

Library of Things Co-lab Session 16 Digital Fundraising

paige@shareable.net

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0:00:00.0 Tom Llewellyn: Alright, everybody, welcome back to the Library of Things Co-lab, we are grateful to have you join us again for another session. As always, this session is being recorded, we will be sharing the recording, both the video, the slides that are presented and also the transcript within the next couple of days. We post those things to Canvas, and maybe Candice, if you can go ahead and put the link to Canvas in there. That's where maintaining all the different resources in this course. Eventually, in the currently being developed, is going to be a Library of Things toolkit, which we will have later in the fall. And so we will be kind of taking all the resources that have been presented and all the videos and everything from the past few months, and put wrapping that all into a toolkit you will be able to reference and share and use moving forward. If you notice on the list of participants, you will see a few of us have pizza slices before our names, those are members of the shareable team.

0:01:16.0 Tom Llewellyn: If you have any questions or need any support during this Co-lab session, feel free to send a direct message to one of us, and we will help you with some technical assistance as needed. And then at the end, the presentation is gonna run through the hour, we'll leave the room open for another 10 or 15 minutes in case anybody wants to continue to chat as we go. So today, we have the first of a two-part session on fundraising, and today, we will be focusing on kind of crowdfunding and other online campaigns. Next month, we will be focusing on grants, on where to find them, how to apply, what to do once you get them, and how to make sure you are in compliance. And so that will be the second part of this training. But today, on digital fundraising, we are fortunate to be joined by Leanna Frick and Darren Cotton, who have both presented to us before. And without further ado, I will hand it off to you two.

0:02:23.9 Leanna Frick: Thanks, Tom. I'll kick us off, since I'm going first. I'm Leanna, I use she/her pronouns, I'm a co-director at Station North Tool Library. I'm also a certified fundraising executive and a fundraiser by trade, although my real heart is in sharing economies. So Darren, do you wanna hop in and say hi?

0:02:43.7 Darren Cotton: Sure. Just realizing I didn't plug this into the title under my photo, so apologies. But executive director at the Tool Library in Buffalo, he/him pronouns, started at the Tool Library back in 2011 as a grad student and just have recently transitioned into a paid full-time position at the organization. So development and fundraising is one of the many hats that I wear at the organization.

0:03:11.7 Leanna Frick: Oh, so I'm gonna go over some basics. This first three units are an overview about digital fundraising specifically, and then Darren is gonna tell us about all how he did it and how he was successful. And this is obviously not comprehensive, it's a crash course, and we're focusing on online fundraising, there's lots of other kinds of fundraising to do, obviously, including grants. But generally, some things to think about if you are considering launching an online campaign, there's lots of kinds of online campaign, but there's some commonalities. So before you do any fundraising, grant rating, in-person events, any of that stuff, you wanna set your goal, right? And that is not just how much money you want to raise, although that is important. But it's how much you really need to do your thing, and then maybe how much extra you could use to do a stretch goal. And then in a lot of specificity, what are you fundraising for?

0:04:08.8 Leanna Frick: So this might seem obvious until you start to write it down, but the more specificity you can get to earlier, the better. That's gonna be a big theme today. Think about when

you need the funding by. You might need a certain amount by this date, and then the rest by that date, might be rolling, you might need it all up front. And then this is a really important question as you start to think about communicating with your donors, is what will be different as a result of raising this money? So not just what are you gonna buy? What are you gonna pay for? But what will be the impact? What's the effect on your community, on people's lives? So really starting to think about that visionary version of the goal that you set. And that really comes into storytelling. So, so much of fundraising is effective storytelling, so if you can talk and write about what you are fundraising for in a way that is passionate and compelling and clear, you're gonna be successful as long as you're talking to the right people.

0:05:09.7 Leanna Frick: That's another option, oh, another topic. So when you think about answering this question, what will be different as a result of raising this money, you are articulating a clear vision, right? Not this would happen or this might, this will happen, when we raise this money, this will be the result. And you wanna illustrate your plans with text and images, there has been a little bit of research in the crowdfunding world about the fact that videos that are less polished, that are more DIY, actually perform better. So don't worry too much about making your graphics perfect, about getting high production value on your videos, iPhone photos and cell phone videos are fine. People really wanna know that there's a real person behind the campaign creating the stuff. So don't get too bogged down on it, but as they say, a picture does... Is worth a thousand words, so think about how you're gonna graphically illustrate your vision for the future.

0:06:09.3 Leanna Frick: As much as you can, it is more successful when you can focus on the positive. So there are two ways to purchase deficit-based and asset-based. When you talk about the deficit, you know, if we don't get this money, this terrible thing will happen is how a lot of political fundraising happens. You might have noticed, but outside of politics, it is a lot less successful. So if you can focus on the positives, when we raise this money, this amazing thing will happen, even if it is, we will be able to keep the lights on. If you frame it in the positive, people will be more inspired and they're more likely to stay with you in the long run if they're not responding to a crisis or an emergency. But you do wanna point to your past successes. So although your story should be about the future, you're also sort of making a pitch to investors in a way, they're investing in your vision. So you wanna prove to them that you know what you're talking about, that you will be able to use this money effectively.

