

Week Six Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Interview with Cathy Linh Che, Indiegogo campaign for Kundiman.....	4
A Successful Kickstarter for NewSpace Center for Photography.....	10
Interview with Zach Weinersmith, raising \$8,800+ per month with crowdfunding in one year.....	18
Indiegogo versus Kickstarter pros and cons.....	26
Conclusion.....	29
Further Resources.....	30

Introduction

Welcome to Week Six! This is it! Woo Hoo! Your final week of this course!

Now we come to one of my favorite parts of this course! Why? Because we talk to real people and how they really succeeded in crowdfunding.

You'll hear from Cathy Linh Che about how she succeeded in raising \$10,000 via Indiegogo for her small virtual nonprofit.

You'll hear from Zach Weinersmith of Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal about how he succeeded in raising \$8,000 a month to support the creation of his comic.

You'll hear from the executive director of a photography center, Tricia Hoffman of the New Space Center for Photography about how they succeeded in raising \$25,000 with their first Kickstarter campaign.

I'm looking forward to helping you learn directly from real people's recent experiences.

Let's dive in!

Interview with Cathy Linh Che, Indiegogo campaign for Kundiman

Today we are chatting with poet and managing director of Kundiman, Cathy Linh Che. Ms Che and her committee [raised over \\$11,600 with crowdfunding on Indiegogo](#) in 2013.

Mazarine Treyz: *Let's get started! Cathy, can you tell us a little bit about you?*

Cathy Lin Che: My name is Cathy Lin Che. I'm the current managing director of [Kundiman](#) which is an Asian American nonprofit organization that helps poets.



Cathy Linh Che

Treyz: *What is your campaign about and why did you start it?*

Che: We wanted to raise \$10,000 caused by an institution's withdrawal of funds. The money would go into an annual writing retreat that the org hosted. The retreat was hosted by Kundiman- our annual poetry retreat for Asian-American poets has become a very powerful community. I took part in that community and wanted to see it continue. I'd only been a high school teacher so I wanted to see what else I could do. We didn't get a couple grants that year and I could see the fundraising needed to happen

I told one of the co-founders that i would like to run the indiegogo and they gave me the go-ahead.

Treyz: *How did you get started fundraising for your nonprofit?*

Che: I volunteered. We are a grassroots organization and we were brainstorming ideas and we saw that other nonprofits were able to do it through crowdfunding and so we decided to try. It was supposed to be a one-shot deal for me. At that point I was working 10 hours a month as their communications program manager.

After 10 years they were at a startup phase, and they had a board that was doing daily work of staff, and they knew that was unhealthy, because they were getting so burned out and so exhausted. They knew that they wanted to hire someone to oversee day to day operations. They wanted to hire an executive director. I had two other jobs, a full time job and teaching-So I'm their part time managing director, it came after me working for them for about a year and a half.

Treyz: *What do you wish you had known when you started your campaign? Any mistakes you'd like to share from when you were first starting out?*

Che: I think that I wish I would have known it's best to have all of your perks lined up. For example one of our perks is books that we would mail out, and have a separate group or committee to mail those perks. I wish I had thought about perks that were very easy to deliver.

The easiest perk to deliver was email lesson plans for poetry. It was emailed. We also had a t-shirt so we had to get sizes for that, find the right sizes package and mail. There were other perks where people had offered things, and it was just another step where people arranged x y or z. I would have loved to have help to mail those out. By the end you're exhausted.

Treyz: *How did you decide what prizes to offer? Any tips on prizes that people seem to like?*

Che: I did the indiegogo in May 2013 and at that time the Kundiman poetry prize book came out. And so I knew that was something people were intending to buy anyway, so they knew they could get the book, and they knew that the money would go toward a nonprofit they really cared about. It was our most popular perk. Also we had these t-shirts that we sold at a literary conference, and we knew they were really popular so we just ordered more t-shirts. And we knew the lesson plans would be really popular because we knew a lot of people teach. We tried to think of who our likely constituents are, and think of what things were timely that they would enjoy, that they would want.

