to donate at a
higher level (Can You Spare a Quarter?, 2010). Many college students today are active on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter (McDermott, 2013). Posting or tweeting the link to the crowdfunding page can reach many friends, some that may not even communicate with the project creator on a regular basis (McDermott, 2013). Other students who support the campaign can repost or retweet the message, expanding the network of outreach even further (McDermott, 2013). Project creators can also utilize e-mail to send their message to a wide audience in a time-efficient manner (McDermott, 2013).

The WPI Choral Music Association is a well established organization on the WPI Campus. Alden Voices, WPI’s all-female chorus, was founded in 1978. The Men’s Glee Club dates back even further in history, founded in 1874. Involvement in the WPI Choral Music Association doesn’t end for all members after their undergraduate careers; many graduates have remained active members in the Glee Club Alumni Association. The longstanding reputation of these groups has resulted in many strong relationships and connections, both from current members, alumni, family, friends, and WPI in general. Many of the people involved and connected to the WPI Choral Music Association are active on social media sites, specifically Facebook and Twitter. The WPI Choral Music Association page has 192 likes, the WPI Men’s Glee Club page has 163 likes, and the Alden Voices page has 174 likes. Crowdfunding is a strategic and smart approach for the WPI Choral Music Association due to its strong relationships, established reputation, and presence on social media. Fundraising amounts can differ depending on the industry. However, Indiegogo provides a simple calculation to aid in establishing a fundraising goal. They suggest to divide your goal by 100. The resulting number is the amount of
donors you will need. If this number seems feasible according to your personal network and other connections to the cause or organization, the fundraising goal could be attainable (How To Choose Your Goal and Deadline, 2014).

**Part II: Emergence of Innovative Viral Fundraising**

Although online crowdfunding platforms did not start to gain popularity until the 2000s, the concept of crowdfunding dates back as far as 1884. As the construction of the Statue of Liberty was nearing completion, the American Committee did not have enough funds to finish the statue’s pedestal. Responding to the call to action, Joseph Pulitzer published an article in his newspaper *New York World* to ask the public for donations. After six months, the committee received an overwhelming response: $100,000 from 125,000 donors. Pulitzer decided to publish all the donor names on the front of the paper, no matter their contribution amount. Accomplishments like this paved the way for crowdfunding endeavors for the future (“Joseph Pulitzer” 1) Although lacking the online platform available on many websites today, the Statue of Liberty campaign acquired many small donations from a large amount of donors by spreading the message through a single medium, similar to the way crowdfunding efforts are executed today ("The Statue of Liberty and America's Crowdfunding Pioneer” 1).

Brian Camelio founded ArtistShare in 2001, one of the first online crowdfunding platforms (“Can You Spare a Quarter?” 3). Other more well-known sites such as Indiegogo and Kickstarter began to emerge in 2008 and 2009, respectively (Markowitz). Many entrepreneurs have set out to start their own crowdfunding sites, and for good
reason. Crowdfunding efforts have raised $2.66 billion in 2012, with predictions for 2013 up to $5.1 billion (Clifford). According to Chance Barnett of Forbes, the top 10 crowdfunding sites are as follows: 1. Kickstarter; 2. Indiegogo; 3. Crowdfunder; 4. RocketHub; 5. Crowdrise; 6. Somolend; 7. appbackr; 8. AngelList; 9. Invested.in; 10. Quirky (Barnett). However, before investing time and effort into a crowdfunding campaign, it’s essential to understand whether crowdfunding is even the right approach for a particular project. Crowdfunding success largely depends on the notoriety of the product/service. If this product/service is not established, not well-known, and does not already have a large audience, crowdfunding may not be effective (Toronto Star 1). Although crowdfunding is a great promotion tool, it’s not necessarily a good starting point. People donate to causes that they believe have a chance of succeeding. Without strong backing from the start, success is less probable (Toronto Star 1). If an individual finds that they have strong support for their project, the next step is deciding which platform to use.

Crowdfunding Platforms

Indiegogo

Indiegogo is Kickstarter’s closest rival. Founded in 2008, the site hosts philanthropic efforts, creative projects, and start-up businesses (Laemmermann 1). Unlike Kickstarter, Indiegogo does not require the completion of a tangible finished product (“Kickstarter Guidelines”, 2014). Donors are encouraged to give at different amounts based on the perks offered by the projects. Perks range anywhere from thank you videos,
apparel and gifts of the associated brand, and exclusive access to unreleased project content (indiegogo new york project). In 2012, Indiegogo partnered with President Obama’s initiative “Startup America” to help entrepreneurs jumpstart their small businesses, the same year they reached 100,000 campaigns on the site (Laemmermann 1).

There are two types of campaigns on Indiegogo: Flexible Funding and Fixed Funding. With Flexible Funding, the project creators receive all campaign contributions, regardless of whether they attained their fundraising goal. Indiegogo takes 9% of the funds raised from Flexible Funding campaigns if they do not achieve their goal. If the project can not be completed without achieving the fundraising goal, Fixed Funding is a better option, and Indiegogo will take only 4% of the funds raised (“How Pricing Works”, 2014) These donations are not tax-deductible unless the sponsoring organization is a certified non-profit (“Indiegogo Frequently Asked Questions”, 2014). A nice feature about Indiegogo is the direct disbursement of funds, which happens as soon as users donate. Other sites may take longer to process donations (Laemmermann 1).

Indiegogo success largely relies on sharing the campaign through social media outlets, specifically Facebook and Twitter. The more a creator shares their project, the greater their “gogofactor,” a concept unique to Indiegogo, which is determined by an algorithm. According to the Indiegogo support guide, a project with a high “gogofactor” will see improvement in “[s]earch rankings, placement on the site, featured spots in [their] newsletter or blog, and inclusion in [their] press outreach ("The Gogofactor.", 2014).” This algorithm calculates the “gogofactor” during the entire life of the campaign, so it’s essential for project creators to keep sharing the project continuously in order to create more visibility and attract more donors (“Indiegogo Help Center”, 2014).
According to American news and media network *The Verge*, only 9.3% of Indiegogo projects are fully funded. However, this statistic may include some test projects, which an Indiegogo spokesperson stated should not have been included in this calculation (Jeffries 1). Regardless, it’s important to remember that Indiegogo projects can still be successful even if they are not fully funded, so this percentage does not necessarily indicate that Indiegogo is an ineffective crowdfunding platform. Indiegogo would be a good option for a creative project that does not necessarily need to reach its total fundraising goal to be successful.

**Kickstarter**

America’s largest crowdfunding website Kickstarter (Laemmermann 1) was launched in 2009 (“Kickstarter Guidelines”, 2014), one year after the founding of Indiegogo. Although project creators generally use Kickstarter in the same way they would Indiegogo, there are a few distinct differences and restrictions. Kickstarter supports projects in the following categories only: “Art, Comics, Dance, Design, Fashion, Film, Food, Games, Music, Photography, Publishing, Technology, and Theater (“Kickstarter Guidelines”, 2014).” Projects must have a clear end and produce a tangible result (“Kickstarter Guidelines”, 2014). Raising money for personal causes such as scholarships, paying off loans, or even greater philanthropic causes like the Red Cross, are not allowed (“Kickstarter Guidelines”, 2014).

In addition to having stricter project guidelines, Kickstarter does not offer a Flexible Funding option like Indiegogo. If the fundraising goal is not reached by its deadline, the project is not funded and the donors receive their money back. Kickstarter
explains that this all-or-nothing funding protects their donors and project creators from risk. They believe that a project which is not fully funded has a much lower chance of succeeding and coming to fruition (“Kickstarter Guidelines”, 2014). Kickstarter will take 5% of the proceeds from a successfully funded campaign (“Kickstarter Guidelines”, 2014).

Kickstarter’s more structured approach has served them well. They boast impressive statistics with a total of 5 million donors who have given $1 billion to fund 50,000 projects (“Kickstarter Guidelines”, 2014). Projects have a success rate of 44.03%, a much more impressive statistic than Indiegogo’s. If a project creator is looking to fund the creation of their product on a very well-known site, Kickstarter may be the right platform for them.

