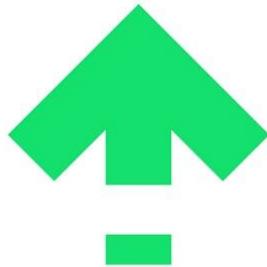


FUNDED!

9 Savvy Strategies Successful
Comic Creators are Using to
Crowdfund Their Projects on
KICKSTARTER



TYLER JAMES

comixlaunch.com

Audio Version



Would you prefer to listen to this strategy guide instead?

Just click this link to download an MP3 version of this guide to listen to on your commute, while doing household chores, or while you're at the art table.

It's definitely worth a listen.

[LISTEN NOW](#)

Introduction: The Best Time to Launch Is Now!

“Have I missed the boat on Kickstarter?”

“Is it too late for me to get in on the crowdfunding game?”

“Is the backer bubble about to burst?”

Every month, I hear creators worry that maybe they’ve missed their chance to make the most of the #1 crowdfunding platform for creators in the world: **Kickstarter**.

But the reality couldn’t be farther from the truth.

Last year, a record 1,457 comic projects were funded on Kickstarter, a 14% increase from the previous year.

Furthermore, comic book projects are succeeding at a higher rate than ever before, and at a significantly higher rate than the overall Kickstarter average.

In fact, since the first episode of ComixLaunch aired back in 2015, the success rate for comic projects on Kickstarter has increased by over 7%!

Now, 7% might not seem like a lot, but believe me... it means the world to the hundred plus more creators whose projects are successfully funding each year.

Kickstarter is now and will continue to be the #1 platform in the world for independent creators looking to fund and launch comics, graphic novels, and other creative projects.

Therefore, MASTERING Kickstarter is a critical skill for 21st-century creators like us.

As a user, teacher, and student of the Kickstarter platform, I’m always keeping my eyes peeled for innovative crowdfunding strategies that are working now for creators at all levels.

This short but actionable guide includes 9 proven strategies that have been implemented by successful comic creators over the past year. But rather than only highlight the biggest launches from creators with massive followings, I’ve instead

chosen to share strategies used by creators at all levels, from Kickstarter newbies early on their creative journeys to crowdfunding veterans who continue to innovate.

For each strategy, what I'll deliver is a brief description of how it works and an example of how a creator implemented that strategy successfully in a recently funded campaign.

I gave each strategy a difficulty level rating in terms of how much work it would take to implement (beginner, intermediate, and advanced) and also provided some **ComixLauncher** action steps in case you want to put that strategy into practice for your next launch.

Where it made sense, I included some bonus resources for tools you may want to use to help you implement those strategies. In some cases, the links provided are affiliate links, meaning ComixLaunch will get a small commission should you choose to purchase those resources. However, I only recommend products that I stand by and use myself in my own creative business, so if it's in this guide, you can trust it's worth your investment.

I've also included a link to an episode of the [ComixLaunch podcast](#) that relates to each strategy if you'd like to go deeper on that subject.

I hope you enjoy this guide and that you'll put some of these exciting new strategies into action for your upcoming crowdfunding projects.

As always thanks for letting me walk with you on your next successful **ComixLaunch!**

Who the Heck Am I and Why Should You Listen to Me?



In case we haven't met, my name is Tyler James!

I'm a writer, artist, award-winning game designer, publisher and educator.

I'm a co-founder of the internationally distributed comic book & graphic novel company [ComixTribe](#) & the horror-themed children's book & toy brand [C is for Cthulhu](#).

I'm also the host of [ComixLaunch](#), the #1 rated crowdfunding podcast for writers, artists, and self-publishers.

Here's What I've Done Over the Past Six Years...

16	\$450,000+	\$1M+
SUCCESSFULLY FUNDED KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGNS	IN FUNDING RAISED ON KICKSTARTER	IN COMIXTRIBE PUBLISHING SALES
1000+	200+	\$600,000+
CREATORS HAVE ATTENDED MY FREE KICKSTARTER WORKSHOPS	CREATORS HAVE ENROLLED IN MY COMIXLAUNCH PRO COURSES & COMMUNITIES	TOTAL FUNDING COMIXLAUNCH PRO CREATORS HAVE RAISED ON KICKSTARTER

I save writers, artists, comic creators and publishers from disappointing Kickstarter launches.

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Strategy #1: The Quickstarter

Campaign Example: *The Chimp with the Brown Hat #1* by Nathaniel Gold

Difficulty Level: Beginner

The Quickstarter Strategy Explained

A successful Kickstarter campaign can dramatically change the trajectory of your creative career. However, most first time creators find the prospect of running a Kickstarter campaign daunting, to say the least. Many who start working toward a launch give up because it just seems like an all-encompassing endeavor.

But it doesn't have to be, and over the past couple of years, Kickstarter has made a concerted effort to get creators to think a little bit differently about what "counts" as a project. And with one initiative after another, Kickstarter has encouraged creators to think smaller... because they know the magic that happens when you finally get off the sidelines and LAUNCH!

One of the latest initiatives that Kickstarter has pushed is the Quickstarter initiative. The big idea behind "Quickstarter"-style projects is that they aren't big at all. In fact, the "rules" of what counts as a Quickstarter project put a whole bunch of constraints on creators that prevent them from sprawling their Kickstarter campaign.

Here are the Quickstarter project rules as defined by its creator, Oscar Lhermitte:

Rules for Launching a Quickstarter Campaign:

- 1. The development process—from sketching an idea to launching it on Kickstarter—should take no more than three months.*
- 2. Keep the campaign under 20 days.*

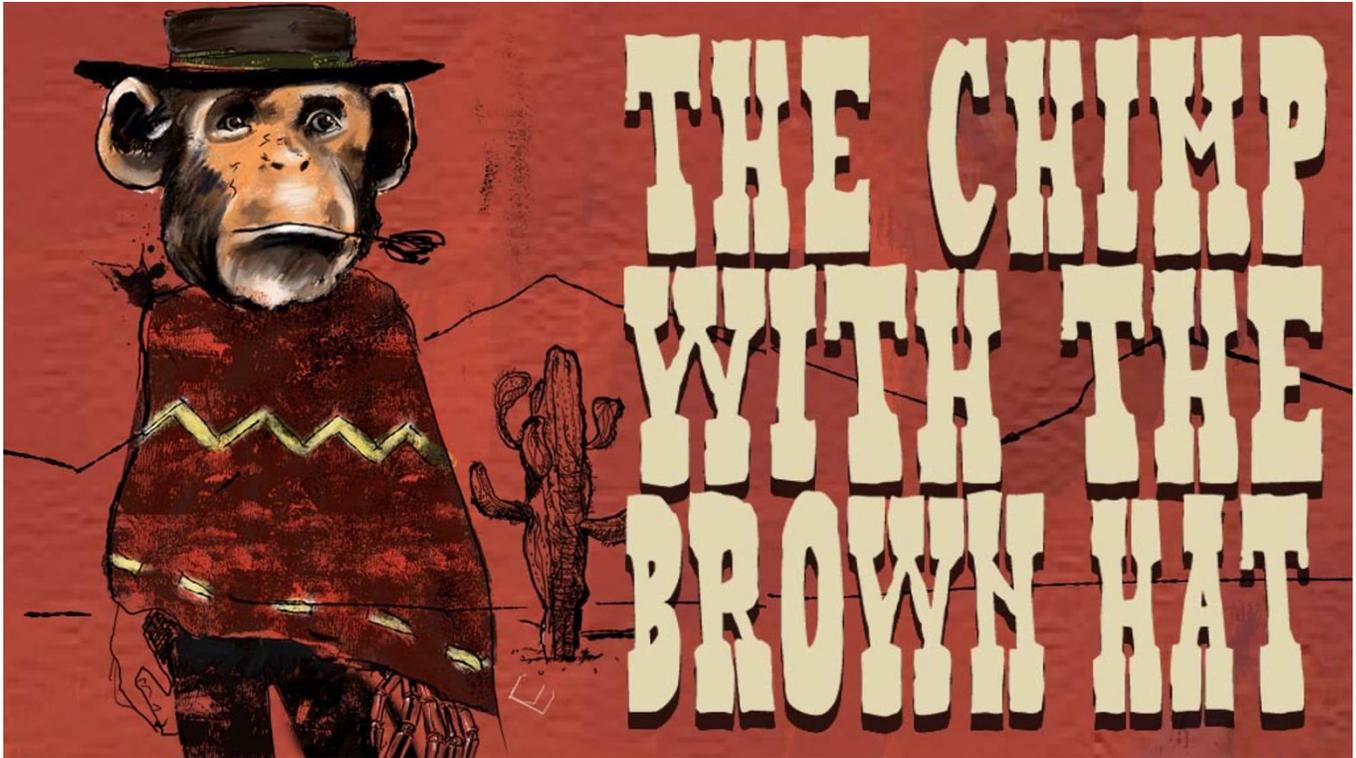
3. *The funding goal should be below \$1,000 (or thereabouts in your local currency).*
4. *The main reward should be under \$50.*
5. *The video should be shot over one day with whatever camera you have (smartphone highly recommended).*
6. *Don't do any PR and media outreach (unless you get contacted).*
7. *Don't run any paid ads on social media.*
8. *No stretch goals.*
9. *Include "Quickstarter" in your campaign name.*

