

Crowded Cases:

Task-based cases on crowdfunding

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For Melita & Theo.

In memory of Prof. Ashok Ranchhod (The Guru).
His echoes are still heard.

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Introduction

I wrote this book because as a teaching and learning practitioner of crowdfunding for over ten years, I felt there was a need for a teaching resource that would connect learning and teaching of the topic with real world scenarios. So, I started collecting cases on crowdfunding – some our own through the consultancy I ran and some from the many hours I spent observing crowdfunding campaigns and their intricacies around the world. At the time I started this book, there was a lot of tremendous positive publicity around crowdfunding in the general media and also in the academic tomes I was reading. But I couldn't help notice a dark side to crowdfunding that few seemed to be concerned about.

Branding, communication, marketing and crowdfunding are closely aligned and it is this alignment that crowdfunding campaign management often get wrong. This is reflected in the cases that you will be exploring on these pages. The 24 cases presented here were chosen as they offer a broad overview of the conditions of the practice of crowdfunding and provide both learners and teachers with some interesting morale and legal dilemmas from which to analyse and study the crowdfunding ecosystem. It functions not as a go-to resource on what to do under certain conditions, but rather as a platform for deeper discussion and thought on and around crowdfunding campaign strategies.

To this end, this volume is a task-based teaching resource that offers no right or wrong answers. The tasks are there for interpretation by the user and through this interpretation richer insights are gained and a better grasp of the process provided. Many of the cases will assume some understanding of crowdfunding and what the main thrust of the concept involves (branding, communication, funding and marketing). However, as a rough guide for the teacher, there are some indicators of the level of difficulty and prior knowledge needed for each case. These are categorised as 'basic' where very little prior understanding is needed, 'intermediate' where it would be helpful to have had some contact with the topic, or crowdfunding more broadly, to 'difficult', where the main topic is narrow and may require some previous understanding at some level.

These categories are subjective and the ultimate decision is with you as a teacher, whether or not to use the case with your class or adapt it in some way. Your management of the class and the activities they undertake are decisions for you to make. I do offer some help in that the final section in each of the cases is a reflection exercise, which can be really powerful in digging deeper with the learners into the insights they have gained. For teachers, this space can be used for suggestions with a particular class or a particular case, offering insights about why the case worked so well or just a space to discuss the vagueness of it.

The book is about pain relief for teachers with their busy lives and demanding schedules. The main thrust was to produce a resource that housed the main scaffolding for a lesson on crowdfunding in one place. As far as I can tell, this is a first. There is a dearth of resources focused on this specific area, which surprised me, given the success and positive media coverage that crowdfunding seems to have attracted over the years.

As a pain reliever it was important that, as far as possible, Crowded Cases helps teachers introducing crowdfunding to their class for the first time, as this can be a pretty daunting project. Far from wanting to add to your burden, the idea was to eliminate some of the stress of teaching about crowdfunding and to offer some insights of our own that might help broaden cognition of the tasks being considered. For this purpose, the cases are presented in the following format:

Title Page: Case number and name.

Context: A short (normally around 200 words) expert opinion that will aid you by showing how experts would have approached the situation and also provide some additional thoughts on the case that may not have been obvious at first glance.

Plan: This section includes the *level* (basic / intermediate / difficult), the *aims* of the case study, *materials* needed for the class, *procedure* which outlines the approach and sequence for using each case. The *extension* is additional tasks or materials for teachers that wish to explore the topic deeper with their class.

My Session: A template lesson-plan page where teachers can write their own lesson plan, adding notes on appropriate resources or aspects of the group they may need to consider.

Case: Case studies average about half a page, and give the reader a brief insight followed by the task for that case. Some are denser than others and some are purposefully vague in order for the learner to exercise a degree of creativity in their approach to the task.

Team Response: This is where learners get to exercise their creativity by addressing the specific tasks they have been set at the end of each case. The format of this page varies based on the task to be undertaken.

Discussion: Topics that can be used following the case study. These are always aligned with the case and engage learners through lively discourse on their choices and opinions related to the case.

Reflection: There is a dual role with this final section: for learners, it is a chance to reflect on the lesson and think about the issues they addressed and how their understanding may have changed. For teachers, the page is a reflective writing exercise where notes can be recorded for other teachers (or themselves) aiding and improving future use of the case.

One last thing, I have not offered timings, as this is very dependent on the capabilities of your class and also on the time you have available. It is possible to spread the cases over an extended period of time and there is no reason why the tasks cannot be completed in more than one session. By being flexible, I hope to accommodate as many of your classes as possible.

We will also use the term *learner* as opposed to *student*. There is no real reason other than personal preference.

I hope this book serves a purpose for your teaching, adds a little fun at times and makes your learners want to develop their understanding of the themes and issues we will be exploring together. Crowdfunding is an amazing vehicle for testing thoughts, building communities and getting some funding for great ideas. By learning about the intricacies of the process, your learners will be better placed to challenge campaigns they encounter and create robust ones for their own endeavours.

THE CASES

CASE #1

IP ISSUES

How best to protect a jewellery maker from being copied by the crowd.
Learners need to advise Mara with a sound strategy.

#1 – IP Issues

Context

Mara has had her jewellery designs copied by a significant retailer in her home country of Italy. She wants to crowdfund her new range, but fears a similar thing happening again.

One solution might be for Mara to be filmed making the jewellery in her workshop while talking to the camera. This will enable her to tell her side of the story, but she needs to be careful not to make unfounded accusations or to blame anyone in the recording.

This is a human story that, if told well, will produce empathy in the crowd. Mara can explain what happened and thus why she is reluctant to show any final designs at this stage.

Her previous work could also be shown in the pitch. This will demonstrate her authenticity and track record. It will also demonstrate Mara's artisan qualities, which will help reinforce her identity as a practitioner within her community.

#1 – IP Issues

Plan

Level: Basic. Some basic understanding of intellectual property will be helpful.

Aims: To achieve a consensus on what actions Mara should take to protect her project. Skills-based group work, using negotiating skills, making suggestions, listening, speaking and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one member to read out the case study.

Part 2 Teams work together on the options for Mara.

Part 3 Topic discussions are held as an open debate / forum.

Part 4 Close and wrap-up.

- There are a number of options Mara could choose, but encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the position Mara finds herself in.
- This can be done as an individual exercise or as a group task. The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Teams present their findings next time you meet, and vote on the best option / solution.

Extension 2: Set the task of independently learning about copyright laws or intellectual property in your country more widely.

#1 – IP Issues

My Session

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#1 – IP Issues

Case

Mara is a jewellery designer and wants to introduce her own range of earrings and necklaces to the market.

Mara was previously copied by a large corporation and tried to fight them through the courts in Italy (her home country) but ran out of money and energy to continue. Mara is rightly a little worried the same could happen again if she shows the crowd her strategy for the business, which is now located in England.

But she also knows that to be successful in crowdfunding this project, she needs to be transparent and that the crowd will probably want to see the designs she has for the jewellery line she will be producing.

How can she crowdfund using the reward model without showing her finished pieces in the pitch?

Your team must decide how Mara can solve this problem, justifying your answers in the process.

#1 – IP Issues

Team Response

Solution(s):

Justification:

#1 – IP Issues

Discussion

1. Define intellectual property (IP).
2. How can *makers* protect their IP when crowdfunding a product?
3. Do responses to the question above vary depending on the type of IP being discussed?
4. How much should crowdfunders 'give away' by publicly discussing their plans and designs? Why?
5. Discuss the differences in terms of the crowdfunding models and options available. Do the different models impact what can be discussed in the campaign?

#1 – IP Issues

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #2

INNOVATIVE REWARDS

What rewards would you offer for funding a play about homelessness?

#2 – Innovative Rewards

Context

Geert wants to produce a stage play highlighting the issues that homeless people face. The problem is that this is the first time Geert has used crowdfunding and he is really unsure what kind of rewards he should offer the crowd.

As a reward, Geert could offer to film a member of the crowd prior to the show and include them in the production. For example, their small cameo could be projected onto a screen at the back of the stage.

This would serve to help engage the crowd and spread the word about the production. If someone is being filmed and included in the production, you can be sure they are going to tell their family and friends about it!

Other rewards may include: their name in the credits, a signed copy of the script, a visit to see the rehearsals in progress, a meet and greet before the show, a drink with the cast after the show or simply tickets to see the show.

Encourage learners to be creative in their approach to this case. Look at some examples online for ideas.

#2 – Innovative Rewards

Plan

Level: Basic to Intermediate. Some knowledge of the types of rewards offered by other campaigns might be helpful.

Aims: To achieve a consensus on what rewards Geert could offer in his campaign. Task-based group work using negotiating skills, making suggestions, listening, speaking and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics from below. Web access if you are going to encourage teams to search online for examples of rewards. For a list of crowdfunding sites, go to: www.rebelniche.com > Listed.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read out the case study.

Part 2 Members do a 'live search' of the rewards other campaigns are offering.

- Be aware this can be very time-consuming if team members are allowed to endlessly find rewards.
- Encourage teams to set their own time limits for this part.

Part 3 Members suggest rewards Geert could offer in his crowdfunding campaign.

Part 4 Teams now discuss the topic discussion questions.

Part 5 Close and wrap-up.

Extension 1: Teams debate the *economic* and *reputational* costs of their suggestions. This is particularly salient for the theatre production sector.

Extension 2: Look at why the creative industries (generally) are seen as a higher risk by investors when compared with other comparable businesses. This may then be debated via a wiki or blog. Encourage people to share their findings.

#2 – Innovative Rewards

Case

Geert has a piece of theatre he wants to produce (a two-man comedy show). He wants to use the reward crowdfunding model, but he is unsure of the types of reward he could offer.

The play is about homeless people living rough in Plymouth, UK.

Two characters in the play will be projected on stage during the live performance (this will be scripted and filmed beforehand).

Decide on eight innovative rewards Geert could offer and justify your answers.

#2 – Innovative Rewards

Team Response

Rewards:

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

Justification:

#2 – Innovative Rewards

Discussion

1. Which team had the most innovative rewards?
2. Which team had the most practical rewards?
3. If you look at some theatre production crowdfunding campaigns, how well do they tend to do? Why?
4. Do the teams think theatre is a harder 'sell' than some other types of campaign? Why or why not?

#2 – Innovative Rewards

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #3

UNIQUE MODEL

Learners must weigh-up the pros and cons for ambitious Zuleika, who is planning a second crowdfunding campaign before knowing the outcome of her first one.

#3 – Unique Model

Context

Ambitious Zuleika is about to launch her first crowdfunding campaign, while also planning a second even more ambitious campaign. The issue is whether she should talk about the longer-term strategy, or just focus on the initial campaign.

This situation is tricky because on the one hand, campaign managers have to clearly state their vision and their strategy, but on the other hand, they cannot be seen to be running before they can walk and trying to get too far ahead of themselves.

In very broad terms, ambition is good, but not when it becomes tainted with too much ambition, which appears to manifest as arrogance or unrealistic self-appraisal of the opportunity that the vision is capable of obtaining. This latter situation will not generally be viewed positively by the crowd.

#3 – Unique Model

Plan

Level: Basic to Intermediate. Some understanding of the different models of crowdfunding might be helpful for the learners.