GoFundMe

GoFundMe, founded in 2010 (Capers 1), is a crowdfunding platform tailored to individuals or those looking to raise funds for their loved ones (“Online Fundraising”). GoFundMe campaigns help individuals raise money for school, athletics, healthcare needs, volunteer projects, business endeavors, special events, and even for pets (“Online Fundraising”). Similar to Indiegogo and Kickstarter, GoFundMe takes a percentage of the money raised during the campaign. However, GoFundMe takes 5% from each individual donation instead of the total amount raised, in addition to 3% in processing fees (“How To Fundraise”).

GoFundMe is much more flexible than other crowdfunding platforms. Campaigns do not require a deadline; they can remain live for as long as the user wants, and most
users leave their pages up forever (“How To Fundraise”). Although they require a goal, the goal does not have to be met. In fact, since there are no deadlines, the campaign can continue to raise money, far exceeding the original goal (Capers). In his book *The Technical and Social History of Software Engineering*, Capers Jones cites a few examples of campaigns that raised much more than they aimed for on GoFundMe:

“…getting almost $75,000 for three little girls diagnosed with…mucopolysaccharidosis…a request for $2,500 to send a terminal cancer patient on a short vacation, which raised almost $30,000…a request for $1,000 to support a wheelchair basketball program for children, which eventually raised about $27,000 (Capers).” Many of these requests have a strong emotional appeal, which may explain the large donations.

Individuals also have the option to create an all-or-nothing campaign, more in the style of Kickstarter (“How To Fundraise”). Unlike other platforms, GoFundMe does not implement incentives or perks. Campaigns are aimed more towards friends, family, and loved ones who want to show support for an individual; they do not necessarily need incentives to motivate giving. GoFundMe is a platform well-suited for those who are looking to raise funds for personal causes.

Crowdfunder

Crowdfunder, founded in 2011 (Perez), first began as a leader of the JOBS (Jumpstart Our Business Startups) Act legislation, which sought to change “the financial regulatory framework to improve access to capital by small business (Barnett 1).” Instead
of only allowing accredited investors permission to fund these ventures, the JOBS Act permits almost anyone to invest in these companies (Taylor 2).

Crowdfunder provides a platform for both established and small businesses looking to make a social impact (Barnett 1). Both individuals and angel investors donate, not for an incentive, but for investment for a return or a stake in the company ("How Equity Crowdfunding Works on Crowdfunder."). Instead of taking a percentage of the funds raised, Crowdfunder charges companies a flat rate based on their fundraising goal and how much visibility they are seeking on the site (Perez 2).

The site focuses on “Tech Startups, Social Enterprises and many other Small Businesses at funding rounds between $200,000 and $7,000,000 ("How Equity Crowdfunding Works on Crowdfunder.").” As shown by the funding round amounts, the stakes are a bit higher for Crowdfunder enterprises than projects on other crowdfunding platforms. As of February 2014, the platform has engaged 40,000 entrepreneurs and investors, 7,000 companies, and acquired $55 million in investments (Perez 2). Although a relatively new platform, Crowdfunder has gained acclaim as a more business-focused crowdfunding site that has already achieved great success in it’s first few years. Crowdfunder is a good option for entrepreneurs seeking fundraising to grow and sustain their company.

Choosing the Right Platform and Campaign Type

There are a vast array of crowdfunding platforms to choose from. Identifying and narrowing down the scope of the project will help to determine which website to use. Is the project a personal cause, fundraiser for a charity, a new product/service, or a startup
business? Not all of these projects are a good fit for every platform. Once the category of the project is established, researching different platforms that have similar projects will help in narrowing down the available options. Choosing the appropriate platform means that the audience of this website is more likely to be interested in the project and more likely to donate (Goldmeier 1). Additionally, it’s important to consider several factors of each platform before selecting where to launch the campaign. Success rates are likely to be one of the first aspects to take into account. Although websites with higher success rates may appear more attractive, they may not be well-suited to the project (Goldmeier 1). For instance, Kickstarter is a popular and successful crowdfunding site, but if there is no tangible result associated with the project, it may not be the most viable option.

Hosting a campaign on multiple platforms might seem like a good way to reach a wider audience; however this method does not always yield the greatest results (Goldmeier 2). Each platform has its own distinct style and caters well to certain types of campaigns. Forcing the project to fit multiple molds will detract from its focus and could make it less appealing to potential donors (Goldmeier 2).

Some crowdfunding platforms, such as Indiegogo, allow the project creator to select whether they will proceed with either flexible funding or all-or-nothing funding. Flexible funding allows the creator to receive the funds raised by their campaign, whether they achieve their goal or not (Barnett 2). At first glance, flexible funding may seem like a practical option, but there a few aspects to keep in mind. Some campaigns may not be able to achieve their goals without the full fundraising goal. The creator must take into account if they will be able to supplement the funds raised out of their own pocket or by
some other means. Most sites, like Indiegogo, will take a greater percentage of the funds raised for flexible funding campaigns (“Features of Indiegogo”, 2014).

All-or-nothing funding requires the campaign to either meet or exceed its goal; if the goal is not reached, all the money raised is returned to the donors (Barnett 2). Proceeding with an all-or-nothing campaign might incite a sense of urgency among potential donors. Additionally, all-or-nothing campaigns will usually take a lower percentage of the funds raised. However, there is always a chance that the project will reach an amount close to, but not quite equivalent to the goal. Losing all of these potential funds may be devastating; it could cost the project creator a great amount of money, time, and effort. The project creator should weigh the pros and cons of each type of funding to make an educated decision about which type of funding is most appropriate for the project.
Preparing and Managing Crowdfunding Campaign

As I began the planning and implementation of our crowdfunding page, I attempted to follow best practices that I found during the initial research. Due to the evolving focus and scope of this MQP, we had to readjust our timelines to work with a very limited timeframe; we were not always able to plan months in advance as suggested by the research. Additionally, we experienced some unexpected obstacles along the way. Although we did not reach our crowdfunding goal of $5,000 due to the fact that some details and follow-up actions were overlooked, we were still able to raise $2,579, a significant amount of money, to decrease the cost of the London tour for the students.

Campaign Preparation

After choosing the appropriate platform for the project, it’s important to spend 3-6 months researching successful crowdfunding techniques by reading crowdfunding blogs and learning more about similar projects (Hui 4). This knowledge will aid in preparation of campaign materials, including the creation of a video, writing a project description, pinpointing a fundraising goal, determining the length of the campaign, and creating incentives for donors (Hui 4). The video and the project description should clearly state why the money is needed and how it will be used once raised, providing a clear definition of the problem and solution (Toronto Star 1). To determine the fundraising goal, the creator must consider associated costs of hiring additional help (for branding, graphic design, videography) for the campaign as well as the cost of the project itself (Temes 1). The next step is deciding which incentives to offer donors. Homemade and/or creative gifts can serve as a more affordable option and still motivate donors (Toronto Star 2).
After research, preparation, and creation of the materials, it’s useful to show them to friends and family before posting them on the page. They can provide feedback on their persuasiveness, their clarity in communicating project objectives, and overall aesthetics.

**Managing the Campaign**

Preparation is only one portion of the work required for a successful campaign. It’s vital to maintain the campaign daily and promote interaction with potential donors in order to keep donations coming in each day (Bechter 1). A campaign can not just sit on a website and earn money effortlessly. Marketing efforts must be employed to spread the word and reach a wide audience. One of the most effective ways to reach people nowadays is through social media (Bechter 2). Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Tumblr, and Pinterest host a large number of users. A project creator can utilize Facebook in many ways. They can create a page in support of their project. They can invite their friends to like this page and encourage friends to invite their friends to like the page, expanding the potential audience at a rapid rate (Bechter 5). If the creator decides to create a new Facebook page in support of the crowdfunding campaign, they must do this at least a few months in advance of the campaign launch date. A Facebook page will not be effective or have a wide reach if only a small number of people like the page. This is why campaign preparation must take place so far in advance (Ramos 3). Without a large audience, these social media efforts may be ineffective. As mentioned earlier, a project is more likely to achieve success if it is already well-known or it is associated with an existing business or endeavor. If the creator already has a Facebook page for their business, since they already
have an established audience, they can use this page to post information about the crowdfunding campaign (Ramos 7). In these posts, the creator can tag their friends and/or encourage their friends to “share” the post. The creator should also encourage their friends and family to share the crowdfunding link on their personal Facebook wall (Ramos 7).