I had a lot of people suggesting a lot of different ideas. It was about all of us digging in, thinking about what we donated to in the past, and what they desired. On the higher end, somebody offered to teach a several week long online poetry course, and some people who bought that were in our inner circle. Very few strangers will just donate to you.

Treyz: *Do you have an email list that you send updates to? If so, how do you grow your list?*

Che: We do have an e-blast list, and in terms of how we grow our list, we have a signup on our website, we go to conferences, we host readings and we pass the clipboard around, and that's how we grow our list most successfully.

Treyz: *Do you use Twitter or Facebook as a fundraising tool? If so, what have you found works on those platforms?*

Che: We raised very little money directly from Twitter and Facebook, we raised *some*, but it is not the majority of the way you raise money. What it really helps with, it's a great way to show gratitude for your donors. We thanked everyone on Facebook and did an event page, and also did updates to keep people engaged. I had a hard time calling people, so I just directly emailed clusters of people in my life. I did an email to my family, an email to my professors, an email to my MFA buddies, and people in a workshop that I was currently in, and another group of people at another conference that I went to. People respond way better to a personal email than an anonymous e-blast. When you reach out to these people, they see that their friends have donated, so it's another reinforcement to donate.

If you don't have that initial back end outreach via email, your campaign is less effective.

Treyz: *Are there any other techniques have worked well for you when you're doing a fundraising campaign?*

Che: Getting a committee together is very important. People on the committee (there were 8 or 9 people) they can pull in their own contacts and friends and family circles. The average amount people donate is \$25, and we had over 200 donors. Typically the majority of people give small amounts in crowdfunding, and it's really key that you reach out to a lot of people.

It's important that a lot of prizes that you offer seem comparable. \$25 for a poetry book seems ok, but if you say \$100 for a book, that seems like a lot. With Indiegogo and kickstarter, you want to give but get something equivalent back.

Treyz: *Anything else you'd like to add?*

Che: Have a committee. Get them to send a personal appeal to their circle.

Don't send out to the same person over and over again.

The first 2 days are incredibly important. You shouldn't go public until you've got the 10-20%. By the end of the first week you can hit 25%. That can happen through your committee.

Indiegogo had a lot of information on how to be successful, and I followed their advice and we did find success.

I talked with people who had done crowdfunding before and that was very helpful. The person I talked to was at [Cave Canem](#) (for African American writers) they did a crowdfunder through calling, which is even harder. She said get a committee together and get a giant list and reach out to people.

I'm actually doing a fundraiser off of indiegogo right now and its really hard, people like seeing their name up there, and the little bar. The thermometer has been implemented since elementary school, I've always been drawn to it. I can invent a widget, but it's a little harder than having it set up for you. Embedding a video is very easy, and doing video and picture updates and has a lot of mechanisms that really do help. I only know now how helpful it was.

Our organization is unique because we have an internal list serv of 100 people that is very active, and that is another way to mobilize a fairly large number of people to help you.

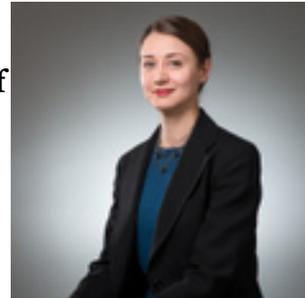
Treyz: *Thank you so much Cathy, this has been so helpful to me! If people would like to learn more about you, where can they go?*

Che: I have a website [Cathylinhche.com](#), and you can check out [Kundiman.org](#). Cathy Linh Che (Managing Director) is a Vietnamese American poet from Los Angeles, CA.

A Kundiman alum and the winner of the 2012 Kundiman Poetry Prize, she has also received awards from The Fine Arts Work Center at Provincetown, Hedgebrook, Poets House, Poets & Writers, and LMCC's *Workspace* Residency.

A Successful Kickstarter for NewSpace Center for Photography

I am pleased to interview Tricia Hoffman, Executive Director of the former Newspace Center for Photography in Portland Oregon.



[Tricia Hoffman](#) has worked in non-profit management for the past 10 years, most recently at Blue Sky Gallery and Photolucida. Previously, she was the Development Director at Mid-America Arts Alliance and Curatorial Assistant at ExhibitsUSA.

