

LEGO® and Crowdfunding

By car_mp

Following the internationalization of the LEGO® CUUSOO project, which previously was only available in Japan, internet is filled with LEGO fans in search of their opportunity. Who has not dreamed of seeing his own design become an official LEGO set? The call is strong and the response has been accordingly, though unfortunately also the conditions to achieve it. Getting 10000 supporters is not easy. Until now few projects have achieved it, and it seems that the recipe for success depends on two main ingredients. You need a theme with a large popular support behind it, even if most of it doesn't belong to the LEGO community, or the support of any (or all) of the LEGO reference pages on the internet.

But taking into account that we are in a capitalist world, it is easier to get 10000\$ than 10000 supporters for a project. And that's where Crowdfunding or patronage comes in. This system, which has been operating successfully for years in areas like music or video games, seems to have been useful also for some projects related to LEGO.

Its operation is simple. Upload your project to any of the websites dedicated to these purposes and wait for the money to arrive to move forward with your project. Well, maybe it is not quite that simple. That is the basic principle, but obviously you have to attract your investors in some way, there are altruistic people in the world but they are not easy to find. It is essential, as you may have guessed, that the project is

relevant to the sector that you are focusing on. After that you need to have a well-planned financial plan and the plan of "rewards" for your investors. In any project, the hardest part is getting the initial investment that allows you to move from design to final product and manufacture and initial circulation of the product at a price that can be competitive. From there it's a matter of maintaining the balance between costs and income and you will get your project going. This initial capital injection is what the creators are looking for on the crowdfunding pages. In return you offer your investors an attractive product and a number of rewards, depending on their initial contribution, if the project comes to fruition. The more you invest the more you will receive from the creator once the project is underway. Sometimes that means more copies of the product, on other occasions it is a custom product, sometimes it is only public recognition. But, what happens if the project didn't raise the necessary money in the allotted time? Simple: on most of the pages the developer does not receive your money at the time of donation, you make a payment through a trusted service (PayPal, Amazon, ...) and the payment is not made effective until the project has been successful. If it fails, the money comes back to you.

You might think that the system is good but what comes out of there will not be an official LEGO product. True. If you search a bit through these pages you will find that the LEGO-related projects are very different from official sets. Some of

The image shows three Kickstarter project cards for LEGO-related projects. Each card includes a title, a description, the creator's name, location, and funding progress.

Project Name	Location	Funding Progress	Funded Amount	Funding Date
"Robots!" -- A stop motion animation using LEGO bricks	Chicago, IL	113% FUNDED	\$3,414 PLEDGED	APR 11, 2011
Little Guys...In Space! A LEGO® Fan Film From Paganomation	Queens, NY	106% FUNDED	\$8,484 PLEDGED	MAY 16, 2012
Mobile Frame Zero: Rapid Attack	Northampton, MA	916% FUNDED	\$82,499 PLEDGED	APR 11, 2012

Several projects related to LEGO in Kickstarter



MINUTEBOT BASE

MinuteBot Base for LEGO Mindstorms enabled robotics
by Soren Jensen


MinuteBot Base is a thick, robust base plate that can be used for construction of robotics based on LEGO Mindstorms.

 Copenhagen, Denmark

SUCCESSFUL!

124%	\$13,743	FUNDED
FUNDED	PLEDGED	MAY 21, 2012

Project name: MinuteBot Base
 Platform: Kickstarter
 End date: 21-05-2012
 Number of investors: 169
 Investment achieved: \$13743 (124%)




SUCCESSFUL!

NXT2WiFi

NXT2WiFi - Webserver module for LEGO® MINDSTORMS® robots
by dbenedettelli

A webserver with Wi-Fi interface that gives your LEGO® MINDSTORMS® robots access to the internet. Control your NXT with iPhone and iPad!

 **Collected € 6350 of € 6000**

Project name: NXT2WiFi
 Platform: Eppela
 End date: 19-05-2012
 Number of investors: 60
 Investment achieved: €6350 (105%)

them could become LEGO® products but others clearly not. For example, a stop-motion film made with LEGO. Or two projects that have recently ended (with success) and could have become LEGO products but they have little relation to the aspects covered by LEGO CUUSOO. One of them is a webserver module that enables communication with our MINDSTORMS models via WIFI and the other is a special Technic baseplate with the appearance of a giant liftarm and an area of 21 x 31 studs. Both projects could have been LEGO products but hardly through CUUSOO. It would not have been easy to get 10000 supports for their production, however both have achieved the necessary economic support. They will have their product, it will not be official but they will not have to renounce to their legal rights and they will earn what they want and others are willing to pay for their product.

It is clear that we are dealing with two different strategies covering two different needs:

In LEGO CUUSOO you get an official product, no investment on your part or on those who support you, with a modest income that will depend on the success of your product (remember that these 10000 supporters have not promised to buy your set) and glory and fame in the AFOL world..., as long as you pass the successive filters of the company.

In Crowdfunding you get economic support to launch your project, donated by people who are interested in your product, and therefore believe that it can succeed. You may need 5 investors or 5000, depending on what you offer and need.

Find your product and participate. Present your own project or support other projects. In many ways our hobby continues to evolve and grow.

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