

Alternative Solutions: Success Tips for Online and Offline Fundraisers

Education Abroad Funding: Available & Accessible
NAFSA San Diego, May 2014

Quick Tips

1.) **Make a Video:**

- Campaigns with personal videos increase their success odds by more than two times!
- Video builds trust with donors and helps them feel a more meaningful connection to the campaigner.

2.) **Writing Your Campaign Description:**

- Keep it on the positive!
- Consider what would inspire you to give to someone else.
- Not necessary to explain why you need funding support or give sad stories, because it is implied by the fact that you are making the efforts to fundraise.
- Share how you'll make it worth their time and effort to contribute. They want to hear from someone that is motivated, hard working and determined to get abroad.
- Explain why you want to go on this trip and how you will grow from it.
- Talk about what you will be able to do with your funders' support - where you will go - what you will get to experience for the first time - and how it is meaningful for you.

3.) **How To: Ask for Money without Making it Awkward:** If you have never fundraised before, then it may feel uncomfortable or awkward to ask your friends and family for contributions to your campaign. You are in luck though, because **fundraising is very different from asking for hand-outs.**

- Get creative and think about making up incentives or "giving levels" for donors
- For everyone that donates \$10 dollars you can promise to send a post card
- For those who donate \$25+ keep a video blog for them **and** send a post card
- If they donate \$100, you can give them a video shout-out from a landmark in your destination country and share it with them via Facebook or email...

These are just ideas, but you can make it as simple or creative as you like. Some people make T-shirts, some write and record songs for their donors, others share travel blogs.

4.) **Share, Share, Share!** Don't feel shy about sharing your campaign page frequently, because that is the only way people will see it. Writing personal emails and including the link is one way, and this is sometimes even more effective than sharing a mass message, one million times over Facebook and Twitter, because it is more personal. The best approach is to make a combination of personal message writing and social media sharing.

5.) **Reach out to Extended Networks:** Be bold and brave! This campaign is a great reason to expand your current network and demonstrate your initiative, for future prospects. If you are traveling to Spain, reach out to the Spanish Club on campus or your local Spanish Culture groups; find Spanish Speakers Associations or Spanish Education Organizations using LinkedIn and other online resources. Inform them about your desire to learn the culture and language through an immersion experience and the incentives you're offering donors. You never know who will be interested in your campaign, until you ask!

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Offline Fundraising Ideas

For those who are exceptionally dedicated to succeeding, incorporate offline fundraising efforts and spread awareness about the campaign through in-person activities too. The best fundraisers combine on and offline efforts. This way, there is more to talk about and share through the online Updates. If you can collect funds offline as well, then by all means, GO FOR IT!

Offline fundraising ideas that can help your online campaign, by interest area:

Chefs and Bakers

- Host a bake sale and designate proceeds to fund your travel.
- Offer to cater a gathering or event for friends and family, tell them it's for the campaign.
- Have your own dinner or dessert party; screen your campaign video & request donations.

Athletes and the Competitive

- Tell your networks about games & competitions. Ask them to donate for every win or milestone you hit and make a short shout out video, dedicating the win to them.
- Sign up for a marathon, Tough Mudder competition, triathlon, pie-eating contest, dance-off, anything! Keep your audience informed about the events and get donation pledges for your wins.
- Host your own competition and get friends to help. It could be a contest for the biggest collection of loose change donations, a bowl-a-thon or even a board game tournament.

Artists and Crafters

- If you like to sew, knit, crochet or bead jewelry, make gifts in return for donations.
- Musicians and writers can host their own concert or poetry slam for contributions.
- If you're good with jingles or stories, offer to write something for your contributors and make a video for them to share with their own networks to help spread the word.
- If you like painting, drawing, pottery or wood-working, host your own art show and sell your creations for travel campaign donations

Entrepreneurs and Educators

- Rake leaves, shovel snow, mow lawns or tutor for tips - get old school!
- Get friends together to host a talent show for donations.
- Babysit or nanny for contributions to your travel campaign.
- Talk to local cultural groups and businesses that might help you sponsor an event or even your trip, in exchange for volunteering or supporting their products/services.

*The best way to develop ideas for your fundraising incentives is to take a minute and reflect on what you are most passionate about. Find a way to **incorporate your greatest interest into the campaign** and it will be a win, win, WIN. This way, you continue to stay motivated on reaching your goal and sharing the campaign. If you love photography, make that a major part of your fundraising!*

*Engage more donor interest by incorporating something you love, and then **you will also enjoy putting your own time and effort into a project that is sure to inspire**. Show the world you are capable of making this trip a possibility and you will end up showing yourself, that you have an impressive character to be proud of.*