

10 TIPS FOR (ASPIRING) CIRCUS ARTISTS TO BUILD AND STRENGTHEN PATRONAGE RELATIONSHIPS

Are you creating great art and performances, but are you not used to asking for (financial) support? These tips can help you build a relationship with backers - people that support your work! Your professional practice will grow stronger with the help of a strong community.

1 It's a game of give and take

Solid patronage is all about relationships based on good mutual understanding. As an artist, you're the one asking for support. But if you want to build a strong relationship with your backers, you'll have to give something in return as well. A reward doesn't have to be big or impressive. Just remember that backers support you because you have something to offer that they don't have, for example a creative mind and the ability to perform.

2 Find your allies

Starting a crowdfunding campaign by yourself is less fun and quite a lot of work. Try to look at it as another thriving creative process while teaming up with others. Even if you're working on a solo project, find people that you trust and that support you.

3 Inform yourself

You're not the first artist starting a crowdfunding campaign. Just ask for help! Write an email to an experienced artist or attend a workshop.

4 Regard your rewards as part of the creative process

The process of asking for donations and creating rewards might feel pragmatic and transactional. Remember: the more you feel inspired by your own rewards, the more your backers will too. Don't let the need for good/fun/creative rewards put a burden on your creativity. Use it as a valuable moment to think about what you have to offer!

5 Keep it simple

When trying to come up with rewards for your backers, don't go too crazy. It can be great to create a personal song for your patrons, but it also takes a lot of effort, energy and time. Returns shouldn't become a new artistic project.

6 Give it time

The process of building a network of supporters takes time, but it's worth it! Envision who you need to strengthen your practice. What would your ideal network look like? Start making connections now, you will benefit from it later.

8 It's not all about the money

Backers have a lot more to give than just money. They can offer you time, knowledge, rehearsal space, financial advice, services, material, coaching, transportation... Whatever you need: there's someone out there willing to help you.

7 Trust yourself and your art

For a lot of artists, networking is just a stupid buzzword. It can feel strange or uncomfortable to 'sell' yourself and your art to others. But when you trust in what you have to offer, networking becomes fun. Networking won't be a buzzword anymore: it represents sharing something you're proud of.

9 Be transparent

Transparency is key! Keep your backers up to date. Provide insight into what happens with their money, time or knowledge.

10 Individual vs. collective

When you ask for a donation, communicate clearly about the goal of the donation. Will someone support your own project? Or will they support a project of a bigger group? Furthermore, don't forget to think about your communication with a backer after you have received the donation. Will it be you as an individual artist who will keep a backer up to date, or will it be a group of artists? Always make sure that your backers know who they are talking to.