As you can see, by following these rules, your campaign should be easier to create and shorter to run.

Quickstarter style projects are great for a first launch, a relaunch for a special artist edition or variant, a set of enamel pins of your most popular characters or maybe a new limited edition print series.

PRO-TIP: After you launch, be sure to send a message to Kickstarter telling them you've launched a "Quickstarter" style project and would like to be listed on the [Quickstarter Projects Page](#) for some additional exposure.

Strategy #1: The Quickstarter in Action



Campaign: [Quickstarter- Issue #1 of The Chimp With The Brown Hat](#)

Creator: Nathaniel Gold

Raised: \$977 **Backers:** 54 **Average Pledge/Backer:** \$18.09

Nathaniel Gold was sitting at the day job listening to an episode of the ComixLaunch Podcast when he first heard about the Quickstarter initiative, and he was hit with a jolt of inspiration.

After spinning his wheels and sitting on the sidelines, perpetually putting off launching on Kickstarter because the campaign he thought he needed to run kept getting bigger and bigger, Nathaniel finally let go and got to work on something smaller.

A few months later and he had his first successful campaign under his belt.

NOTE: Nathaniel returned to Kickstarter less than two months later to do a more traditional-style Kickstarter launch to fund the graphic novel [THE CHIMP WITH THE BROWN HAT Vol. 1](#). This campaign raised another \$2,716 in funding for the series.

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Take Action on the Quickstarter Strategy

Step 1: Brainstorm a list of small projects that you could launch for \$500 to \$1,000.

Step 2: Pick two and then survey your friends, family and social media followers to discover which idea has the most appeal to the people already in your world.

Step 3: Set a launch date no further than 3 months away and then get to work planning your Quickstarter-style launch!

Bonus Resource: [The Quickstarter Manifesto by creator Oscar Lhermitte \(The Kickstarter Blog\)](#)



ComixLaunch Podcast Connection: [Listen to the episode that inspired Nathaniel to get off the sidelines and launch a Quickstarter of his own on Kickstarter. And if you're stumped for ideas on a Quickstarter launch for your creative business, Tyler gives you three great ones to steal. \(ComixLaunch.com/session155\)](#)

Strategy #2: Packaging as a Feature & Benefit

Campaign Example: *Sunmaker #1 & 2 by Ryan Kroboth & Liam Hayes*

Difficulty Level: Beginner

The Packaging as a Feature & Benefit Strategy Explained

Most backers have had the experience of following an awesome campaign with interest, backing with enthusiasm, keeping up with every update as the product is manufactured, and then excitedly checking their mailboxes every day after their reward has shipped.

Unfortunately, some backers find their Kickstarter rewards savagely stuffed into their mailbox by a masochistic mail carrier. Often, the shoddy packaging chosen by the project creator did little to protect the collectibles inside. As a result, the very last impression the creator and the campaign makes on them is a negative one.

Far too many Kickstarter creators treat their packaging as an afterthought... or even worse, didn't think of it at all and then find themselves scrambling to find the cheapest option out there, whether it protects their merchandise in transit or not. This is shortsighted.

One of the reasons Apple can charge more than any other company for its products and still have people lining up on release day is that they take their packaging and the unboxing experience seriously.

But it turns out that you don't have to wait until you ship your rewards to backers to take advantage of providing a premium packing experience. In fact, savvy creators are finding that explicitly sharing how they will pack and ship pledges on their Kickstarter page will make potential backers trust their packages will arrive in great shape and thus increase the odds that they'll back.

Strategy #2: Packaging as a Feature & Benefit in Action



Campaign: [Sunmaker #1 & 2: The Frozen Apocalyptic Fantasy Continues](#)

Creators: Ryan Kroboth & Liam Hayes

Raised: \$3,862 **Backers:** 146 **Average Pledge/Backer:** \$26.45

When designing his beautiful Kickstarter page, artist Ryan Kroboth took time to specifically call out exactly what backers could expect from him regarding packing and shipping his books.

Here's what Ryan wrote on his page:

HOW WILL YOUR ORDER
BE PACKAGED?

"I love comics. The larger majority of books I get are from creators themselves, so I appreciate when someone takes that little something extra to be sure that my package gets there in excellent shape."

Here is a look at the packaging mock-ups you can expect to receive your reward in.



For tiers that include the physical book, sketch-in, and aluminum prints this is what your shipment will look like. All comics are bagged and boarded, then packed inside a rigid cardboard envelope.

Original art mock-up packaging looks like this:



The comic is still protected inside of a bag with a board. Aluminum prints have their own bag to protect them from being scratched. The original art will be placed inside a rigid plastic protector, then inserted into a priority mail box to make the package even more rigid. Finally, that box will be placed into a large bubble mailer to protect your reward even further.

But the real secret?

Ninjas.



That's right. Your own personal package protector. These guys will keep your shipment safe, as no one wants to mess with a ninja.

No one."

Clearly, anyone thinking about backing this project would have zero concerns that Ryan isn't prepared to ship his books.

(And c'mon! Protected in transit by ninjas! How cool is that?!)

But Ryan actually took things to the next level with this line, showing just how seriously he takes his commitment to deliver books in immaculate condition:

"While I've done my best to attempt to select shipping materials that will best keep your product safe, I'm aware that things do happen."

If for any reason you receive a package at fulfillment with a book that doesn't meet your quality standards I will replace it at absolutely no cost to you.

I know there are collectors out there, and I want your book to make it to you in excellent condition."

I hope you see just how powerful this strategy that Ryan employed is for inspiring trust in your potential backers and you'll consider doing something similar for your next launch.

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Take Action on the Packaging as a Feature & Benefit Strategy

Step 1: For your main pledge levels, figure out exactly how you will pack and ship it, down to every detail. Make a list of all the items you'll need.