Mazarine Treyz: What was your Kickstarter campaign about and why did you start it?

Tricia Hoffman: The Newspace Kickstarter campaign was run to support hiring a curator to manage our exhibitions and public programs. We started it to get our community involved in the fundraising process. Many times it's important It let us ask people to reach out at any level.

MT: How did you get started fundraising for your nonprofit online?

TH: This was the first time we've been involved in a crowdfunding campaign project. We had been interested in doing something for awhile but waited until we found the right project and it felt like this was it.

MT: This was your first time running a crowdfunding campaign, right?

TH: Yes, it was my first time running a crowdfunding campaign as well.

MT: And you succeeded in the campaign.

TH: We raised a little over \$25,000!

MT: Wow! That's incredible. Well done you! What do you wish you had known when you started your campaign? Any mistakes you'd like to share from when you were first starting out?

TH: I did a fair amount of research and talked with Kickstarter staff and talked with people who had successful and unsuccessful kickstarter campaigns. I learned a lot about the process before even getting started.

I learned subtle details through the process. I was fortunate to feel pretty well prepared thanks to the generosity of people beforehand with their time.

There's always things people can do better. I probably would have given myself more time. we had started talking about it in June, and planning for it in June, and we had initially wanted to launch it a little earlier, and then pushed it back to the summer months to allow me more time to prepare.

I still wish I had allowed more time, organized my time to reach out to people before the campaign. We planned a lot of it in advance, and I still wish I had had more time. And I wanted more time on the end as well. I knew I was ambitious about how fast i could get the awards out on time-Making sure I could get everything out in the right person, with the right letter and the right packaging. I wish I had had more time. One wants to be really detail oriented with these things and that takes a lot of time.

I was warned, people said, give yourself more time, have a clear plan about how you're going to appeal to people throughout the campaign.

MT: I hear that, sending out the packages, the fulfillment is quite difficult. But after you filled the awards, the question is, did you feel like then you could start to help people become larger and larger donors?

TH: Well, (laughs) I will say that I'm not done. because we did prints, I need to get additional packaging, i should be able to get the remaining prints out next week. there are people who wanted to pick up their awards. I have a handful of people who haven't told me how they want to receive their stuff, if they want it mailed, and to where, and there's people who still need to come pick it up. It's still an ongoing process.

MT: You feel like you can't solicit them again til you get all the rewards out, right?

TH: Yes!

MT: Maybe that's a learning for next year, right, have everything mailed?

TH: At the same time I'm happy to welcome people to Newspace, and they haven't been here in awhile, so I want to give them the opportunity to give them a tour. We expanded the facilities in 2011 and i want to show them around the space. I would love that opportunity to bring people into Newspace and share what we're up to in person.

MT: How did you decide what prizes to offer? Any tips on prizes that people seem to like?

TH: You know, I think it varies, we looked at other campaigns that were successful and what they had to offer, and we saw that it was really important to have small items for entry-level donations. And to have mid-range and high end rewards for people who are able to make a more significant contribution, and make sure that those are meaningful. So we wanted to have a few that were more experiential, a few more about products a thing they would come away with, the thing I thought was important was to have a reasonable selection. People who are local people could come and have an experience of newspace, but also have some rewards that didn't require you to be local. We moved in both directions.



MT: Do you have an email list that you send updates to? If so, how do you grow your list?

TH: I sent specific updates out to everyone who backed the campaign-Kickstarter has a nice interface on the back end.

I send people communications at least once a month about rewards and programs. I try to communicate on at least a monthly basis, and we also connect to our wider community through our monthly newsletter.

Here's how we grow our list. With our general newsletter email list, we add people to that through a variety of channels, we collect emails from people who come to look at the gallery, and class participants, people who become members and donors.

MT: Do you use Twitter or Facebook as a fundraising tool? If so, what have you found works on those platforms?

TH: I don't know that we use it as a fundraising tool specifically, but have been using social media for the last couple years, to make people aware of our fundraising efforts and our programmatic offerings. Facebook had a donate button, and we haven't gone that route and we don't necessarily run campaigns. Our social media campaigns are mostly focused on

raising awareness or marketing including our active fundraising campaigns that we have going on. We use those to drive people to our website or the kickstarter page to keep people in the loop on what we're up to.