Aims: To achieve a consensus on what actions Zuleika should take in her communication strategy. Task-based group work - critical thinking with restricted writing. Teams use their cognitive skills for making suggestions, listening, speaking and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams read the case study, perhaps one person reads to the others?

Part 2 Teams work through the pros and cons of the situation.

Part 3 Now they justify their responses.

Part 4 Open discussion on the task topics below.

Part 5 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise or as a group task. The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: List the most important things to include in any update communication for a campaign in any of the crowdfunding models. Compare and contrast lists between the teams.

Extension 2: Look at some live campaigns in both the crowdfunding (equity) and the reward crowdfunding models. How does the type of language used change between these models? Are there any significant differences?

#3 – Unique Model

My Session

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#3 – Unique Model

Case

Zuleika wants to crowdfund her new widget through the reward model. She has lots of market research to prove the concept is needed/wanted and she thinks she will be in a position to grow and expand quite quickly. So quickly, in fact, that she is already planning her second campaign for an equity raise through crowdfunding (even though the first campaign is yet to launch).

Zuleika has a good track record in sales and is a very ambitious individual. She is confident that she has a very large potential to create a sustainable organisation that will be capable of trading across continents.

Zuleika has asked your team for your opinion: should she communicate this second campaign immediately to the crowd in the first campaign (and risk being seen, or perceived, as too advanced as the concept is not yet on the market), **or** should she **not** mention this second campaign to the crowd in case things don't go to plan with this first campaign?

Your task is to weigh-up the pros and cons and report a final decision for Zuleika to follow.

#3 – Unique Model

Team Response

Pros:

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

Cons:

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

Decision:

#3 – Unique Model

Discussion

1. Which team had the most convincing arguments?
2. In light of the debate, has anyone changed their point of view?
What convinced them to shift their view?
3. In very general terms, do you think stating future plans for a vision will help create a sense of authenticity in a campaign? Why or why not?
4. How might a campaign be damaged by presenting their long-term plans?
5. What factors would you consider before talking about long-term plans?

#3 – Unique Model

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #4

SPECIAL STRUCTURE

A co-operative with a social mission that has the potential for huge returns for early investors, but how can they balance the social versus capitalist messages?

#4 – Special Structure

Context

A social model in a co-operative has the potential to benefit millions of the most disadvantaged people around the world. There are also potentially huge returns for the investors if the predictions of the model are correct.

The issue here is how the crowd will react to the use of the margins and profits the co-op are predicting. At the end of day, this is an untested product in a growing and competitive market. A business-savvy crowd will understand that any business, especially a social enterprise, has to make a profit to be economically-sustainable and continue what they do.

The focus should be on the value the co-op is creating for the world and the benefits this vision delivers. But management should also think about how they would react if the use of profits become an issue. They should prepare a response and as part of the campaign planning, get answers ready for any backlash that may surface.

#4 – Special Structure

Plan

Level: Intermediate. Some very basic understanding of co-operatives and business models might help the learners working on this case.

Aims: Group work, task-based critical thinking. Teams will use their cognitive skills for making suggestions, listening to others, speaking, giving opinions and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read the case study to the team.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and think of an appropriate suggestion.

Part 3 Now teams justify their responses.

Part 4 Open discourse on the discussion topics below.

Part 5 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise but this depends on the experiences of the individual. If, for example, they have a lot of experience in the world of entrepreneurship they may have greater insights.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Teams consider the impact that this product could have in both the majority and minority world. Think about the applications for the product and how it could be used in different sectors of the economy.

Extension 2: Look at the different co-operative models in your country. Where can you find this kind of information, and how clearly is it presented?

#4 – Special Structure

My Session

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#4 – Special Structure

Case

Atul and his team run a co-op. They have developed a solar panel that can be rolled-up and carried anywhere. It is the most efficient the world has ever seen, and the product has the potential to save millions of lives and help countless people in both the majority and minority world. This is a massive market and although the main thrust of the vision is altruistic, the returns for the co-op are huge.

Atul runs a particular type of co-operative. In the rules for being a co-op, his committee must support the community they are helping. However, there are also some special circumstances which mean the co-op may ring-fence 51% of their profit and feed this back into the project. The remaining 49%, however, can be returned to the funders as earnings. This is their intention; the co-op members are all very successful business people and they expect a healthy return for giving their time and energy to the project.

But how do they communicate the co-op model they are using in their reward model crowdfunding campaign without seemingly overly capitalist?

Should this information be in an update, stated clearly from the beginning in the main page or presented formally in their video (or through some other method of communication such as social media, for example). Or, should they not say anything and hope the issue doesn't get highlighted?

Your team must decide and justify your answers.

#4 – Special Structure

Team Response

Decision (tell or keep quiet?):

Justification:

#4 – Special Structure

Discussion

1. Should social enterprises privatise profits?
2. If this co-op was producing a different product, would that change your reaction to the situation?
3. Imagine this co-op was offering the opportunity to buy an equity share in the organisation. What factors would you consider before making an investment decision?
4. Based on the limited knowledge you have of this case, on a scale of one to seven (where one is low and seven is the highest), how would you rate the riskiness of this project?

#4 – Special Structure

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #5

NAUGHTY PARTNER

An ethical / moral choice will challenge learners.
Do they mention a business partner with a large skeleton in their closet...
or do they keep quiet about their past?

#5 – Naughty Partner

Context

A partner, Mel, joins a start-up to help children with learning difficulties, but she was involved with a previous care provider company that was responsible for killing a number of people. Although not directly involved, and cleared in a court case of any personal wrongdoing, this individual could still be seen as a liability for the crowdfunding campaign and the new start-up more broadly.

The issue here is how the crowd will react if they knew about Mel's past, and the impact this might have on the campaign.

Mel has been cleared, but does this mean she is viewed as innocent of wrongdoings by the crowd? That is the main issue, but equally, it is one that can be influenced by owner Aphra, and the team behind the campaign.

For example, the team could state that clear lessons have been learned, the extent to which Mel was complicit in the irregularities at the care provider, and what Mel has achieved since to ensure this kind of malpractice doesn't happen again. These are all positive outcomes that, if true, can help redress the balance a little.

Importantly though, Mel is a partner, as such she will need to be visible (to a degree) to the crowd. This does mean awkward questions may well be asked. Preparation is key.

#5 – Naughty Partner

Plan

Level: Intermediate to Difficult. A good understanding of communication strategy might help learners when tackling this case. There is a lot of missing information where learners will need to use their imaginations to fill in the gaps.

Aims: Group work, task-based critical thinking with restricted writing. Teams use their cognitive skills for making suggestions, listening, speaking and writing.

Warning: Please be cautious, these topics are a little more controversial. Some cultures / people may feel uncomfortable discussing these issues.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read the case study to the team.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and think of an appropriate suggestion.

Part 3 Teams justify their responses.

Part 4 Open discourse on the discussion topics (see warning above).

Part 5 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise but this depends on the experiences of the individual. If, for example, they have a lot of experience in the world of entrepreneurship they may have greater insights.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Teams consider the competition that is out there and the types of products in this space (help for those with learning difficulties). What are the most innovative or surprising products they can find?

As homework, teams could report findings in the next session.

Extension 2: Look at some crowdfunding campaigns that are trying to add value through social enterprise. Compare the language they use against campaigns that are more commercially-focused. How does the language change?

#5 – Naughty Partner

Case

Aphra has just teamed up with a new business partner, Mel, to form a limited partnership.

They are going to produce a new mobile educational game that will help autistic children to manage their stress levels better throughout the day. They intend to use the crowdinvesting (equity) crowdfunding model.

However, Mel, Aphra's new business partner, has a very large skeleton in the cupboard. She was one of a team of accountants for a large care provider in Cornwall. Financial irregularities were discovered at the care provider and this was thought to be the reason why so many corners had been cut - resulting in five deaths.

Mel has had some very negative press coverage, even though she was cleared of any wrongdoing by a court last year. The press was keen to highlight the financial issues at the care provider. Mel was very vocal about the fact that she was never given the full details of the financial position of the company. Publicly insisting on this, Mel became the focus of the presses attention when the story first got revealed two years ago.

This leaves Aphra with a problem. Should she tell the crowd from the outset that Mel is now involved with this project, or should she not say anything about this situation and hope no one brings the question up?

#5 – Naughty Partner

Team Response

Decision (tell or keep quiet?):

Justification:

#5 – Naughty Partner

Discussion

1. What kind of questions can you predict the crowd asking, and how would you respond to try and counter some of the more negative questions?
2. There is a strong social dimension to this campaign, how could this help the campaign?
3. Is there an opportunity to reach out to the five families of those that died and ask them for their help? Why or why not?

#5 – Naughty Partner

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #6

TROLLS

How will learners deal with one individual that is having a major negative impact on a positive crowdfunding campaign that was supposed to do good for animals?

#6 – Trolls

Context

Shane launched a campaign to fight against dog fighting. He physically drives across the country stopping at major dog compounds to promote the message. However, a group known as the Anti Dog Fight Collective (ADFC) have misunderstood the message, and assumed the campaign is *promoting* dog fighting. ADFC have a large membership across the country.

This is a problem of the modern era, where misunderstandings, fake news, disinformation and misinformation can be widely spread in a few minutes. For people like Shane, who find themselves in the middle of this situation, it can be hard to focus on tasks that need doing, to get the attention back on the positive aspects of what he is trying to achieve. The point is, the focus is wrong and even though the reality of what Shane is trying to achieve is stated, this particular group (the ADFC) have misunderstood the message.

The danger is a knee-jerk reaction from Shane to the ADFC which may cause even greater offence. The best approach is to help ADFC members to understand that the campaign is on their side, and that the message may not have been conveyed clearly enough, but is definitely not about harming animals.

It may be that because he is so passionate about this issue, the team raced to get the campaign out there and neglected to test to see if the message was clear enough. Perhaps the ADFC could even help by telling their members to support the campaign?

#6 – Trolls

Plan

Level: Intermediate to Difficult. A good understanding of networks and network effects might help learners with this case.

Aims: Group work, task-based critical thinking where teams use their critical skills for making suggestions, giving opinions, listening, speaking and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Warning: Please be cautious, this case deals with death threats.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read the case study to the team.

Part 2 Teams debate whether to withdraw the campaign immediately.

Part 3 Teams decide on the eight actions and when to implement these.

Part 4 Teams justify their responses.

Part 5 Open discourse on the discussion topics (see warning above).

Part 6 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise but this depends on the experiences of the individual. If, for example, they have a lot of experience in the world of entrepreneurship they may have greater insights.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Think about the tribal aspect of what Shane is trying to achieve. With consumer tribes, it can be difficult to 'sell' things (like ideas) to them, but it may be easier to get their support for a vision like Shane's. With this in mind, try to identify as many consumer tribes as you can, who may be interested in what Shane is doing and thus may support him in his mission.

Extension 2: Hold a competition where the winning team is the one to find the most controversial campaign. This could be live at present or one in the past.

#6 – Trolls

My Session

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#6 – Trolls

Case

Shane is a freelance filmmaker. He is also passionate about the pit bull breed of dog.

For a long time, Shane has been fighting against pit bulls being bred and trained specifically for dog fighting. This is a huge underground business where millions of pounds are exchanged each year, and hundreds of dogs are killed in inhumane manners.