Step 2: Now, actually go and package up a similar sized item in that exact packaging configuration and take a few pictures of it.

Step 3: Include those pics in a “how your pledges will be shipped” section of your Kickstarter page.

Bonus Resource: Want to know the absolute best way to ship single issue comics or trades and ensure they arrive in pristine condition?

[Use Gemini Comic Supply Comic Flash Mailers!](#)



WE PROTECT YOUR
BOOKS IN TRANSIT
WITH DURABLE
COMIC FLASH
MAILERS FROM



[And as a ComixLaunch listener, you can get 10% off every order by using coupon code **“COMIXLAUNCH”** at checkout.](#)

(Note: I have an even bigger discount for ComixLaunch Pro members!)

Don't Launch Your Kickstarter Alone:
An Interview with Rancidville's
John Edingfield II and Sunmaker's
Ryan Kroboth



COMIXLAUNCH.COM/SESSION114

ComixLaunch Podcast Connection: [Shipping ninjas is just one of many brilliant ideas from the mind of Ryan Kroboth. Get to know him better by listening to this session all about why you should never launch alone. \(ComixLaunch.com/session114\)](https://www.comixlaunch.com/session114)

Strategy #3: The Instant Add-On

Campaign Example: *C is for Cthulhu Blanket Stuffed Pillow* by Jason Ciaramella, Greg Murphy & Tyler James

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

The Instant Add-On Strategy Explained

Let's talk about the problem with Kickstarter add-ons. If you've launched a project before, you know that Kickstarter does not natively support add-on purchases. On Kickstarter, every backer can have just one pledge level. If a backer wants to add something to that pledge (an extra book, a toy, some stickers, etc.) that process is clunky and looks a little something like this:

1. The backer needs to log into Kickstarter, find out how much to add to his/her pledge for the add-on, and manually add that amount of money to his pledge.
2. The backer might comment or message the creator about adding extra funds and the creator has to find a way to record that somewhere.
3. After the campaign is over (sometimes months later) the backer may need to remember what the add-on funds were pledged for when filling out the survey.
4. The creator needs to create his or her own add-on tracking and notification system and refer to that during fulfillment, or risk messing up orders.

Like I said, clunky. Supporting add-ons is such a hassle that separate businesses such as BackerKit or Crowdox exist to make managing crowdfunding add-ons at the survey level much easier for both creators and backers. But those services do

cost money to use and add some complexity to Kickstarter campaigns for you and your backers.

While the cost of these services is almost always worth it with a campaign of 200 backers or more... the biggest cost of add-ons is often not found on any balance sheet... it's the time cost of complexity.

My biggest Kickstarter launch ever had 21 unique pledge levels. (That's a lot.) However, because we offered add-ons through Crowdox after the campaign, when all was said and done, our campaign had 87 different product configurations. That number of configurations meant fulfillment (even by a professional fulfillment center) took months longer than anticipated.

And so, for the next launch that I ran with Greg Murphy & Jason Ciaramella for our C is for Cthulhu brand, I wanted to do something a lot simpler when it came to add-ons. (To be honest, the fact that my wife and I had brought home my newborn son Cullen just 3 days before the launch meant my #1 goal was not maximizing funding but minimizing complexity.)

One choice was to simply not offer add-ons at all. I could have firmly stated that we were offering pledge levels only for this campaign, without any option to add or customize beyond what was available on Kickstarter

However, we had a lot of backers commenting about add-ons. NOT allowing people to buy product you have is bad customer service.

So, instead, I decided that we WOULD offer a limited number of add-ons, but we would do it in a different way... following different rules.

THE INSTANT ADD-ON STRATEGY RULES

- 1) Only offer add-ons for products already in stock, ready to be fulfilled now.
- 2) Add-on sales take place on a dedicated add-on sales page OFF of Kickstarter where add-ons can be purchased by backers as a separate transaction.
- 3) Add-ons are shipped to backers immediately, and separate from the Kickstarter rewards fulfillment.
- 4) Offer backers a discount (Free Shipping or 25% off) on the add-on purchases made during the campaign only.

With these rules in place, add-ons could be handled completely separate from the Kickstarter pledges, so that Kickstarter fulfillment would stay simple and could be executed by using the Kickstarter survey only.

As it turned out, there were a lot of pros to this strategy versus the traditional Kickstarter add-on strategies most creators use, such as:

- Backers get their add-ons right away.
- You collect the funds for add-ons right away, instead of 14 days after the KS ends.
- You cut Kickstarter and Backerkit/Crowdbox out of the add-on sales process (there's an extra 5%+ in fees not paid on add-ons through the channel.)
- Adds no complexity to the Kickstarter fulfillment process, which means fulfillment will be limited to reward groups, and can be batched and executed more quickly.

Of course, the strategy is not without a few cons, including:

- Add-on funding isn't counted towards your Kickstarter funding total, which could make hitting your funding or stretch goals more difficult. (Not a big deal if you're already funded or aren't doing stretch goals.)
- Requires setting up a secondary page to host the add-ons and run your checkout experience. (Not a big deal if you already have an online shop you can use for this purpose.)
- It's a not commonly used Kickstarter strategy, so takes some education and explanation to get backer buy-in.
- Requires you already have the add-on product in stock.
- There's always the chance that some backers will use the coupon and then bail from the Kickstarter. (But there's always the chance they bail from the KS regardless, and this way ensures that they buy at least something from you.)
- You will probably do less overall add-on sales than you would do if you were selling in one transaction and using a survey management tool.

Clearly, the instant add-on strategy isn't for every creator or every campaign. But for the right project, it makes a lot of sense!

Strategy #3: The Instant Add-On in Action



Campaign: [C is for Cthulhu Blanket-Stuffed Pillow & Books \[Limited!\]](#)

Creator: Jason Ciaramella & Greg Murphy

Raised: \$33,944 **Backers:** 446 **Average Pledge/Backer:** \$76.10

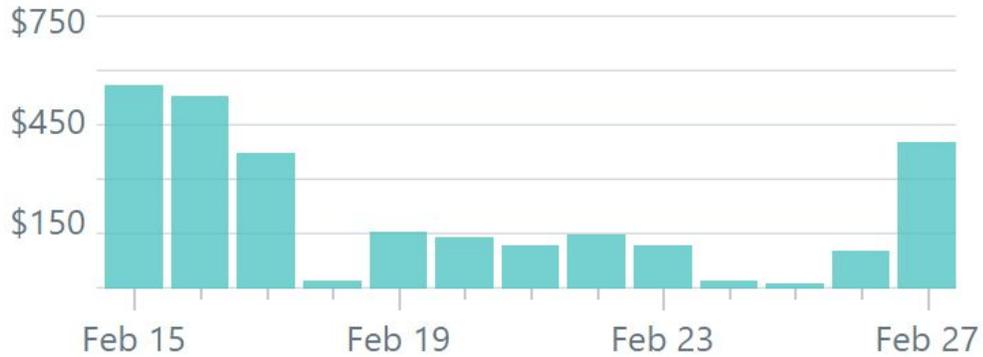
We rolled out the instant add-on strategy during the two-week launch and it added over \$2,600 in funding taking place at [CisforCthulhu.com](#), on top of the \$33,944 raised on Kickstarter.

TOTAL SALES

Feb 15–27

\$2,686.98

47 orders



And unlike the Kickstarter funds, which were held for 14 days until the campaign was over, those funds were in the C is for Cthulhu coffers almost immediately, and without KS transaction fees, and without paying for an extra crowdfunding service like BackerKit and Crowdox.