Twitter can be used in a similar fashion as Facebook. Again, the project creator can start a new Twitter account specifically for the purposes for crowdfunding. However, this process can take even longer to acquire an audience than a Facebook page would. If the creator already has a Twitter account, it is recommended that they use this for social media outreach rather than creating a new account (Ramos 3). The creator should communicate with the audience that they have already established. Creating a new Twitter account and simply following others who are in a similar industry does not necessarily equate with dedicated followers. The best way to build up a strong Twitter following is to interact with users and provide useful information in tweets (Ramos 3). Posting generic tweets about the crowdfunding page is not likely to garner much interest. Tagging friends in tweets can help encourage them to share and “retweet.” Twitter also employs the unique feature of the hashtag. For instance, when tweeting about the crowdfunding campaign, the creator can use hashtags that apply to the industry that the project belongs to. Projects involving the performing arts could utilize hashtags such as #theater, #performingarts #creativearts (Ramos 4). It’s useful to check trending hashtags on Twitter. Trending hashtags usually indicate a hot topic of discussion on Twitter that many people are tweeting about and could help you gain more traffic on Twitter.
In addition to social media, emailing personal contacts is another way to spread the word about the crowdfunding campaign (Hui 4). While cold emailing may not be very effective, emailing friends and family with additional information about the campaign as well as the link can help to get the message out in a time-efficient manner. Adding a personal touch to these emails and emailing individuals rather than large groups will persuade people to look into the campaign and perhaps share it themselves (Hui 4). Emailing is a great way to spread the message to friends and family; it’s also useful to utilize email to contact media outlets. Whether it’s your local TV station, newspaper, or an online blog related to the industry you are working in, the more people you have talking about your campaign, the greater the chance you will reach out to more donors (Hui 4). It’s helpful to have a press release drafted to send to media outlets for them to post on their site or just to give them more information about your project.

Managing a crowdfunding campaign takes much time and effort. The creator should expect to spend at least a few hours a day updating the page, reaching out to potential donors, and overall spreading the word about the campaign. A live campaign needs constant upkeep and updates in order to keep donors interested and new people coming to the page (Hui 4). Frequent updates to the page let the audience know that you are invested in the cause. Potential donors like to feel like they are part of the cause. For campaigns that are anywhere from 15 days to 2 months long, the creator should spend 2-11 hours each day maintaining the page (Hui 5). The creator should sent, at the very least, one email per week to their personal connection, usually friends and family. This outreach is twofold; the project creator should ask for donations as well as help in spreading the word (Hui 5)
Many crowdfunding campaigns begin on a strong start. However, the “midway lull” is bound to happen to some campaigns. Usually, there is much excitement generated from the offset of a campaign. People are eager to donate to the cause and share the message. However, about halfway through the timeline, the campaign may experience the “midway lull.” This happens when excitement about the campaign dies down a bit and donations stop coming in as rapidly (Steinberg, Chapter 8). There are a few methods the creator can employ in order to avoid this “midway lull.” Planning surprises for backers is a great way to keep your audience engaged. Give announcements on the progress of your campaign as well as your project. Tell the backers what else you have been doing. Upload video testimonials of other people involved in your campaign. (Steinberg, Chapter 8). You can even include a personal message from yourself (Steinberg, Chapter 8).

**Post Campaign**

The final step in the crowdfunding process is post-campaign follow-through. It’s easy to neglect this step during the excitement of the campaign. However, to show your donors that you are reliable and trustworthy, post-campaign management is crucial (Jagoda 3). Depending on how many donors the campaign attracts, it may be necessary to enlist additional help to make and deliver the incentives in a timely manner (Jagoda 3). It’s worth the extra time and money to ensure prompt delivery of incentives to build a good report with the audience. It’s important not to underestimate the time required to get all the rewards sent out. Provide a one month buffer, and let your backers know when they can expect to receive their rewards (Jagoda 4). They have done their part to support
the project, so keeping communication, even if the incentives take longer than expected
to deliver, is crucial.

Crowdfunding for University Choral Tour

We decided to utilize a crowdfunding page as part of a multi-pronged fundraising
approach. Our overarching fundraising goal for the London Tour was $50,000. We knew
that it would not be reasonable to raise the entirety of this money on a crowdfunding page.
However, our research showed that crowdfunding could help us raise a few thousand
dollars to contribute to our $50,000 goal.

But why did we include crowdfunding in our fundraising plan? Crowdfunding is a
new and innovative way to attract potential donors to a cause. We already had other
fundraising methods in place that were each aimed at different audiences. Our December
mailing was targeted towards alumni, specifically Glee Club alumni; our benefit event
catered to distinguished individuals from the WPI and Worcester community; the Best
Friends campaign emails were sent to family and friends. The crowdfunding page would
reach a different audience. Although it doesn’t necessarily make sense to solicit
donations from strangers, crowdfunding allows creators to reach out to more than just
family and friends. It provides a whole new online community to reach out to. Some
people browse sites like Kickstarter and Indiegogo to view the latest projects and see if
there is anything of interest to them. Because crowdfunding pages can provide a lot of
pertinent information about the cause in a clean, concise manner that’s easy to absorb, it
could even attract donations from people not directly linked to the cause, just a personal
interest in the subject. Unlike some of our other fundraising methods, crowdfunding is
strongly propelled by the use of social media. Tweeting or posting a Facebook status with information about the cause, along with the crowdfunding page link, can reach a mass of online people. The average amount of friends for a WPI student is around 700 people. These friends may be fellow WPI peers, friends from the hometown, and many other areas. Facebook provides access to many different networks for each person who shares information about the cause. The average amount of Twitter followers for a WPI student is around 200 people. Although the numbers may be greater on Facebook, Twitter promotes a lot of interaction between people who may not know each other personally. Additionally, the usage of popular hashtags places tweets in an organized list of other tweets on the same subject. If a person has their Twitter account set to public, anyone who searches for that specific hashtag could see this tweet and learn more about the crowdfunding campaign. Whereas some of our other methods included navigating to our account page on the WPI website or sending a check by mail, accessing the crowdfunding page would be as simple as directing donors to a link where they enter their PayPal or credit card information.

Many crowdfunding pages can be successful thanks to many small donations. We believed that the crowdfunding page would pull in more of our peers and friends. A quick email, Facebook message, or SMS txt with the donation page could inspire donations. Many crowdfunding pages have achieved great success in funding their efforts. I had personally heard more and more in passing conversation about Kickstarter and how many projects achieved success on that platform. Due to its growing popularity, I decided to investigate the usage of Kickstarter further.
Crowdfunding also utilizes a feature that some fundraising methods do not always employ: incentives. Simply asking people for money may be challenging. However, offering a reward in exchange for a donation makes asking much easier, because you have something to offer in return. Incentives may also motivate giving at higher levels. Potential donors may plan on giving a specified amount. However, when they see the rewards offered at the next incentive level, they could be persuaded in giving a few extra dollars for an exclusive listen to a band’s unreleased content or their signed memorabilia.

Crowdfunding incentives do not always have to place a financial burden on the project creator. Many creators will offer creative incentives such as a personalized thank you video, a video of them doing a silly dance, customized song. Any direct communication from the creator that promotes interaction with the donors makes the donors feel more connected to the cause. The possibility of providing low-cost incentives made crowdfunding a viable option for our fundraising plan.

Crowdfunding may not have been the best option for fundraising five or ten years ago. Due to the rise in popularity of such sites, it made sense to include it in our plan. We didn’t face the problem of having to explain how crowdfunding works. Most people understand the concept today due to such popular projects as the Veronica Mars Kickstarter. It is very relevant today in the world of fundraising.