Shane launched his campaign on a reward crowdfunding model platform 15 hours ago, but he has already received death threats - not from those that support dog fighting but from a group called the Anti Dog Fight Collective (ADFC).

It appears they misunderstood the aims of the campaign, and have already started a prolific social media campaign of their own, denouncing Shane and his crowdfunding efforts. They are also connected to several widespread religious groups, who have also started to denounce Shane and his campaign. Shane is a Christian who attends church every month, and is active in his local community. He is gutted by these turns of events.

Your team must decide what eight actions Shane should take to combat or appease the ADFC and when he should implement the strategy you suggest. But before that, there is an even more pressing issue to tackle. Shane wants to withdraw the campaign and rethink the story he is telling. What should he do?

#6 – Trolls

Team Response

Withdraw campaign immediately? YES NO

Actions:

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

When:

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

#6 – Trolls

Discussion

1. How seriously would you take a death threat from a group like this?
2. What actions would you take if you received a death threat?
3. Are threats like this ever justified?
4. How might Shane make the situation worse?
5. Would you ever consider withdrawing a campaign under these circumstances? Why or why not?

#6 – Trolls

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #7

SISTER PRODUCT

An ethical question for learners as they must decide whether to be honest with a platform, or keep quiet about the true purpose of a crowdfunding campaign.

#7 – Sister Product

Context

Melita, a successful business woman, is about to launch a second product by her company. The first was a huge success. Melita wants to test the new version with the crowd and use the crowdfunding platform as a mass focus group where she can garner opinions and views on the new concept with minimal risk. She doesn't need the money at this stage.

This is actually a pretty regular occurrence today and is even accepted (to a degree) by the platforms as part of the business model they themselves have helped develop. In reality, Melita has no obligation to tell either the crowd or the platform of her actual financial situation, unless of course there is a legal reason for doing so.

In this particular case, Melita is merely engaging an enthusiastic crowd and protecting her company by limiting the risks it is exposed to. This could be argued as a justified thing for Melita to do, but if her company fails, everyone loses, including the crowd of enthusiasts.

#7 – Sister Product

Plan

Level: Intermediate. A good understanding of both market research and methods might help learners tackle this case. Extension 2 below requires good research skills.

Aims: Group work, task-based critical thinking with restricted writing. Teams use their critical skills for making suggestions, listening, speaking and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read the case study to the team.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and present their conclusions.

Part 3 Teams write-up their responses.

Part 4 Open discourse on the discussion topics.

Part 5 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise but this depends on the experiences of the individual. If, for example, they have a lot of experience in the world of entrepreneurship they may have greater insights.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: How might Melita use transmedia storytelling to help her in the justification of using the crowdfunding platform for this new product? How might she tell the story behind the product? What strategy should she adopt and how might this change the nature of the campaign?

Extension 2: Find crowdsourcing platforms. What are their terms and conditions for using the platform? How large is their 'crowd' and how successful have previous projects been on these platforms?

#7 – Sister Product

My Session

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#7 – Sister product

Case

Melita is a chef and last year she successfully crowdfunded a new cooking utensil that was very popular. She is already in negotiations to sell the product's rights to a major international retailer, which is a very lucrative deal for Melita's company.

She has now developed a second product that she thinks will be even more successful. It is a much-improved design on the first product.

Melita doesn't need the money to develop this second product, but she would like to use the same crowdfunding platform to crowdsource opinions about the product's design. Her concern is that she might put people off if they knew she doesn't need the money. If the crowd knew that the development was going ahead no matter the financial outcome of this campaign, Melita is concerned that she may turn the crowd against her and the products.

There is also a problem with the platform - they will not be making any money if Melita does not raise her target amount. Should Melita tell either the crowd or the platform her real reason for crowdfunding, or keep quiet?

You are a team of advisors and have been brought in to advise Melita. You have been asked to present both scenarios and the most likely outcome for each of the four possible decisions (i.e., the outcome if she tells the crowd, the outcome if she doesn't tell the crowd, the outcome if she tells the platform and the outcome if she doesn't tell the platform).

#7 – Sister Product

Team Response

Outcome 1: Melita tells the crowd her true reasons for utilising crowdfunding:

Outcome 2: Melita tells the platform her true reasons for utilising crowdfunding:

Outcome 3: Melita doesn't tell the crowd her reasons for utilising crowdfunding:

Outcome 4: Melita doesn't tell the platform her reasons for utilising crowdfunding:

Outcome 5: *An alternative* to the above strategies, agreed by your team:

#7 – Sister Product

Discussion

1. Should platforms police this kind of crowdfunding use?
2. What action can platforms take to prevent this sort of activity?
3. If you discovered this to be the case on a campaign that you had backed, what action, if any, would you take? Why?
4. In this case we don't know the target amount Melita is asking for. Compare the figures below and discuss how they change your response to the case:
a) £5,000 b) £15,000 c) £50,000 d) £150,000 e) £500,000
5. On a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is very low and 7 is the highest), how risky would you rate each of the four strategies proposed? Why?
6. Do you consider Melita immoral? Why, or why not?

#7 – Sister Product

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #8

RUBBISH VIDEO

There is no budget left for the production of a video for a campaign,
so, what can be done?

#8 – Rubbish Video

Context

Theo's campaign needs a video, but he has not got the cash to pay for one!

This is actually quite a regular problem for entrepreneurs and project management that rush to get the campaign out there. One option might be to ask a local video producer to help.

If they could do this on a contingency basis, where they only get paid if the campaign is successful, Theo might be able to get a reasonable-quality video for the campaign and highlight the contribution that the video producer has given.

This option might also mean the video producer being more active in the promotion of the video, as they will have a certain amount of skin in the game and thus it is obviously in their interest for Theo to reach his goals.

#8 – Rubbish Video

Plan

Level: Basic. Only a fundamental understanding of the crowdfunding process is required.

Aims: Group work, task-based critical thinking where teams use their critical skills for making suggestions, giving opinions, listening, speaking and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read the case study to the team.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and write-up their conclusions.

Part 3 Open discourse with the discussion topics.

Part 4 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise but this depends on the experiences of the individual. If, for example, they have a lot of experience in the world of entrepreneurship they may have greater insights.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: This campaign has very limited details. What burning questions would you like to ask Theo? Why and how would this help you come to a decision about funding the campaign?

Extension 2: Find the best advice on video production on budget. Discuss with the group what makes the advice good.

#8 – Rubbish Video

My Session

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#8 – Rubbish Video

Case

Theo is a qualified blacksmith that has just returned to the UK - he has no money but he does have a lot of talent. In America, where he learnt to be a blacksmith, people raved about his artisan craftsmanship.

He has decided to crowdfund the building of a furnace in the back garden of the home he shares with his partner, Isis.

Together, Theo and Isis have produced a video for the campaign. Neither of them has very much experience of doing this sort of thing. The result is a very poor-quality video, the light is good but the sound is poor and the wind can be heard at times on the video. Theo is audible, but with some strain at times.

Your team must help them with five suggestions and some advice around costs. Remember, they have no money for the production of a quality video, so what can they do?

#8 – Rubbish Video

Team Response

Suggestion 1:

Cost:

Suggestion 2:

Cost:

Suggestion 3:

Cost:

Suggestion 4:

Cost:

Suggestion 5:

Cost:

#8 – Rubbish Video

Discussion

1. Do you think Theo will need planning permission for the furnace?
2. What could Theo do to show he is an 'authentic' blacksmith?
3. What do you consider the biggest risk for the crowd in funding this campaign?
4. Imagine Isis and Theo want to use some music in their video as background sound. Where could they find royalty-free music?
5. The campaign is trying to appeal to a very wide audience. What kind of music would you advise Isis and Theo to use in the background of their video? Why?

#8 – Rubbish Video

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #9

SELLING OUT

The funding community are upset as campaign management
sell out to a corporation.
What are the long-term consequences of this for crowdfunding?

#9 – Selling Out

Context

A crowdfunding campaign is very successful and raises a huge amount of money. The owners are then approached by a very high-net-worth and well-known personality who created one of the biggest brands on the planet. They sell, but the crowd only gets the product they funded in the campaign. People aren't happy.

This was a massively controversial move by Facebook to acquire Oculus Rift, a fully-immersive virtual reality system. The controversy was really over the amount of wealth that people thought Palmer Luckey, the founder of Oculus Rift, was getting from the deal.

True, he stood to make a small fortune from the deal, but it would also be true to say that without Facebook behind the project, it might have never got to retail stores at all.

Yes, the figures were huge and the fact that Facebook and their team were behind the deal also added insult to injury for some of the backers who thought that Palmer Luckey, had, in effect, sold them out (see case #10).

Many people that had backed the product in the crowdfunding campaign never got a penny from the sale. But that is how it should be. This was not an equity deal; it was a buyout of a company that had not offered the crowd anything they did not deliver on. Nevertheless, it remains one of the most controversial campaigns in Kickstarter's history.

#9 – Selling Out

Plan

Level: Intermediate to Difficult. Some knowledge of business acquisition strategies may help the learners in this campaign.

Aims: Group work, task-based critical thinking where teams are asked to use their critical skills for making suggestions, giving opinions, listening, speaking and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read the case study to the team.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and write-up their responses to the two questions.

Part 3 Open discourse with the discussion topics.

Part 4 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise but this depends on the experiences of the individual. If, for example, they have a lot of experience in the world of entrepreneurship they may have greater insights.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Write a campaign update stating that the management behind the start-up were actively seeking to sell the company.

Extension 2: What do you need to consider when selling a company which you have spent years building?

#9 – Selling Out

My Session

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#9 – Selling out

Case

Kirsten was a funder who backed a tech hardware / software project.

The campaign was asking for \$250k and closed in September 2012 having raised \$2,437,429 from 9,522 backers (of which Kirsten was one).

In March 2014, it was announced that the start-up was being sold for \$400m in cash with 23.1m shares in the purchasing company and a further \$300m (cash) if certain milestones were reached.

Not bad for a start-up that had no revenue streams yet. But it did have Kirsten and 9,521 backers who stood to make \$0! That's right - nothing.

#9 – Selling Out

Team Response

Is there a moral issue in selling the product for such a large figure?

What does this move do to the reputation of crowdfunding as an emergent form of funding for start-ups?

→ If *damaged* - how can this be repaired?

→ If *undamaged* - how can this be leveraged to the platform's advantage?

#9 – Selling Out

Discussion

1. Imagine if Coca Cola bought the company. Would that change the perceptions of the crowd? How so?
2. What if the management behind the start-up stated in the campaign that they were actively seeking to sell the company – how might that change the backlash against the buy out?
3. Discuss how you would feel knowing you had backed the project.
4. Imagine you work for the start-up. How would you react if:
 - a) You found out about this deal in the press?
 - b) The founder told you in a meeting he had called for all staff?
What would be the difference? Why?
5. Which is the worse situation?
 - a) The company ships the product and fulfils all the orders that it received from the campaign. It then goes bust and production stops.
 - b) The company is sold as in the case study, but the product doesn't sell as expected and the company goes bust.
Why is one worse than the other?