I don't know about you, but in my book, that doesn't stink!

(And as someone who has recently become acquainted with changing dirty diapers... I now know the true meaning of stink!)

ComixLauncher

Take Action on the Instant Add-On Strategy

Step 1: Make a list of add-on products that you already have in stock or can produce in a week or less that you can offer as “Instant Add-Ons.”

Step 2: Create an Add-On Sales Page. I chose to create my Add-On Sales Page as a new COLLECTION inside my existing C is for Cthulhu shop, powered by Shopify.

[Here's the dedicated Add-On Sales Page we used.](#)

Honestly, I can't tell you how much I love Shopify as a shop hosting platform... it's worth every penny and then some, as this page was super easy to create from existing listings. [If you're looking for a new or better shopping option, here's the ComixLaunch free trial link.](#)

Step 3: Create the discount for backers inside your shopping platform, and make a graphic that clearly shows it off.



Step 4: Share the add-on offer details in a private Kickstarter update for your backers. [Click here to view the Instant Add On Update that we sent.](#)

Bonus Resource: Need to set-up a high-converting, mobile friendly, affordable online store without any of the tech headaches to utilize this strategy?

My top online store recommendation is Shopify.



[Click here for a special 14-day free trial offer.](#)

With Shopify...

- You don't need design skills. Shopify has dozens of beautiful, fully-customizable, mobile-friendly templates to get a perfectly branded look and an online shop you'll be proud of.
- You don't coding skills. With Shopify, setting up your store is simple, and you'll be selling in no time at all, even if technology hates you.
- And you don't even need a Credit Card to get started. With this ComixLaunch offer, you can try Shopify free for 14 days. No risk, and no credit card required.

What you get with Shopify is a...

- Fully customizable website, online store, and blog... your store can be your website!
- Unlimited products!
- Smooth integration to sell on channels like Facebook, Amazon and Pinterest.
- 24-7 Customer support!

More than 500,000 creative businesses are powered by Shopify, including both Shop.ComixTribe.com and CisforCthulhu.com store which I own... and couldn't be happier with it.

Stop messing around with subpar online shop solutions and try Shopify.

To get a ComixLaunch 14-day free trial of Shopify, go to ComixLaunch.com/shopify

5 Powerful ComixLaunch Lessons for the New Year



COMIXLAUNCH.COM/SESSION181

ComixLaunch Podcast Connection: [Everytime you launch you learn. With 16 campaigns under my belt and more in the works, I still see every new campaign as an opportunity for growth. In this session, I share my 5 most powerful lessons from last year's launches. \(ComixLaunch.com/session181\).](https://www.comixlaunch.com/session181)

Strategy #4: The Launch Serialization

Campaign Example: *The White Ash series by Charlie Stickney and Conor Hughes*

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

The Launch Serialization Strategy Explained

One of the biggest mistakes that rookie crowdfunders make is thinking that one launch is all they need to make their series pop.

We see this when creators launch and try to fund multiple issues of a comic in a single launch or a huge graphic novel before they have much of an audience or following for the book. As a result, they ask for a funding amount beyond their reach or project a fulfillment date far into the future... and their launches suffer.

Other creators avoid that mistake and instead choose to launch a single first issue... and often are successful. But then their next launch is for a completely different project or property.

However, there is a small, but growing number of creators who are sticking with one property and serializing their launches, building tremendous momentum along the way. They'll start by launching issue #1. And then when issue #1 has been fulfilled, they launch #2. When #2 arrives at their backers' doorsteps, it's the perfect time to launch #3 on Kickstarter. And so on, until they're ready to collect the trade. Which, you guessed it, they also launch on Kickstarter.

What these creators are finding is that the more they launch, the more funding they raise, the more awareness they build for their series, and the more opportunities they have to not only deliver books to their supporters who come back for more, but to also pick up brand new fans every campaign.

Strategy #4: The Launch Serialization in Action



Campaigns: [White Ash #1: 52 pages of fantasy, horror and romance](#)

[White Ash: #1-2](#)

[White Ash #1-3](#)

[White Ash #1-4](#)

[White Ash: Volume 1](#)

Creators: Charlie Stickney & Conor Hughes

Total Raised: \$88,671* **Backers:** 2557* **Average Pledge Per Backer:** \$34.68*

Prior to Kickstarter, it would have been inconceivable for a first-time comic creator to generate over \$100,000.00 in sales on his or her first comic book series, without a publisher and without direct market distribution.

And yet, Charlie Stickney and his team are poised to do just that with their outstanding Kickstarter-funded series *White Ash*.

What was Charlie's secret?

His sole focus for the past few years has been building a following for *White Ash* and rallying that following during his serialized Kickstarter launches.

In the direct market, it's common for orders for the first issue to be the highest of the entire series. Most orders for the second issues of even the best series are slashed in half or more.

But the opposite often happens on Kickstarter, with subsequent campaigns performing better than previous launches. Why is this?

Well, it's because savvy creators like Charlie make it clear that every *White Ash* campaign is a clean jumping on point for new readers. One subtle thing to pay attention to is how Charlie names his projects.

His second launch was NOT for *White Ash #2*. It was for *White Ash #1-2*.

His third was for *White Ash #1-3*, and so on.

It might seem like a small thing, but it sends a clear message that both new and longtime *White Ash* fans are welcome to participate in every campaign Charlie launches.

And as a result, with each launch he's not only selling hundreds of copies of the new book, he's moving lots of the previous issues as well.

**Note: As of this publication, Charlie's latest campaign was still funding, so final totals will be higher than shown.*

ComixLauncher

Take Action on the Launch Serialization Strategy

Step 1: Make a list of all of the comic projects ideas you have.

Step 2: Of all the projects on your list, choose one to commit to serializing over the next few years.

Step 3: Now, map out a tentative schedule of at least the next three launches for that property. When you name those campaigns, make sure it's clear that every Kickstarter you launch is new reader friendly.



ComixLaunch Podcast Connection: [Charlie's great success as a first-time comic creator is rare. Learn some of his innovative campaign and promotions strategies in this session. \(ComixLaunch.com/session142\)](https://www.comixlaunch.com/session142)

Strategy #5: The Holiday Hijack

Campaign Example: *Red Xmas by Clay Adams, Alexander O. Philippe and Fabio Ramacci*

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

The Holiday Hijack Strategy Explained

Savvy Kickstarter creators look for (and often create) any and every advantage they can for their launches. When it comes to building awareness, interest and buzz for your titles, all is fair in love and crowdfunding.

One strategy you may employ is to use the calendar to your advantage, and try to connect your launch to a holiday.

When Joe Mulvey was planning the launch for his children's book [*Mummy's Always Right*](#) launch, he had Mother's Day circled on the calendar as a target for obvious reasons. Horror creators may get more buzz for their projects around October 31, while romance comics often try to launch around Valentine's Day because love is already in the air.

Many media sites are looking for thematic content to feature around those holidays, so if your campaign is on theme, your chances of getting covered may go up dramatically if you can make a good case for a holiday connection to your project.

Strategy #5: The Holiday Hijack Strategy in Action



Campaign: [Red Xmas 1-3. A horror/comedy Christmas comic for adults.](#)

Creator: Fried Comics

Raised: \$5,272 **Backers:** 215 **Average Pledge/Backer:** \$24.52

Clay Adams has made it a habit of launching his series Red Xmas around the holidays, but in 2018, he took it to the next level.

