Establishing a Crowdfunding Sustainability Project for Resource-Depleted Secondary Agricultural Education Programs

Submitted to:

American Association for Agricultural Education
2016 Southern Conference

Innovative Idea Poster

Submitted by:

Ms. Morgan L. Schafbuch
Agricultural Education
University of Kentucky
307 Garrigus Building
Lexington, KY 40546
859-257-3153
morgan.schafbuch@uky.edu

Dr. Stacy K. Vincent
Agricultural Education
University of Kentucky
505 Garrigus Building
Lexington, KY 40546
859-257-7588
stacy.vincent@uky.edu

Dr. Joan Mazur
Curriculum and Instruction
University of Kentucky
335 Dickey Hall
Lexington, KY 40506
jmazur@uky.edu

Establishing a Crowdfunding Sustainability Project for Resource-Depleted Secondary Agricultural Education Programs

Introduction/Need for Innovation or Idea

One approach for implementing safety practices among youth is through experiential, service-led projects, since previous attempts at teaching farm safety practices to adults have been deemed ineffective (Ambe, Bruening, & Murphy, 1994; Carrabba, Jr., Talbert, Field, & Tormoehlen, 2001; Goldcamp, Hendricks, & Myers, 2003). According to Shoulders, Blythe, and Myers (2013) extending ownership in laboratory activities is the most important lesson-based attribute. An attempt is being made to reduce the number of farm youth injuries and fatalities in high injury-prone communities through the implementation of Cost-effective Rollover Protective Structures (CROPS).

While student led projects are effective at giving students ownership and pride in learning, the projects are costly. For poverty stricken schools to support this program there needs to be some form of income generated in order to provide sustainability of CROPS for instruction in future years. Boone and Boone (2007) discovered that barriers such as school budget cuts, lack of funding, or lack of administrative financial support hindered agriculture teachers from implemented valuable educational projects.

How it Works/Methodology

The rise in popularity of crowdfunding, a social media platform, allows people to build and raise awareness to a campaign and provides project creators the opportunity to fulfill their fundraising needs in new ways. Crowdfunding is defined as a growing social media trend in which project creators request financial donations from various contributors who help realize a new project, idea, or product (Belleflamme, Lambert, & Schwienbacher, 2011; Wash, 2013). In some ways, crowdfunding almost always benefits the public (Wash, 2013), and in this case, it is constructed rollover bars provided to poverty-stricken farmers through the local agricultural education program.

The public is able to view campaigns and donate a small amount of money to be used toward the project. A project is defined by Wash (2013) as a "well-defined set of tasks that need to be accomplished." Oftentimes, projects with clear goals, specific needs, and a defined end date are more successful at raising money than projects without clear objectives (Wash, 2013).

Most often, family members and friends of project creators who are involved in the project are the most likely to donate. Crowdfunding is less about raising large amounts of money from a few investors, and rather, more about raising small donations from a large group of people, "the crowd" (Belleflamme et al., 2011; Wash, 2013). One reason crowdfunding is so successful is due to the "feel good" or philanthropy attached to donating (Belleflamme et al., 2011; Gerber, Hui, & Kuo, 2012; Wash, 2013). Belleflamme et al. (2011) states that crowdfunding produces the same amount of funds as if you were to seek funds from a bank, but what compels the public to donate to a crowdfunded project is the perceived benefit to what is being created. The combination of agricultural education programs and community citizens allows the project to fall under priority areas two and six of AAAE's National Research Agenda (Doerfert, 2011).

Results to Date/Implications

To date, the authors received a feasibility grant to develop a curriculum crowdfunding module during the current academic school year (2014-2015). Upon completion of the academic school year, a select group of secondary agriculture teachers in rural poverty stricken, Appalachian communities in Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina received a curriculum module that began with a crowdfunding start-up package. The crowdfunding began generating funds throughout the 2015-2016 academic school year. The crowdfunding campaign assists in the sustainability of the project and curriculum. A Twitter hash tag and Facebook page assists the tracking of total funding generated. The local agriculture teacher and the participating post-secondary agricultural education program monitor each crowdfunding site. To date, the selected schools have generated over $10,000 toward the sustainability of the curricula project. In July, the project received top honors for innovation by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health; a division of the Center for Disease Control in Washington, DC.

Future Plans/Advice to Others

It is anticipated that the crowdfunding component will generate $18,000 for these resource-depleted agriculture programs in order to provide two CROPS per community per year. The success of the project has generated national attention and the overall curriculum project, which includes the crowdfunding component, is one of seven finalists for $1.25 million dollars to expand the project throughout the entire Southeastern region of the United States. A department of communications is examining the best practices of the current crowdfunding project and the impact the project has upon a community. These results will assist the researchers in identifying new steps in the overall development of the project.

Cost/Resources Needed

One of the primary benefits of constructing a CROPS rather than purchasing one from a dealer is the less expensive cost. To build homemade CROPS from the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) approved plans, it will cost roughly $626.41. The cost of construction materials equate to $387.66 with an additional $238.75 to supply a new seat and seatbelt. When schools are part of the project, they are funded through a grant from the Educational Opportunity Program. After the school year concludes, schools are no longer funded through the grant. However, the teachers are welcome to continue using CROPS curriculum as a tractor safety education component and service-learning project.

Schools are provided with a list of materials, as well as information on where to purchase the materials. The crowdfunding sites that are part of the crowdfunding packet are GoFundMe.com, Kickstarter.com, and DonorsChoose.org. GoFundMe and Kickstarter are popular, well known, and successful crowdfunding sites. DonorsChoose is an organization specifically geared toward K-12 teachers whose campaign is designed around projects, purchasing class equipment, or field trips.

References

Ambe, F., Bruening, T.H., & Murphy, D.J. (1994). Tractor operators' perceptions of farm tractor safety issues and implications to agricultural and extension education. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, *35*(4), 67-73. doi: 10.5032/jae.1994.04067

Belleflamme, P., Lambert, T., & Schwienbacher, A. (2014). Crowdfunding: Tapping the right crowd. *Journal of Business Venturing*, *29*(5), 585-609. doi:10.1016/j.jbusvent.2013.07.003

Boone, H.N., Jr., & Boone, D.A. (2007). Problems faced by high school agricultural education teachers. *Journal of Agricultural Education, 48*(2), 36-45. doi: 10.5032/jae.2007.02036

Carabba, J.J., Jr. Talbert, B.A., Field, W.E., & Tormoehlen, R. (2001). Effectiveness of the Indiana 4-H tractor program: Alumni perceptions. *Journal of Agricultural Education, 6*(3), 179-189. doi: 10.5032/jae.2001.03011

Doerfert, D. L. (Ed.) (2011). National research agenda: American Association for Agricultural Education's research priority areas for 2011-2015. Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University, Department of Agricultural Education and Communications.

Gerber, E. M., Hui, J. S., & Kuo, P. Y. (2012). Crowdfunding: Why people are motivated to participate. In *ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work*.

Goldcamp, M., Hendricks, K.J., & Myers, J.R. (2003). Farm fatalities to youth 1995-2000: A comparison by age groups. *Journal of Safety Research*, *35*(2), 151-157. doi: 10.1016/j.jsr.2003.11.005

Shoulders, C.W., Blythe, J.M., & Myers, B.E. (2013). Teachers' perceptions regarding experiential learning attributes in agricultural laboratories. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, *54*(2), 159-173. doi: 10.5032/jae.2013.02159

Wash, R. (2013). The value of completing crowdfunding projects. In *ICWSM.* Retrieved from: http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.374.6606&rep=rep1&type=pdf