0:07:05.7 Leanna Frick: You can say, this workshop that we have run was so successful, it was overbooked, there's so much demand, we wanna offer it five more times and we want you to fund it. So if you can build on your past towards that future, it's gonna be more successful as well. And then this is a key maxim in fundraising is that people don't give to organizations, people give to people. And whether that is you as the fundraiser that they believe in, a crowdfunding team member who they love and want to support, the membership of your library. If you can say, "With this money we're gonna be able to put 20 more rates in the hands of people who are maintaining our neighborhood, or we're gonna be able to offer this workshop to 10 more people." That is gonna be more effective than talking about something amorphous like, we're gonna to meet our organizational budget. That's great, people don't care, people care about people, and animals, but that's not relevant here usually.

0:08:05.8 Leanna Frick: Alright. So once you've figured out your story, you know why you're fundraising, you have your elevator pitch, you have a quick video or some images, you wanna think about the logistics, right? How are we actually gonna do this thing? We use an online platform

called Givebutter. I'm gonna show you some examples that are on two different platforms, Givebutter and Indiegogo. There are a million out there. It doesn't matter too much which one you pick, but it should be user-friendly, it should offer you a streamlined, sort of like pretty opportunity for people to give. And it should just be easy to use, that's the most important thing. Easy to use and cheap or free. Givebutter is free, I don't work for them, I just love them, it's a great product. There are a couple of different ways you can structure your online landing page, right? When you say, go to this link and give us money, that can be a crowdfunding page, where lots of different people are getting people to go to that page and give to their specific team.

0:09:04.0 Leanna Frick: I'll show you some examples of that. It can just be a regular donation form and this could be your form you use for everyday giving, it can be a specific form for a specific cause, which I'll show you an example of. It could be embedded in an event, it could be sort of just like a gateway to give a gift. And if you're having an event there is the opportunity to collect donations through buying tickets or RSVPing for an event. So think about all the different ways that you can direct people to a link to give. And the majority of gifts do happen online and even the people who give via check or stock transfer often are being prompted by a digital invitation these days. And this is a really good tip that Darren threw in there 'cause I forgot it. If you have people coming through your space who are gonna see you in-person you can still direct them to an online giving page and a QR code that people scan with their phones is a really easy way to do that.

0:10:06.4 Leanna Frick: While you might be running an online campaign, make sure that there are lots of different ways to give. PayPal and Venmo are integrated into a lot of giving platforms now. So Givebutter does accept PayPal and Venmo. You can set up a PayPal.me for your organization, just be aware of the fees they can add up if you have a bunch of different platforms. But make sure that people know where to send checks. So if somebody is giving a really large gift, you wanna save them that 3%, 5% credit card processing fee by giving them an opportunity to write you a check instead. It's free for everyone and often if someone's dropping off a check or mailing a check it's a really good opportunity for you to thank them in-person or to mail them back a card. So it's a little bit more personal when someone gives you cash or checks in-person. And then again if you are selling tickets or you're selling anything else and there's the opportunity to add an optional donation, just do it, just turn it on.

0:11:04.0 Leanna Frick: People will give you money. And then you want to plan ahead for recognition. So make sure that you're capturing how people wanna be recognized, if they want to be anonymous, think about who's gonna send those thank you emails, you're gonna do thank you cards. We talked about this in our earlier fundraising, so the stewardship part of this, so I would go back to Canvas if you want more details there. Alright if you are doing a set campaign like a capital campaign or crowdfunding campaign, which is to say you have a specific goal with a deadline and you're raising money to do a thing at a specific time. So that could be buying a building, it could be adding tools to your library, it could be we just do this at the end of the year every year we have a two-month annual campaign. There are some bonuses that can make it more fun and encourage people to give. So you probably have seen challenge grants or matching grants that's really common.

0:11:58.4 Leanna Frick: What I do is every sort of like larger gift throughout the year that I talk to someone about, I say, "Would you like to double this? Like, would you like to make a pledge now that at the end of the year, you will match donations so that encourages other people to give?" Or it could be, if we get 30 new donors, if we raise \$50,000, we'll get an additional 10,000. Lots of ways

to structure it and it can be pretty informal on the matching donor side. But people, typically tend to get excited about the idea that their gift could go further in inspiring other gifts. And matching challenges still work pretty well. So you are gonna raise more money if you... If people get the sense that it's gonna help you unlock other money, they're more likely to give. The other three on this list, I am a little bit less fond of because they are transactional. And so while somebody might make a gift to get something, in exchange they're less likely to make a gift again, because that was like a tit for tat.

0:13:02.0 Leanna Frick: But they can be very effective and some people will continue to give, so you can do raffles and prize drawings, we do a week every year during our annual campaign where we have handmade gifts made by our volunteers and every donor, every donation is an entry to win. So if you donate to multiple campaigns it's multiple entries and we draw a name every day and give them a gift. You can also do donors only flag like stickers that people can put on their car. This is the NPR tote bag technique. You can add their name to a public list or an item like a brick in a sidewalk, a rung in a ladder, something like that, people can name things by giving. And then you can also have competitions among your fundraisers. So you might say like the volunteer who raises the most money gets a gift card for a dinner that was donated by a local restaurant, something like that. Alright. And speaking of your fundraising team, whether or not you're crowdfunding, you need people to help you.