Crowdfunding Committee

Although it may appear that crowdfunding campaigns do not require much effort, they require great planning, strategy, implementation as well as management during the live campaign. Combine these factors with a very restricted timeline and we decided that
it would be essential to work alongside a student committee to make the crowdfunding campaign a success. For the purposes of our overall fundraising endeavors, we established four student committees focused in the following areas: Media, Communications, Crowdfunding, and Event Planning. The crowdfunding and event planning committees would be specialized in their respective areas. The Media and Communications committees would assist the Crowdfunding and Event Planning for their necessary purposes. The Communications committee consisted of Andrew Smith, Ellie Coffey, Eileen Wrabel, Nick Hewgley, and Sarah Roth. The Crowdfunding committee consisted of Merriele Ondreicka, Taymon Beal, Nate Wells, John Morrow, and Andrew Haveles. The Event Planning committee consisted of Nick Adami-Sampson, Eileen Wrabel, Ellie Coffey, John Morrow, Seth Norton, Julia Scott, and Rebecca Draper. The Media committee consisted of Linette Davis, Yigit Uyan, Maeve McCluskey, Nate Wells, and Andrew Haveles. Overall, we recruited seventeen students to participate on these committees, with some students serving on multiple committees. We invited all students involved in the committees to attend our first meeting on December 11, 2013 due to the focus on brainstorming.

**Platform**

Due to Kickstarter’s popularity, I led this meeting discussing how to launch a page on that site. However, one of the students brought up the possibility of creating a page on Indiegogo instead. Upon discussion of both of these platforms, we came away with the following points: Kickstarter is a deliverable-centric platform. They place great emphasis on projects with a finished product. If we were to launch our campaign on
Kickstarter, the focus would not be on the London Tour. Rather, the focus would be on the completion of our on-site CD recording. We also noted that Kickstarter requires projects to reach their goal in order to receive donations. Otherwise, all of the money is returned to the backers. The draw with Kickstarter is the popularity factor. When most people think “crowdfunding,” they think “Kickstarter.” It is currently the most well-known platform.

Regarding Indiegogo, it seemed like a platform that would allow us to showcase the talents of the Glee Club. Rather than a focus on a tangible finished product, Indiegogo focuses more on causes. Instead of having to focus only on the on-site recording of the CD, Indiegogo would allow for emphasis on the London Tour itself and providing scholarship for students. Although Indiegogo is not as popular and well-known as Kickstarter, some students mentioned campaigns they knew about that were successful, like the Oatmeal Comic. Afterwards, we discussed the possibility of hosting campaigns on both platforms. However, from the conversation as well as our background research, we concluded that our efforts would be spread too thin if we were to host two simultaneous campaigns.

I took some time to conduct further research on crowdfunding platforms and incentives before proceeding. Points made during the Crowdfunding meeting persuaded us to choose Indiegogo. It seemed like a platform that catered well to our project. However, Kickstarter still remained on our minds. Upon further research, it was shown that Kickstarter projects were more likely to be successful than Indiegogo due to the sheer popularity of the site. In order to guarantee the highest return, we believed we should launch on Kickstarter. Further deliberation convinced us against using Kickstarter.
in the end. We had come to terms with the fact that the platform was not the right fit for our project. Although the Glee Club was producing an on-site recording of their repertoire, that was not the main focus of our cause. Ultimately, we provide financial assistance for the students to go on this tour; the CD was not of primary importance. Since we could be more deliberate in our goals on Indiegogo, we made a final decision to launch on Indiegogo.

We came back to the committee with our final decision to use Indiegogo as our platform.

**Length of Campaign**

We then discussed potential launch dates. We hoped to pick a date that coincided with a major event. That way, we could make a big announcement and get the campaign started strong with a lot of donations. Every year, the Choral Music Association hosts an alumni weekend filled with celebrations, concerts, and social events. We believed that the Glee Club Alumni would account for many of our donations, so we wanted to make the announcement when they were back on campus. Closer to launch time, we actually decided to end the campaign the Monday after alumni weekend, which will be discussed later in the paper.

**Incentives**

After discussing the different platforms, we moved on to brainstorming what we could offer as incentives. We came up with incentives such as apparel, program mentions,
advertising space, physical and digital CD, dinners at John Delorey’s house, private
concerts, live performances, and more. Our list was exhaustive; however, we knew we
had to narrow down the incentives. Providing too many incentives on our page might be
disturbing to our potential donors and would also require great organization in terms of
follow-through. I assigned one student to research the cost of providing each incentive.
He later responded by email with some of the following costs:

- **t-shirt (I support the WPI Choral Association)**
- free admission to big event (2 or 4) – private table, bottle service, mention at the
  concert - $100
- **CD (costs us money to produce) - $3-4**
- **digital copy of CD – code on iTunes (early access) – Basically free**
- **recording of live performance - $3-4**
- **London postcard – about 1 pound**
- private concert by choral association
- **mentioned in our tour/Worcester program (rank by amount they donate)**
  - framed signed portrait of the chorus $10-20
  - rent out an a capella group for your gathering
  - tour of the WPI campus with a HU&A focus with dinner at Higgins House/ all-
    inclusive tour - $?
- private music lessons
- alumni/parent booklet/newsletter mention
- full page ad for the year
• season pass/punch card for choral performances (keep a list of who has one) à talk to VOX/a capella shows/ Mechanic’s Hall Xmas Concert
• Personalized concert (we sing songs you pick!)
• signed London tour poster - $1-3
• plaque (sponsor of WPI glee club) - $$$
• lower tier – a heartfelt thanks!
• Glee club travel repertoire - $11
• Choral tour music bundle

The student bolded ideas which he deemed feasible and established costs of some incentives. This provided me with a clearer picture of what was truly feasible and the cost of these incentives to the Glee Club. Most of our incentives would only cost us a few dollars. The Glee Club Travel Repertoire was one of the more costly incentives at $11.

Crowdfunding Page Materials

Next, it was time for us to draft up the page materials. Indiegogo requires a short project description of 160 characters, a longer project description, listing of incentives with their price points, and a video. The longer project description is included in Appendix B.

I assigned one student to compose the longer project description and another student to finalize the incentives with their price points. I drafted the short project description as follows:
The WPI Choral Association is embarking on a 12-day singing tour in London this May. We are fundraising to provide scholarship money for our dedicated singers.

After some edits, we compiled a longer project description, found in Appendix C. Our list of incentives can be found in Appendix D.

The final and perhaps most critical part of the page was creation of the video, which I assumed responsibility for. Although I am fairly comfortable with video editing software, I had never made a video for this kind of purpose. To provide some inspiration, I searched for some successful music-related crowdfunding campaigns on both Kickstarter and Indiegogo. Here’s what I found in most of the well-made videos:

• They were brief, succinct, and to the point. Most videos that kept my attention were around five minutes or less.

• Projects involving choral groups almost always showed live footage, either of performances or rehearsals

• Videos showed the people who would be benefitting from the donations.

Although I didn’t have equipment of my own, I was able to rent a tripod and a video camera from WPI’S ATC. Before I began filming, I organized my thoughts and goals for the video in outline format. I wanted to make sure we included the following elements

• Introduce the group

• Describe what we are doing

• Show live singing from rehearsal

• Include testimonials from males, females, seniors, and freshmen.
In addition to looking at other videos and formulating my own thoughts, I read the Help Center page on Indiegogo’s website. They included the following information about videos: “Indiegogo campaigns with videos raise 114% more on average than projects without one. Videos help reveal your story and connect the audience to your idea. You don't need a fancy camera or video editing software to make a compelling Pitch video. The best videos are personal and succinct. Anyone can make a great video!”

I came to chorus rehearsal one evening with the camera and tripod. I captured a lot of footage of the entire group singing some of their repertoire. I attempted to get wide-angle shots so potential donors could see the entire group. I also panned closer to some of the students who would later provide testimonials. The benefits of this technique were twofold: potential donors could hear for themselves how talented the singers were. They also had the chance to hear them speak about the tour itself and their experience in WPI’s Choral Music Association. I wanted to make this video as personable and humanistic as possible. Once potential donors saw the endearing nature of the students, they would hopefully be motivated to donate. Alicia Weber (freshman) and Eileen Wrabel (senior) delivered the first testimonial. I wanted to show the difference between someone who just joined the program and someone who is finishing up their time with the chorus. It provided a nice contrast and showed how students grow in the program over the years. Alicia spoke to the fact that the choral program at WPI attracted her when she was looking for colleges. WPI allowed her to pursue her passions for engineering and singing concurrently. Eileen explained how her involvement in the choral program also provided her with leadership opportunities and helped her become a well-rounded student and performer.
The next testimonials were from Rebecca Draper (senior) and Tony Guerra (senior). Similar to Alicia, Rebecca explained how she had been searching for a technical institution with a strong music program while Tony emphasized the extraordinary opportunity to sing in some of the most prestigious venues in London.