#10 – Selling Out

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #10

SELLING OUT RESPONSES

Management sells a product to a large corporation. The crowd isn't happy.
Learners must develop a communication strategy
responding to the backlash.

#10 – Selling Out Responses

Context

The crowd feels as though management has sold out, and left them with a product that is now associated and managed by a large corporation that seems at odds with the original vision and values of the start-up.

The problem with trolls and negative responses to any campaign is that they cannot be predicted and often seem to come out of nowhere. When they hit, they can be devastating.

This is a good example, people are (rightly?) annoyed by the situation and feel they are owed something in return for their early investment. The truth is, the crowdfunding model was clear, as were the promises the campaign made to the crowd. Nevertheless, people were still angry, and responding in a measured and balanced way is difficult in this situation.

Preparation is the key to any crowdfunding campaign, including any potential backlashes. An excellent exercise to help prepare for any potential backlash is to try and see the campaign from the crowd's perspective and seek out any controversies that you feel may be significant to a particular tribe or person. Next, think about how you are going to address their concerns in a balanced and sober manner.

It's not always easy, and often the backlash is unforeseen prior to the launch.

#10 – Selling Out Responses

Plan

Level: Intermediate to Difficult. Learners will be helped if they have some prior knowledge of business communication.

Aims: Group work, task-based using critical thinking skills where teams are expected to make suggestions, give opinions, listen, speak and write.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read aloud the case study to them.

Part 2 Teams debate the responses they could offer to the four criticisms outlined in the 'case' section. Encourage teams to think of more than one response to each.

Part 3 Teams decide which responses are a best match with the criticism and then write these up.

Part 4 Open discourse with the discussion topics.

Part 5 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation. In part two, allow time for reflection on the responses they might offer.
- This can be done as an individual exercise but this depends on the experiences of the individual and how confident they are dealing with conflict.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Flip the situation and get teams to express their disappointment at the responses from other teams. This may need control if the debate gets heated!

Extension 2: Look at a 'live' campaign and find criticisms of it. How has the management behind the campaign responded? Was this a good or bad response? Why?

#10 – Selling Out Responses

Case

Loykie was a funder who backed a tech hardware / software project.

The campaign was asking for \$250k and closed in September 2012 having raised \$2,437,429 from 9,522 backers (of which Loykie was one).

In March 2014 it was announced that the start-up was being sold for \$400m in cash with 23.1m shares in the purchasing company and a further \$300m (cash) if certain milestones were reached.

Not bad for a start-up that had no revenue streams yet. But it did have Loykie + 9,521 backers who stood to make \$0! That's right - nothing. The members of the crowd were outraged and posted many critical comments.

Your team must respond appropriately to these four criticisms:

1. "You selling out to Facebook is a disgrace."
2. "I cannot put into words how betrayed I feel by this."
3. "I NEVER would've given you a single cent of my money had I known you were going to sell out to Facebook. You sold all of us out."
4. "Your decision not only damages your reputation; it damages crowdfunding as a whole."

Comments taken from: Biancuzzo, M., 29th March 2014, The Dark Side of Facebook's Latest Power Grab, *Wall Street Daily*. Emphasis in original.

#10 – Selling Out Responses

Team Response

“You selling out to Facebook is a disgrace.”

Response:

“I cannot put into words how betrayed I feel by this.”

Response:

“I NEVER would’ve given you a single cent of my money had I known you were going to sell out to Facebook. You sold all of us out.”

Response:

“Your decision not only damages your reputation; it damages crowdfunding as a whole.”

Response:

#10 – Selling Out Responses

Discussion

1. Discuss a set of 10 rules that should be used when responding to deep criticisms from the crowd.
2. Is bad language ever warranted when communicating through open and public forums on the Web?
3. As a PR exercise, do you think there are ever times that this kind of negative commentary can be used to the advantage of the campaign? How?

#10 – Selling Out Responses

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #11

LATER AND LATER

Disaster strikes early in the campaign.
How will learners handle the tense situation and
decide what should be prioritised?

#11 – Later and Later

Context

This is a rare instance of loss of control where a factory in a foreign country and a culture that is alien to the management has suddenly shut down with no warning. This leaves the management with a major problem. The product (a widget) is popular and funding is looking good, but what about getting it produced?

This is a serious issue for Nesta and her company. Not only is she in danger of losing the funding she has received through the campaign so far, but her entire business model is in jeopardy.

Nesta needs to act fast. First, she needs to find a new factory that can produce the widget. Sounds easy, but if the factory needs 'tooling' to produce the widget, Nesta has to find a way to get the new factory up to speed quickly. This is a very rare situation. It is more likely that the widgets the factory produce are not to the standard expected or that the tooling process is taking longer than anticipated, but for a factory to simply close its doors without warning is very, very rare indeed.

Secondly, Nesta needs to reassure the crowd that she is on the case and that things are moving in the right direction.

So, the sequence we would advise would be:

- First, find out what has happened and if it's possible to get the details of the necessary tooling requirements which could then be passed on to the new factory. Better still, can the equipment used to make the widget be transferred to another factory to continue production?
- Find a new factory and get them onboard ASAP.
- Reassure the crowd and explain in full what Nesta knows of the situation.

It is tempting to sit on the bad news and not say anything, but if the crowd was to find out, this could lead to greater embarrassment for Nesta and create distrust amongst the crowd, making a bad situation worse.

#11 – Later and Later

Plan

Level: Intermediate to Difficult. Some operational supply chain knowledge may be helpful for learners using this case.

Aims: Group work, task-based critical thinking with teams applying their critical skills for making suggestions, giving opinions, listening, speaking and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read aloud the case study to them.

Part 2 Teams debate the tasks they have been set.

Part 3 Teams decide on their responses and then write these up.

Part 4 Open discourse with the discussion topics.

Part 5 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation. This can be a difficult task if they have no experience of dealing with suppliers.
- This can be done as an individual exercise but this depends on the experiences of the individual and how confident they are dealing with conflict.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Map out the supply chains that exist in the learners' market. How would they rate these in terms of importance? Why?

Extension 2: Create a presentation on 'slowbalisation' and the impact this has on the learners' markets.

Hint: The Economist newspaper has a few great articles on the term.

<https://www.economist.com/search?q=slowbalisation>

#11 – Later and Later

Case

Nesta's campaign for a new widget is going well. She is 86% funded in the first three days of the campaign.

There are now 20,000 backers of which 19,950 have pledged at a level to receive a minimum of one product, but a major issue has just developed.

The production plant in Asia that is making the widget has just closed its factory doors and sacked all the workers. This is a very surprising move and means that the planned delivery of the widget in nine months is now 18 months away - at best.

According to the terms and conditions of the platform, the backers have a cooling off period of one week after the campaign has closed - in this time, they can decide not to fund the project and withdraw their support.

Your team must help Nesta. How she handles this situation will be the key to success and keeping the crowd's backing.

In teams:

1. Decide when the crowd should be informed of the situation.
2. Draft a statement for Nesta, remember the wording is crucial.
3. Work out a rough strategy for disseminating this information.

Which channels should she use and why?

#11 – Later and Later

Team Response

Decide when the crowd should be informed of the situation.

Draft a statement for Nesta, remember the wording is crucial.

Work out a rough strategy for disseminating this information. Which channels should she use and why?

#11 – Later and Later

Discussion

1. Do you think language barriers are still a major problem in today's global supply chains?
2. When dealing with foreign suppliers, what protection would you expect?
3. What role do you think national governments have in protecting global supply chains?

#11 – Later and Later

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #12

FATAL FLAW

A flawed product means the crowd is going to lose out.
Management wants to run a second campaign soon, so what can they do?

#12 – Fatal Flaw

Context

A campaign closes successfully and the management behind the product then discover a fatal fault in the design.

This is sad news for Yochai. On the bright side, the fault has been identified prior to anything being released and anyone being hurt.

Whatever the issue, management need to act fast and get the widget right before they do anything further.

This campaign had successfully ended, so the campaign management has the money, and it is now down to them to make things right, and ship a new version of the widget, (refunding money is not recommended). The campaign closed, and the crowd should have understood the risks involved.

If Yochai is sincere in his ambition of shipping this product, then he must find a way to do so.

If Yochai does decide to refund the money he received, he will need to think about the logistics of this and the money the company will have lost developing the widget thus far. Some platforms will find the idea of refunding money problematic.

#12 – Fatal Flaw

Plan

Level: Intermediate to Difficult. Some understanding of business communication and the risks inherent in a crowdfunding crowdfunding model may help learners in completing this case. This case study is vague and teams will need to be creative. They will need to imagine the extent of the criticisms likely to be received.

Aims: Group work, task-based critical thinking where teams use their critical skills for making suggestions, giving opinions, listening, speaking and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read aloud the case study to them.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and choose which statement they are going to write. Ensure teams are fully behind the decision they have chosen.

Part 3 Teams write their statements up.

Part 4 Open discourse on their decisions. Teams read them out and discuss the choices they made, followed by the discussion topics.

Part 5 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Acting as journalists, learners research a campaign in their sector and write a short news article about the success / failure. Encourage the learners to fact-check any criticisms or praise they talk about in their piece.

Extension 2: Learners have to find an example of criticism being levied at a campaign and the kind of responses given by the management behind the campaign.

#12 – Fatal Flaw

My Session

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#12 – Fatal Flaw

Case

Bad news has just arrived. Having successfully raised the £300,000 needed to make a new widget for the market, Yochai has just been informed that the product doesn't work.

There is a fatal flaw in the design that means it is too dangerous for the market and the Federation of Widget Controls has asked that it be banned.

Press and media, more generally, were already very critical of both the product and the team. They saw the product as a 'gimmick', and in an article they suggested that the team lacked business experience.

How can Yochai limit the damage while also telling the backers (the campaign finished six months ago) that they have actually backed a product that will never be produced? He used the equity (crowdinvesting) crowdfunding model that states in the terms and conditions of investing that problems of this nature **do not** mean an automatic refund for investors.

Your team must help Yochai to decide on his course of action and then craft a statement in relation to the choice. Be careful of your wording and what you say - there may be a need for Yochai to crowdfund more products in the future.

#12 – Fatal Flaw

Team Response

Decision to go back to the drawing board and try again. Craft your statement below:

Draft a statement for Yochai that, in effect, means that the company is closing:

Decision to refund all investments. Craft your statement below:

#12 – Fatal Flaw

Discussion

1. As an investor, what would you prefer Yochai do; refund or try again? Why?
2. Do you believe investors should be made aware of this kind of risk?
3. How risky do you think investing in start-ups and small enterprises is in today's market? How could this be better managed?
4. This campaign received some strong criticism in the general press, do you think this should have served as a warning for investors? Why or why not?

#12 – Fatal Flaw

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #13

FREEZING BRUCE

A change in musical direction for a band leads to a serious backlash.
Learners need to act quickly to keep the campaign on track.

#13 – Freezing Bruce

Context

A rock band called Freezing Bruce is crowdfunding their next album. They have decided to change artistic direction and depart from their traditional genre of rock. The problem is, they have not told their fans who are funding this new album.

The arts can have some very deep-felt connections with their fans and followers.

Music is particularly prone to this; however, we do not know the age of the fan base, merely that the musical genre has been 'rock' in their previous releases. Now though, they're changing their musical direction and this will not appeal to every one of their fans.