Photo by Aline Smithson

MT: That's the way to do it! Are there any other techniques have worked well for you when you're doing a crowdfunding campaign?

TH: You know I've found that personally connecting with people really helps. I sent a ton of personal emails to people that I thought might be interested – whether someone that I knew or someone that was affiliated with newspace through our exhibition program, and

give them the opportunity to participate. It was also important to have our board members involved and our volunteers, letting their friends and communities know.

MT: How did you get your board members to help you fundraise for this campaign?

TH: I did a couple of things. I sent them boilerplate explanation of what we were doing, and I sent them my version of my email so they could either take the general information and make it into their own, or they could edit my email and make it their own, that was really helpful. a couple board members reached out to past board members at Newspace and invited them to get involved, and I think that was much more effective to help them get involved than me alone. It was great to let them know this was happening and give them a chance to be involved in this effort.

MT: Thank you. that's what I've been hearing, people really respond to personal emails. Anything else you'd like to add?

TH: The one truth that I was told and that really held true for me was that crowdfunding campaigns are meant to reach the crowd.

I know that's kind of in the title but it's really important if you're considering doing a kickstarter or a similar campaign to have a sense of how large your network of supporters is before you start. Newspace has an active list of several thousand people, plus our social media account, plus we've worked with hundreds of artists and thousands of people have taken our classes, that means we had a pretty sizable network of people who were interested in Newspace before we started.

Not everyone is going to be interested in supporting every project that you do, but its a numbers game and the more people you know are interested, you'll end up with enough people giving enough to be successful in a campaign like this.

I think we also benefited from supporters letting their network know, for example we have a couple of businesses in town that we work with regularly and they definitely put the word out to their community, and that really helped.

Interview with Zach Weinersmith, raising \$8,800+ per month with crowdfunding in one year

Zach makes [over \\$8,000 a month with Patreon](#) and draws a comic called [Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal](#). Today we're asking him how he did it, and hopefully giving you some tools and ideas you can use as you fundraise for your nonprofit!

Mazarine Treyz: Zach, for my readers, what is your comic about and why did you start it?

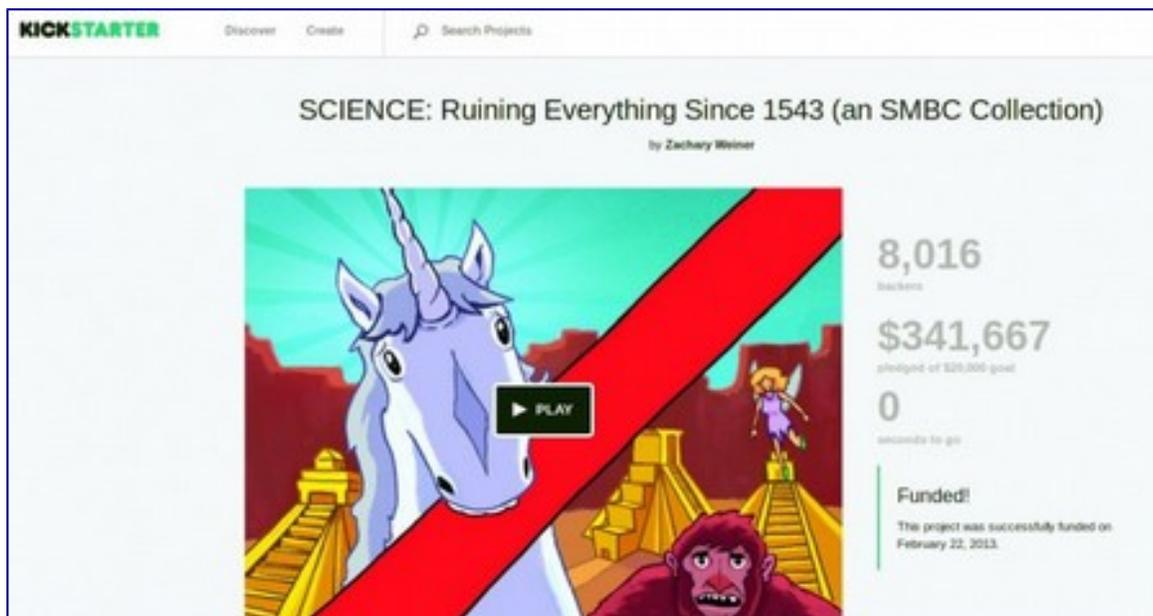
Zach Weinersmith: It's kinda about everything. we usually bill it as a general nerd comic. Math jokes, Linux jokes, philosophy jokes, also stupid jokes. i started it in high school for cuteness-. I started in earnest when i was working in entertainment, I had a miserable job, comics was a way to escape financially, mentally too. I started doing it every day around 2005 and a couple years later I was able to make enough money to quit my job.



Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal by Zach Weinersmith

MT: How did you get started fundraising for your comic? This isn't your first effort at fundraising, right?

ZW: We're a bit new to the fundraising stuff. We've done ad revenue for years, and then we added in merchandise, but I don't count that as fundraising. The first fundraising project we did was a Kickstarter in 2011. It went very well, much better than expectation, so I put out two books self publishing, and then one through Kickstarter, the revenue difference was HUGE so now how it's working, we're planning on keeping launching books through Kickstarter.



MT: What do you wish you had known when you started your Patreon? Any mistakes you'd like to share from when you were first starting out?

ZW: Sure- one valuable insight about Patreon- which is, I had a few other people try this and I won't say who, but I think I over-promised when i first started-I didn't promise that much, but I have a live draw session that I do, and I have around 350 \$5/month for that reward. That reward is that you get to go to a live-draw session. Typically less than 10 people show up to the live draw session and twice no one has showed up.

To me that's a good thing, it means most people just want to give money, they just want to support the project. My advice-comic artists think they have to put themselves out, but most people just want to support what you're doing and just pay for it. I've had people say this is nice because I don't want to buy your merchandise, I just want to support what you're doing. Most people who support you on Patreon are doing it because they want to support you. My advice for Patreon is don't go crazy with your rewards.

MT: Versus, this is very different from Kickstarter where people do want the swag.

ZW: Right exactly. Kickstarter everything we do, except for ultra mega premium levels, we straight up price it like we're selling products. We might price it up just a little to contain

the uncertainty in the production costs. That's more like shopping-it might be the same set of people, but I actually don't know. But it's a different behavior let's say.

MT: How did you decide what prizes to offer? Any tips on prizes that people seem to like? Patreon or Kickstarter?

ZW: You don't want to promise too much. I've talked to a few people who say, "if you do X large amount of dollars I'll do a personal chat for you" But personal chats can be really awkward, that's just been my experience. Most people who want to support me are doing it because they like the writing I do. if i were known as a good artist then the artwork based rewards might be more exciting for other people

MT: Did you find with Kickstarter t-shirts were popular or buttons?

ZW: The thing about kickstarter is not just about what is popular as a prize, it is about profit margins.

How much of a pain will it be to send out?

The last Kickstarter we did not do t-shirts because t-shirts are a big pain to ship. For each t-shirt you have to have 12-13 sizes and query each buyer which size you want whereas if you do a paper product like a stickers or poster, there are relatively high profit margins. We try on every project to come up with something that hasn't been done or that is a little unusual- our kid's book project, we offered traditional stuff, like a bookmark, etc one thing that we did that was a little unusual is that we have a limited edition cover cloth with foil stamp on front- so it's not just shopping, it's kind of special.

MT: So it's really about how much of a pain in the butt is it going to be to send something out

ZW: It's not just about the personal strife, although that is a factor, but in shipping time really is money. I talked to a friend, I won't say who, but his Kickstarter it went wild, blew up like crazy and he raised half a million dollars. I talked with him two years later, he said

I'm still working off that Kickstarter, I'm still doing stuff I promised for it. I think he promised artwork or something.

What I do now, when you do a Kickstarter it's kind of like being drunk you're like, you want to send out everything so you can get that number higher, but you want to know your limits beforehand.

MT: Well I'm glad he raised that money, but it's hard when you're fundraising to say ok I'm going to fundraise again if you haven't sent out all of your prizes yet.