He branded his last Red Xmas launch as “12 Days of Red Xmas” and ran it for just 12 days. Many of his reward descriptions were written with a spice of the holiday season, and premium backers could get on “the Naughty List” receiving a credit in the front of the book.

And if you think 12 days is too short for a Kickstarter campaign, it’s worth noting that this was not just Fried Comics shortest campaign ever, it was also their most backed and most funded to date!

ComixLauncher

Take Action on the Holiday Hijack Strategy

Step 1: Scan a list of holidays and see if there are any holiday connections to your project that make sense.

Step 2: If there are obvious holiday connections, consider scheduling your launch to overlap with that holiday for some added synergy.

Step 3: If there are no obvious holiday connections, then plan your launch for the best time for you and your audience. But then think about how you can tie in your project to any key holidays or events happening during that month.



Kickstarting the Holidays with Clay Adams of Red Xmas



ComixLaunch Podcast Connection: [Learn more of Clay's lessons learned from launching holiday themed Kickstarter projects. \(ComixLaunch.com/session121\)](https://www.comixlaunch.com/session121)

Strategy #6: The Post-Campaign Credit

Campaign Example: *Tales of Mr. Rhee Vol 4 by Dirk Manning and Seth Damoose*

Difficulty Level: Advanced

The Strategy Explained

One of the things you'll learn is that when done correctly, Kickstarter is a renewable resource. If you launch great campaigns to your audience, successfully fund, and then deliver on all your promises to your backers, they'll be hungry to support you on Kickstarter again and again and again...

The lifetime value of a superfan can be thousands and thousands of dollars, and so some creators choose to reward that loyalty.

One thing many creators do is offer an early bird discount on their Kickstarter page as an incentive to their existing backers to come back for more, which is often very effective. However, the problem with this strategy is that the concept of "discounting" is counter to the objective of "crowdfunding" where the goal is to raise as much money as possible.

It's also not the best look to create what looks like a two-tiered system on your Kickstarter page, where things are priced one way for longtime backers and another for new ones. People usually don't mind paying the price you'll offer, but everyone hates knowing that others are getting a better deal. And Kickstarter itself doesn't make it easy for you to treat certain backers different than others, so most creators who try often hack together an unreliable and confusing system.

But some creators are choosing a far better and far simpler option by using backer management software, such as **Backerkit** or **Crowdox**.

With these programs, you can create your own list of backers who you'd like to reward with something extra.

✓ REWARD 2 EXTRAS 3 SHIPPING 4 CONFIRM

Extras

If you pledged for any extras during the campaign, please mark them now.
Don't want any extras? [Continue to the shipping page.](#)

\$10 Available
You have additional funds available that can be used to purchase extras below.

Click thumbnails to zoom 🔍

Most Popular Add-Ons!

These are the items most backers are adding to their pledge!



WAILING BLADE #1D: HEADTAKER METALLIC COVER [KICKSTARTER EXCLUSIVE] **\$25**
Only 83 left

This Kickstarter Exclusive METALLIC Cover is Extremely Limited and Only Available through this Campaign!

[Note: One copy of this cover is included in the WAILING BOX.]

Add To Purchase +



Wailing Blade #1C: Sketch Cover (Blank 2-Pack) **\$30**
Only 28 left

Get your favorite artist to sketch a WAILING BLADE #1 original cover or try your hand at drawing Headtaker yourself!

Each 2-Pack Includes 2 Copies of the WAILING BLADE #1C: Sketch Cover (Blank)

Add To Purchase +

It could be a special reward that you'll only make available to that backer or it could be a monetary credit that the backer would have added to his or her pledge and redeemable when they go to fill out the survey after the campaign is over. They can apply that credit toward upgrading to higher pledge level or put it towards some add-ons or extras you make available at check out.

This lets you reward your superfans simply and privately, without having to make a big deal about discounted tiers on your public Kickstarter page.

Strategy #6: The Post-Campaign Credit Strategy in Action



Campaign: [TALES OF MR. RHEE Volume 4: "Everything Burns" KS Hardcover](#)

Creator: Dirk Manning & Seth Damoose

Raised: \$26,650 **Backers:** 414 **Average Pledge Per Backer:** \$64.37

Dirk Manning had a problem. His new volume of *Tales of Mr. Rhee* was ready to launch. The issue: his last campaign, a MASSIVE collection of his long-running series *Nightmare World*, hit some fulfillment delays and had not been shipped to backers yet.

Dirk felt conflicted about asking his audience to support another launch while they were still patiently waiting for their pledges from his last campaign. And yet, fans of *Mr. Rhee* and his publisher and creative team didn't want to push back the new launch either, as the book was ready to print.

What Dirk decided to do was offer a \$10.00 post-campaign credit to all backers of his last campaign who chose to back the new campaign. After the *Mr. Rhee*

campaign was over, when backers who supported both campaigns filled out their Backerkit survey, they would have an extra tenner they could put towards extras or a higher level pledge. As a result, they felt acknowledged and rewarded for their previous support of Dirk. And Dirk was able to launch this other campaign on schedule.

As it turns out, backers are incredibly generous and understanding when it comes to delays, as long as creators do what Dirk does... stay transparent, keep the lines of communications open, and take care of the fans that have kept him in business all these years.

ComixLauncher

Take Action on the Post-Campaign Credit Strategy

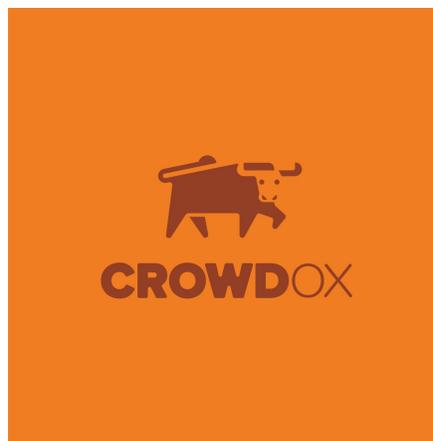
Step 1: Make a list of your top 50-100 superfans by either # of projects backed or dollars spent.

Step 2: Brainstorm ways you can reward or acknowledge your best customers during your next launch.

Step 3: Decide on a survey management tool for your next launch that will help you easily add those rewards to the backers who earned them.

Bonus Resource: The Post-Campaign Credit Strategy requires the use of a survey management tool. While the most common tool used is [BackerKit](#), I favor [Crowdox](#) as a simpler and more cost-effective survey management option.

Simply send your Crowdox customer service manager a list of backers who should be getting extra credit added to their accounts and it'll be waiting for them once they fill out their surveys.



[ComixLaunch listeners can get a special 10% off per-backer pricing at Crowdox.com.](#)

Note: A survey management tool makes sense only for campaigns big enough to justify the cost. Usually, campaigns need a minimum of 250 backers or so and a solid add-on plan to make the investment worth it.

However, for larger campaigns, using one of these tools is the easiest way to add an additional 8-20% of funding to your campaign AFTER it's over.

Kickstarter Rhee-I Talk with Dirk Manning



COMIXLAUNCH.COM/SESSION120

ComixLaunch Podcast Connection: [Listen to Dirk Manning and Tyler James have a frank conversation about the convention grind, crowdfunding growing pains and building a genuine connection with your fans. \(ComixLaunch.com/session120\)](https://www.comixlaunch.com/session120)

Strategy #7: Showing Your Skin in the Game

Campaign Example: *Angels Powers* by Amélie Hutt

Difficulty Level: Beginner

The Showing Your Skin in the Game Strategy Explained

One thing that many Kickstarter creators learn the hard way is that success on the platform has little to do with how badly the creator needs the funding.

