

Crowdfunding for an established organisation: make your organisation stand out in this fast emerging trend.

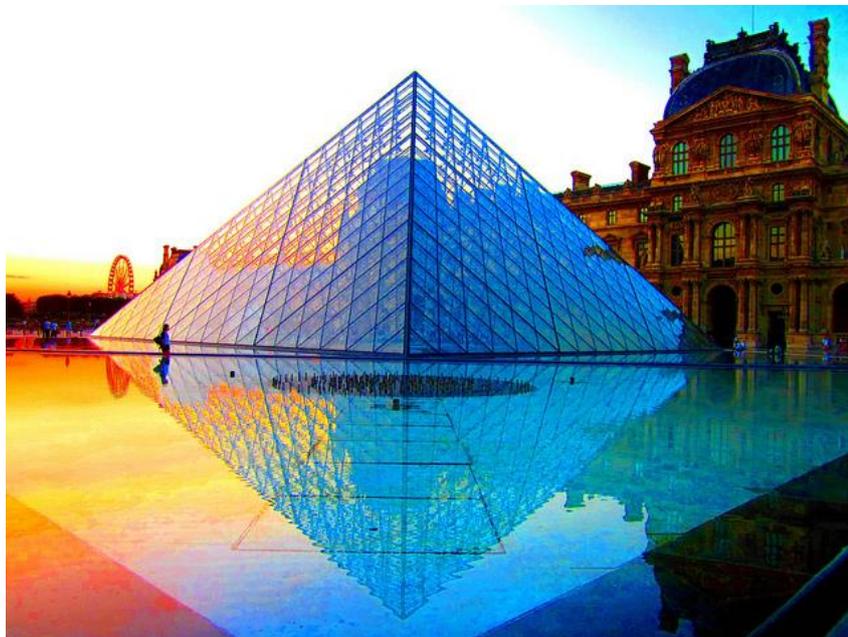


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Historical art museum Louvre captures eight centuries of art and displays a collection containing masterpieces and organises exhibitions that are renowned worldwide.

For the first time in its history, The Louvre sought help from its audience to purchase an artwork of great national value; Les Trois Graces (1531), by Lucas Cranach the Elder has never been on public display and came on sale, by its then owner, for the sum of €4 million. Because of its remarkable condition and technical perfection the painting was assigned the status of National Treasure in 2009, prohibiting the painting from being exported from France. As the sale involved a national treasure, the Louvre had the first right to purchase the artwork. The Louvre collected €3 million from its own funds and corporate donors, however this still was not sufficient. To address this major gap in funding, the Louvre launched the crowd funding campaign 'Tous Mécènes!' to collect the final €1 million. As the French are not as familiar with cultural philanthropy, as say in the US or the UK, the Louvre was positively surprised with the great success of the campaign.

Objectives

- To raise €1 million for the purchase of Les Trois Graces over a period of 3 months.
- To stimulate people to help the museum and to get involved in the purchase of a masterpiece.
- To stay connected to donors and potentially persuade them to become regular donors for the long term.

Target Groups

- The Louvre oriented itself towards online audiences, both French and non-French citizens.

Process

The Campaign was started on 15 November 2010 and was due to last until the 31st of January 2011. However, the campaign ended early, by mid December, when over a million euros had already been donated. As this was the first time crowd-funding, of this scale, had been trialled in France, it quickly attracted a great deal of attention in the media and created a lot of buzz around, and awareness for, the subject.

When you receive a donation of any amount, it is crucial to properly thank people and to ensure you create a connection. The Louvre recognised this and as such they hosted several preview events for larger donors, as well exhibiting a list with the names of all donors during the inauguration of the painting.

Outcomes

- Within one month, the project raised €1,260,000, which far exceeded the target.
- 7200 donors contributed to the acquisition of the masterpiece: the average age was 56, but age ranged from merely a couple of weeks old to 101 years old.
- Donations ranged from small amounts (€1) to large amounts (€40,000)
- Companies and foundations provided an additional €255,350.
- A considerable proportion of the donors to this campaign went on to become regular donors. Approximately 50% of the Louvre's donors are regular donors.

Key points for effective practice

- **Make a clear case and emotional connection to people:** the Louvre were able to exploit the painting's status as a national treasure, which meant that it was clear to people why such a masterpiece needed to be acquired by the Louvre. If it was purchased by another private owner, then there was a chance it would not be seen by the public again, and this created an emotional connection with people.
- **A pressing need:** furthermore, there was the sense of urgency as the auction approached and the risk of this national treasure ending up in the hands of a private collector, instead of the Louvre, became an increasing possibility.
- **Create a strong media profile and reaching the widest audience for the campaign:** crowd funding had never been used as a fundraising tool in the cultural sector in France before, and quickly caused a media sensation, which meant the campaign was widely known of.
- **Accessibility and acknowledgement:** the campaign was accessible to all, as donors could donate any amount of money they wished. All donors were thanked and everybody was acknowledged through a list, which was displayed in the museum for several months. In addition to this, those who had made more substantial donations were invited to special previews.
- **Stewardship:** making a connection, and staying connected with donors, was really important to the Louvre. As a result of this connection, many donors to the campaign remain regular donors to the Louvre. In that sense 'Tous Mécènes' has been an effective tool for gaining more long-term donors.

Conclusions and recommendations

The importance of the acquisition of a national treasure played a crucial part in the crowd funding campaign of the Louvre. This was broadly exploited during the campaign by communicating the rarity of such an opportunity and what the acquisition would mean to the museum, art history and to French citizens at large. A piece of heritage that has never been displayed before would be returned to the country and to the world.

As the painting would be returned to France, and the acquisition concerned all citizens, the Louvre addressed virtually everyone it could reach to contribute to the acquisition. To make donations accessible to all, donors were invited to give as little or as much as they wished, and were able.

What made the campaign of 'Tous Mécènes' of impact in the long term was the amount of regular donors that came as a result of the campaign, which was made possible through the strong connections that were established with donors. The campaign 'Tous Mécènes' is repeated each year for the acquisition or restoration of art works and proves to be a wonderful fundraising tool to increase the amount of long-term donors to the Louvre.

Additional information

[Official Presentation of the Campaign](#)

[Press Document Louvre](#)

About CultureHive

This case study was produced as part of CultureHive, a free knowledge hub where you can discover and share best practice in cultural marketing and fundraising. Visit culturehive.co.uk for more great resources.