Although I included pertinent information in the project description, I also wanted to provide potential donors with a general overview of our efforts in the video. I obtained footage of Joshua Croke, the Assistant Student Conductor. He provided some background about the music program at WPI that may sometimes be overlooked due to the institution’s technical background. He elaborated on the importance of the London Tour for our students and how it could really make a statement about the strong Humanities & Arts programs at WPI. After providing this information, he explained why our fundraising efforts are so important for the students involved in the choral program. The London Tour differs from past choral tours at WPI due to goals of making the trip possible for all students who wished to attend, regardless of financial ability, so Josh emphasized this point to potential donors.

I ended the video with a short piece on the dedication of our choral students. It was important to me to show the potential donors that our students are not just singers. They provide the choral music program with its strength and leadership. This dedication shows that they more than deserve this opportunity to go on tour in London.

The video was just under four minutes long with enough footage to describe the group and the trip while remaining engaging.
Unexpected Obstacles

Creating all of these materials for the page took longer than expected. And we also experienced another setback. A few days before our launch, we received news from Alumni Relations that we may not be able to launch our page due to WPI restrictions. After all of our work, this could have been a major setback.

I set an appointment with Emily Perlow, the Director of Student Activities, to receive clarification and open a dialogue. She expressed her concern about the crowdfunding page due to the off-campus management of the funds. These funds could either be misused or mistakenly lost. Upon meeting with Emily, she agreed to give us permission to launch the page under a few circumstances. She required the outside bank account to be managed and monitored by our sponsor, John Delorey. She also requested that we avoid contacting alumni for donations. This is because documenting these donations from a crowdfunding platform is much more difficult and donors who may want university recognition may not receive it when donating to a crowdfunding page. We agreed to aim the crowdfunding page more towards our peers and friends, as well as promoting it on our social media avenues.

Although we experienced some unexpected delays, we were able to launch our crowdfunding page on Indiegogo on March 3rd. I wanted to work closely with the Crowdfunding committee to receive their feedback on all aspects of the campaign, but I had overlooked three very important factors: campaign type, length of campaign, and fundraising goal. Due to time constraints, rather than consulting with the committee, I conducted some research to help me make these decisions.
Final Decisions

Research showed that campaigns with fixed-funding needed to meet their fundraising goal in order to succeed with their project. Campaigns with flexible-funding could still be successful in cutting costs for their project. Our goal was to decrease the cost of scholarship for those students who needed it. In this case, any amount raised would help. Although fixed-funding campaigns create a greater sense of urgency due to the all-or-nothing factor, it appeared that flexible-funding was a better fit. With the current money raised, we were not in a strong position to take a risk with fixed-funding.

Setting a fundraising goal was difficult. Some choral groups managed to raise upwards of $10,000 for their musical tour. Other struggled to reach a few thousand. Admittedly, I did not conduct enough research to establish this amount. Upon discussion with Josh and our best judgment, I set the fundraising goal at $5,000. A closer look at Indiegogo’s Help Center page would have provided much more guidance in establishing a goal. They offered the following tips:

“1. Identify a discrete funding need.

- You don't always need to raise your entire project budget with one campaign. For larger projects, we recommend that you run a different campaign for each unique stage. For example, as a filmmaker, you might run separate campaigns for development, production, post-production and distribution…

2. Check your goal with a simple calculation.

- Divide your goal amount by 100. This is an estimate of how many people need to donate to your campaign in order to meet your goal. Do you have that many
friends? Is this an attainable number of contributors? If the number seems too high or too low, adjust your goal to fit.

• Remember, this is just an estimate. Every campaign is different and you may have a wider network or more generous contributors than most. If you don't meet your goal, you can choose a funding type that allows you to keep what you raise. You always get to keep any funds you raise above your goal.

3. Be aware of goal psychology.

• Your goal is a reflection of your project. Too high and your project may seem unattainable, too low and it may seem unrealistic. Be sure to choose a goal that demonstrates that you understand exactly what you need. We recommend including a detailed budget in your pitch description to show contributors how you will use the money (Indiegogo Insight).”

Indiegogo’s maximum campaign length is 60 days. If we established a 60-day campaign that launched on March 3rd, we would not have time to collect the funds to disburse to the tour company. Upon browsing both Kickstarter and Indiegogo, most successful campaigns lasted 30 days. A 29-day campaign worked well for our calendar. Four weeks allowed ample time to acquire donors, but it was still short enough to incite motivation and proactivity from potential donors. The ending date of March 31st was also strategic. Our Crowdfunding Committee originally discussed launching the campaign sometime during alumni weekend (March 27-30). However, keeping in mind that donations could take up to fifteen days to process, this start date was much too late. I decided to end the campaign the Monday after alumni weekend (March 31) instead. Since
alumni events took place on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday of that weekend, it
allowed us many opportunities to talk about the progress of the campaign so far. Since at
that time there would only be a few days left of the crowdfunding campaign, it would
incite a sense of urgency.

Press Releases and Media Outlets

I drafted up a press release to send to local news/media outlets as well as choral
music blogs. However, I made the mistake of sending out the press release on the launch
day of the campaign. Unfortunately, the responses were not as favorable as I had hoped. I
reached out to Chris Rowbury who writes a blog called “From the Front of the Choir
(http://blog.chrisrowbury.com/).” Although he responded promptly, he explained that he
wasn’t really interested in the Glee Club’s kind of music. I emailed Richard Sparks,
writer of the blog “Music, Conducting, Choirs (http://richardsparks1.blogspot.com/).” His
response was curt, stating that he could not post information about the Indiegogo
campaign on his blog. I received a speedy response from Allegra Martin, author of “A
Choral Musician’s Blog (http://currentconductor.blogspot.com/).” She explained that her
blog caters to people outside of Rt. 95 around Boston and due to the high volume of
submissions she receives, she has to limit her posts to strictly local happenings.

I reached out to a few local news outlets as well. Pulse Magazine responded
asking for a photo to include for a Facebook post. I didn’t follow up with their response,
so we did not see a post. I didn’t receive any responses from Worcester Magazine and
GoLocal Worcester. Granted, they receive a lot of requests and I could have been
successful if I went to the offices in person or even just made a telephone call.
Although there was not much reception from blogs and Worcester news sources, we did get the chance to speak with WPI’s newspaper “The Towers” and WPI’s online news and information source “The Daily Herd.” Even though our exposure was limited, we still managed to spread the word about our campaign on the WPI campus.

**Post-Campaign Management**

My research stated that many project creators do not take into account the work of delivering incentives. It takes time and money to acquire/create the incentives. I will also be graduating in May and will most likely not be around Worcester afterwards. For these reasons, I decided to delegate this task to one of the members of the Glee Club to ensure that all donors receive the incentives they paid for. He has graciously taken on the responsibility of both ordering necessary items and mailing them.

As far as fund disbursement from Indiegogo, I provided Thomas L. Collins, III (Glee Club Alumni Association Chairman) with the Indiegogo account information. He was able to set up John Delorey’s bank account information to acquire the funds.
Discussion of Funds Raised, Donors, and Web Presence

The Indiegogo campaign for the London tour raised $2,579 of the $5,000 goal. Although we did not achieve our full goal, I still considered the campaign as successful due to our selection of a flexible funding campaign, which allowed us to take the majority of the amount we raised. Indiegogo’s Campaign Insights provide a detailed look at the donors, incentives, and traffic to the campaign page.

Funds Raised

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal:</th>
<th>$5,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount Raised:</td>
<td>$2,579</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funds</th>
<th>Credit/Debit and other payment methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raised to date</td>
<td>$2,579.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiegogo fees deducted (9.0%)</td>
<td>$232.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiegogo fee refund (5.0%)</td>
<td>N/A - goal not met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment processor fees deducted</td>
<td>$77.37 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.1: Funds Raised and Fees

The figure above illustrates our funds raised as well as the deductions. Indiegogo took 9% of our funds raised ($232.11), since we didn’t reach our $5,000 goal. If we had met our goal, Indiegogo would have returned 5% of the deducted fees. We also had to give 3% of our funds raised ($77.37) towards payment processing fees, totaling our final amount raised to $2,269.52.
So why didn’t we raise the full $5,000 amount? Indiegogo suggests to take your fundraising goal and divide it by 100 to see how many backers you would need. In our case, we would need 50 donors to donate $100 each, averaging it out to mean that some donors would give more than $100 and some would give less. Although we did have fifty donors, their donation amounts were not enough to reach the $5,000. What could have persuaded people to give more? How could we have acquired more donors?