Backers are more than willing to help you make your project happen, so long as it's clear that this is a project that you've already committed to seeing through and one where it's clear that you've already put a significant amount of time, energy and money into bringing to life.

One of the jobs of your Kickstarter page is to show how much skin in the game you've already put into making your project a reality. It's one thing to talk about how much work you've already put in, but another thing entirely to show it.

Some things that savvy creators add to their Kickstarter pages to make it absolutely clear that they're committed to this project include:

- A completed cover and preferably 3D mock-ups so backers can see exactly what they're pledging for.
- A series of full-page, lettered sequential preview pages so that backers know that you can tell a story and have an understanding of how comic book lettering works.
- A place to go download an even bigger look at the book, because you have nothing to hide and want to make sure your work is right for your prospective backer.
- Pictures of the creative team, with bonus points if those pictures show you interacting with happy fans at conventions or store signings.

- Endorsements from respected voices in comics (or at least someone other than you saying your book is great.)
- Visual mock-ups of all of your reward levels.

Remember what you're asking backers to do is kind of crazy... You're asking people to trust you with their hard earned money, which they'll hand over now, in exchange for something that usually doesn't exist yet, that you promise to send them in the future.

It's a big ask... so make sure that your Kickstarter page screams "I can trust this person!"

Strategy #7: Showing Your Skin in the Game Strategy in Action



Campaign: [Angels Power Volume 1: A Fully Painted Fantasy Epic](#)

Creator: Amélie Hutt

Raised: \$24,271 **Backers:** 508 **Average Pledge Per Backer:** \$47.77

Putting “skin in the game” has never been a problem for creator Amélie Hutt. She had put years of work into her online graphic novel **Angels Power**. But when prepping for her first launch, she knew it’s not enough just to have done the work.

Understanding that Kickstarter is a visual platform, Amélie looked for ways to make it clear that she had put in the work on this series to justify a big launch.

One of the best way she showed this was by posting on her page a FULL PAGE BOARD that showed all of the completed pages of her graphic novel in thumbnail size:

THE FULL PAGE BOARD

Of all the pages featured in Volume I, 38 pages haven't been published online!



I just grabbed a clip of the image from her Kickstarter page, the actual one is much bigger. It's impossible to see an image like this and not trust that Amélie has already put in the work and is 100% committed to seeing this book all the way to the finish line.

ComixLauncher

Take Action on the Showing Your Skin in the Game Strategy

Step 1: Tally up how much total time you and your creative team have already put into your project. (It's probably a lot more than you think.)

Step 2: Now, what else have you invested in this project? Money? What have you given up or not done so you could focus on this? How have you put everything on the line to make this dream come true?

Step 3: Finally, find a way to visualize the skin in the game you've already put into this project and share those visuals on your Kickstarter page and in your marketing efforts during your launch.



ComixLaunch Podcast Connection: [Looking for more strategies to design a Kickstarter page that backers will trust? 37 proven page elements that build trust with backers are served up in this session. \(ComixLaunch.com/session185\)](https://www.comixlaunch.com/session185)

Strategy #8: The Objections Crusher

Campaign Example: *Espresso Detective* by Eric Erdek

Difficulty Level: Beginner

The Objections Crusher Strategy Explained

Have you ever heard the expression, “*when you don’t address the elephant in the room, it just gets bigger?*”

Well, it’s completely true with crowdfunding campaigns.

While your family, friends and superfans will no doubt support your next launch, everyone else is going to be somewhat skeptical.

“*This looks good, but...*” they’ll tell themselves.

Your job when planning your launch is to anticipate every “*but*” and have an answer for them all.

Instead of ignoring objections and hoping they go away, savvy creators shine a spotlight on them... and then wipe them out.

When you voice an objection and then address it, you enter the conversation already happening in your prospective backers’ heads, and let them know that you have the answer for them.

Okay, sounds good... but how exactly do you crush an objection? I’ll give you three commonly used objection crushing techniques that work:

Technique #1: Reverse It!

Essentially, you want to point out something negative and then show how it's actually a good thing.

Example:

Objection: This creative team is pretty inexperienced.

Crusher: Get in on the ground floor with a promising new creative team. Years from now, when they're on top of the industry, you can say you helped put 'em on the map!

Technique #2: Provide an Original Solution

Name the issue and then show that you know it's a problem and have already thought of the solution.

Example:

Objection: The last comic book Kickstarter campaign I backed arrive damaged.

Crusher: We pack our comic books using Gemini Comic Supply Flash Mailers for maximum protection and offer free replacements for any packages damaged in transit! (Oh, and we also include shipping ninjas!)

Technique #3: Provide a Counter-Example with Proof

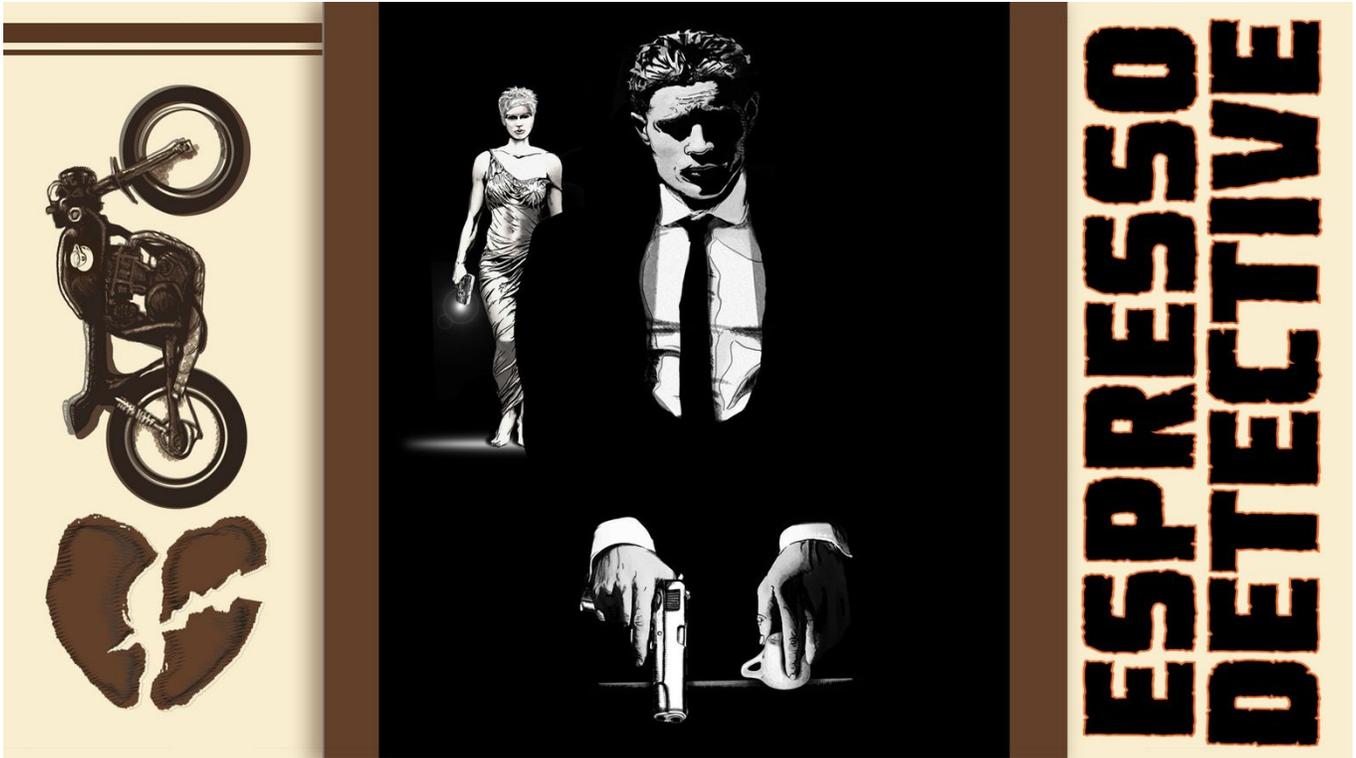
Often people assume because something is common, it's a fact. But if you can provide even one exception to the rule, it's not a rule at all.

