

SOFT LAUNCH: THE SMART START TO FUNDRAISING



What's a “soft launch”?

At the start of your campaign, you may be tempted to blast your campaign out on social media. But wait! First, reach out to your closest networks of friends, family, and colleagues and let them be your first investors! In those first few weeks only send your page to the people who love you and trust you enough to donate even when you're still at \$0.

We call this time period of focusing on close family and friends your “soft launch” because, though your campaign is active, you are not yet telling the larger public. You should start by asking the people most likely to give, in order to secure your first 15-20 donations, or around 25% of your goal, before you announce your campaign to “the public.” Everyone wants to support something successful. With a solid 25% raised, acquaintances, friends-of-friends, even strangers will be more comfortable investing in your campaign and you'll have the momentum you need.

How To Get Started



Build a list of the closest people to you that you know would give to your campaign ie close family, friends, and colleagues.



Calculate your soft launch goal by dividing your total goal by 4. Then divide that number by your number of teammates.. This might look like: Total goal: \$10,000; Soft Launch goal: \$2,500; Divided by 5 teammates: = \$500 each. Then each team member can map their asks using the [prospect chart](#).



Choose a soft launch deadline that is realistic for all of your teammates. For a typical 6-8 week campaign this is the first 2 weeks, but you can extend this date for a bigger budget or longer campaign.



If your teammates are planning to donate personally, ask them to give first. Any size donation will encourage potential donors to give as they see your commitment to your project.



Send your first note to close family, friends, and colleagues. Let them know how critical they and these first donations are to your campaign. All of your teammates can use a template similar to [this](#) or [this](#).



Follow up. After you send an email, set a date to call or visit with the folks on your soft launch list that haven't yet responded. Use this [phone tree](#) to help guide your call. This could take 3-4 times but is still very important.



Thank your first donors within four days, if at all possible, and turn them into teammates. Ask them to share your campaign with 10-15 of their neighbors and closest friends. Provide them with specific language (emails, tweets, messages) you want to be shared. [Here](#) is a great example.

Help! We're stuck!

If your soft launch isn't going as well as you would like, try out these ideas to jumpstart your fundraising:

1

See if you can find someone who can be your special first donor. This should be someone that you know very well that would enjoy playing the special role of moving you from \$0 raised. When you make your ask, make sure they understand the impact of your work and why it's bad to have your live page read \$0 raised. Since you know this person well, lay it on thick and watch them give more than you expected!

2

Try to recruit more [teammates](#) to expand your network of potential donors.

3

Try a soft launch challenge. You and your teammates could make the first donation and challenge close family and friends to at least match your donation. We've seen it work before!

4

Make sure your teammates have followed up personally with those they've asked.

5

Make sure you've thanked all donors and asked them to share your campaign.