0:14:02.7 Leanna Frick: If it's just you asking for money, you can ask, however many people are in your network or you have emails for. But we're gonna get to this in a second. The more people are involved, the more people they know personally, the more people are gonna get a really compelling ask. So build your team early, provide them a comprehensive toolkit with templates, I'm gonna show you ours, you can just snag it, adapt it. And then you wanna train them on your strategy and the story. So you spend all that time talking about what will be different. Make sure they know that and make sure that they have their own version of that story that they can tell people. And then you wanna incentivize them and celebrate them. They're doing important work for you, this is a really critical way to volunteer. And your program volunteers are some of your best ambassadors because they're already giving their time, they know how important the organization is, they know it inside and out.

0:14:52.4 Leanna Frick: So if you can get them onboard as fundraising cheerleaders, you're already part of the way there. Alright, so I mentioned our fundraising toolkit, I'm just gonna give you a quick glimpse. This is still live on our website, it's not linked because we're not in fundraising season. Right now we're not in our annual campaign season, but the url is here and I can put all this stuff in the chat later. But feel free to grab any of this from our website that is helpful, you can see we have a downloadable toolkit so this is pdfs of all this stuff. How to create a fundraising page on our platform, it's pretty straightforward but giving people a guide really helps. Sample messaging, these is our past successes that I mentioned, so this is stats that people can draw on. So last year we had this many members, we loaned this many tools. And then we use Canva which is a free graphic design software to create templates that people could access, create their own version for social media.

0:15:55.5 Leanna Frick: And then we have some sample emails. We also and this is really kind of for our internal volunteers, we have about 80 volunteers so we have a pretty good team, but you can also recruit members, you can create recruit family members, anybody. I always like to give people a couple different ways to opt in that are very straightforward, right? So the top extra all in, we have

like two or three of these people every year who go all out, they make a fundraising page, they throw a dinner party, they like create their own raffles, like all this stuff. All the way down to the bottom, which is like, I don't wanna participate, but I'll help. Then that's how we get our gifts for our handmade raffle. So This I find create your own version of this for your community, but giving people concrete ways to opt in that are meaningful is really helpful. Alright. And you might be thinking like, how am I gonna get these people to ask for money? Asking for money is scary, we hate it, no one wants to talk about money.

0:16:55.3 Leanna Frick: It's not true. There's lots of us that do this all day, every day. And this is my best tip for training board members, volunteers, crowdfunders who are nervous about asking people for money. And that is just to remember the last time that you, especially if you were asked to, gave to someone or something that you care about. How did it feel? I've asked this question maybe a 100 times. The answer is never, I hated it, it was terrible, I regretted it. Everyone is always really happy to support something that they care about and not everyone you ask is gonna care about it, but the people you ask who do, are gonna feel great about supporting you. And that's the thing to remember is you're not taking anything from anyone you're giving them the opportunity to have this great feeling that you have had in the past. So that's an important framing I think and I offer that to you, it's a valuable question. So then how do you make the ask? Just a couple of tips here.

0:17:55.2 Leanna Frick: When you train fundraisers or when you go out to fundraise, the instinct is always like, oh, I'm gonna put it on Facebook, I'm gonna put it on Instagram, I'm gonna make a TikTok and be like here's the link, give. It doesn't work, it doesn't work. People don't... People see asks and ads and stuff like that on social media all the time. The first couple of years that we had Giving Tuesday, it was effective and it has not been since then. So working from the bottom, a social media post or even a bunch of social media posts encouraging people to give is almost never going to get you a significant number of gifts. A mass email, so like if you send out your annual news or your monthly newsletter, whatever, sending out a version of that that's about giving, it's gonna get you some, it's probably people who were planning on giving anyway, and it's a reminder that they need it. If you send a direct email, even if it's like a mass merged email that comes from your email address, you put it, you merge in their first name.

0:18:52.3 Leanna Frick: It feels a little bit more personal, but you don't really know them, it's gonna be a little bit more successful. If you send an email to the 20 people who are in your address book who love you, owe you a solid, love what you do, whatever and you say, "Hey gang, I'm doing this thing, I'm fundraising for new shovels. Please give us \$25, I would really appreciate it." That's gonna be almost the best thing you can do. Asking people in-person is still the most effective way to get a gift. And it also feels the most awkward, but it's exactly the same as emailing them because the worst they can say is no. Literally the worst that someone... Unless you really misjudge your relationship, the worst they can say is, I don't think so, not right now. You're not asking for yourself, that's the important thing to remember, you're asking for these other people. And so it's gonna be actually a lot less awkward in-person than you think. And again, specificity is the soul of fundraising. So be specific about the amount you're raising and why. So if you can say, of this \$30,000 goal, 10,000 is gonna go to new tools and repairs. Then people who really care about borrowing new tools is gonna be like, "cool, I'm gonna contribute to that, cool."