I faced one issue with contacting press outlets. Instead of reaching out and sending press releases prior to the start of the campaign, I waited until the launch date of the campaign. This did not allow enough time to reach out to blogs and local news outlets. Some of the local news outlets did not respond to my original inquiries. Due to the high volume of submissions they receive, my e-mail could have easily been overlooked. Further followup could have resulted in more press coverage. Although we had some press coverage from WPI via the Daily Herd and The Towers, local news coverage could have been very helpful. WPI may not be a common name to someone in California, but most people in the Worcester community have heard of WPI. When provided with additional information about our crowdfunding efforts, Worcester residents may have been more inclined to donate to our cause, expanding our donor network.

I did receive responses from some blogs. One blog-writer mentioned that she only posts information about events happening inside the Route 95 Circle around Boston and both London and Worcester didn’t fall within that criteria. This response was a little disconcerting as crowdfunding should transcend geographical boundaries. However, it could have been fruitful to contact blogs that are choral-themed but also post information about events and fundraisers happening worldwide. Another blog-writer responded,
saying only that this isn’t information he could include on his blog, with no reason attached. Another blog-writer responded saying that our repertoire does not represent music he is interested in. It wasn’t a mistake to contact some of these blogs. In fact, their responses helped me to realize what criteria matters for a blog submission. Acquiring a much larger list of potential blogs to submit to could have resulted in more positive responses.

Perhaps our incentives did not appeal to a wide variety of people. It’s important to keep in mind that potential donors for our campaign may not have any interest in choral music (however, if they have no interest in choral music and no personal connection, they most likely would not donate to the campaign). They could simply be a personal connection of mine or to a singer in the chorus. Some donors may be strongly passionate about choral music but have no interest in WPI. For these types of donors, WPI apparel or recordings of the WPI chorus may not have been appealing, causing them to donate at lower levels. For these donors, we could have offered incentives such as a mention on our social media pages on Facebook or Twitter. The chorus could record a cover of the donor’s favorite pop song, or a personalized song with their name, and post the video to their Facebook wall. We could have priced these incentives at a greater amount to encourage donors not interested in choral music to donate more to the cause.

**Donors**

The table in Appendix E lists all the individuals who donated to the campaign, along with their donation amount and the incentive they selected. We received donations from many of the parents of students involved in the Choral program, Glee Club alumni,
and some of my friends who I reached out to personally. In a more robust study, I would interview choral members to concretely identify whether a donor was directly connected to the chorus (hard connection) or not directly connected to the chorus (soft connection). Upon my own inspection, I could identify twenty-four hard connections out of the fifty total donors. The campaign analytics provided by Indiegogo did not give enough information to determine if there were any more hard connections; there could be even more than twenty-four. For this reason, it’s difficult to determine whether the campaign was successful at reaching potential donors who didn’t have a direct connection to the WPI Choral Music Association. Almost half of the donors are directly connected to the chorus via WPI, me, or a member of the chorus. This could lead to overtapping of this community, since this was not the only fundraiser the WPI Choral Music Association held.

To reach a broader network of potential donors, we could have made greater usage of Twitter. However, we would not want to create a new Twitter account for the WPI Choral Music Association right at the launch of the campaign. A choral member would create the account at the beginning of the school year. He/she would build up this account by attracting followers both from the local community as well as from the online community. He/she could acquire followers by interacting with other Twitter accounts related to London, choral music, or music in general. An interactive and involved following on Twitter would serve as a great audience to pitch the crowdfunding campaign to. The same could be said for the creation of a blog for the WPI Choral Music Association, using common tools like WordPress or Tumblr. Establishing a greater online presence could help attract a greater number of soft connections to the page. Indiegogo
also offers further exposure on their site for particularly innovative and successful campaigns. With prior work put in at the beginning of the school year on Twitter and blog sites, we could have had this chance as a featured campaign, creating more opportunities to build soft connections.

The table below shows the number of contributors over time. The blue bars indicate the number of contributors on a given day, while the orange line depicts the total number of contributors over time.

![Campaign Activity](image)

**Figure 4.2: Number of contributions over time**

On the first day of our campaign, we received donations from thirteen people. This number steadily declined over the course of our campaign. We received at least one donation seventeen out of the twenty-nine days of the campaign, with no donations received on eleven of the days. Why did we lose donors as the campaign continued? This could be attributed to the fact that many of our hard connections donated to the campaign at its start. Our social media pushes might have been targeting the same people. If we had already sufficiently tapped the WPI community at the beginning, contributors from our
soft network could have been continuing to come in throughout the course of the campaign.

Although the number of donors declined over time, we found that the actual donation amount peaked on the very last day of the campaign. In the following graph, the blue bars indicate the amount raised on a given day, while the orange line depicts the total amount raised over time.

![Graph showing campaign activity](image)

**Figure 4.3: Amount raised over time**

The first day of the campaign incited many donations; we received $450 from thirteen donors. The number of donors and donations decreased over time, bringing us to a midway lull in the campaign, which is typical for crowdfunding. Donations shot up to a total of $530 on the last day. This was due partially to the fact that crowdfunding campaigns that are quickly approaching their deadline incite a sense of urgency among supporters to help the campaign reach its goal as it approaches its closing. Additionally, I also scheduled the campaign to close the Monday after the Choral Alumni weekend. This
allowed time for choral students to talk to current alumni, friends, family, and other guests attending the alumni festivities and encourage them to donate. WPI alumni helped on the closing of the campaign. It’s important to reach out to them because 1.) they care strongly about the cause; and 2.) they are more likely to donate larger sums of money. In the future, I recommend that the WPI Choral Association end their crowdfunding campaign on alumni weekend, since that was a large push for us in terms of donation amount.

**Web Traffic**

The graph of our web traffic illustrates a similar pattern to the number of contributions over time. Our page was viewed 323 times on the first day. This number dropped to 130 visits on the second day and experienced an overall decline as the campaign continued. In the following graph, the blue bars indicate the page visits on a given day, while the orange line depicts the total page visits over time.

**Figure 4.4: Visits over time**
It makes sense that our page received a lot of web traffic on the first day. Many choral students were posting about the campaign on Facebook, and I was asking many of my friends for donations on the first day. Both myself and the choral members were excited about the campaign on the launch date. Why did the page visits decline so sharply over time? Sometimes after delivering an initial ask, people are wary of spreading information about the campaign repeatedly for fear of being perceived as a “spammer.” Additionally, some students may have felt that after sending initial asks on the first day, that they no longer had the responsibility of sharing the page. When excitement dies down after the launch date, it can be difficult to engage both potential donors and the choral members.

Although the page never received as many visits as it had on the initial launch date, it had garnered 1,118 total visits by the end of campaign. These 1,118 visits led to donations from fifty people. In other words, 4.47% of the visits resulted in donations. The total number of visits may appear misleading; rather than counting unique visitors, the visit count increases anytime anyone visits the page. So if I visited the page ten times in one day just to check the fundraising amount, I would have logged ten visits into the statistics. The low page visit to donation ratio could be explained by many factors. An individual could have stumbled upon the page by accident. One donor could have visited the page several times before deciding to donate. It’s important to note that I visited the page forty times over the span of the campaign. Other choral members or WPI community members may have racked up the total visit number by doing the same.
The table below illustrates how many page visits we acquired from different countries. As expected, the vast majority of visitors were from the United States. Some of these countries, such as Denmark, account for WPI students who were abroad on IQP.