Example:

Objection: If this book was any good, a "real" publisher would have picked it up and it wouldn't be on Kickstarter.

Crusher: We've already sent advanced review copies of our book to [critics, reviewers, industry pros] and here's what they're saying [praise.]

Strategy #8: The Objections Crusher Strategy in Action



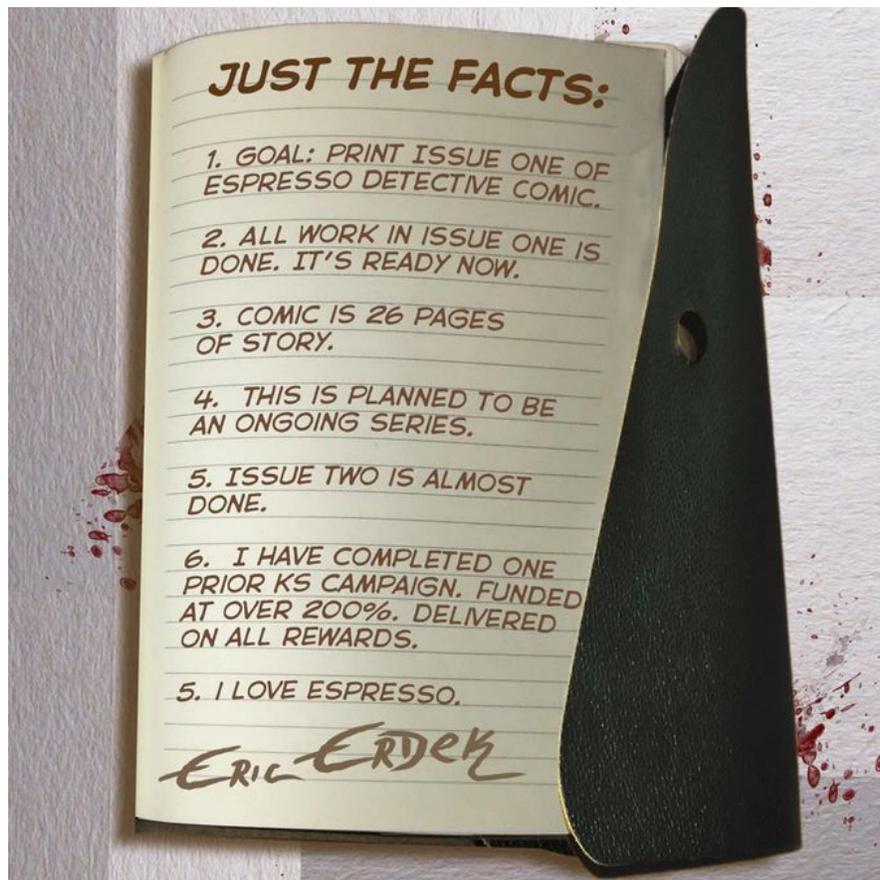
Campaign: [THE ESPRESSO DETECTIVE COMIC No. 1 PRINT CAMPAIGN](#)

Creator: Eric Erdek

Raised: \$4,029 **Backers:** 90 **Average Pledge Per Backer:** \$44.77

One of the exercises I make all of my ComixLaunch Course students do before launching is to SWOT their projects, identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats present in their project.

Eric Erdek did this and then proceeded to address every weakness and threat he identified and also amped up every strength on his Kickstarter page. Where possible, he highlighted them in graphics like this one:



The other thing Eric did was take the required "Risks and Challenges" section of his Kickstarter page seriously, while still having some fun with it and letting his personality come through by writing:

"The content of Espresso Detective #1 has all been created. It's done. I've successfully done one previous kickstarter campaign. The only challenges should be printing and distribution.

I have done my homework with the printers and made the spreadsheets to make sure everything stays on track

I do realize that there can be unforeseen problems, but I promise to be frank and open with the backers, posting updates and keeping everyone informed.

I pledge to remain caffeinated and give 100% until every single one of my wonderful backers has received their reward."

Addressing objections head-on, rather than ignoring them, is how you gain backers trust and support.

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Take Action on the Objections Crusher Strategy

Step 1: Fold a blank sheet of paper in half. Label the first column “Objections.” And then take 5-10 minutes and write down literally every objection someone might have to backing your Kickstarter campaign.

Step 2: At the top of the second column, label it “Crusher.” Then, for every single objection, write a response that not only addresses it but crushes it. Use the three strategies to crush objections shared above.

Step 3: When crafting your Kickstarter page, make sure as many objections as possible are crushed in a clear and compelling way. And the more visuals you have to crush those objections, the better!



ComixLaunch Podcast Connection: [Systematically setting up and then swatting down objections is one of the fundamentals of effective copywriting. In this session, I'll share some of my best copywriting techniques that have helped me and my collaborators generate over a million dollars in publishing sales. \(ComixLaunch.com/session146\)](https://www.comixlaunch.com/session146)

Strategy #9: The Milestone Bonuses

Campaign Example: *Cthulhu Kids* by Andrew Pawley and Peter Duncan

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

The Milestone Bonuses Strategy Explained

One of my biggest Kickstarter pet peeves is when I see creators present and promote Kickstarter stretch goal to their backers well before they even come close to hitting their funding goal.

Now, don't get me wrong. I love stretch goals or additional promises you make to your backers that correspond with funding levels that exceed your stated Kickstarter goal.

But it's presumptuous to talk them up before you've funded, and it also takes the spotlight off of one of my favorite strategies that you should be doing instead... especially if you're having trouble getting to 100% funded.

Here I'm talking about the milestone bonuses strategy.

Milestone bonuses are surprise extras you unlock for your backers above and beyond what you've already promised them for their pledges, on the way to hitting your funding goal.

Milestone bonuses don't have to be big or expensive. Digital extras are fine, as is something as simple as adding a new pledge to the campaign or showing off some additional preview art from the project that you held back from the launch.

The power in the milestone bonus is less about what it is and more about creating a reason for prospective backers to back NOW instead of later.

What they allow you to do is switch the focus from how FAR you are away from 100% funded to how CLOSE you are to the next milestone, whatever that may be!

This strategy is especially crucial for campaigns that find themselves stuck in neutral and feel like they are in the dreaded “Kickstarter Dead Zone.”



DECLAN
SHALVEY
VARIANT
ADDED TO
EVERY
WAILING BOX!



All you need to do is pick a milestone (Backer total, Funding total, Funding % total, etc.) that's within striking distance, and come up with an extra perk that all backers will get when you hit it.

Once you have that, you then put 100% of your marketing effort into promoting the next milestone...

It works like a freaking charm for projects big and small!