0:20:08.5 Leanna Frick: Even though it's the same thing. And you wanna talk about what the money will be spent on and how much each dollar amount will accomplish. So in a lot of places,

you'll say like a gift of \$25 covers a replacement battery, it's like 100, a gift of \$50 covers the materials for this workshop. Having people have a sense of exactly what their money will do helps them feel more confident about giving the gift and also makes it feel more meaningful to them. And then asking people for a specific amount of money, even if it's not the most that that person might give you, really, really helps. There's this psychological phenomenon that when you have to make a choice, especially a choice about something that has social impact, which is like, is this enough? Is this the right amount? How much do they expect me to give? 'Cause a psychological pain. And so if you just say, "Hey, Aunt M, if you have 50 bucks to contribute to this campaign, it will buy us materials for this workshop so that we can offer a scholarship."

0:21:10.8 Leanna Frick: Aunt M is gonna be so much more likely to give you 50 bucks because you asked for 50 bucks. It's just easier that way. The average online gift of a crowdfunding campaign used to be \$20 to \$25, it's going up. I would say if you have no idea what this person's capacity is to give, 40 or 50 is a pretty safe place to start. And you could give them three options. You could say 25 will do this, 50 will do this, 100 will do this. Alright, so that's everything you've ever needed to know about fundraising, I'm just kidding, it's just a little bit, but I did wanna pause before we turn it over. We're gonna go through a couple of examples and then turn it over to Darren. We're also gonna have time for Q&A at the end.

0:22:02.7 Darren Cotton: We haven't seen very many questions in the...

0:22:04.5 Leanna Frick: Great.

0:22:04.7 Darren Cotton: In the chat, but if anybody wants to just come off mute for a moment.

0:22:15.0 Speaker 4: Yeah, can you hear me?

0:22:16.8 Leanna Frick: Yeah.

0:22:17.0 Darren Cotton: Sure can.

0:22:18.0 Speaker 4: Yeah, hi. So I'm wondering, you mentioned, speak to your past successes. I'm wondering if you're just starting out, you don't actually really have any of those, what do you recommend in that situation?

0:22:26.5 Leanna Frick: That's okay. You don't necessarily have to. If you can really lean harder on the specificity of your vision, it will give people a similar sense of confidence, that like you have planned this out, you actually will be successful if you get this money. And I'll show you a campaign example from a North Tool Library that I think did that really well.

0:22:46.9 Speaker 4: Thanks.

0:22:48.0 Leanna Frick: Yeah. I also would say, pulling back the curtain and saying like, here are the people involved and why they're awesome and what they've done in the past, even if it wasn't for this library. If you feel really confident about the team that's getting your library things off the ground, talk about them, put up their pictures, help people understand why they're gonna be successful. Okay. Well, feel free to put more in the chat, we will have time at the end. Oh, Kate. Oh, yeah. Yes. Kate points out that you should make sure that you are in compliance with your state

rules and regulations about fundraising. Each state has different charitable registration rules. Most of them require you to tell the state, either the state attorney general or another office that you are fundraising. So definitely Google like how to fundraise in your state and make sure that you've done the appropriate filings.

0:23:43.3 Leanna Frick: It can take a while. So that's a really good thing to get started on actually first before you set any goals or anything like that. And make sure that you have an entity there to receive the money. So go back to session three in the Co-lab about operations and there's some different ways to structure your entity, but don't have it go into your bank account, you will have to pay income taxes on it. Alright. Let's look at some examples. So I've talked about a couple of different ways that you can set up online fundraising campaigns, this was our most recent event. So again, with Givebutter, you can give people the opportunity to donate along with a ticket. We have found that if there are like free drinks, or free events or like free activities that we advertise, people are much more likely to give us money because they're like, "Oh, well, it's, I'm gonna have like a free fun time, I might as well kick some money their way."

0:24:40.5 Leanna Frick: So you can see we had about 100 people attend this event, we raised about 430 bucks. This is a pretty straightforward way to raise some money and also to keep track of who came. So you don't have to have people sign in, but you do have their email addresses for later. This is like I mentioned, the last version of our annual crowdfunding campaign, we've been doing this for nine years. Every year we raise between 30 and \$40,000. It is getting harder and harder to do this kind of fundraising just with the changes in our economy growing wealth gap. So many demands on people's time and money and energy and attention, especially in an election year, but we were successful. I wanted to show you this specifically 'cause this is a great example of a crowdfunding campaign. So you can see we had 11 folks, I'm sort of the profile that got all the gifts directed to Station North Tool Library.

0:25:37.3 Leanna Frick: But everyone else here is a volunteer, a teacher, a board member, and they set their own goals, they reached out to their own communities and made a really, really big impact on our total. So you can see giving people updates is really valuable, interacting with people's comments really makes a big deal. And then we didn't add a stretch goal, but I'll show you an example of a really good stretch goal where if you get close to your goal, you can say, actually we wanna raise \$5,000 more and here's why. But we did do some infographics that we got good feedback on. So we were really specific about what we were fundraising for and part of it was that we had this grant. So of our goals for the next year, one of them was to buy all this new equipment and we had gotten this grant. So we included that like we're part of the way there. We got this 20,000 grant already. We also try to set goals that appeal to a broad range of people.