![Table 4.1: Total number of page visits by country](image)

Since crowdfunding should transcend geographical boundaries, it was slightly disheartening that our campaign did not possess great international reach. However, since most of our choral members, their families, and our immediate connections reside in the U.S., these numbers make sense. If I took more time to build press coverage in London, we could have increased our traffic in Europe.
The table below shows how people were directed to the campaign page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Contributions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.facebook.com">www.facebook.com</a></td>
<td>$950</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (email, direct, etc.)</td>
<td>$628</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.facebook.com</td>
<td>$326</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiegogo Sharetools</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tinyurl.com</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.indiegogo.com">www.indiegogo.com</a></td>
<td>$150</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wp.wpi.edu</td>
<td>$25</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t.co</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.google.com">www.google.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.reddit.com">www.reddit.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.bing.com">www.bing.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>webcache.googleusercontent.com</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Domains directing traffic

Figure 4.5: Domains directing traffic

A great majority of donations stemmed from links from Facebook and the mobile Facebook app. The utilization of the WPI Men’s Glee Club Facebook Page as well as the creation of a new WPI Choral Music Association page helped to reach a wide audience,
totaling $1,276 in donations from 23 donors via Facebook. It also makes sense that we received many of our donations from directly sending the link to people, since choral members were encouraged to send emails to friends and family asking for contributions.

We utilized our presence on Facebook via our official pages in addition to encouraging choral members to share the status updates. The screenshots below display the statuses we shared on Facebook.

Figure 4.6: Social Media Pushes
The following graph shows the social media pushes alongside the contribution graph:

![Campaign Activity Graph]

**Figure 4.7: Social Media Pushes with Contributions**

This graph illustrates correlation and not necessarily causation. While social media pushes certainly did not hurt the donation amounts, they did not exactly increase donations. This graph also does not include all the social media pushes from individual choral members. As shown by the previous table “Domains directing traffic,” a lot of our donors linked to our campaign via Facebook. This suggests that Facebook promotion is essential and reaches a large number of people.
**Incentives**

The following figure lists claimed incentives.

**Table 4.3: Incentives Claimed**

The personalized thank you video at $5 and the deluxe choral gift basket at $250 were our least popular incentives. The incentives ranging from $10-$100 were most popular; the physical and digital CD at $25 and expanded choral gift basket at $100 were each claimed by nine people. The bulk of the fundraising was thanks to the $100 expanded choral gift basket which raised $1,050.

Out of the fifty total donors, fourteen individuals elected not to claim an incentive. Our incentives also did not offer much diversity. Starting at the second incentive, a digital copy of our CD at $10, the following incentives merely added upon the previous
incentive. As the donation amount increased, there was not much diversity in rewards. Incentives have two purposes for crowdfunding: 1.) reward people for donating; and 2.) encourage them to donate at higher levels to receive an appealing incentive. Increased diversity in our incentives could have inspired more donors to push themselves to donate to the next donation level.
Recommendations for Future Crowdfunding Campaigns for the WPI Choral Music Association

While we still considered the crowdfunding campaign a success, the experience illustrates some areas for improvement. Implementing the following recommendations in future crowdfunding endeavors can assist with coming even closer to the fundraising goal:

1. Start planning ahead at least a year in advance
2. Contact press outlets before the start of the campaign
3. More frequent campaign updates both through social media and the page itself. Keep the audience more engaged.
4. Greater social media presence. Engage more choral members

Following these recommendations will assist choral members in creating a more solidified plan and outline for the campaign.

Plan Ahead

Due to the evolving nature of this MQP, we were unable to begin our initial planning for the crowdfunding page until one month in advance. In this short amount of time, we had to choose a crowdfunding platform, create a video, put together a write-up of our project, think of incentives, establish a fundraising goal, and establish a campaign length. This timing was not nearly sufficient for all we needed to accomplish. Individuals who have launched and completed crowdfunding campaigns recommend anywhere from a few months to a year of preparation time. This extra time would have proved valuable
in overcoming some unexpected hurdles that we experienced during the campaign. We would have more time to send out the page materials for feedback, establish our press outlets, and establish a calendar of updates and social media pushes. Overall, more time would have led to stronger campaign materials and more of a chance to reach out to potential donors before the onset of the campaign.

**Contact Press Outlets Early**

Crowdfunding blogs recommend contacting press outlets to help spread the word about your campaign. We reached out to many local media sources as well as blogs. However, I contacted most of these sources on the first day of the campaign. I expected most of the recipients would read the press release I attached and upload it to their website or include in their publications. However, I learned that this is not always the case. Some of the bloggers did not think that our crowdfunding campaign contained relevant information for their readers, for reasons concerning our musical content and geographical location of our school and the tour. Local newspapers and magazines in Worcester did not respond to my emails; I could have benefitted by reaching out to them in person, or over the phone. Once the campaign got underway, following up with press outlets became less of a priority.

In the future, the individual in charge of the crowdfunding campaign should amass a list of press outlets three months before the launch of the campaign. This will allow ample time to get in touch with writers to see if their website or newspaper can write an article about the campaign or include our own written press release. Reaching out to writers or publications via phone is much more effective in eliciting a response.
Once the campaign is underway, press outreach should not be a main concern. Ideally, most of the press releases will be ready for release prior and published during the campaign.

**Update Campaign Frequently**

Donors like to know that project creators are engaged with their audience, and they like to stay informed. More frequent campaign updates could have helped strengthen our pitch on Indiegogo. I posted a campaign update on our Indiegogo page on the fourth day of our campaign describing our initial excitement with our fast progress:

![Indiegogo Update](image)

*Figure 5.1: Indiegogo Update*

We could have benefitted from more updates of this nature, especially as we were experiencing the midway lull. The update could have served to incite a sense of urgency among donors. Although it’s important to congratulate and thank donors with these updates, talking about a lull in the campaign or the fast approaching deadline could have motivated more people to give.

In addition to updating our campaign page, we could have also benefitted from more social media updates. I included posts on my personal Facebook page, the WPI Choral Music Association Page, and the WPI Men’s Glee Club page. I implemented
social media pushes in the days before the campaign as well as during the campaign. However, greater social media presence could have helped spread the word about our campaign to a wider audience.

Establish Greater Social Media Presence

Along with a strong social media presence from the project creator, it is also important to ensure that choral members are doing their share in promoting the campaign. As shown by this table, only two choral members and I generated referrals that resulted in monetary contributions.

Table 5.1: Referrers

Some crowdfunding campaigns provide incentives to those users who make the most referrals (http://support.indiegogo.com/hc/en-us/articles/527406-How-to-Run-a-Referral-Contest). One person can only reach so many people in their network. It’s more effective to get a greater number of people to spread the word about your campaign, increasing
your reach exponentially. Some project creators can provide incentives/prizes to those individuals who make the most referrals. This could be implemented as part of the campaign or only used internally within the WPI Choral Music Association. Either way, this will result in more donations if people are more motivated to get their friends or family to donate.

**Concluding Remarks**

The goal of this MQP was to design a plan to assist in fundraising for the WPI Choral Music Association. We wanted to create a sustainable plan to help in future fundraising endeavors. We implemented a crowdfunding campaign on Indiegogo to raise this money. Despite not reaching our fundraising goal of $5,000, we were still successful in the fact that we raised 52% of this amount and were able to keep all the funds raised in the limited amount of time we had. This method should be used in the future along with more time allocated for preparation.

This paper provides guidelines for how to implement and run an efficient and successful crowdfunding campaign. We hope that choral students in the future will utilize crowdfunding to help cut costs for singers looking to go on international tours.
References

<http://greekaffairs.ua.edu/parents.cfm>.


Perez, Sarah. "Crowdfunder Raises Another Million Ahead Of International Expansions."


Institute for Prospective Technological Studies, 2014. Web. 27 May 2014.


Student Organization Guide to Finance by WPI [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibOZsSmmY_0#t=77


Appendix A: Indiegogo Press Release
CROWDFUNDING PAGE LAUNCH FOR WPI CHORAL MUSIC ASSOCIATION
2014 LONDON TOUR

Worcester Polytechnic Institute’s Choral Association is launching their Crowdfunding Campaign on Indiegogo today. The group will be embarking on a 12-day singing tour in London in May 2014, and they are campaigning to raise at least $5,000 to reduce the cost of the tour for their singers.