Some are going to be disappointed with the changes they have made.

In reality, this case was based on a campaign that failed to adequately prepare the fans for this change and it led to some very vociferous criticism on social media.

#13 – Freezing Bruce

Plan

Level: Basic to Intermediate. A limited understanding of crowdfunding is required for this unit.

Aims: Group work, task-based critical thinking with teams using their critical skills for making suggestions, giving opinions, listening, speaking and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read aloud the case study to them.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and think about the approaches they will adopt to the three criticisms outlined in the ‘case’ section, and the final decision on whether to explain the change in direction. Ensure team members are all behind the decisions they make.

Part 3 Teams write out their responses.

Part 4 Open discourse on their decisions. Teams read them out and discuss the choices they made, followed by the discussion topics.

Part 5 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Learners choose the optimal channels to message the target demographic of the band. This extension will need learners to make some conjectures about the band and the demographic of their fans.

Extension 2: Choosing different genres of music, learners search for criticisms and apply text analysis techniques to categorise the criticisms they found. Were there any patterns?

#13 – Freezing Bruce

My Session

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#13 – Freezing Bruce

Case

Rupinder is the campaign manager of a popular and well-connected rock band called Freezing Bruce. They are looking to raise £50,000 to produce their next album using the reward model.

Freezing Bruce has won several nominations for top awards in your country and have had a triple platinum album in the last 24 months (selling over 3 million units).

The band has decided to move their musical focus away from their traditional genre of pure rock, and introduce a more subtle electro sound. This is obviously not to the taste of a majority of their fans who will be expecting a more traditional rock-based sound.

As the manager behind the campaign, Rupinder knows there are going to be very loud criticisms aimed directly at the band and she is predicting the following issues as being the most salient:

- The band have enough money to cover the costs of production without crowdfunding this album.
- Fans are asked to take the risks while management / band take all the profits.
- Only a limited number of fans will be able to back the project.

As well as addressing these issues, Rupinder has asked your team to consider whether she should mention the change in musical direction that this album signals.

How should Rupinder address these issues and persuade the crowd to back the campaign?

#13 - Freezing Bruce

Team Response

Criticism that will need responding to:

1. The band have enough money to cover the costs of production:

2. Fans are asked to take the risks while management / band take all the profits:

3. Only a limited number of fans will be able to back the project:

Now outline whether Rupinder should mention the change in musical styles for this album, and justify your reasoning:

#13 – Freezing Bruce

Discussion

1. Do you think there is no such thing as *bad* publicity? Justify your opinion.
2. How would you rate the risk of **not** telling fans about changes to artistic direction before a new album gets released?
3. What do you consider the worst thing that could happen when fans realise the artistic change?
4. It could be argued that changing musical direction for any famous band is a tough thing for them to do and presents loyal fans with some difficult choices. What would you say is the main moral obligation of any band wishing to change their artistic direction?
5. As manager, should Rupinder quit? Why or why not?

#13 – Freezing Bruce

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #14

PAYING YOUR TEAM

A huge fan base raises a lot of money for their band,
but the band has not been paying local musicians.
How would learners cope?

#14 – Paying Your Team

Context

A fantastic response from the crowd means a huge amount of money is raised for a band, Amazing Palms. The band regularly reach out to local musicians where they are playing, offering an opportunity to play live with them. No money is exchanged, the reward for the local musicians is the kudos of playing with the band. Until now, this hasn't been an issue. But, with such a large amount being raised, fans are now questioning if these local musicians should be paid.

Amazing Palms is trying to be more inclusive with their fan base and fellow musicians. The band's ethos was always to be inclusive and not exclude any local talent.

However, the large figure they have managed to raise from their fans seems to have upset the balance. Not paying fellow musicians for their part of the Amazing Palms act now seems like a snub and has put the band in a tricky position.

Amazing Palms has done nothing wrong; this is really a moral code that they appear to have broken for some of their fans. We don't know how many fans have reacted negatively and we don't know the extent of the damage the press coverage has had on their tour. So, learner responses will, to a greater degree, depend on how the teams gauge the depth of the criticism and the volume of fans that have been critical.

#14 – Paying Your Team

Plan

Level: Intermediate to Difficult. Some understanding of the connections and networks necessary for crowdfunding to work might be helpful for the learners.

Aims: Group work, task-based critical thinking with teams using their critical skills for making suggestions, giving opinions, listening, speaking and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read aloud the case study to them.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and think about the approaches they will adopt to the criticisms and how they will respond. Ensure teams are fully behind the decisions they make.

Part 3 Teams write out their responses.

Part 4 Open discourse on their decisions. Teams read them out and discuss the choices they made, followed by the discussion topics.

Part 5 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Do learners see this as a moral issue, or is there another way they would see the problem Amazing Palms has faced? Brainstorm how they could handle the situation and compare how each group (or person) might approach the issue.

Does this change depending on how they see the issue?

Extension 2: Choose a country that you would like to travel to with your (imaginary) band. List all the logistical issues you would face transporting yourselves and the equipment to that country. As an extra challenge, make it a really remote location!

#14 – Paying Your Team

Case

Jonas is the campaign manager of a popular and well-connected pop group called Amazing Palms. The campaign has now finished and it was looking to raise £80,000 to produce an album, tour and booklet using the crowdfunding reward model.

The campaign smashed all expectations and managed to raise £1.5m - an incredible figure that means the planned tour will be much better than expected.

The album will be produced with some even bigger industry names.

The booklet will also be much broader than originally planned, as there is now so much more of a story to tell. All rewards from the campaign have been delivered on time and to a quality as stated in the main campaign. Fans are happy.

So, things were looking rosy, until last night when the first concert was played.

Amazing Palms often plays with local musicians alongside the core band members. They view this as part of their fan connection and two days ago, as is custom, they put out a call for local musicians to come and play live with them at the gig.

However, this time, and as a direct result of their massive success with their crowdfunding campaign, they have been heavily criticised in the national media and on social media for not paying these local musicians.

As management, it is Jonas's job to address this criticism and try to quell some of the bad feeling this seems to have generated among the fan base, but how should he do this and what could he say to convince them?

Your team must devise adequate responses for Jonas to use.

#14 – Paying Your Team

Team Response

Some of the criticism on social media:

“The money raised should be used to pay local musicians, no question.”

“At the very least, surely Amazing Palms can pay the invited musicians’ expenses.”

“What a cheek, they have just raised over a million, how dare they NOT pay the musicians they have INVITED to play with them, this is an outrage.”

Your team response:

#14 – Paying Your Team

Discussion

1. Can a negative post on social media ever be a good thing?
2. How do funders' expectations change when the vision being crowdfunded is an intangible product?
3. Should all musicians be members of a musicians' union?
4. Imagine you are a musician and you have been invited to play with a band that you have admired for a long time. The gig you are going to play at is 100 miles away and you need to travel and stay overnight at the destination, but the band managers have not mentioned paying any expenses. Do you risk losing the chance to play with them by mentioning / demanding travel expenses to their management?

#14 – Paying Your Team

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #15

ELITIST CLAIMS

A punk band with anti-capitalist messages is allowing the management to crowdfund on their behalf, how can learners best manage this?

#15 – Elitist Claims

Context

An anti-establishment punk band, Armis Sextus, is crowdfunding and some of the rewards offered appear to be in conflict with the band's and the fans' anti-capitalist values.

Above all this is a political problem where Armis Sextus has probably contractually agreed to this early-bird investment party and not really thought the situation or the perceptions from their (loyal?) fan base through.

This is not the first time these kinds of accusations have been made towards an artistic vision and probably not the last either. The options for the management are to speak on behalf of the band and try to appease the fans by explaining that it was their thinking and not the band's, or, riskier still, let the band have their say on the situation.

The problem with this latter option is that the band may say something that incites the fans further. This could also be the case if the management appear to be the band's mouthpiece. Fans might take the opinion that the management is muffling the voice of the band.

Perhaps that is not such a bad thing in these circumstances?

#15 – Elitist Claims

Plan

Level: All. This unit is really down to the learners in terms of how complicated they wish to make the responses.

Aims: Group work, task-based critical thinking where teams use their critical skills for making suggestions, giving opinions, listening, speaking and writing using brainstorming techniques.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read aloud the case study to them.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and think about the approaches they will adopt to the criticisms and which key words they will take ownership of. Ensure teams are fully behind the decisions they make concerning the overall approach and also the key words they choose.

Part 3 Teams write out their two responses (press release and website copy).

Part 4 Open discourse on their decisions. Teams read them out and discuss the choices they made, followed by the discussion topics.

Part 5 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Who would the teams 'blame' for this situation? On a scale of one to four (one = no blame, 4 = serious blame) get teams to address the issue and ask them to rate both the band and Harriet, the manager. Open this up to discussion.

Extension 2: Looking online at your favourite band(s), what channels are they communicating with their fans through? In your opinion, are these the optimal channels the band could be using? Do the channels change depending on the genre of music the bands produce? Again, thinking about alternative channels – where could they have more impact?

#15 – Elitist Claims***My Session***

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#15 – Elitist Claims

Case

Harriet is the manager of a popular and well-connected punk band called Armis Sextus.

The crowdfunding campaign was launched yesterday and is looking to raise £50,000 to produce their next album using the reward model. Their campaign will run for four weeks.

The strategy was to allow the first funders of the first £10,000 of the campaign to be present at a private function (with the band playing a private gig) once the campaign had closed. Funders would need to give a minimum of £500 to access this reward.

However, today social media is full of negative comments about Armis Sextus being too elitist in their approach of offering a ‘special’ private function for the first round of funders.

There is also some secondary criticism about the use of crowdfunding by Armis Sextus. The band members have often been quite vocal in their opposition to “unfettered capitalism” and their song lyrics often reflect this position.

It is essential Harriet responds today, on day two of the campaign. What should she say to counter some of this criticism and how should she respond to the direct accusations of being inauthentic to the core principles of Armis Sextus and their fans?

Map out the responses and then compose an adequate reply to the criticism which will be sent to press and used for social media posts (including their own website).

#15 – Elitist Claims

Team Response

Task 1: Brainstorm the key words you will own in your team's response.

Task 2: Write a press release (remember to include the key words).

Task 3: Write copy for the Armis Sextus website. Again, remember to include the key words from task one.

#15 – Elitist Claims

Discussion

1. Authenticity is highly regarded in a crowdfunding campaign. Can another person speaking on behalf of someone else ever be truly authentic?
2. Does *elitism* concern you with regard to tiers in a reward model crowdfunding campaign? Why or why not?
3. Do you regard special rewards for the early investors, in this case of £500+, to be appropriate in any crowdfunding campaign?
4. How serious do you think the situation really is? Do you think in three years' time anyone will remember the backlash against their campaign?

#15 – Elitist Claims

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #16

WHITE SLAVES

Prepare for the backlash. A controversial 'serious' video game needs help with their communication strategy.

#16 – White Slaves

Context

A 'serious' game is a game with purposes other than pure entertainment. In this case, the other purpose was education about the treatment of slaves. But, by the very nature of the sensitivities of the game, it created a lot of heated debate with some gaming communities. This got so intense that the game was pulled from a well-established streaming service.