0:26:33.3 Leanna Frick: So folks who use our maker space, people who borrow tools, people who care about the environmental impact of what we do. So talking about the same vision from a couple different, in a couple of different flavors can be really valuable too. And then we always try to be pretty transparent about our budget, because donations actually make up a really small portion of our budget. People find that it is an approachable goal, right? It's not like we're throwing money into this giant hole, it's like if we meet our goal, we're actually solving, we're great, that's our budget for next year. So again, focusing on positivity also includes saying that like, yeah, our goal is realistic, it's gonna be impactful. This is the third example of how we use this. And this is for, this is just like a permanent donation page that we use a QR code for in our knife making shop, our maker space. And this is just for people to give a donation that is directly related to how much they use the space.

0:27:30.4 S21: So we found these are really useful. It's less of a campaign and more of an ongoing online donation option. And then to your point about a new campaign, we'll get you all of these links so you don't have to frantically open them all. But this was the Denver Tool Library startup campaign. So they had a flexible goal, this is Indiegogo, so this is a different platform. It's more for... It's more like Kickstarter, so it's for actual like investment, whereas ours is entirely for charitable donations. But they had a lot of media, so tons of videos, really compelling graphic design. And a really great tagline, if everyone contributes a little, we can do a lot. They had perks. So their platform was set up to offer perks, ours isn't, it's not something we generally do. And their mission is simple. So I thought the way that they wrote and put together this page was really compelling, it's concrete, right? Here's an example, here's their actual building.

0:28:35.0 Leanna Frick: They had really compelling perks that also were related to both like in-person thank you events and also using the service, right? So the way that you might kickstart something is like you buy it in advance, they had this as well. So they had like a lifetime membership that you could buy as part of their initial funding push. And then I really thought this was great, right? Like what if we don't meet our entire goal? This is something that often grant makers will wanna hear. What's your plan if you don't reach it? How are you still gonna be successful? And this is another way to inject some positivity and confidence into your campaign by getting out ahead and saying like, we raised 20 out of 30,000, we're still going to do all this great stuff, we're just gonna wait till next year to do the other 10,000 worth. This is a sort of the other end of the spectrum, this was the Toronto Tool Library's campaign to try to stay open, right?

0:29:27.7 Leanna Frick: So this is a difficult one to spin positively. And when an organization is in the point of needing to do this kind of campaign just to stay open, it is a very different approach to donors, it's more of an urgent crisis. So this is just an example of how they did things a little bit differently. They did meet their goal though and they included a stretch goal that you can look into, right? So they reached their basic goal, excellent and now they pivot to positivity to the future, right? We wanna do more than just survive, here's all the stuff we're gonna do when we raise more money. Alright. So that was a brief overview. And Kate included another online example in the chat. If you have your own examples of successful crowdfunding campaigns, put them in there, let's share them. Tom asks, "You have specific fundraising pages for other aspects of our consumables?" We do. So each of our workshops has a QR code for people to contribute to consumables in that space.

0:30:30.7 Leanna Frick: And we're trying to decide if we want to do that in our library, we're not in the position of like ensuring that we have consumables in the lending library for people to use. So we kind of don't wanna encourage it, but giving people the opportunity to give at any moment is definitely my philosophy. Alright. I'm gonna shush and hand it over to Darren and then at the end, we can take questions if you have them about any of the content.

0:31:02.0 Darren Cotton: Hey, y'all. So really excited to get to share our experience with crowdfunding. And this is largely part of our capital campaign. So crowdfunding is a portion of a much larger campaign for us to buy our building. So excited to kind of dive into that and crowdfunding has been a really important piece of that. So a lot of what I'm going to say is going to echo the basics that Leanna went over. So again, like setting the vision, what do you hope to accomplish as an organization? Owning our own building is something that we had dreamed about for many, many years. So when we adopted our first ever strategic plan, one of our longer term

goals identified in that plan was that we would own our own property. A number of different rationales for that, we've seen some pretty significant increases in rent across the city of Buffalo. So really just kind of ensuring the long term sustainability of the organization through property ownership.

0:32:10.0 Darren Cotton: But again, you can really lay the groundwork for a campaign, many, many years in advance and sort of slowly work towards that. The other thing was up until 2022 the Tool Library was totally volunteer run so we had no staff. So running things like crowdfunding campaigns but specifically something like a capital campaign without staff, that can be really difficult. So we wanted to make sure that we had the organizational capacity to actually manage something like that. So there's a lot of moving pieces that was mentioned previously and you really need staff to keep track of those things and to follow up and to steward donors. So in 2023 we applied to a local foundation, one that specifically focused on capacity building, so if you know anything about grant writing, which I'm excited to hear will be on the docket for next month. People like to fund things they don't necessarily like to fund people, but we were lucky that this particular funder focus specifically on capacity building.

0:33:22.8 Darren Cotton: So we had asked them for funding to bring our two part time staff up to full time in 2024. With the reasoning be that that would allow us a number of different things but one of which was to launch a capital campaign to buy our building. And that was really one of my main charges headed into 2024 to get this campaign off the ground. And again having numbers and making the case as to why are you launching this crowdfunding campaign, why are you trying to raise this money. And for us it was just that we had seen incredible growth since the pandemic, and so really trying to put those numbers into perspective to let potential funders and potential donors know like why the time is now, like why we urgently need their support and why it makes sense for them to support our campaign. So these are just a handful of stats that we used but I'm sure there are lots of other kind of metrics that you can use.