This is an incredibly exciting opportunity for many reasons! The WPI Choral Music Association has been awarded the unique privilege to perform in London’s most prestigious venues including St. Paul’s Cathedral, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and the Royal Naval Chapel in Greenwich. They will also be producing an on-site recording of their choral repertoire. Their director, John Delorey, has worked diligently with the Gilbert & Sullivan Society in London through the WPI Humanities & Arts London Project Center, and has spent the last few years organizing these opportunities that are not usually available to foreign choirs.

The WPI Choral Music Association is offering incentives such as exclusive access to their recorded content, personalized video messages, and choral memorabilia. They are accepting donations of any amount but have set levels of $5, $10, $25, $50, $100, and $250. The campaign will be hosted on Indiegogo until March 31st.

To find more about this incredible tour please visit their web page at https://users.wpi.edu/~choral. To donate, please visit their Indiegogo page at http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/673275/emal/6308323.

Sylvia Parol
Executive Manager for London Tour
508-768-7416
sparol@wpi.edu
Appendix B: Indiegogo Project Description

Short Summary

Contributors fund ideas they can be passionate about and to people they trust. Here are some things to do in this section:

• Introduce yourself and your background.
• Briefly describe your campaign and why it’s important to you.
• Express the magnitude of what contributors will help you achieve.

Remember, keep it concise, yet personal. Ask yourself: if someone stopped reading here would they be ready to make a contribution?

What We Need & What You Get

Break it down for folks in more detail:

• Explain how much funding you need and where it’s going. Be transparent and specific—people need to trust you to want to fund you.
• Tell people about your unique perks. Get them excited!
• Describe where the funds go if you don’t reach your entire goal.

The Impact
Feel free to explain more about your campaign and let people know how the difference their contribution will make:

• Explain why your project is valuable to the contributor and to the world.
• Point out your successful track record with projects like this (if you have one).
• Make it real for people and build trust.

Other Ways You Can Help

Some people just can’t contribute, but that doesn’t mean they can’t help:

• Ask folks to get the word out and make some noise about your campaign.
• Remind them to use the Indiegogo share tools!

And that’s all there is to it.
Appendix C: Long Indiegogo Project Description

Hello, my name is Sylvia Parol, and I am a senior at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. I am spearheading the crowd-funding efforts to help raise money for WPI's 2014 Choral Tour in London. As a completely self-funded effort by college students, we are looking to provide scholarship for our students, so we can attend this tour and experience amazing singing events in London. This is an incredibly exciting opportunity for many reasons! We have been awarded the unique privilege to perform in London’s most prestigious venues including St. Paul’s Cathedral, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and the Royal Naval Chapel in Greenwich. We will also be producing an on-site recording of our choral repertoire. Our director, John Delorey, has worked diligently with London through the Humanities & Arts London Project Center, and has spent the last few years organizing these opportunities that are not usually available to foreign choirs.

Your donation will reduce the cost of the tour for students who otherwise could not afford to participate in this culturally enriching choral experience.

*Please note that donations are not tax deductible.
What We Need & What You Get

We are looking to raise $5,000 which will go towards scholarship funds for students. Your donation will help reduce the cost of airfare, travel, lodging, and food. We are a group of college students that are working hard in order to fundraise for this tour, and we all have the same stake in it; no one carries more weight than another. If we do not reach our goal, all proceeds will still go to a scholarship fund for all people going on the tour.

If you donate, we are offering incentives such as exclusive access to our recorded content, personalized video messages, and choral memorabilia.

The Impact

If you donate to our cause, it will not only raise awareness of American choral music in the United Kingdom, but you will also give a lifetime of memories to our students. For some students, this is the only chance they'll get to sing in some of these venues.

Other Ways You Can Help

If you can't give, you can still help to spread the word about our efforts! Tell your friends who love choral music or who went on a tour while they were in college. Don't forget you can use the Indiegogo sharing tools to boost our publicity. Thank you very much!
Appendix D: List of Indiegogo Incentives

$5: Our heartfelt thanks!
  • We will give you a personalized thank you video message.

$10: A digital copy of our CD
  • You will receive exclusive access to our recorded material

$25: Physical and digital CD
  • You will receive exclusive access to our recorded material on both digital and physical CD.

$50: Choral Gift Basket
  • A physical AND digital copy of our CD
  • WPI Choral Association t-shirt OR Men’s Glee Club Travel Repertoire Songbook

$100: Expanded Choral Gift Basket
  • A physical AND digital copy of our CD
  • WPI Choral Association t-shirt
  • Men’s Glee Club Travel Repertoire Songbook
  • London tour poster signed by every singer on the tour

$250: Deluxe Choral Gift Basket
  • A physical AND digital copy of our CD
  • WPI Choral Association t-shirt
  • Men’s Glee Club Travel Repertoire Songbook
  • London tour poster signed by every singer on the tour
  • Acknowledgment on our website, choral programs, and our annual year-end newsletter
Appendix F: Indiegogo Page

WPI Choral Association London Tour 2014
The WPI Choral Association is embarking on a 12-day singing tour in London this May. We are fundraising to provide scholarship money for our dedicated singers.

Music: Worcester, Massachusetts, United States

Campaign Name: WPI Choral Association London Tour 2014

$2,579 USD
Raised of $5,000 Goal
0 time left

Flexible Funding
This campaign has ended and will receive all funds raised. Funding deadline: March 04, 2014 - 11:00pm PT

Select a Perk for your contribution

$5 USD
Our heartfelt thanks!
We will give you a personalized thank you message.
1 claimed

$10 USD
A digital copy of our CD
You will receive exclusive access to our recorded material.
1 claimed

$25 USD
Physical and digital CD
You will receive exclusive access to our recorded material on both digital and physical CD.
1 claimed

$50 USD
Choral Gift Basket
- A physical and digital copy of our CD
- WPI Choral Association T-shirt
- Men's Glen Club Travel Repertoire Songbook
1 claimed

$100 USD
Expanded Choral Gift Basket
- A physical and digital copy of our CD
- WPI Choral Association T-shirt
- Men's Glen Club Travel Repertoire Songbook
- London tour poster signed by every singer on the tour
1 claimed

$250 USD
Deluxe Choral Gift Basket
- A physical and digital copy of our CD
- WPI Choral Association T-shirt
- Men's Glen Club Travel Repertoire Songbook
- London tour poster signed by every singer on the tour
- Acknowledgment on our website, choral programs, and our annual year-end newsletter
1 claimed

Also Find This Campaign On:

Facebook
Website

Created By:
Sylvia Palski

WPI Choral Association London Tour 2014

Short Summary
Hello, my name is Sylvia Palski, and I am a senior at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. I am spearheading the crowdfunding efforts to help raise money for WPI’s 2014 Choral Tour in London. As a completely self-funded effort by college students, we are looking to provide scholarship funding for our students, so we can attend this tour and experience amazing singing events in London. This is an incredibly exciting opportunity for many reasons! We have been awarded the unique privilege to perform in London’s most prestigious venues including St. Paul’s Cathedral, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and the Royal Naval Chapel in Greenwich. We will also be producing an on-site recording of our choral repertoire. Our director, John Welley, has worked diligently with London through the Humanities & Arts London Project Center, and has spent the last few years organizing these opportunities that are not usually available to foreign choirs.

Your donation will reduce the cost of the tour for students who otherwise could not afford to participate in this culturally enriching choral experience.

*Please note that donations are not tax deductible.*

What We Need & What You Get

We are looking to raise $5,000 which will go towards scholarship funds for students. Your donation will help reduce the cost of airfare, travel, lodging, and food. We are a group of college students that are working hard in order to fundraise for this tour, and we all have the same stake in it; no one stands more weight than another. We do not reach our goal, all proceeds will go to a scholarship fund for all people going on the tour.

If you donate, we are offering incentives such as exclusive access to our recorded content, personalized video messages, and choral memorabilia.

The Impact

If you donate to our cause, it will not only raise awareness of American choral music in the United Kingdom, but you will also give a lifetime of memories to our students. For some students, this is the only chance they’ll get to sing in some of these venues.

Other Ways You Can Help

If you can’t give, you can still help spread the word about our efforts! Tell your friends who love choral music or who went on a tour while they were in college. Don’t forget you can use the indiegogo sharing tools to boost our publicity! Thank you very much!
# Appendix F: Table of Donors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Perk</th>
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<tr>
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