Crowdfunding Tool Kit

To ensure a successful crowdfunding campaign, you need the right tools to tell your story. Utilizing press releases, media alerts, photos, video, social media, etc. can help your project gain visibility and thrive. Playworld put together this tool kit as a guide to help build your crowdfunding page and make your play space a reality.

Social Media

Social media can be a useful tool to share your campaign. Having a presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media channels offers people additional places where they can view information about your playground project. Having social profiles across various outlets can ensure you are reaching your entire possible audience. Keeping people informed and updated on the goals and status will help foster continued interest in your project.

Social media tips:

- Develop a hashtag. Creating a custom hashtag for your project will allow people to easily keep up with the conversation around the project and even join in!
- Build your social following. Follow people and businesses in your area to increase your social following and awareness of your project
- Share important updates and milestones across all social channels. For example, when the project reaches 50 percent of the fundraising goal, announce that milestone on social channels to inform people and celebrate the accomplishment
- Engage with users. Be sure to answer people's questions and interact with people's posts about your project
- Inform followers of perks. You can use social media to inform your followers about certain perks corresponding to various donations which may incentivize them to go donate

Photos & Videos

Visual assets are key to enticing people to learn more about your project. Including pictures or videos of the playground equipment you want to purchase help people visualize what their money will go towards and what the space will eventually look like. Visual elements are also shareable which heightens the chances of the page and project reaching more people.

Visual element tips:

- Be sure to include images. Your page should house images of the playground equipment for which you are raising money. You can even include pictures of the current planned space for your project
- Create a video. According to Indiegogo, campaigns with a video raise four times more than campaigns without. You can create a short, simple video highlighting your project's

story (i.e. why you're trying to build a particular playground, what this space would mean for your community, etc.)

- Take photos of the progress. Consider keeping a photo log – capture the days you prep the site, host a fundraiser, begin installing, etc. These images can inform people of progress and garner social media interest!

Media Alerts

Media Alert Guidelines

What is a media alert?

A media alert is a brief but compelling one-page announcement. Its primary purpose is to inform journalists of an upcoming event and convince them of its newsworthiness.

Media Alert Template

The following is an example media alert template announcing a community fundraiser for a new playground:

[Logo]

MEDIA ALERT

[HEADLINE—ALL CAPS BOLD]

[Subhead - Sentence case italicized, capitalize each word]*

WHO:　　　　[Organization name(s)] seek volunteers for a community playground fundraiser.

WHAT:　　　A community playground fundraiser is happening on [date] at [location]. (This section should provide details on what is occurring and what is requested of the community. The alert should mention interesting details that would entice media to cover the event, including notable features of the playground in which you are fundraising for, a description of photo and interview opportunities, etc. It will also be important to highlight details of your crowdfunding campaign in this section)

WHEN:　　　(Provide date and time)

WHERE:　　(Provide exact location and address)

CONTACT:　(Provide contact information, including a phone number and email)

*The AP rule for subheads: Capitalize the first word of every letter except articles, coordinating conjunctions and prepositions of three letters or fewer. One exception: Any word that is the first word in the headline or the last word should be capitalized, regardless of its part of speech.

Sample:

The following is a media alert issued by a Playworld distributor in Kansas:

MEDIA ALERT

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR PLAYGROUND BUILD AT HESS PARK

Help Bring Play to McPherson on March 25-26, 2016

WHO: The City of McPherson staff, Fry and Associates and Hutton Construction seek volunteers for a community playground build.

WHAT: A community playground build is happening on March 25-26 at Hess Park. Members of the community are invited to volunteer with installation of the play equipment, happening under the guidance of professionals.

This fully inclusive playground, which marks the first play space at the park, was made possible by donations from area residents. The playground will feature equipment from Playworld, a leading playground manufacturer committed to saving outdoor unstructured play, including:

- Cruise Line, a type of zipline swing, providing kids the thrill of perceived risk and speed
- Spinami, an upright spinning whirl
- Revo, a vertical rotating ring
- Cozy Cocoon, an enclosed space providing fun for all children, but specially designed for those with autism spectrum disorders
- Wave Rider Seesaw
- Sierra Climber and RockBlocks - climbing walls for kids to utilize their problem-solving skills

In addition to volunteers, businesses are encouraged to donate food and drinks for the build day.

WHEN: March 25-26, 2016 at 9 a.m.

WHERE: Hess Park
(Corner of Canterbury and West Northview)
McPherson, Kansas

CONTACT: The City of McPherson Public Lands and Facilities Department at

620.245.2535 or wayneb@mcpcity.com.

News Releases

News Release Guidelines

What is a news release?

A news release, also referred to as a press release, media release or simply a release, is a written form of communication targeted to journalists. With the ever-changing media landscape, the terms news release and media release resonate most because both encompass all forms of media (print, online, blogs, broadcast, etc.). A news release demonstrates to a member of the media the newsworthiness of a particular person, event, service or product. Widespread use of the Internet means news releases are accessible to anyone and as such, are powerful tools to convey an organization's message broadly to its audiences.

How is a news release used?

News releases are, for the most part, sent by e-mail to a targeted group of journalists. Often, they are also distributed over a newswire (i.e., Marketwire, Business Wire, PR Newswire) that disseminates the information to various online news databases and thousands of media outlets. Distribution can be customized based on geography and topic.

News releases are often part of a media kit and are provided in print form, electronically on a USB drive or via an organization's online newsroom. The media kit includes background information on the company as well as high-res (300 DPI or higher) images of the company's products or other relevant visuals.

Tips for writing a news release:
- Present the most important information first (the inverted pyramid)
- Write your news release from a journalist's perspective – include the who, what, why, when, where and how
- Stick with the facts and don't editorialize. Avoid marketing speak and using inflated phrases like "breakthrough," "unique," "state-of-the-art," "cutting-edge," etc.
- Incorporate key words and terms to increase the visibility of your release in search engines (search engine optimization or SEO)
- Avoid using insider language, obscure acronyms and industry jargon
- Never use "I" or "we" unless in a quote
- Write with brevity; shorter is better. Try to communicate your message in no more than two pages; one page is even better
- Include standard company boilerplate information at the bottom of every news release

News Release Template

The following is an example news release template announcing the launch of a crowdfunding campaign for a new playground:

[Logo]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

<div align="center">

[HEADLINE—ALL CAPS BOLD]

[Subhead - Sentence case italicized; capitalize each word]*

</div>

[Dateline**] — Organization name, [insert brief organization description], today announced that __(what)_____ at ___(where)___.

Once built, the playground will serve as an inclusive play space for the local community. (Second paragraph should contain additional information about the playground crowdfunding campaign and/or playground equipment – the "why")

(Third paragraph should contain a quote from a designated organization spokesperson or a creator of the campaign)

(Fourth paragraph should provide additional support points that make this project newsworthy, etc.)

(Fifth paragraph should include any remaining details about the campaign such as links, social channels, etc.)

Closing line that leads to boilerplate.

[Insert organization boilerplate]

Media Contact: (this section must include details of a person qualified/trained to speak to the media)
[Insert contact person, organization or position, phone number and email address]

Properly formatting a press release is the best way to ensure it is taken seriously by the news organizations it reaches. The Associated Press (AP) Style regulations are the industry standard dictating press release formatting. The AP Stylebook is a writing style guide for journalists and PR professionals. It is published and updated annually to reflect changes in writing style and new guidelines.

*The AP rule for subheads: Subheads are optional. However, if incorporating one, capitalize the first word of every letter except articles, coordinating conjunctions and prepositions of three letters or fewer. One exception: Any word that is the first word in the headline or the last word should be capitalized, regardless of its part of speech.

**The AP rule for dateline: Datelines should include a city name, entirely in capital letters, followed in most cases by the abbreviated name of the state, county, or territory where the city is located and the date. Refer to this page for list of AP style state abbreviations: http://writingexplained.org/ap-style/ap-style-state-abbreviations

Sample:
The following is a news release issued by Playworld:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PLAYWORLD® UNVEILS UNITY® CONNECT AT ASLA ANNUAL MEETING AND EXPO

Towering, Modern Play System on Display in Booth #621

NEW ORLEANS, La. (October 21, 2016) – Playworld, a leading commercial playground equipment manufacturer committed to saving outdoor unstructured play, will debut Unity Connect at the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Annual Meeting and Expo in New Orleans (October 21-24, 2016). A towering, modern and modular play system, Connect encourages older kids to put down technology, get out of the house and engage in face-to-face interactions and physical activity.

Visitors to Playworld's booth (#621) will have the opportunity to experience Connect firsthand. Created for ages 5-12, the system focuses on bringing children together by providing areas for them to meet, move and define their own paths of play. Various play components of this system feature networks of rope, providing children with dynamic movement, unpredictable challenge and open-ended play opportunities. With both traditional and brand new play events, Connect offers kids a wealth of physical, sensory and social benefits.

"Connect showcases the endless play opportunities that emerge from meaningful design," said Michael Laris, vice president, Global Innovation for PlayPower, Playworld's parent company. "The simple yet unique system allows children to create their own experiences while promoting cooperation. Whether it be playing or relaxing, Connect offers everyone a space for face-to-face interaction, and we're excited to watch ASLA attendees experience it for themselves."

Connect is a hub of the larger Unity Collection—freestanding products that marry exceptional design with unprecedented play value and form a decentralized playground layout, allowing children to move around, explore and discover new ways to play.

Also featured in Playworld's booth are PlayCubes, iconic structures revived through a partnership with architect Richard Dattner. The distinctive, modular design was recreated for even more physical, social and cognitive play value and engagement. The geometric form invites imagination and exploration with undefined paths and varying handholds for climbing. Negative spaces invite kids to play in, on, and through PlayCubes.

About Playworld
Playworld, a division of PlayPower®, Inc., believes The World Needs Play®. Play is vital to everyone's health and well-being. It's something you are never too young or too old to enjoy. We develop playground environments where creativity is king, belly laughs are welcome and children make the rules. Playworld equipment is designed to unleash the transformational power of play so bodies grow stronger and imagination can take flight. For 45 years, Playworld has created innovative, inclusive and meaningful outdoor play experiences for all ages and abilities. Come play with us. Playworld.com

About PlayPower®, Inc.
PlayPower is a global leader in the recreation industry. The company is headquartered in North Carolina, with manufacturing facilities in Missouri, Pennsylvania, Texas, Sweden and the United Kingdom. PlayPower brands include Playworld®, Miracle® Recreation, Little Tikes® Commercial, Soft Play®, HAGS®, EZ Dock® and USA Shade™. PlayPower's vision is To Inspire the World to Play through its mission of Creating Outstanding Play Environments for All Ages and Abilities. More information is available at PlayPower.com. PlayPower is a portfolio company of Littlejohn & Company, LLC and is actively seeking add-on acquisitions.