0:34:31.0 Darren Cotton: Again, I think, I was looking through Leanna's fundraising toolkit webpage, which we are absolutely going to steal for our use as well, really good stats and materials there but lots of ways for you to measure your impact, your success. So these were just a handful that we chose. Exactly, it's never stealing. The other case was that we... And cost savings. Well actually we can jump into questions at the end, but yeah I can share a little bit more about how we calculate that at the end. The other big case was that we were operating out of a tiny, tiny, tiny space and we had seen incredible growth just in membership and number of tools where it was like, we literally just didn't have the physical space to store the tools that we needed. And so one of the biggest cases was, hey, we're moving to a space that is essentially four times the size of our current space, imagine what that will allow us to do as an organization.

0:35:49.8 Darren Cotton: The other thing too, again, is creating a realistic timeline. So I was chatting before people entered the Zoom just about, capital campaigns can take years of planning. We had been thinking about this idea since 2021 but we really hadn't done a ton of like the pre-planning work around launching the campaign, as well as launching that public component. We just kind of lucked out that we found a building that really worked for us, and that the owner was willing to do a lease to potentially own at the end of that lease. So we had kind of that timeline already built in where we had 14 months to essentially start at zero and work our way up to \$500,000, which was the purchase price for the building. So, again, if I could go back and do it all over again, if I could have doubled that amount of time, would I? Absolutely. But again, speaking to

the sense of sometimes when you have that urgency, that sense of urgency that does help with encouraging people to support your campaign.

0:37:12.5 Darren Cotton: And then the other thing is for people who have experience in fundraising, a giving pyramid is something that you always wanna think about. So starting from your largest gifts and then working towards whether or not you have one or two \$50,000 gifts and then working your way to you're planning on \$250 gifts and under. So really thinking about where your community sort of falls in this pyramid, how many gifts you can sort of expect to be granted over the course of your fundraising campaign. If you've run past fundraisers, where have gifts sort of fallen. Leanna talked about what their average giving, what their average gift was during their annual campaign and so looking at that data if you have it. And then really thinking about do you... Are there lead gifts out there, again, back to the one campaign that Leanna pointed out where they had that \$20,000 grant already secured. And it is really helpful to have some of those larger gifts already secured before you go public.

0:38:31.0 Darren Cotton: And on that, again, sort of best practice states that you should hope to raise between 50 to 75% of your goal before going public. Again, this is for a major capital campaign. If you are doing a smaller scale fundraiser, this may not necessarily hold true. You may just be starting from square one, that's totally fine. But for these larger sorts of amounts, so whether you're buying a building, you wanna add staff, you have a new program that you wanna develop, they really encourage you to try to fundraise as much as you can before going public. They tend to call that the quiet phase. So again, if you have donors who have donated before, if you have relationships with sponsors or local foundations, this is an opportunity to approach them before you've gone public with what the ask is, you know, what you hope to accomplish, what the outcomes will be and ideally securing some of those ahead of time before you go public, before you launch that Givebutter campaign.

0:39:36.9 Darren Cotton: And again, I am not a fundraising professional, so we were doing a lot of this. We were kind of learning as we went and we were really lucky. So we had basically set, okay, we're gonna launch our campaign on April 24th, and then we were working our way backwards from that date to say, "Okay, what larger gifts can we secure prior to that date to include in that initial amount?" And so we had applied for this competitive grant through two local funders. And the final presentation was literally the night of April 23rd. So we got a phone call at 9:00 PM saying that we had won \$175,000, which brought us to over 50% of our goal. So again, do I recommend waiting until the day before you launch your campaign to try and hit that 50 to 75% goal? Not necessarily. That is just how it worked out in our case. And it's just really helpful to build that momentum that donors see, okay, this ideally is going to happen. There's more reason for me to support. They're just trying to fill what is essentially a much smaller gap.

0:40:51.1 Darren Cotton: And then again, going back to just the basics of having a platform in place, having donation protocols in place. So we also use Givebutter. We love it because it is free. People can choose to pay a platform fee, but there is no cost to the organization to use it. And we use Givebutter more or less as our CRM or customer relationship manager or management system. So this allows us to track every transaction that anyone has ever made through Givebutter. So you can see if someone has donated to an event, if they have gone to a workshop, if they have supported your annual campaign. So you get sort of that longitudinal information on how long has this person been a donor, how many times have they donated? And it allows you to keep all of their contact information all in one place.

0:41:48.5 Darren Cotton: So if you wanna do a direct mailing at the end of the year or you wanna send out an email blast, you can easily just export all that data right from Givebutter. And that allows you to kind of have all of that in one place. And again, these are all things that before we launched the campaign, we were still kind of working on figuring those things out. So the more you can front load that pre-planning and just making sure that you have those processes in place, the better. So it's myself. And then we have a development committee chair who also kind of helps steward our Givebutter. It is a lot of work, again, if you get offline donations. So if we get checks, we're entering those as manual transactions, we're making sure that everyone is being acknowledged. So there is a lot of data entry management to think about when you are launching an online campaign like this.

