

Kickstarter Launch Timeline

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Please note that the timelines below are recommended. You want to **aim to have these tasks completed by the timeline indicated** (unless they are ongoing). In reality, you may complete some of these tasks earlier or slightly later than these dates, but you want to avoid leaving them until the last minute, as they may have trickle-down effects.

6 months before launch date: Finalize and input your launch start and end dates (aim for around a 24- day campaign, preferably launching on a Tuesday and not in December or early January), cautiously looking at other launches happening at the same time.

6 months before launch date: Create a landing page to capture emails and ensure this is linked to an email service provider (Mailchimp is free up to a specific size).

6 months before launch date: Determine your budget and ideas for your marketing plan.

6 months before launch date and up to launch date: Create a Facebook GROUP for your game and encourage people to join, including those who have joined your mailing list. Engage with members regularly.

6 months before launch date and up to launch date (and during campaign): Promote your game organically (weekly posts on social media, etc.), playtest, and collect email addresses.

6 months before launch date and up to launch date (and during campaign): Engage with your followers regularly (weekly if possible) to keep them interested by sharing art, backstory, behind-the-scenes info, and asking for advice via polls or general questions, etc.

4-6 months before launch date: Continue to playtest and finalize your game and your rules, especially through blind playtesting.

4-5 months before launch date: Finalize art and design for your prototype.

4-5 months before launch date: Determine potential stretch goals and deluxe version ideas.

4-5 months before launch date: Finalize your components and get multiple manufacturing quotes (from at least 5 manufacturers), including line-item breakdowns and separate quotes for the base game and anything else you are considering (deluxe version, stretch goals, etc.)

4 months before launch date: Finalize your rulebook. Consider participating in a rulebook

swap with another designer (or designers).

4 months before launch date: Order prototypes of your game for reviewers, etc.

4 months before launch date: Create a very preliminary Kickstarter page and get your project approved so that you can start asking potential backers to hit the notification button on your page. Grow this notification number right up until launch day.

4 months before launch date and up to launch date: Work on your Kickstarter page. This includes creating headers, images, links, etc. When you feel you are close to ready, share the page with trusted people and super fans for feedback and make adjustments.

4 months before launch date: Research potential videographers and hire a videographer to create your Kickstarter video, along with any teaser videos or GIFs that could be used for your campaign.

3 months before launch date: Research potential reviewers and previewers to find good matches. Also, consider asking a content creator to record a “how to play” video or create one on your own. Contact them 3 months before you launch to give them enough time to prepare content.

3 months before launch date: Research and reach out to fulfilment partners for shipping and fulfilment quotes.

3 months before launch date: Research potential podcasts and other channels that you could appear on to promote your game before you launch or during your campaign. Line up interviews and other methods to get the word out. Do note that some of these might be booked 3 months in advance, so be early.

2 months before launch date: Determine your preferred manufacturer and fulfilment partner(s), along with backups for each.

2 months before launch date: Finalize your pricing model for pledge levels, funding goal, and shipping by region. Get feedback on the pledge levels from members of your Facebook group, they might have other ideas that you should take into consideration.

1 month before launch date: Ask your manufacturer for an updated quote that will still be valid for when you enter into manufacturing.

1 month before launch date: Increase your social media presence and post once a day. Start running and testing Facebook ads if your budget allows. Start testing quotes and other content on your Facebook page as tests (found in the Business Suite).

1 month before launch date: Research and determine which pledge manager you will use.

1 month before launch date: Develop and review your FAQ sheet.

2-4 weeks before launch date: Notify media outlets, including Indie Game Alliance (make sure to first join as a free member) and <https://www.shelfclutter.com> of your upcoming launch date.

1-2 weeks before launch date: Notify friends and family of your upcoming launch, ask for support on launch day, and let them know how Kickstarter works. Consider going LIVE or make a video on how to pledge.

1 week before launch date: Finalize your Kickstarter page and all remaining details. Remember, pledge levels, funding goals, and project duration cannot be altered after you launch. The rest of your page can be updated and edited after you launch.

3 Days before launch: Hit your email list with a notification that your project will go live (insert hour slot with timezone).

1 Day before launch: Ask in your Facebook group who is going to be backer #1. This creates friendly competition and highlights the importance of being early.

1 Hour before launch: Ensure that the newsletter goes out to everyone on your list, notifying them of launch.

On launch day: Hit the launch button at your time of launch!

On launch day (after you launch): Notify potential backers that your project is live on socials.

On launch day (after you launch): Share your live link with reviewers, previewers, etc. and update this on Facebook and your website. It's best to create individual referral links for everyone who will be sharing your campaign so that you can track the effectiveness of their efforts.

On launch day (after you launch): Post your FAQs.

24 hours after launch: Post your first update. This can be done earlier if you hit your funding goal before. If not, you can post a Day 1 update.

During the campaign: Reply to comments and messages on your KS campaign. Engage with backers, listen to their ideas, run contests (if applicable), use polls, etc.

During the campaign: Post regular updates for milestones, stretch goals, and special events.

During the campaign: Continue to promote your game and appearances on podcasts on your site, Kickstarter page, Facebook groups that allow promotion, etc.

During the campaign: Add any additional reviews that come in during your campaign, highlight the new content by adding them to the next update.

During the campaign: If you've hit your funding goal, set up your pledge manager to be ready and active as soon as the campaign ends.

Assuming your game has funded...

After the campaign ends: Update your Kickstarter page Call to Action (CTA) to "Late Pledge" or something similar and link this to your pledge manager.

2 weeks after the campaign ends: You should receive your funds from Kickstarter about 2 weeks after the campaign ends. You can now invite backers to go to the pledge manager and update/pay for shipping and add on any items or upgrade their pledges.

After the campaign ends (later):

- Continue to update your backers regularly (at least monthly, more often if there is anything important to share) and respond to questions and comments
- Register for VAT or work this out with your EU fulfilment partner
- Purchase barcodes for each version
- Finalize your artwork
- Ensure your box markings meet all requirements (barcode, contact/website, Made in China [if manufactured there], Not suitable for 0-3 years of age, CE marking, etc.) • Finalize orders (including retailers)
- Submit files to your manufacturer
- Review the digital sample
- Receive and review the physical sample version of your game
- Make any modifications
- Approve and start manufacturing
- Send PNP version to backers
- Get CE testing completed on your game if necessary (especially if using small components and child age range)
- Freight ship your games to fulfilment centres
- Deliver your games to backers

After the game has been delivered

- Collect reviews and user-generated content, post and share on socials.