Hi! Jon Ostrow here, Ariel’s right-hand man at Cyber PR.

Over the last several months, I’ve been helping Ariel to prepare for the launch of her crowdfunding campaign (which went live on Monday!).

While we were doing our research, we came across article after article saying the same few things about crowdfunding preparation that we already knew about:

• You need to have an existing fan base – crowdfunding is NOT a discovery tool.
• You need to understand your target audience and create not only compelling rewards, but also a compelling story/journey to bring them on.

But what we were finding to be most unexplained was even a step further back from this.
The Crowdfunding PRE-Preparation…

There were so many things that we needed to decide on that we had never even considered, and we wanted to share some of these things with you for your own crowdfunding campaigns:

1. Choosing the right platform

There are several platforms available for crowdfunding. While many of them seem to offer a similar experience to those funding the campaign (fund a campaign and in return become part of an experience – oh yeah, and receive some pretty great prizes), choosing the right platform takes serious thought. For us, it came down to understanding the focus of the platform itself, so that their support would be as effective as possible in planning, creating, launching and beyond.

We ended up choosing RocketHub because of their focus on educational products. We knew that Brian Meece and co. would be able to support our campaign and help us create an optimized experience surrounding education.

And even though we love RocketHub, they have a limit on the character number for each reward description. We were fortunate enough to pack each prize to the rim, but the character limit made it so we had to create a new page just to properly list out each reward.

2. Deciding the timing of your campaign

It is a natural thought to start out of the gate at full throttle, but we learned that it is actually far more effective to continuously update the campaign with more and more content as time goes on to keep interest high and persuade those still on the fence about which package to go with (or for those on the fence about funding the campaign at all).
As with any launch, there is a long-tail effect where the launch starts with a bang but then trails off, slowly fizzling out as time goes on. It is important to plan out the campaign so as to counteract this effect, keeping interest high throughout.

3. Partnering with others for a mutual benefit

Crowdfunding campaigns can very quickly become about me, me, me. This is especially true when creating the rewards. And rightfully so in many cases… after all, this whole experience is about taking your fans, followers and customers on YOUR journey.

But why not get others involved in this journey?

This was the question we presented ourselves, and decided there was absolutely no reason not to! So we reached out to several other friends and allies in the music industry and social media space to take part as well by offering up products and
services for the reward packages. We help them to connect with their target audience, and in return, they help to continue to drive attention to the campaign. Win-Win.

4. Creating ALL of the content needed for the campaign

There are two obvious pieces of content that you need for a crowdfunding campaign:

- Campaign video
- 8 to 9 levels of rewards

But something that we completely overlooked was the truly overwhelming amount of OTHER content that we also needed in order to launch the campaign, including:

- Reward Graphics
- Webpages
- Blog Posts
- Newsletters
- Expanded Campaign Videos
- Video Testimonials
- Ad Banners
- Skins (Backgrounds) for Social Media Accounts

5. Overcoming the fear…

One of the biggest reservations people have about crowdfunding is the fear of failing, but something that we personally came across was a different kind of fear. The fear we found felt resistance from sharing Ariel’s dream. This isn’t just ‘help me build a new product’… this is ‘I’ve got a dream and it’s in your hands to help me achieve it.’ We found it incredibly difficult to find the RIGHT way of saying just how important this is to Ariel personally, not just to us as a company, without it coming off as cheesy or cliche.