Strategy #9: The Milestone Bonus Strategy in Action



Campaign: [Cthulhu Kids- All Ages Cosmic Terror & Mythos Madness](#)

Creator: Andrew Pawley

Raised: £6,366 **Backers:** 279 **Average Pledge Per Backer:** £22.82

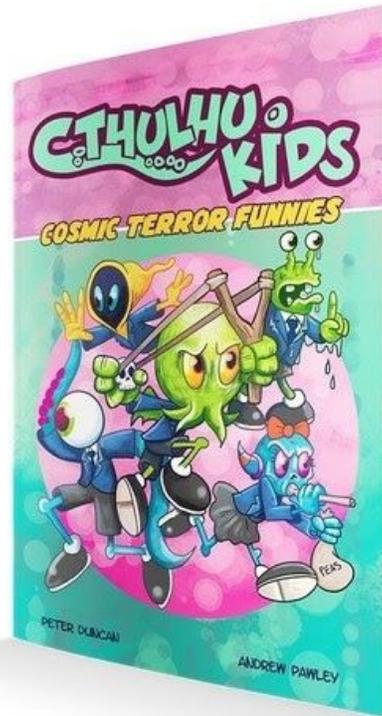
When going for his biggest Kickstarter project goal to date with the *Cthulhu Kids* launch, artist Andrew Pawley knew he'd need something to keep the momentum going on the march to 100% funded.

In addition to being a skilled comic book artist, Andrew is also an awesome paper toy designer. These paper toys made brilliant milestone bonus rewards, because he could deliver them digitally to all backers at no cost, and backers could print them out and make them right away, should they choose.

Andrew broke up the march to funding by rewarding backers with a new original paper toy download at 25%, 50%, 75% and 100% funded.

MILESTONE BONUSES

A FREE PAPER MODEL FOR **EVERY** BACKER TO DOWNLOAD AND MAKE EVERY TIME WE HIT A MILESTONE TOWARDS FULLY FUNDED!



The other nice thing about rewarding backers with extras along the way to funding is that it gives you an easy thing to talk up in your Kickstarter updates and increases your backer retention, as they wonder what other cool extras you may have for them above and beyond what they've already pledged for.

There's a reason every project Andrew launches funds... the milestone bonus strategy is one way he over-delivers for his backers.

ComixLauncher

Take Action on the Milestone Bonues Strategy

Step 1: Do an audit of digital content and extras you have access to in your backlist. What do you already have that you could give as an extra incentive to backers as milestone bonuses?

Step 2: Do you know any creators who have digital items your backers might like who would be up to swapping digital items with you? This is an easy way to get even more bonuses to use.

Step 3: Now, break up the road to 100% funding into a few key milestones and attach those bonus rewards to each funding level. Don't be shy about making a big deal about those milestones during your next launch!

Pro-Tip: If you're not sure how fast you'll fund, you may want to wait a few hours to a day into your launch before you announce your milestone bonuses. This is because, you'll want to pace your bonuses out, and ideally not unlock more than one per day, so that you always have the next bonus to use for marketing purposes. And if you happen to fund faster than expected (great "problem" to have) you can also switch your milestone bonuses to stretch goal incentives.

Bonus Resource: Members of **ComixLaunch Pro** have access to **THE COMIXLAUNCH EXCHANGE**, which is a "take a digital book, leave a digital book" system for our members.



The ComixLaunch Exchange

Leave a book, take a book and to use it as a bonus reward for your backers!

The logo features a green square with a white upward-pointing arrow. Inside the arrow is a green circular icon with a white 'R' and a curved arrow, symbolizing an exchange. Below the arrow, the text 'THE COMIXLAUNCH EXCHANGE' is written in white, bold, uppercase letters.

Every creator-owned book in the exchange is there explicitly so other creators can use as a digital reward for their backers during Kickstarter launches.

So, even if you don't have a big backlist of digital goodies to give to your fans, when you're a member of **ComixLaunch Pro** and have access to the **Exchange**, you can still rock the milestone bonuses strategy with the best of them.

Growing a Freaky Audience on Indiegogo & Kickstarter with Andrew Pawley



COMIXLAUNCH.COM/SESSION084

ComixLaunch Podcast Connection: [Learn more about Andrew Pawley's creative journey and why he switched from Indiegogo to Kickstarter and has never looked back. \(ComixLaunch.com/session084\)](https://www.comixlaunch.com/session084)

Bonus: Insight & Inspiration from Successful ComixLaunchers

Every month, hundreds of writers, artists, comic creators and publishers are taking the bold leap to fund their dream projects on Kickstarter. And every month, we highlight the lessons learned from launching by one successful creator inside the **ComixLaunch Pro** community in the form of [ComixLaunch Pro Creator Spotlight](#). Get inspired by the stories of so many successful creators inside our community!

- [How Writer Kevin Joseph Doubled His Best Ever Kickstarter Backer Count and Raised Over \\$12,000.00 for His Latest Comic Book](#)
- [Creator Amélie Hutt \(ANGELS POWER\) on How to Raise More Than \\$24,000.00 in Your First Comic Book Kickstarter Campaign](#)
- [How To Crowdfund Your Comic Book On Indiegogo, With TALES OF THE TWELVE STARS Writer Albert Lim](#)
- [How First-Time Kickstarter Creator Melody Peña Raised \\$30K in an Hour on the Way to a Six-Figure Graphic Novel Launch!](#)
- [How DIARY OF NIGHT's Will Allred Rescued His Comics Kickstarter Campaign in The Final Week](#)
- [How TREASURES OF THE DEEP SLUMBER's Jerry Willoughby Used Facebook Ads To Power His Best Comics Kickstarter Launch Ever](#)
- [How First Time Kickstarter Creator Rene Pfitzner Raised Nearly \\$9,000 In His First Ever Comics Campaign](#)
- [How to Plan For Kickstarter Success, with Comics Creator Newton Lilavois](#)
- [How Jim Whiting Launched An Art Book on Kickstarter--And Had His Best Campaign Ever](#)
- [How Comics Creator Andy Perry Quadrupled His Email List Ahead of A Second Successful Kickstarter Launch](#)
- [How Travis Gibb Ran Two Comics Kickstarters At Once... And Lived To Tell The Tale](#)

The Next Step...

The intention of this guide was to share some of the top new and innovative strategies creators like us are using on Kickstarter. I hope reading it has given you some new ideas and inspired you to take some action.

But if what you're looking for is a more in-depth training that will share 7 key steps to making your next launch your best one ever, please join me for my most popular FREE Kickstarter workshop [**THE ULTIMATE COMIC BOOK KICKSTARTER PLAN WORKSHOP.**](#)



REGISTER FOR THE NEXT AVAILABLE WORKSHOP AT:

[**ComixLaunch.com/workshop**](https://ComixLaunch.com/workshop)

Conclusion

There's a reason the Kickstarter success rate in the comics category continues to climb while other categories stagnate.

And that's because we're innovators and fast learners!

We're not afraid to roll up our sleeves and put in the hard work to bring our art to life.

And when it comes to our campaigns, we pay attention to what's working for others, and we get creative by putting our own fresh spins on those killer strategies to make them work for our campaigns.

For me, one of the most rewarding things about working directly with creators inside the **ComixLaunch Pro** courses and community is seeing how they are able to take the tried and true systems, strategies, templates and processes I've developed to succeed on Kickstarter and apply them in ever new and original ways that work for them.

I hope this guide has inspired you to put some new strategies in place for your upcoming projects.

Remember, every time you launch, you learn.

I can't wait to see what you launch next.

Best,

Tyler James
Newburyport, MA

P.S. If you have any feedback on this guide, or would like to share an innovative strategy that's worked for you or creators you know, I'd love to hear from you.

Please leave a short voicemail over at ComixLaunch.com/voicemail to share your insights.