ZW: Right. We've settled into a routine and we know each one does not need to be huge in terms of prizes.



MT: Do you have an email list that you send updates to? If so, how do you grow your list?

ZW: We don't actually use an email list- we do Facebook and twitter and we have ability to ping people from Kickstarter but we use that sparingly. We never use an email list, we probably should. I know other people who do and it works reasonably well for them. Somehow it seems old fashioned, we really should get into it

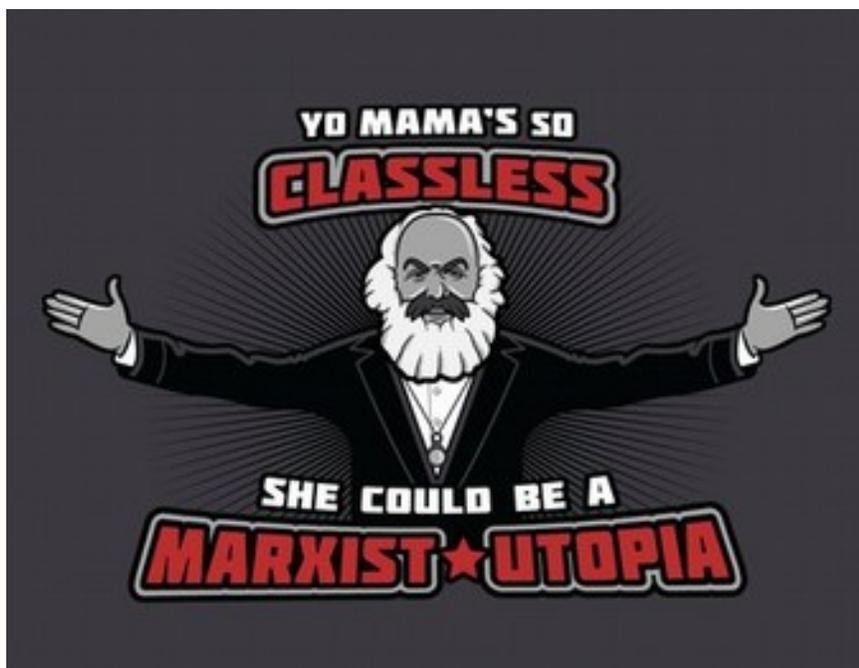
MT: Do you use Twitter or Facebook as a fundraising tool? Are most people on twitter and Facebook?

ZW: I don't know actually, I can make that assumption, Twitter is not a great place to get sales, people don't tend to click stuff very often. You tweet and then it disappears. Facebook has been very good for driving sales to Kickstarters for us. But it's probably not quite as good as having a proper spam list I guess. I don't know.

MT: I know when I send an email out, it generally works a lot better than when I just tweet about it. But when you have a Kickstarter and a Patreon, the best thing is you make a banner on your website because you have a lot of traffic?

ZW: Yes, what we usually do when we have one of these big projects or a big launch. i will occupy the space of the comic for the day.

The last two I drew a little comic about the Kickstarter-that seemed to work really well. I worry that people will be annoyed with you, so on that day I double update, so hopefully that offsets a little of the irritation.



MT: Are there any other techniques have worked well for you when you're doing a fundraising campaign?

ZW: A couple best practices we do- you never know if you had done something else. One of our rules, with Kickstarter, we set the initial goal as low as possible- zero profit. the logic of it is, and there is now some evidence that this is true, that once you've reached a goal, people tend to spend more readily, because it's more like buying something you're sure you're going to get it. Our goal on day 1 is to get to the goal as fast as possible.

Another thing I recommend if we have favors we can call in media wise or get press on the first day, we try to do that.

If you can drive up that media high enough, then you can attract even more media attention because that's a high number, then the more you can make a splash very quickly the better off you are.

If you'd like to learn more about how to actually set up a campaign and make it successful, check out the rest of the [Ultimate Crowdfunding and Online Giving E-course](#)

OR Check out [Fundraising Mastermind Elite](#), where you can get this course, (normally \$197) plus 10+ more courses and 60+ webinar recordings, for one low yearly price.