The issue is twofold; firstly, the very idea of a game based on slavery and the conditions of slavery can be repugnant to some people. Secondly, and this follows from the first, people often forget the educational element of the game and by default think this is in some way irresponsible of the game developers.

This case is based on a real game called *Playing History Slave Trade 2*, by Danish game developer, Serious Games Interactive. The game was focused on the slave trade that crossed the North Atlantic to the Americas.

It got pulled from the streaming service Steam even though the producers had defended the game and attempted to highlight the educational aspects over the 'entertainment' ones. Nevertheless, this game remains one of the most contested in Steam's history.

#16 – White Slaves

Plan

Level: Intermediate to Difficult. There are sensitive issues in this unit that need to be addressed appropriately.

Aims: Group work, task-based critical thinking with teams using their critical skills for making suggestions, giving opinions, listening, speaking and writing.

Warning: Please be cautious, these topics are a little more controversial. Some cultures / people may feel uncomfortable discussing these issues.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read aloud the case study to them.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and think about the category the game should be under and the backlash they would expect against this game. Ensure teams are fully behind the decisions they make concerning the overall approach.

Part 3 Teams write out their two responses (category and strategy).

Part 4 Open discourse on their decisions (see warning above). Teams read them out and discuss the choices they made, followed by the discussion topics.

Part 5 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: What elements of the game do teams consider to be the most controversial? Explore why this is the case in the context of the social norms of the local community in which learners inhabit.

Extension 2: What's missing from the game? Search for the historic contexts to slavery and look at elements that could be added to the game making it more relevant, by further exploring the slave industry of the 18th century to today.

#16 – White Slaves

Case

Amar has developed an historic game called *White Slaves*.

The aim of the game is to steer a ship through chartered waters and, in pirate-style raids, capture (enslave) the people living in small villages close to the shore in Southern England.

Part of the game is Tetris-style, where players have to load the captured slaves into the hull of a vessel for transportation to North Africa. The objective is to fit as many of the slaves as possible into a limited asymmetrical space.

In the game, players are the captain of the ship and in this role, they must pack as many of the slaves into the hull of their vessel as possible. There will also be the possibility of capturing fishing vessels and their crews at sea, increasing the total number of slaves.

This will be a controversial game, but Amar has taken some advice and decided the benefits of educating people about the condition's slaves were transported in, and the ethics behind their treatment, far outweigh any offence that may be caused to descendants of slaves.

Your team's mission is to firstly decide what category the game should be listed in, and then decide on a strategy to deal with the expected backlash against the game.

#16 – White Slaves

Team Response

Task 1: Category...

Task 2: Strategy for backlash (first, think about the kind of backlash your team expect and then work from there to develop a strategy).

#16 – White Slaves

Discussion

1. Is there a difference between controversial educational topics being taught via a textbook versus being taught via a serious game?
2. If this serious game was a board game, as opposed to a video game, do you think it would have been less controversial? Why or why not?
3. Should this topic be taught in schools? If so, at what age should the topic be introduced?
4. Given that this product is going to prove to be controversial, what restrictions, if any, would you expect for the game being advertised?
5. If this game used the concept of aliens coming to Earth and taking people as slaves to work on another planet, would this make the game more or less controversial? Why might this be the case?
6. Can you think of any 'controversial' political situations that have been portrayed as a science fiction story in the arts? Would TV shows and films like *Star Trek* be examples of this?

#16 – White Slaves

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #17

GATEKEEPERS

Learners must persuade a platform to allow an innovative adult health and well-being product on their platform.

#17 – Gatekeepers

Context

This is a sensitive case in that it deals with sexual health. A client wanted to crowdfund the manufacture of a universal sexual masseur tool specifically aimed at the female market. The issue is that the platform refused to host the product on the basis that they did not have a category for this type of product.

This issue is less of a sensitivity today in the crowdfunding industry - the predicted growth in sex robots* and human-machine sexual encounters is expected to be prevalent by 2050**. The issue, for some, is already out of date. For example, most platforms frequently have innovative adult-themed gadgets on their platform and have no issue with creators promoting these products.

This case was a real one, and the creator found it frustrating that the platform she had attempted to use had, in effect, acted as a gatekeeper for what was a well-researched and proven product. Although she lacked business acumen, she had a real passion and drive for the product.

She understood the health and well-being benefits this could deliver. At the end of day, that is perhaps the most important factor, that creators believe passionately in what they are doing. Although you may lack business acumen, passion and drive often counter this.

Sources:

* Horton, H. (2015) 'By 2050, human-on-robot sex will be more common than human-on-human sex, says report', *The Telegraph*. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/news/11898241/By-2050-human-on-robot-sex-will-be-more-common-than-human-on-human-sex-says-report.html>

** McCarthy, N. (2017) 'Would You Have Sex With A Robot?', *statisica.com*, 9 October. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/chart/11390/would-you-have-sex-with-a-robot/>

#17 – Gatekeepers

Plan

Level: Intermediate to Difficult. This case deals with adult-themed issues, and so a mature outlook is expected of learners.

Aims: Group work, task-based critical thinking with teams using their critical skills for making suggestions, giving opinions, listening, speaking and writing.

Warning: Please be cautious, these topics are a little more controversial. Some cultures / people may feel uncomfortable discussing these issues.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below. Internet access if you wish to refer to the sources in the ‘context’ section above.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read aloud the case study to them.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and think about the main thrust of their argument to the platform, the channels of communication which will be most effective and the timing of these communications. Ensure teams are fully behind the decisions they make concerning the overall approach.

Part 3 Teams write out their responses (they could use bullet points).

Part 4 Open discourse on their decisions. (see warning above). Teams read them out and discuss the choices they made. Followed by the discussion topics.

Part 5 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Imagine the learners represent the platform. Draft a policy statement (300 words) on why these products are forbidden from the platform.

Extension 2: What are the most credible predictions for this market in the next five to ten years? Why are these sources so credible?

#17 – Gatekeepers

My Session

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#17 - Gatekeepers

Case

Shilha has developed an innovative adult amusement aid specifically for the female market.

After several years' consultation and market research, Shilha has developed an innovative product that is charged via USB, is waterproof, has an antibacterial coating and is small enough to fit in most jean pockets. 99% of the 1,000 people used in the focus groups (USA and Europe) also commented on the design, with frequent comments like: "Really cool design", "Finally something I can carry without embarrassment" and "It's cool design means I would be happy with others knowing I owned one of these".

Research has also convinced Shilha that the time and the market are right for such a product. However, the platform she has approached, Indie-kick-kick-go, have rejected the product outright, claiming that the product does not 'fit' any of their categories.

Your team must now decide on a strategy to persuade Indie-kick-kick-go that the product is wanted and that there is sufficient demand for the campaign to succeed.

Think about these questions:

- How will you persuade Indie-kick-kick-go?
- What channels will you use?
- How can timings help you maximise your impact?

#17 – Gatekeepers

Team Response

Persuasive argument (spend time crafting this point of view):

What channels will you use?

How can timings help you maximise your impact?

#17 – Gatekeepers

Discussion

1. Do you think adult entertainment gadgets should be separated on crowdfunding platforms?
2. Predictions suggest that by 2050 human-machine sexual interactions will be prevalent. Do you find this prediction uncomfortable? Why or why not?
3. Discuss the potential 'harm' you predict in a society where human-machine sexual encounters are prevalent.
4. Discuss the potential for positive health / well-being benefits you can predict in a society where human-machine sexual encounters are prevalent.
5. With the pornography industry attempting to go more mainstream, what effects do you forecast for that industry if the predictions of increased human-machine sexual interactions are correct? Explain your opinions.
6. What do you think would make human-machine sexual interactions socially more acceptable in a society? Why?

#17 – Gatekeepers

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #18

KILLING MONUMENT

Learners create a strategy for persuading their local population to stop crowdfunding a military heritage monument.

#18 – Killing Monument

Context

A development company wishes to build several high-income leisure and retail facilities in a town. They also propose to build a monument (statue) to a military artillery tank that was built in the town during a global conflict.

This sort of issue can seriously split communities. They are rightly proud of their heritage, but on the other hand, they are also struggling with social conditions deteriorating the developers, BLDC, may bring jobs to the area, but at what cost?

They propose to build a five-star hotel that needs to attract clients of a certain standing, but will this monument help or hinder this objective?

There are many things to consider, and the learners using this case have been given a small insight into some of the concerns. However, the main arguments they have been given are purposefully vague. It is up to the learners to choose to use these or not. If they do use them, then they will need to elaborate on the issues further.

Learners may have experience of this type of development or of the social issues outlined. If so, ask them to contribute their experiences of these issues and the kinds of impact this has had on their local community.

#18 – Killing Monument

Plan

Level: Intermediate to Difficult. A good understanding of community issues, campaigning and the development (building) process will help learners in this unit.

Aims: Group work, task-based critical thinking where teams use their critical skills for making suggestions, giving opinions, listening, speaking and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read the case study aloud.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and think about the main thrust of their opposition to the monument. Learners also need to consider the communication strategy they consider to be the most effective - this should include timings, channels and message. Ensure teams are fully behind the decisions they make concerning the overall approach.

Part 3 Teams write out their responses. They may wish to brainstorm ideas first.

Part 4 Open discourse on their decisions. Teams read them out and discuss the choices they made, followed by the discussion topics.

Part 5 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Write a policy document for the local council to follow. This document should outline the criteria for the council to consider funding a local arts or heritage project.

Extension 2: What controversial planning decisions can you find in relation to your local community? What backlash was there and what was the outcome of this activity?

#18 – Killing Monument

My Session

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#18 - Killing Monument

Case

Raj is a crowdfunding expert and has been asked to help a local development company raise money for a monument celebrating the 'Super Turret' tank, an artillery weapon that was largely attributed as helping Britain win the Second World War. There are strong local links with the tank's creation.

The Big Local Development Company (BLDC) is redeveloping a park with three large international retail units, a casino and a five-star luxury hotel. The annual rents BLDC will receive are staggering.

Your team are outraged that BLDC are asking the local community to fund this project via a crowdfunding campaign. Your team has decided to mobilise, and start a counter social media campaign to persuade Raj and other local people that funding this monument should be done by the property developers and not by the local residents (most of whom live just above the national poverty line).

The main arguments to consider are:

- 1. Glorifying a weapon of mass destruction may send out the wrong message.
- 2. The BLDC should fund this tribute themselves.
- 3. There are rumours of corruption at local council levels that need addressing.
- 4. More should be done with the profits for local residents.
- 5. There are other significant issues that need addressing in the region.
- 6. Schools in the local area are under-resourced.
- 7. Recently, there has been a significant rise in gang-related crime.

Your team must help persuade the developers to build this monument themselves and not to burden the proud local community, who generally look favourably on their past industrial expertise. To do this, you need to devise a strategy for using social media to communicate with both the local community and the developers.

Which arguments do you think are the most persuasive and which do you feel will have the most impact?

#18 – Killing Monument

Team Response

Choice of arguments:

1. Glorifying a weapon of mass destruction may send out the wrong message.
2. The BLDC should fund this tribute themselves.
3. There are rumours of corruption at local council levels that need addressing.
4. More should be done with the profits for local residents.
5. There are other significant issues that need addressing in the region.
6. Schools in the local area are under-resourced.
7. Recently, there has been a significant rise in gang related crime.