0:42:51.5 Darren Cotton: And also something that Leanna pointed out, a really fantastic way to engage your board and or volunteers. So, especially for something like a capital campaign, you absolutely need 100% buy-in from your board. We've been super lucky that literally every single one of our board members has launched a peer to peer fundraising campaign as part of our capital campaign. So you'll see here individuals, how many supporters, how much they've been able to raise, and it's a really great way to expand your potential network of donors. Your board members are going to know a totally different subset people than you. So again, it's super easy. Leanna included in their fundraising toolkit, how people can set up that fundraising page. We did a quick in-person demo with our board to show them how to set it up, but it is literally three or four buttons. They fill out some information and then they're able to share this both in email and then as well as online. So that's been super successful for us.

0:44:00.9 Darren Cotton: Something that we did too before we launched our online campaign is did something called network mapping. So this is just kind of an example on your left different kind of pots of people or individuals or organizations. So actually having hard copies of this to print out and give to your board and fill out. Again, we have a working board, so we don't have individuals... We don't have a ton of board members who know people who can just write a \$1000, \$5,000 checks. And I think myself included, have a tendency to be like, well, I don't really know anyone who I can fundraise from, or I don't know anyone who can give. And again, it doesn't really matter if it's \$5, \$50 or \$500. We all have networks that we can tap into. And we found that just doing this in-person tactile exercise was actually super beneficial for people to really think about who are their connections, who are their network.

0:45:02.5 Darren Cotton: And then we were able to take that data back to our development committee and really think about, okay, who is going to make those individual asks, you know, to a potential sponsor or media outlet or even other nonprofit organizations. So highly recommend looking into network mapping. Again, this was just a free example that we found online. I'm sure there are tons of other ones out there. But we did this at a board meeting, had people fill that out, they turned them in and then we kind of compiled that data afterwards. Engaging your members. So for those of you that have a super active membership base, letting people know that you're running a crowdfunding campaign. So we have signage in the shop, QR codes that people can scan. But one of our board members also took the lead on actually running a video series as part of that capital campaign online fundraiser.

0:46:01.3 Darren Cotton: So we just asked people to share why they love the tool library, and then just share their name and say that I am the tool library. So really trying to capture like, who are tool

library users? Why do they use the organization? Why is this important? And ideally, why should donors care about this campaign that we're putting on? Again, this was like a ton of work, but we had a board member who was super down to do it. He set up a camera in the shop for five hours on one day and was able to capture, I think, between 15 and 20 stories from individual members. And again, these were just people coming in either checking tools in or checking tools out. And we got a lot of really fantastic content. So much so that we're thinking of just incorporating this into something we do on an annual basis. Other important thing is keeping your donors and supporters engaged. So providing them updates as you get gifts letting them know that you're getting closer to your goal. And again, it doesn't have to be a huge gift. Again, just celebrating small wins, posting on social media, posting on your Givebutter or whatever platform you choose to use. And then being sure to mention all the ways that people can support, again, beyond just actually giving tangible funds different ways that they can engage in that campaign.

0:47:28.6 Darren Cotton: And something that Leanna mentioned as well is thinking about, are there going to be perks for donations? Again, because we were raising a much larger amount of money, we put sort of the threshold at a much higher rate. So these tend to be less individual gifts and more kind of corporate philanthropic gifts. But also just something to keep in mind, if you do want to recognize gifts in different ways, what that might look like and being able to share that with supporters. And then again, also wanting to make sure that the donation that an individual gives is not the last donation that they give to your organization. So stewardship a huge part of that. We put together postcards and thank you cards specifically geared towards the building, geared towards the capital campaign. So we run a list of all of the donors from Givebutter, we export that to a spreadsheet, and then we basically divide and conquer between staff and board, so that everyone, regardless of how much money they get, gets an individualized thank you from us.

0:48:37.6 Darren Cotton: And just some challenges, lessons learned. So we got a ton of really great positive publicity when we launched our campaign. So much so that we were kind of inundated both by new members and by tool donations. And we just weren't prepared for that influx of either. So again, we saw super long wait lists. We just had people lined up out the door, tons of donations that were filling the basement, and so we just weren't really prepared for that. So thinking about if you are launching a major campaign like this, what the impact on your day-to-day operations might be, and planning ahead for that. Something that I wish we had done a little bit more of, but that right now we are just playing catch up with. And then this isn't necessarily so much on the crowdfunding side of things, but we have found it that some funders don't see the difference between tool libraries and tool rentals. So being ready and willing to educate people on what the differences are and kind of the importance of the sharing economy and tool libraries as a piece of that.

0:49:54.7 Darren Cotton: Okay. I think we had some really fantastic questions in the chat. So Andreas asked, what does cost savings mean? So for us, we have a replacement cost that we put into my turn for every tool, and then we go through at the end of the year and calculate out individual unique loans of tools by members and then we'll tally that up with that replacement cost. So that gives us an approximate amount of money that people have saved by borrowing rather than buying. So we do try to remove things like renewals, things like the same member taking the same tool out multiple times. So it gives us kind of an approximation of, okay, if everyone had gone out and bought what they borrowed from us, what would that amount be? And we find that to be a really powerful metric for us.

