Story Selling on Kickstarter

Written by mlmoment
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Starting a Kickstarter page may be the contemporary equivalent to buying a lottery ticket. Both hinge on dreams of making money quickly, and by chance. But, as Jason Best, Principal of Crowdfund Capital Advisors in San Francisco points out: "Crowdfunding is not an easy way to raise money. It's a new way to do a difficult thing, which is raising money for a business. It enables you to more efficiently raise the money and shorten the time it takes to do so. But it takes a lot planning, a lot of preparation, and careful execution of your plan" (Assenova et al., "The Present and Future of Crowdfunding," p. 125).

In this MediaLit Moment, your high school students will have the chance to imagine themselves in the position of the entrepreneur who wishes to raise funds on a crowdfunding platform, and learn the basics of creating a project page that's likely to drive traffic to the site.

Ask students to evaluate the effectiveness of a sampling of Kickstarter project pages

Grade Level: 9-12

Key Question #5 for Producers: Have I communicated my purpose effectively?

Core Concept #5: Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.

Key Question #3 for Producers: Is my message engaging and compelling for my target audience?

Core Concept #3: Different people experience the same message differently.

Key Question #4 for Producers: Have I clearly and consistently framed values, lifestyles and points of view in my content?

Core Concept #4: Media have embedded values and points of view.

Materials: Computer with high speed internet access, LCD projector and screen.

Activity: This MediaLit Moment activity requires a little teacher preparation. Visit the Kickstarter home page, then look for the FAQ page, which will provide directions for establishing a Kickstarter account. There's no need to worry about starting a project. Creating a minimal profile page is enough to establish your Kickstarter account. Next, search the site for the Kickstarter Creator Handbook. Read the section titled "Telling Your Story." This focuses largely on putting together the project video. Next, spend a little time browsing successful and unsuccessful projects. Each time you open the Kickstarter main page, you'll see showcases of successful projects, or projects in progress that are doing well. A site search for "unsuccessful projects" or "unfunded projects" should yield several failed campaigns.

For the activity itself, browse a few successful and unsuccessful project pages with your students, and ask relevant questions. Project videos are the first priority. These are essentially three minute elevator speeches which answer those **Key Questions for Producers**: Is it engaging and compelling? What is the project creator hoping to accomplish, why is it important, and what are the benefits for prospective funders? And, what's inspiring the project creator to take the risk of creating the campaign? Ask students to evaluate the pages they've visited. If you have any time to spare, you might also want to take a look at the different features of the project page. How many backers are there for the campaign? Has the project creator been a backer for other campaigns on Kickstarter? Have backers posted any comments? Has the project creator posted any updates? Generally, the more active the site, the more successful the project is likely to be.

The Five Core Concepts and Five Key Questions of media literacy were developed as part of the Center for Media Literacy's MediaLit Kit™ and Questions/TIPS (Q/TIPS)™ framework. Used

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