Outline strategy:

#18 – Killing Monument

Discussion

1. Is there ever a time when the industrial past should not be celebrated?
2. Should companies that do social harm be forced to provide some added value to the communities where the harm has occurred?
3. Do you consider gambling an issue in your country? Why or why not?
4. Discuss the potential benefits and disadvantages of having a five-star hotel in your local region.

#18 – Killing Monument

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #19

NO FLIGHT

Susan is too ill to fly home.
Learners must decide what Susan should do with the money raised.

#19 – No Flight

Context

Susan has completed a successful crowdfunding campaign to fly home to the UK from her base in New Zealand, but has now been given devastating news, her illness is preventing her from flying.

These situations are always difficult. The crowd has generously given the money in good faith and received a warm glow of satisfaction knowing they have benefited another human being in crisis.

For the most part, the crowd will not be worried about losing a small amount while trying to help. However, there will undoubtedly also be a small number of people that will consider this a sham and want recourse in some form.

It is these people that need the most attention and persuasion. For example, they may claim that the money should be refunded to them and that Susan should have known about the possibility of not flying home.

Susan and her family could choose to ignore these people, but the issue may become greater if the story gains traction and the press start to focus on the topic.

#19 – No Flight

Plan

Level: Basic. A basic understanding of the crowdfunding process is helpful in this unit.

Aims: Group work, task-based critical thinking with teams using their critical skills for making suggestions, giving opinions, listening, speaking and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read the case study aloud.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and think about the sensitivities of this case. Learners need to consider what they will do with the money raised, and how they will communicate this with the crowd. Ensure teams are fully behind the decisions they make concerning the overall approach.

Part 3 Teams map out the scenarios for what to do with the money. For this part, they may wish to brainstorm ideas.

Part 4 Open discourse on their decisions. Teams read them out and discuss the choices they made, followed by the discussion topics.

Part 5 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Discuss how the differences in age, gender or money raised might impact the outcomes of such a campaign. For example, how do you think people would react if Susan was much younger with small children? Or if Susan was a very religious person? What if she was male instead of female? How might this campaign be different if the patient was not human, but a much-loved pet? What difference does the money raised make, for example, if the campaign had raised £100,000 instead of £5,000?

Extension 2: In the above scenario, research which crowdfunding platform you would choose and then justify your rationale for the choices you reach.

#19 – No Flight

My Session

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#19 – No Flight

Case

Susan, 53, is a mother of two children (one 23 and the other 25). She and her life partner (Kurt, 45) emigrated to New Zealand five years ago.

Susan was diagnosed with terminal cancer 6 months ago and crowdfunded her ticket home to the UK for her last Christmas with her remaining family. Her sons were also flying to the UK from Canada and China where they work.

The ticket was crowdfunded as Susan and Kurt simply have no money left from all the medical bills that have accumulated, and the time off that both Susan and Kurt have had since Susan's diagnosis.

However, following a recent medical scan, she has now been told that the cancer is spreading faster than expected and that chemotherapy will start sooner than originally anticipated.

This means she will not be able to travel as expected, even though she received £5,000 from the crowdfunding campaign for a flight home.

Your team must brainstorm and make a final decision as to what Susan should do with the money raised. Produce arguments for both sides (return the money to the crowd or keep it). Simply giving this money to charity is not an option and forbidden in the terms and conditions of the platform used.

#19 – No Flight

Team Response

Return the money to the crowd?	
Yes	No
Final Decision:	

#19 – No Flight

Discussion

1. Do you think crowdfunding platforms should carry out due diligence on all campaigns they host? What might prevent this from happening?
2. How likely would you be to donate to this kind of campaign?
3. Do you think that the family have a right to keep the funds and use them for any purpose they see fit? Why or why not?
4. Discuss the ways in which you consider it **unacceptable** for the family to use the money for the following:
 - Towards funeral costs.
 - Returning the body to the UK.
 - Flying family to New Zealand.
 - A holiday for Kurt after Susan's death.
 - Towards medical bills.
 - Towards rent / mortgage payments.

#19 – No Flight

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #20

VALUATION

Roo has blundered - he accepted a finance deal while a campaign is running.
The deal undermines the valuation in the campaign.
What should he do?

#20 – Valuation

Context

This situation is difficult and suggests incompetence on Roo's side.

He either took advice that was wrong, decided to take an easier route than crowdfunding the project or he is simply giving up and (in his mind) is selling out to the highest bidder.

Business can be a tough environment and this is especially true in the world of finance. That's not because all business people are mean, but because there are so many variables to calculate. It is also doubtful that the 'business angel' club knew of the campaign – if they did, they would have some serious questions to ask to both themselves and Roo.

It would appear Roo had not disclosed the crowdfunding campaign to the angels, which could be interpreted as misleading them.

Either way, this is a serious situation and one that, in the real world, would probably see this campaign fail and many people left embarrassed.

It should be noted that this campaign never actually went live - this situation happened in the planning phases of the crowdfunding campaign. The real 'Roo' had overestimated the value of his company by a considerable amount. However, the real company went on to thrive but never did crowdfund the vision, it remains with private investors.

#20 – Valuation

Plan

Level: Basic to Intermediate. Some basic understanding of funding beyond crowdfunding might help learners in this unit.

Aims: Group work, task-based critical thinking where teams use their critical skills for making suggestions, giving opinions, listening, speaking and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams allocate one person to read the case study aloud.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and think about the choices they have.

Part 3 Teams brainstorm their ideas based on the three scenarios they are given (outlined in the 'case' section) and then make a final decision on which one they would choose. Ensure all team members are behind the decisions they make concerning the overall approach.

Part 4 Open discourse on their decisions. Teams read them out and discuss the choices they made, followed by the discussion topics.

Part 5 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Imagine you are an editor for a news site and you are running this story on the site this evening. What headline would you use to attract people to read the story?

Extension 2: Register with a crowdfunding platform and (without actually investing) choose a company / campaign that really appeals to you. What is it that makes this such an attractive investment?

#20 – Valuation

My Session

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#20 - Valuation

Case

Roo and his team have valued their company at £1m. They are offering an equity share of 10% to investors through crowdfunding.

Their campaign was going well until yesterday (day five) when they announced they had agreed a deal with the Hamchester Business Angel Group. This deal actually values the company at half that stated in their crowdfunding campaign.

Social media and the press have been hounding Roo and his team for responses. They need to justify the valuations urgently.

There are three options open to Roo and his team, you (as consultants) have been tasked with developing ideas for three options:

1. Use the business angels and keep the crowdfunding campaign going.
2. Reject (stop) the crowdfunding campaign and stick with the business angel investors.
3. Reject the business angel investment and stick with the crowdfunding campaign.

Brainstorm each idea and then make a judgement on which one will be the best course of action for Roo and his company.

#20 – Valuation

Team Response

Brainstorm ideas for the following scenarios:

1. Use business angels and crowdfunding:

2. Reject the crowdfunding campaign and stick with the business angel investors:

3. Reject the angels and stick with the crowdfunding campaign:

Final decision:

#20 – Valuation

Discussion

1. How confident are you with dealing with accounting processes?
2. Early-stage businesses are renowned for being high-risk investments. Why do you think this is the case and what should be done to protect investors?
3. Imagine you are reading the financial details of a company's crowdfunding campaign and you see that a member of the crowd contradicts the forecasts by the company. Who are you more inclined to believe, the member of the crowd or the company? Why?
4. To what degree should companies be forced to tell the truth to their investors? Do you think there are ever circumstances when lying is actually beneficial for investors?

#20 – Valuation

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #21

COMPLEXITY

This campaign for a very complicated business model is under pressure, and needs to show the crowd it is a sound business... but how?

#21 – Complexity

Context

Investors need time to assess a business and its proposition. The business in this case is complex.

Alina's business appears to have been running for some time, so she will have a track record to show the crowd. She should focus on some of the successes and how it works.

Her consultancy will have had clients who may wish to invest in the business – if this is the case, then she is reinforcing the crowd's trust by demonstrating authenticity. Likewise, if these clients would be happy to go on record in support of the business (a kind of recommendation) then this will add further weight to the campaign.

But persuading clients to do this can be tricky, and Alina would need to be cautious in her approach. Time is an issue, and this approach of asking her clients to support the campaign should have been done before the campaign went live. Basically, there is a distinct lack of planning and forethought that seems to have gone into this campaign.

#21 – Complexity

Plan

Level: Basic to Intermediate. Some understanding of business risks will help the learners with this unit.

Aims: Group work, task-based critical thinking with teams using their skills for making suggestions, giving opinions, listening, speaking and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams either allocate one person to read the case study aloud or they read alone.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and brainstorm ideas for helping the crowd understand the business. Ensure teams are fully behind the decisions they make concerning the overall approach.

Part 3 Open discourse on their decisions. Teams read them out and discuss the choices they made, followed by the discussion topics.

Part 4 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Imagine the class are investors – what information would they like to know about this business? Discuss the types of questions that they would ask and why these are important to understanding the business.

Extension 2: Register with a crowdfunder platform and (without actually investing) choose a company / campaign that really appeals to you. Now search for the questions and responses between the investors and the applicant. How would you classify the questions? Are there common themes in the information that the crowd is seeking?

#21 – Complexity

My Session

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#21 – Complexity

Case

Alina is crowdfunding a loan for her European Government Compliance Consultancy.

Her company is at the forefront of a very complicated industry where they advise other companies about compliance issues they will face when entering the EU market.

Some members of the crowd have suggested that the timeframe for making an investment decision is too short and they need longer to make a reasonable assessment of a very complex business model. Alina did not choose the timeframe for the campaign – this was dictated by the crowdfunding platform.

How should Alina make her case for the campaign's length of time and the sense of urgency these crowd members are obviously feeling?

What could she say to satisfy them? Brainstorm ideas around compliance and risk.

#21 – Complexity

Team Response

Brainstorm ideas in relation to compliance and risk:

Now draft a statement to satisfy the crowd:

#21 – Complexity

Discussion

1. Do you understand the need for business compliance with regulations on things like safety? How could businesses that break these rules be penalised?
2. How would this situation be different if Alina's business was a new business?
3. Do you ever think bureaucracy is ever a good thing? Why or why not?
4. How might compliance with standards of manufacturing protect you, as a consumer?
5. How might safety standards protect a company?

#21 – Complexity

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #22

HOLIDAY WISH

There has been a tragedy in the family, so Olly wants to take his kids on holiday, but the crowd doesn't like it. What advice could you offer?

#22 – Holiday Wish

Context

Olly's campaign to raise money for a holiday for his kids following a year of tragedy has failed and now local media, who showed no interest when the campaign was running, want to interview Olly about the campaign and his plans.

There are times when things are hard. There are frustrations with crowdfunding that at times seem unjust or unfair, but it is a collective means of funding visions people place before the crowd.

In this case, the crowd has not been convinced the vision is right, for whatever reason. Interest from local press is not unusual, but it is surprising that they are interested now, after the campaign has failed to reach its target and closed.

Their help could have been tremendous while the campaign was running, but now it has failed, this story becomes more about the kids' disappointment and Olly's frustration than about the campaign itself. For this reason, it would be best for Olly to ignore the media and not do the interview if possible.