0:50:56.5 Leanna Frick: Us too. And in fact, we didn't have that information for the first 12 years, but we just got an intern to catalog everything. So I'm really excited to use that in our fundraising campaign this fall. And I'm definitely gonna borrow from how you did it too. Kami asked, what about very early stage groups that aren't 501c3's yet? So again, I think session three on operations is a good place to start. But fiscal sponsorship, yes, is a really good option for a group that's just starting out. And that's when you approach a larger nonprofit. There are groups that exclusively do fiscal sponsorships. Many times a community foundation or a funders network will also fiscally sponsor you, that is willing to sort of like be your umbrella organization. So you would become a program of that nonprofit.

0:51:48.5 Leanna Frick: You would fundraise under their 501c3 designation, they would handle your money for you, provide a lot of other business services generally. There's more about fiscal sponsorship in unit three, but I would highly, highly, highly recommend finding some entity to collect money under because unless it is all cash, that is gonna get taxed. And I have known people who have had a GoFundMe or whatever go into their bank account and then they get attending [0:52:17.3] from GoFundMe for \$30,000 of income. So yes, definitely try to find a nonprofit to hold your money.

0:52:27.6 Darren Cotton: And I will mention we were under another nonprofit from 2011 to 2017, and it was only until we basically, our budget underneath them was larger than their organizational budget that they were like, "Okay, I think it's time for you to leave the nest."

0:52:46.5 Leanna Frick: Yeah, same. We were fiscally sponsored for 10 whole years. And it was fine until we realized that the percentage that they were taking was just way more money than what we were getting in return. Any other questions? Did we time it perfectly? We have agreement. Every fiscal sponsor is gonna have their own contract. If a fiscal sponsor does not offer you a legal contract, they're not a good fiscal sponsor. I can put our fiscal sponsorship agreement in, and I don't know if we can still add it back to that operations module, but it's generally has to do with what services they're providing in terms of like financial statements, the frequency of those statements, that's very important. And then how much of your revenue they're taking in exchange. There's a question.

0:54:00.8 Darren Cotton: Difference from a tool rental. I think really just the fact that tool libraries aren't transactional by nature. And so it is more about a community based organization focused on providing everyone access regardless of background, ability to pay. So tool rental is transactional. If you can't afford to rent the tool, then you don't have access to it. Whereas tool libraries, by nature are about accessibility. I think it's also at a larger level just about power and equity and who has power and who is able to do things. And so again, tool libraries are really about being an equalizer where everyone has access to the same things. And then again, I think beyond just the tool borrowing, if you do have programs that you offer, so workshops, repair cafes, those sorts of things, what are you providing to the community beyond just, you know, people being able to borrow tools.

0:55:07.9 Darren Cotton: And then I think also being able to capture things that your members have said. So on many, many occasions we have people who come in who are like, "I literally wouldn't have been able to do this project without the tool library." So just being able to share sort of those quotes, those case studies with funders, I think can be really helpful. But it also just goes to show some funders have never had to worry about going to Home Depot and dropping \$500

because their basement flooded, or it just, I think it reflects a mentality of people with money who have never had to go without. So doing that as diplomatically and kindly as possible.

0:56:01.9 Tom Llewellyn: One of the things that stuck out to me early on was that the idea that people give to people, not to organizations. And I think that's, that bridges with, people give to people, not to organizations, but they also give towards an outcome. So it's that, as you also laid out. So it's that, that kind of bridging of those things together, which reinforces the ability to raise money on things that don't yet exist. If you're able to make a compelling need as somebody, again, this is mentioned earlier, but if you basically are able to lay out like, "Hey, there is this need. It's a need that's not being met. This is a proven way to meet it. And for X, Y, and Z reasons, myself and our team are the right people to be able to do this. And to be able to meet that need with your support and with the support of the community as a whole."

0:57:05.3 Tom Llewellyn: And so bridging, basically bringing people in for their role as a funder, as a contributor, to be both supporting you to do the work, but for that outcome to be achieved. And if you're able to bridge all those together in a two minute pitch or less, you're in a good position when you get a chance to talk to somebody. And then you have a conversation about what the nuances of doing it, what it will actually take and how other groups have been able to pull it off in the past, which this series hopefully should help you out, help you make the case. Now that we've got all these great case studies. So we are right here at the the hour. Wanna thank everybody for joining us and especially for Leanna and Darren for coming and sharing their experience with us. Also wanna thank everybody who has been contributing questions and suggestions in the chat. We are saving this chat. So if there's links that you missed, all of all, everything in the chat is going to end up getting posted onto Canvas. And Candace, who's had to hop out a little bit earlier today will be sending out a message to everybody who registered for this session. Once these resources are up there to be able to access again and to share with others in your communities and groups. And also if you just scroll back up the chat, you'll see that we posted the flyer for the next session, which will be on Tuesday, October 8th. Just had to remember the date for that one.

0:58:43.7 Tom Llewellyn: Same time, same place, Amanda Miller and another presenter yet to be confirmed will be presenting that session. And feel free to please invite others. If there's other people in your community that you're working on that you're trying to get something going or that are working on your existing libraries of things, and you wanna bring other people to help support the fundraising, it's a great way to enroll them into getting more involved in that by showing up to sessions like these. So thank you all for joining and look forward to seeing you again. And as I mentioned, we'll keep the room open for another 10 minutes or so. In case anyone wants to stick around and chat about fundraising or other things related to LLCs.

0:59:32.6 Leanna Frick: Anyone happens to be...

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