#22 – Holiday Wish

Plan

Level: Basic to Intermediate. A basic understanding of crowdfunding and the communication needs in a campaign will be needed by learners in this unit.

Aims: Using this case, learners will develop their group work with task-based critical thinking, where teams use their skills for making suggestions, giving opinions, listening, speaking and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams either allocate one person to read the case study aloud or they read alone.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and brainstorm which topics they should cover in the interview and then what advice they would offer to Olly. Remember, teams may decide to decline the interview all together.

Ensure teams are fully behind the decisions they make concerning the overall approach.

Part 3 Open discourse on their decisions. Teams read out and discuss the choices they made, followed by the discussion topics.

Part 4 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Flip the situation, and ask the class to prepare questions to ask Olly, as they take on the role of journalists covering this story. What sensitivities should they consider?

Extension 2: Can the class find any similar crowdfunding cases? How successful were they? What kinds of comments did campaigners receive and were any patterns found in these responses? What were the most curious aspects of the campaigns they looked at?

#22 – Holiday Wish

My Session

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#22 – Holiday Wish

Case

Olly is a single parent with two children, Morris (eight) and Mabel (ten). Olly works night shifts at a local distribution depot and relies on government aid to help support the family as he struggles to afford childcare.

Recently, Olly lost his father (the children's grandfather), and the children's grandmother from his ex-partner's side. The children were both devastated by these losses. They frequently console themselves by watching YouTube videos of other children being surprised by their families who have booked a special holiday.

Olly wants to do the same for Morris and Mabel, however, money is a serious issue, so he has turned to crowdfunding to help cover the cost. He is seeking £5,000 for flights and accommodation.

The campaign was not a success and raised only £20 - the children have heard about this through the local media and other children talking about the campaign at school. The local press is asking Olly for an interview.

Your task is to support Olly. Is there anything specific you think he should be highlighting during this interview? What advice would you give him before he talks to the press about the campaign?

#22 – Holiday Wish

Team Response

Specific topics to cover:	Preparatory advice to be given:

#22 – Holiday Wish

Discussion

1. Do you consider this story to be a human-interest story? Why?
2. Do you think Olly could help other people in a similar situation? How so?
3. How could Olly spin this situation into a positive experience for him and his family?
4. Should there be a duty of care with the crowdfunding platform? What benefits would this bring for people like Olly?
5. What other support services can you think of that might help Olly?

#22 – Holiday Response

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #23

AGE CONCERN

A challenge to the government over controversial legislation.
Learners are tasked with presenting opposing arguments.

#23 – Age Concern

Context

A government wishes to introduce age verification on websites that carry adult content, including content on crowdfunding platforms. A pressure group have tasked the learners with finding arguments that support the government position to introduce age verification. This will enable the pressure group to be more prepared to counter these arguments.

This issue really depends on the learners' view of content of this nature. Some will take the moral high ground and see all adult content (particularly pornography) as an ill in our society. The middle ground may take an academic approach where the use of porn within relationships can be beneficial if used collaboratively, or harmful, if it becomes addictive.

The more liberal approach would be to say everyone has agency and, as long as no one is harmed, it should be the individual's choice.

But the issue of harm has never really gone away in the debate over pornographic content. There is an industry-wide attempt to legitimise the creation and viewing of this content with, for example, Pornhub advertising in mainstream media in the USA.

The debate continues with human trafficking and forced sex workers still being uncovered in various locations around the world. This is a thorny issue that really is a subjective one with good arguments on both sides. Ultimately, it is down to the individual's perceptions that will influence how they see this topic and the issues that surround it.

#23 – Age Concern

Plan

Level: Basic to Intermediate. This is a controversial topic. The sensitivities of the cultural background of your learners may need considering. Some basic understanding of common law may help learners with this unit.

Aims: Using this case learners will develop their group work, task-based critical thinking skills. Teams will use their critical thinking skills for making suggestions, giving opinions, listening, speaking and writing.

Warning: Please be cautious, these topics are a little more controversial. Some cultures / people may feel uncomfortable discussing these issues.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams either allocate one person to read the case study aloud or they read alone.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and think about the arguments they may want to propose. Teams must also consider the single most salient argument and consider why this is so important to the situation.

Ensure all team members are fully engaged and behind the choice of arguments they decide to list.

Part 3 Open discourse on their decisions (see warning above). Teams read out and discuss the choices they made, followed by the discussion topics.

Part 4 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Using *crowdjustice.com*, encourage individuals to find a case that they feel is unjust in some manner. Now present the case and debate the central issues of it.

Extension 2: Advertising can be controversial at times and there are many examples that have led to some rich debates. Task learners with the mission of finding and presenting some of the more controversial advertisements. Consider how these might be reimagined to be less controversial (if possible).

#23 – Age Concern

My Session

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#23 – Age Concern

Case

Nelida is a member of a group that wishes to launch a crowdfunding campaign to help fund the legal challenge against the government's introduction of age verification on websites that show adult content.

Nelida has previously worked in the adult entertainment industry and is concerned that introducing an age verification layer to websites that carry this style of content will make them less secure, and potentially act as a vehicle to capture data on users for government agencies.

The main concern of Nelida's group is that by verifying the age (and by default, the identity of the person wishing to view the content), it will open the possibility of being targeted with advertising, having their viewing history hacked, or their details sold to third parties interested in the viewing habits of people on these sites.

But in preparation, Nelida needs your help. She needs to identify the opposite arguments for introducing age verification on these adult sites. Why should this be allowed to happen and how should the government proceed?

In your teams, compile a list of both pros and cons on this issue. What are the most salient issues that Nelida and her group need to consider?

#23 – Age Concern

Team Response

Pros	Cons

Most salient issue:

Why?

#23 – Age Concern

Discussion

1. Do you consider verification of age on pornographic sites as something that could protect people? Why or why not?
2. Do you think the introduction of age verification for this kind of content is a kind of censorship? Does this view differ if we consider different geographical and political states?
3. How worried are you about government surveillance of this nature?
4. Can authenticity ever be negative? How could negative authenticity manifest itself in the real world versus the virtual world?
5. What do you think is the most persuasive argument a government could use to introduce verification of this nature?
6. What are the broader implications of this type of campaign for crowdfunding? Do you think it could damage perceptions of crowdfunding? If so, how?

#23 – Age Concern

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

CASE #24

CHARITY FUNDING

How would learners advise a charity with an urgent funding gap?

#24 – Charity Funding

Context

Sponsors have withdrawn from funding a charity –through no fault of the charity, but because of wider market conditions. The charity was established to help make terminally ill children’s last wishes a reality. These wishes vary from meeting a celebrity to scuba diving.

This issue is really about finding sponsorship – fast! This was a real case and the charity in question decided, after much debate, not to use crowdfunding. The main issue was that the board for the charity decided crowdfunding could expose them to some adverse publicity, especially if they started to crowdfund individual children’s ambitions.

The issue was that some dreams would be fulfilled, while others would not. How this reflects on the charity and on the individual children was thought to be too sensitive, and could possibly expose the children to unnecessary levels of criticism that could cause greater discomfort for them and their relatives.

The potential funding opportunity was discussed at length, and the charity’s board considered it a ‘high-risk’ strategy at a time when they needed guarantees of funding.

Although the board did not completely abandon crowdfunding - in a subsequent review, after new corporate sponsorship was found, they were much more persuaded by the idea of running a campaign for the charity as an entity, with the aim of maximising exposure at a national level.

At the time of writing, this campaign was yet to go live.

#24 – Charity Funding

Plan

Level: Basic to Intermediate. A basic understanding of crowdfunding and business communication would help learners in this unit.

Aims: Using this case, learners will develop their group work through task-based critical thinking, where teams use their skills for making suggestions, giving opinions, listening, speaking and writing.

Materials: You will need the case study and the discussion topics below.

Procedure:

Part 1 Teams either allocate one person to read the case study aloud or they read alone.

Part 2 Teams debate the situation and think about the four main tasks they are asked to consider. Teams must justify their responses as these can be used in the open discussion that follows.

Ensure all team members are fully behind the choices made.

Part 3 Open discourse on their decisions. Teams read out and discuss the choices they made, followed by the discussion topics.

Part 4 Close and wrap-up.

- Try to encourage teams to be creative in their responses to the situation.
- This can be done as an individual exercise.
- The ideal group size is three team members.

Extension 1: Try to find charities using reward model crowdfunding platforms. How successful do they appear to be on these platforms?

Extension 2: What advice can learners find on attracting sponsorship for a charity? How can they verify the information? What criteria for their search was most effective?

#24 – Charity Funding

My Session

Date / Time	Session	Venue
Class	Module	Level
Aims of session:		
Learning outcomes:		

Session outline	
Time	Focus

Hand-outs:	
Assumptions:	
Homework to give out:	

Additional notes:

#24 – Charity Funding

Case

Mike runs a charity dedicated to supporting children with terminal illnesses. Mike's charity, *Dreaming Child Charity*, needs support in order to keep fulfilling the dreams of these terminally ill children (below age 18). The children's dreams range from scuba diving to meeting a celebrity. Mike's charity tries to make these dreams come true before the terminal illness takes the child.

His main sponsor has recently had to pull out of the sponsorship as they are a supplier to the USA and have been hit hard by an unexpected tax bill. Another sponsor has already said they can no longer afford to keep the deal going next year, and Mike is worried that the charity is heading for some big problems in the next financial year.

He knows from experience that sponsorship of the charity can be fraught with issues and problems and it takes a long time to agree corporate terms of sponsorship. Mike thinks crowdfunding could be a good option to help in the next financial year. His main concern is how best to create a fully-integrated communication campaign.

Approaching a consultancy, Mike has some burning questions that need to be addressed urgently:

1. Should he attempt to raise funds for the whole charity in one go?
2. Should he start individual campaigns for individual children and their wishes?
3. Should he start a mixed type of campaign that blends the two options above?
4. What potential risks could crowdfunding expose the charity to?

#24 – Charity Funding

Team Response

1. Should he attempt to raise funds for the whole charity in one go?
Response:
2. Should he start individual campaigns for individual children and their wishes?
Response:
3. Should he start a mixed type of campaign that blends the two options above?
Response:
4. What potential risks could crowdfunding expose the charity to?
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Other points to raise:

#24 – Charity Funding

Discussion

1. What do you think has the more emotional draw for funding: animals or children? Why?
2. Do you think charities should be barred from crowdfunding on the grounds that there is no physical product being produced? Justify your opinion.
3. How might communication strategies change when crowdfunding a product and crowdfunding a service?
4. How important do you consider authenticity in a crowdfunding campaign for a charity? Does this change for crowdfunding technology products or games? Why?
5. Kickstarter don't allow charitable donations. Non-profits must produce something 'new and shareable'. Why do you think they take this position and what implications would this have for Mike's charity?

See:

'How do I run a project as a non-profit?' (updated in 2021), *kickstarter.com*.

Available at:

<https://help.kickstarter.com/hc/en-us/articles/115005127894-How-do-I-run-a-project-as-a-nonprofit-> (accessed 8th January 2020)

#24 – Charity Funding

Reflection

Before this case I thought:

But now I think:

