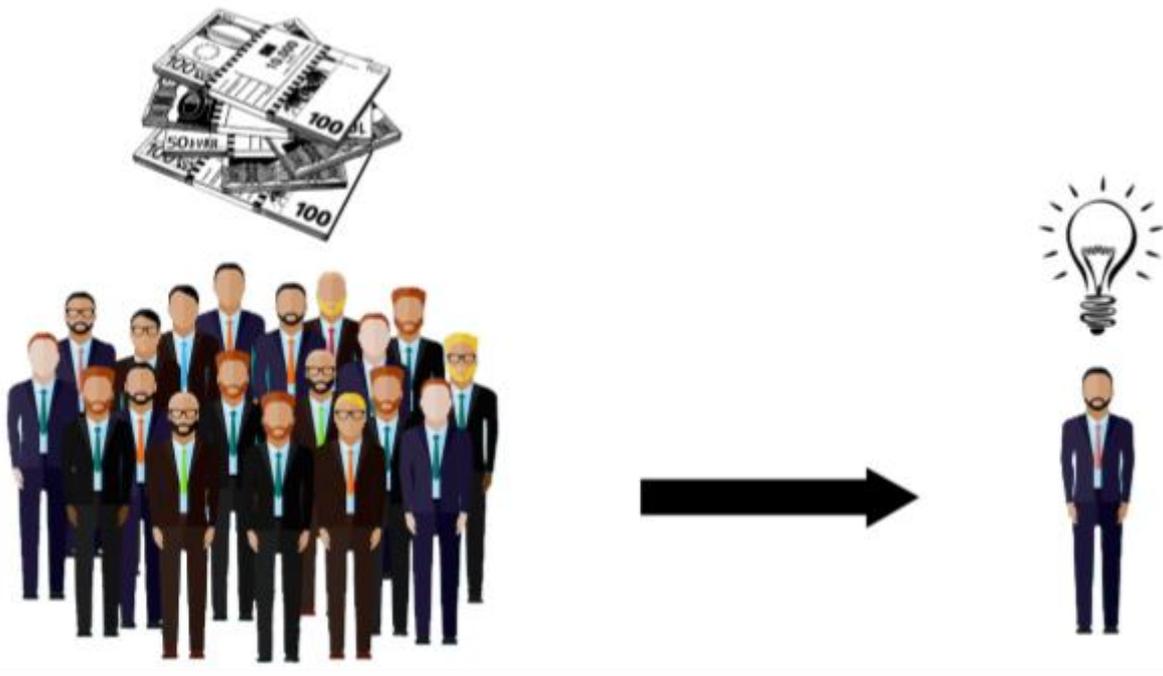


ENGAGING CROWDFUNDERS OF DUTCH FEATURE FILMS

*STRATEGIES THAT CAN BE ADOPTED BY CAMPAIGN CREATORS TO KEEP THEIR
CROWDFUNDERS ENGAGED, TO ENLARGE THE CHANCE THEY FUND A FUTURE PROJECT*



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Graduation Report

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PREFACE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In January 2017 I started as production assistant for De Familie Film & TV. Without having any experience with doing producer related work, I was self-assured this position would appeal my interest. After 5 months, I can confirm it was a great experience working for De Familie Film & TV. The diversity of the tasks was very pleasant. It gave me a good impression of what producing documentaries was like. Due to the rich diversity of tasks, I encountered the crowdfunding campaign for the first feature film of De Familie Film & TV.

With the help of 376 crowdfunders, the remaining amount of money was acquired. However, Michiel van Erp and his associate Monique Busman did not have any experience with maintaining the relation with this number of people. It was the beginning of this research, with De Familie Film & TV as commissioned party.

Writing this research was quite tough, especially in combination with working 36 hours a week. I am more than grateful for the help people offered me in any possible way. Even though conducting eight interviews is an intense workload, it was very interesting to listen to all the stories. The eight interviews enabled me to investigate how crowdfunders can be engaged throughout a whole crowdfunding campaign. All eight funders had a very supportive attitude towards me. Therefore I would like to thank; Iris Kleinsman, Hansje Quartel, Mylene Esmeijer, Yvonne Buunk-Werkhoven, Willem Korthals Altes, Peter Clark, Bram Bax and Evert de Vries for their willingness to help me obtain the results.

Next up, I want to thank De Familie Film & TV for providing me the position as production assistant. Due to the interesting projects, nice colleagues and great facility I experienced my internship as a very pleasant and educational time. Due to their flexibility – in the broadest sense of the word – combining writing my thesis and working 36 hours a week became possible, thank you.

Finally, I want to thank my supervisor and NHTV lecturer Stephen Paine for guiding me throughout the whole process. With quick and very useful responses he was always available to give me feedback with both positive and constructive feedback. I experienced it as a very positive – but above all – relaxed guidance.

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

In October 2016 De Familie Film & TV acquired the targeted amount of money to produce their first feature film. With the help of private funders, the financial shortcoming was covered. The campaign success was partly due to Johnny Wonder, a communication company that guided in acquiring the targeted amount. When the money was raised, Johnny Wonder stopped guiding De Familie Film & TV. However, the funders were waiting to be engaged and involved with the project. Since this was their first crowdfunding campaign, there was no one available with enough communication knowledge and skills to deal with this situation. With an eye on the future, this situation gave motive to the following main research question: “What strategies can be adopted by De Familie Film & TV to keep the funders of the crowdfunding campaign for ‘Niemand in de Stad’ engaged to enlarge the chance they fund future projects?”

Quite a few researchers have researched the general aspects of crowdfunding. How to reach the right crowd (Belleflamme & Lambert & Schwienbacher, 2012), the motivations to fund for funders, (Gerber & Hui & Kuo, 2014), how to create value for the funder (Meyskens & Bird, 2015). These generic studies are very valuable since there are only a few studies that dive into these topics. However, the engagement part of crowdfunding is not covered by research yet.

Gerber, Kuo and Hui (2014) researched that the supporter in crowdfunding desires to collect external rewards such as an acknowledgment, a tangible product, or an experience. Most supporters argue this is the major reason why they decided to fund (Gerber et al., 2014; Belleflamme et al., 2012; Bretschneider & Knaub & Wieck, 2014). Also, supporters have a strong desire to help creators with whom they have a strong and personal connection (Gerber et al. 2014). Yet, a personal connection with the creator is not always necessary, a link with the work also motivates to give. According to Kuppuswamy and Bayus (2014), providing updates has a positive influence on acquiring the target amount in crowdfunding. The updates will generate more excitement among the crowdfunders and can subsequently create awareness among people that did not donate yet. Both the crowdfunder and people that did not donate yet, can donate (again).

In their theory, Evans and McKee (2010) explain that the engagement process for social media consists out four social action building blocks. It starts with consumption and leads to content creation. The social actions move the customers to an increasingly engaged state, with customer collaboration as the endpoint. When approaching people via e-mail, Chittenden and Rettie (2013) argue there are a few variables that influence the response rate – and in particular the click rate - of readers. These variables include: e-mail length, relevance, personal note, number of images.

In order to answer the main research question, two methods are used. With qualitative research we try to find out how crowdfunders can be engaged throughout the whole process of making the film. As well as what the motivations and deterrents for crowdfunders are to fund a future project. Semi-structured interviews with eight crowdfunders are conducted to cover these topics. The second method concerns a case study for the crowdfunding campaign ‘Niemand in de Stad’. This case study investigates how engaged the crowdfunders currently are. Based on the social media and e-mail behavior of the crowdfunders an extensive analysis is executed.

The results and conclusions are described in chapter four and five. In these chapters is explained that updating the crowdfunders makes them more engaged. Especially with personal, interesting and relevant messages. Ideally these messages contain a personal note, e.g. a personal salutation. Rewards are - besides being an important motivator for the crowdfunders to donate again – also an important tool to engage the funders with the project. The funders’ willingness to support a future campaign is influenced by three things. Firstly, engaged funders are more willing to fund. Also, a link with the creator is important. This can be a personal link or a link with his work. Lastly, not being updated deters crowdfunders to fund a future campaign. The social media and e-mail behavior shows that the funders are rather engaged with the project.

Recommendations for De Familie Film & TV to make their crowdfunders engaged are presented in chapter 6. Updating the crowdfunders is key in making them engaged. The updates should contain interesting and relevant information. Furthermore, the message should be personal with a personal note. Their online engaged can be triggered with providing a platform to let them create (and collaborate) content. One who strives for an engaged audience, better maps out relevant rewards with acceptable prices. The (personal) connection with the creator should be maintained to enlarge the funders’ willingness to fund a future campaign.

Recommendations for future research include how crowdfunding can be used as a promotional device rather than a tool to acquire funds. The terms; being engaged, attracted and interested can be better defined in relation to crowdfunding. Since the definitions of these terms differ among industries and contexts. Lastly, more research can be conducted on rewards since they are of great importance and have multiple purposes in crowdfunding.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Director and filmmaker Michiel van Erp decided in 2014 to make a feature film, based on the novel of Philip Huff, called ‘Niemand in de Stad’. ‘Niemand in de Stad’ is produced by production company De Familie Film & TV located in Amsterdam. Michiel van Erp and his associate Monique Busman, started in 2014 with the pre-production of the film.

At De Familie Film & TV [from here on referred to as De Familie], every production goes roughly through the same process. Once the idea has come to paper, film plans are written. Ideas either come from third parties or in-company. Once all the pre-production documents are commencing to be finalized, the financial resources start to take a more important role. The producer of the film - Monique Busman - requests financial support from funding organizations. In order to receive financial support, the request and vision of the film should be in line with the criteria as stated by the funding organization. This differs among funding organizations. The supporting organizations that are involved with this specific production are the CoBo fonds, Filmfonds and Avrotros. They each have a different mission:

CoBo fonds; they aim to bring film and television closer to each other (CoBo, n.d.).

Filmfonds; they stimulate the diversity and quality of the film productions and they promote the (production) climate in the Netherlands (Filmfonds, n.d.).

Avrotros; with their broadcasting network, they aim to connect and enrich The Netherlands with qualitative and innovative content (Avrotros, n.d.).

The above-mentioned missions are all in line and somehow linkable with the production ‘Niemand in de Stad’. Therefore De Familie received in total €898.000,- from these funding organizations (De Familie Film & TV, 2016). Despite this, the producer, distributor and De Familie itself also gave financial support. In October 2016, the total costs were covered for 95%. The remaining 5% still had to be covered to put the pre-production into actual production.

De Familie decided to setup a crowdfunding campaign to fill the remaining financial gap. Crowdfunding takes place when “*a project or venture is funded by raising money from a large number of people who each contribute a relatively small amount, typically via the Internet*” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). With the help of Johnny Wonder, De Familie wrote a campaign plan to make the crowdfunding a success. Johnny Wonder develops creative communication concepts and campaigns for companies (Johnny Wonder, n.d.).

The funders had two options for donating money. The first option was donating an x-amount of money without receiving anything for it in return. This is called donation-based crowdfunding. Those people are not donating because they want to ‘pre-order’ a reward but they just want to contribute to the process of creating the product. According to research done in 2014 by Gerber & Hui this contribution with helping others is one of the main reasons why to fund a crowdfunding project. The second option was pre-ordering. By donating the funders would ‘pre-order’ an award, which could be consumed later. What kind of awards they receive depends on the amount of money they fund. An overview of the awards and corresponding prices is visible in appendix 1. The reason for offering the option to not receive a reward is simple. Not everybody wants to receive a reward, some are already satisfied by helping De Familie realize their feature film (Johnny Wonder, internal communication, 2016).

De Familie wishes to enlarge their own supporters, make them more sustainable and make them more engaged with the productions (Johnny Wonder, internal communication, 2016). A crowdfunding campaign can be ideal to achieve this. By setting up a crowdfunding campaign, De Familie reaches more people. Besides the people that are already familiar with the company, high educated students (25-35 years) and high educated people (40-45 years old) are also reached. Who are their primary and secondary target audience for this campaign (Johnny Wonder, internal communication, 2016). By giving the funders the feeling they are part of the production, they will be more likely to be interested and engaged with this production, as well as future projects (Johnny Wonder, internal communication, 2016). Funders want to be part of a community (Gerber & Hui, 2014), so the sustainability is achieved automatically by letting funders give financial support.

In this thesis, the term ‘crowdfunding campaign’ is used. It implies the whole process involved in crowdfunding. Not only the funding part, also the activities that need to be carried out to make the funding run smoothly, this includes pre- and post-campaign. The term ‘creator’ is used when a person or a group of people decide to start a crowdfunding campaign and pledge funds from individuals. A ‘funder’ is a private individual that pledges funds to a crowdfunding campaign. Creators place their crowdfunding campaigns online on crowdfunding platforms. These are websites where creators request for financial support of a funder. De Familie used the ‘Voor de Kunst’ website to request financial support. <https://www.voordekunst.nl/projecten/4881>.

The next chapters of this study are: the literature review wherein all the scientific literature is discussed and reviewed, relevant to this study; the methods chapter includes two methods how and what information is obtained, in-depth interviews and a case study; finally, this study ends with the results that came out of the survey and conclusions that are written based on the findings.

1.1 Problem Analysis & Definition

As mentioned in the introduction paragraph, De Familie received help from communication agency Johnny Wonder. The intention of the guidance was to lead De Familie in the right direction during the campaign period. This period started in June 2016, when the first ideas were realized. Throughout the campaign period, original posts and content were posted online as advised by Johnny Wonder. The whole campaign ended when the shortcoming €75.000,- was raised in October 2016, entirely according to schedule (Johnny Wonder, internal communication, 2016).

Suddenly, De Familie did not receive any guidance any more from Johnny Wonder. The campaign period did not include the period from achieving the crowdfunding goal till the film release. Although the campaign stopped, there were still the funders, waiting to be involved and receive regular updates. Since this was their first crowdfunding campaign, there was no employee with enough online communication skills experience to engage the funders. This effected a few things for De Familie:

Dissatisfied funders. One of the main reasons why people decide to fund is to be part of a community (Gerber & Hui & Kuo, 2014). They want to have the feeling that they are part of the product/project by giving a financial contribution. When the funders rarely receive updates, that barely interests them, the funders will not feel connected with the project anymore (Baird & Parasnis, 2012). They might even regret their donation.

Less potential funders. When the funders are not given the attention they deserve, they will not be engaged and become dissatisfied; they will refuse to fund a future campaign (Gerber et al., 2014). So there will be less potential funders.

Lower quality of future productions. As a result of the decrease in potential funders, the total amount of possible funding money will also decrease. When there is less money available for a production, the quality goes down logically.

Higher workload. Receiving less money from crowdfunders means finding other parties to fund. This includes doing the required research and writing fund request documents. This extra work is done by the employees of De Familie.

Less profits. Less money coming in from crowdfunding means less profits for De Familie.

1.2 Research Objective

This research obtains insight into how creators of a crowdfunding campaign can engage the small community that arose from the campaign. There are several studies that analyze why crowdfunding campaigns became successful. Though there has not been research done on how a campaign should be executed to keep the current funders engaged. As well as; if and how the chance could be enlarged that funders give a financial contribution to a possible future project.

This research aims to provide the team behind the creation of ‘Niemand in de Stad’ with recommendations. Recommendations that can be adopted by De Familie to keep the funders engaged and enlarge the chance to fund future projects.

1.3 Research Question

The main research question for this study is: “*What strategies can be adopted by De Familie Film & TV to keep the funders of the crowdfunding campaign for ‘Niemand in de Stad’ engaged to enlarge the chance they fund future projects?*” To answer the main research question, 3 sub research question are derived:

1. *How can the small community that arose from a crowdfunding campaign be engaged throughout the pre-, post- and production phase?*

Every individual has their own unique social media behaviour. Everyone has his or her own preferences regarding receiving updates. To achieve engaged funders, the company needs to find the right balance between what communication channels to use and with what frequency. As well as what type of message needs to be delivered.

2. *What are the motivations and deterrents for a person to support a crowdfunding campaign for a Dutch feature film for the second time?*

Finding out what the motivations and deterrents for a funder are, is very valuable. With this information, we can find out what the reasoning is whether people decide to give financial support for the second time. This could come in handy when De Familie decides to setup a new crowdfunding campaign.

Also, with the motivations and deterrents taken into consideration, we know what the crowdfunders find valuable. During the campaign period these factors might need some extra attention. By giving extra attention, possible deterrents could be avoided before they negatively influence the crowdfunders’ willingness to fund.

3. *How engaged are the crowdfunders of ‘Niemand in de Stad’ currently?*

When the level of engagement is measured, a creator can take action. Either do nothing; the level of engagement is high enough, or improve the related activities so the funders will become more engaged. The level of engagement also influences the decision to (not) fund a future project.

1.4 Relevance of the Topics

First of all, there is a relevance for the commissioned party. De Familie obtains insights into what strategies they should adopt in their business operations to keep the funder engaged.

This study is of great value for production houses. Just like De Familie, most of these production house companies are independent and need to take care of their own financial situation. Hereby private funders could be a nice addition to let them produce documentaries or features of greater quality. This study will show the production houses how they should treat and communicate to the funder. This leads to less financial dependency and therefore productions of greater quality.

Though, this study is not only for production houses relevant. It is actually relevant for all creators that have started a crowdfunding campaign. The negative experiences a private funder might have experienced, influences the funding behaviour for possible future projects. This includes documentary and feature film related campaigns, but also any other product or service that is presented on a crowdfunding platform.

1.5 Company Description

De Familie produces documentaries and documentary series for television, and projects for third parties. The subjects of the productions vary from members of The Dutch Royal Family to war veterans, portraits of well-known Dutch artists, the lives of anxiety patients or discovering the myths and mysteries of Eastern and Central Europe. The productions made by De Familie are about hope, desire and ordinary people. Observation and everyday life are keywords in their productions.

De Familie was founded in 2004 by director / producer Michiel van Erp and producer / researcher Monique Busman. Under their leadership, and in collaboration with several Dutch broadcasters, De Familie produced the documentaries; *Onder de Oppervlakte* (VPRO), *MH17, het verdriet van Nederland* (BNNVARA), *Schaken met de Dood* (NCRV), *Satudarah-One Blood* (NTR), *Mattheus* (NCRV), *Zwart Als Roet* (VPRO), *Hollands Welvaren* (VPRO), *Ramses* (AVRO), *Wit is ook een kleur* (VPRO), *De Europeaan* (VPRO) and many more.

Located near the Amstel in Amsterdam, De Familie currently has 9 full-time employees. The day-to-day operations vary from doing research, producing and copyright related work. Approximately three to five films are produced each year, depending on the amount of ideas that are brought to the company.

The upcoming years, De Familie wants to concentrate on creating high quality documentaries, both about young as well as proven talent. Since the quality of the productions are so high, De Familie tends to be very selective. After all, producing qualitative documentaries demands more time. This selectiveness manifests in the number of projects they produce at the same time and the same group of freelancers that works for De Familie.

(De Familie Film & TV, 2017)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is focused on what strategies can be implemented to engage the crowdfunders of ‘Niemand in de Stad’. There has not been done research on engagement in crowdfunding. However, some general research is conducted on crowdfunding. This is briefly presented in chapter 2.1. Consequently, the theoretical framework will be presented that will be used to give meaning to the findings.

2.1 Previous Research

Quite a few researchers have researched the general aspects of crowdfunding. How to reach the right crowd (Belleflamme & Lambert & Schwienbacher, 2012), the motivations to fund for funders, (Gerber & Hui & Kuo, 2014), how to create value for the funder (Meyskens & Bird, 2015). These generic studies are very valuable since there are only a few studies that dive into these topics. However, the engagement part of crowdfunding is not covered by research yet.

2.1.1 Crowdfunding Purposes

The average crowdfunding campaign amount is €6500,- and becomes successful 50% of the time. (Newswire, 2014) According to Ley and Weaven (2011), Colgren (2014) and Dorff (2014) it is used to supply funds for start-ups which are in their early stage. It allows them to grow and become visible on the market. Whereas they first were not able to produce their products, they now have the (financial) resources. This is not always the case though. Crowdfunding occurs for any variety of purposes related with finance activity from finding artists for a song, shooting a movie, find a writer for a book and indeed funding start-ups (Lawton & Maron, 2010). The funded product or service is not always dependent on the monetary resources to get potentially produced. I.e; crowdfunding is also used to enrich a product or service. This could be a crowdfunding campaign aiming to spice up a scene with special effects.

2.1.2 Forms of Financing in Crowdfunding

There are two forms of crowdfunding in which the creator can solicit funds of individuals (Belleflamme & Lambert & Schwienbacher, 2013). The first option is pre-ordering. The creator invites the individual to pre-order a product or service to collect the required capital. The second form is profit sharing. The creator invites the individual for a fixed amount of money. In exchange the funder receives a share of future profits or equity (Belleflamme et al., 2013).

When crowdfunding is based on pre-ordering, the community benefits directly from the consumption experience. Since it is a pre-order, the true quality of the product is obviously revealed later. The funders all have their different expected valuations for the upcoming product (Belleflamme et al., 2013).

However, when crowdfunding is based on profit sharing, the community benefits are more related to investment rather than consumption. They support the creator without necessarily becoming a consumer. The quality of the product is less important in this case. (Belleflamme et al., 2013).

In their study Belleflamme et al., (2013) created a theoretical analysis where the two forms of financing were considered as mutually exclusive. They suggested that creators either have the option to let funders pre-order a product or to share the profit with them. However, the crowdfunding campaign for ‘Niemand in de Stad’ offered both options. With pre-ordering funders were able to choose a reward. With the donation-based funding they donated without receiving anything in return (Johnny Wonder, internal communication, 2016).

2.1.3 Customer Engagement

With the advent of the internet and social media, customer engagement is exploding in interest (Sashi, 2012). The possibility to build relationships with the customers on social media interests a wide variety of industries. Therefore, the term ‘customer engagement’ is far from consistent across these industries (Vivek & Beatty & Morgan, 2012). It is either based on cognitive, affective, behavioral, or social construct (Vivek et al., 2012).

There is not only a difference between industries, but each media also has their own implication and relation to engagement. In traditional media, engagement is defined as read-only setting (Evans & McKee, 2010). This is also found by Malthouse, Haenlein, Skiera, Wege and Zhang in 2013, the traditional engagement model assumes that customers are passive. The customers are responding to a company’s actions primarily through their purchasing behaviour, without directly interacting with the company.

On the other hand, social media has a different viewpoint on engagement than the traditional media (Evans & McKee, 2010). In social media, engagement means acting in an open, participative social environment. With its interactivity, social media can establish conversations among customers and involve them in creating content and value. This is both acknowledged by Sashi in 2012 and Malthouse et al. in 2013. The development of content and value creation results in better served customers by satisfying the needs of the customer.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

In the upcoming chapter several studies are discussed that have a relation to the research topic of this study; engaging crowdfunders of feature films. These theories provide the background. This background is applied in the upcoming chapters to give meaning to the findings and conclusion.

2.2.1 Motivations and Deterrents for Participation in Crowdfunding

With the increasing number of crowdfunded projects (Gerber & Hui & Kuo, 2014), it is important to understand what drives people to fund these projects. Gerber et al. researched what the motivations and deterrents are for participation in crowdfunding. The supporter in crowdfunding desires to collect external rewards such as an acknowledgment, a tangible product, or an experience. They refer to the transaction as ‘buying’ and ‘getting’, suggesting that crowdfunding share some elements with the consumer experience. Most supporters argue this is the major reason why they decided to fund (Gerber et al., 2014; Belleflamme et al., 2012; Bretschneider & Knaub & Wieck, 2014).

While many supporters are motivated to collect, other are motivated to ‘give’. Supporters have a strong desire to help creators with whom they have a strong and personal connection (Gerber et al. 2014). Yet, the connection to the creator is not always personal. Even if there is not a strong connection with the creator, they are still willing to fund. Sometimes the work of the creator is known with the funder, or a friend suggested the crowdfunding campaign. They would rather support creators with whom they somehow have a connection with, than no connection at all (Gerber et al., 2014). Also, supporters desire to help creators who are close to their funding goal trying to make a meaningful impact. The progress of a campaign is very transparent, since it is visible for everybody on the crowdfunding platforms. However, this could also deter funders. Funders tend to be deterred when they see that a crowdfunding campaign is running for a while with relatively little yield (Gerber et al., 2014).

As mentioned earlier, receiving a reward is an important motivator for supporters. Donating without receiving a reward (while they paid for it) can lead to a deterrent for funding future projects (Gerber et al., 2014). This cancelation of giving the reward to the funder is often caused due to bad planning. The employees are not experienced with manufacturing the product and underestimate the time needed (Gerber et al., 2014). Sometimes this leads to a delayed reception of the promised reward. The experienced delay is a deterrent for participating in a future crowdfunding campaign (Gerber et al., 2014).

Another motivation for the crowdfunders is the usefulness of social communicative updates during the campaign. The topic of the update can vary from updating on the project itself or the progress of the target amount (Kuppuswamy & Bayus, 2014). According to them, updates have a positive influence on acquiring the target amount. The updates will generate more excitement among the crowdfunders and

can subsequently create awareness among people that did not donate yet. Both the crowdfunder and people that did not donate yet, can donate (again). In the same study Kuppuswamy and Bayus explain that (potential) funders are not motivated to provide extra support once the crowdfunding campaign has reached the funding target. According to them, observing that the campaign reached the target amount is a deterrent for potential crowdfunders.

2.2.2 Engaging People Online

Internet has become a 'new' channel for companies to reach their audience. Whereas it was first mainly used for advertising or promoting corporate images (Kiang & Raghu & Shang, 2000), recent years have shown that internet usage changed. With the advent of the new platforms, engaging customers has gained interest from companies, with social media as most potential platform (Baird & Parasnis, 2011).

2.2.2.1 Social Media

According to Baird and Parasnis (2011) most of the social media users do not engage with companies via social media just to feel connected. Consumers tend to think more pragmatic; what is in it for me? Therefore, becoming engaged is self-interest. To engage the audience - Baird and Parasnis explain that - companies need to design experiences that deliver tangible value in return for customers' time, attention, endorsement and data. I.e.; customers are more likely to become engaged when tangible value is returned to them (Baird & Parasnis, 2011).

Glyn Mangold and Faulds found in 2009 that customers feel more engaged with the products or service of the organizations when they are able to give their feedback. By providing a feedback possibility, the funder has the feeling that they are part of the community. Honesty and open communication are encouraged and customer engagement is enhanced.

The feedback that is provided by the customers is of great value. According to Evans & McKee (2010) understanding and collaboration in response to a conversation often matter more than the initial message. Simply put; the discussion about a message often matters more than the message itself. By participating in the discussion (creating content) users become engaged. In paragraph 2.2.3.1 content creation and engagement is further explained.

Besides users responding on the discussion, the company itself can also participate in the discussion. Baird and Parasnis found in 2011 that transparency on social media is very important. They argue that the majority of people only interact with brands via social media when they feel the company's communication is transparent. Companies that have problems with being transparent risk being perceived as manipulative. As a result; users are deterred to create content and are therefore not/less engaged (Evans & McKee, 2010).

Moreover, responding to their audience also offers companies the opportunity to listen to the users and give them the feeling they are heard and understood. Which is in general perceived as a positive experience. It will enhance the relation with the user and motivates the user to participate and connect with the company on social media (Evans & McKee, 2010). Such interactions with the user can also be seen as an opportunity for the company to potentially encourage the user to become advocates for their products (Malthouse et al., 2013).

If one would like his customers to engage with him, he needs to give them a reason for doing so. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), the first step to realize this is listen to your audience. With the input of the audience one can find out what they find interesting, what they would like to hear or talk about. Based on this information, relevant content can be developed and posted that fits the expectations of the audience. The audience is much more likely to participate on social media – and therefore be engaged - with content that is appealing to them.

2.2.2.2 E-mail Marketing

E-mail marketing is a form of direct marketing which uses e-mail as a means of communication to the audience. It is very easy and cheap way for companies to promote their products or services via e-mail. Companies use e-mail marketing to communicate with existing customers, but also send unsolicited bulk e-mail to a wider audience, where not everybody responds or reads it.

From a business perspective, this response rate on e-mails is essential. More response means a higher potential to sell products or services. A response to an e-mail includes clicks, opens and scrolls. This response rate can be measured and even influenced. For an entrepreneur, this is significant information. By fine-tuning the e-mail, it will be more effective for the audience concerned. According to Chittenden and Rettie (2013) there are a few variables that influence the response rate – and in particular the click rate - of readers. The following variables are retrieved from their study:

E-mail Length

The length of an e-mail has a significant effect on the click through-rate. The longer the e-mail, the lower the response rate. In their research, Chittenden and Rettie found that the lowest responding e-mails were nearly twice the length of the highest responding group. One needs to find the perfect balance between providing enough information and being concrete and to the point.

Relevance

The relevance of the list refers to the interest the audience has for the message. The more ‘relevant’ the individuals are that receive the e-mail, the better the response rate. The narrower the sender targets his

audience, the more relevant the audience is, the higher the response rate. Besides the mailing list, the subject line matters as well. As found by Marinova, Murphy and Massey in 2002, subject lines that are relevant to the product or service being promoted generate greater responses. Whereas, Chittenden and Rettie argue that a subject line with a strong incentive in it, will improve response rates.

Personal

A personal salutation corresponds positively with the response rate, in comparison to e-mails that were not personalized. However, Marinova et al. (2002) argue that there is not a significant correlation between personalized salutation and response rate. This study – however – investigates e-mail marketing for the hospitality industry, whereas Chittenden et al. based their research on different products and services. Thus, not related to any industry; actually covering multiple industries. The contradictory conclusions might be the result of the difference in e-mail behavior among audiences.

Number of Images

A minimal amount (or no) images included in the e-mail leads to a lower click-through rate. Readers find an e-mail more appealing when it is more colourful and attractive looking. More images generate a greater response. An overkill of images works counter however.

In addition, Maneesoonthorn (2006) states in his study about e-mail marketing that companies should focus on developing a long-term relationship with their audience. Instead of becoming obsessed about the first contact they have with their audience, they should focus on the future. According to him communication has less impact when a random message shows up, at a random moment in a random place. He explains that ‘dropping the ball’ after the first e-mail should be avoided, otherwise readers are less interested in reading future e-mails. This is ensured when the message is personalized, frequent and relevant (Maneesoonthorn, 2006), which is also described in Chittendens’ and Rettie’s study.

2.2.3 Measurement of Engagement

As discussed in the literature review, engagement on social media means stakeholders becoming participants rather than viewers. In comparison with traditional media, stakeholders can be engaged by watching a movie, without participating. On social media; stakeholders cannot be engaged by watching alone, they must participate in order to be engaged (Evans & McKee, 2010).

2.2.3.1 Forms of participation in Social Media

The following paragraph is based on the research done by Evans and McKee in 2010 on social media marketing. The engagement process for social media consists out social action building blocks (Evans & McKee, 2010). Those blocks make it easier to step through the engagement process. It starts with consumption and leads to content creation. In figure 1 the engagement process is presented. The social

actions move the customers to an increasingly engaged state, with customer collaboration as the endpoint. The meaning of each social building block is explained in the next paragraphs.

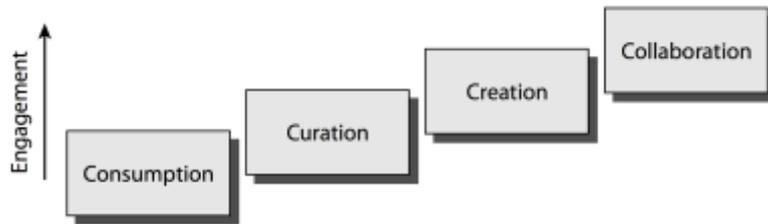


Figure 1; The Engagement Process

Consumption

The first foundational block in the engagement process is consumption. As used in the context of social media, consumption relates to watching, reading, downloading, or listening to digital content. This is the starting point for almost any online activity. E.g.; it is impossible (or at least unwise) to share something that you did not consume yet. Also, what we share is only a small part of what we consume, because humans filter information. Therefore consumption outweighs any other activity on social media. The majority is ‘taking’ (consuming) rather than ‘putting back’ (creating).

As a campaign creator – or any other person that aims for an engaged audience – content creation should be encouraged. By providing possibilities to let the audience create their own content related to the initial message, consumption transforms into creation. When this happens, the audience skips the social building block that lays in between consumption and creation.

Curation

Curation relates to describing content. It includes rating, reviewing, commenting on and tagging. This process of describing content makes the content more useful for others. This process can be compared with a review of the trailer for ‘Niemand in de Stad’. Based on the review, people make a ‘purchase’ decision. In this context, the purchase decision relates to buying a ticket for the cinema. For a creator, it can be very valuable when this ‘review’ is placed into the interests and context of the person reading it, so it enables the purchase decision.

This also includes the ‘review of the reviewers’. By reading what other people think about the review, more information is gathered. Along with the personal information of the reviewer or the amount of responses on the review the potential buyer is in a better position to evaluate the review. The result is a better-informed consumer which leads to a better purchase decision and a satisfied consumer.

Creation

Content creation requires a little more than responding to an event. The community members share content they have made themselves. This content is based on the initial message of the creator. The fact that people like to share what they are doing and want to be recognized for their own contributions within the larger community drives to create content. Since this step is quite demanding for the community, it is important to keep it approachable for everyone by providing easy-to-use tools. If one wants his audience to move beyond consumption and curation, he should encourage the audience and empower them to create.

Collaboration

The previous building blocks can be largely individual activities. Collaboration is a collective social action between members of the community that naturally appears. E.g., when the film trailer of ‘Niemand in de Stad’ is online and the members discuss and interpret it in a blogpost. This blogpost is seen by other members and a discussion among members naturally appears.

2.2.3.2 Measuring Engagement with e-mail Marketing

E-mail marketing platforms such as MailChimp, GetResponse, Constant Contact and AWeber help to measure the engagement of an audience (Gibbs, 2015). Unlike print and traditional direct marketing, e-mail marketing allows you to track the behaviour of the audience (MailChimp, n.d.). MailChimp offers advanced reporting features that tracks the audience’s engagement level by:

- Showing how many people opened the e-mail;
- Showing how many times each receiver opened the e-mail;
- Showing where they clicked on and how many times;
- Showing the subscribe activity;
- Showing the unsubscribe activity;
- Showing the audience growth over time;
- Showing which customers made a purchase;
- Showing at what geographical location the e-mail is opened;
- Showing per hour the amount of opens and clicks.

With all these data, an in-depth analysis can be done on the engagement of the receivers. With this analysis, the creator is aware of the weak points of the campaign and can improve it easily. E.g.; pictures engage the readers and sustain attention (Ellis-Chadwick & Doherty, 2010). When the analysis shows the same results, the creator might implement visuals in the e-mail instead of plain text only. An extensive analysis on what tactics to use in e-mail marketing is discussed in chapter 2.2.2.2.

Industry Standard

The engagement statistics for e-mail marketing differ between industries (MailChimp, 2017). Measuring the engagement by comparing the campaign results with the industry standard gives a fair analysis of the campaign performance. For example; Daily Deals/E-coupons e-mails have an average opening rate of 15,22% whereas hobbies related e-mails have a percentage of 28,46% (MailChimp, 2017). A campaign creator should therefore compare his campaign statistics with the industry standard statistics. On their website, MailChimp offers an overview of the industry standards (MailChimp, 2017). A selection of this table is presented in the table 1.

Industry	Open	Click
Arts and Artists	27.23%	2.85%
Beauty and Personal Care	18.48%	1.96%
Computer and Electronics	20.87%	2.16%
Daily Deals/E-coupons	15.22%	2.39%
Entertainment and Events	21.21%	2.33%
Games	20.82%	3.33%
Government	26.33%	3.62%
Hobbies	28.46%	5.13%
Photo and Video	25.36%	3.49%
Travel and Transportation	17.26%	1.80%

Table 1; Average E-mail Campaign stats per industry

3. METHODS

As discussed in chapter 1 and 2 due to the lack of knowledge De Familie Film & TV has no idea what strategies to adopt to engage the funder to enlarge the chance of future financial support. This problem is translated into the main research question of this study: “*What strategies can be adopted by De Familie Film & TV to keep the funders of their crowdfunding campaign for a Dutch feature film satisfied and enlarge the chance to fund future projects?*” In this chapter the research method will be discussed. The methods for this study consist out of qualitative research and a case study.

3.1 METHODOLOGY 1 | QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The first and second sub-questions require a qualitative research method. A qualitative research method is chosen to uncover the meaning of a phenomenon, how people interpret their experiences, how one constructs their worlds, and what meaning one attributes to their experiences (Merriam, 2009).

3.1.1 Data Collection Method

When we look at the research question(s) as stated in chapter 1, we see that the first two are more focussed on the feelings and thoughts of the funders, rather than quantification. The qualitative research strategy emphasizes words rather than numerical data in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2012). We want to find out what the whole reasoning of the funders is. How and why they want to be engaged and what the motivations and deterrents are to fund for the second. Those questions require an analysis of their feelings and thoughts. It is not significant to know if the funder is engaged and willing to fund a future crowdfunding campaign of De Familie Film & TV, but rather why and how. Their reasoning behind it. Therefore, a qualitative research method will be used to answer the first two sub-questions of this study.

3.1.2 Semi-structured Interviews with Funders

In chapter 3.1.1 is discussed that we want to understand how a funder can be engaged with the crowdfunding campaign for ‘Niemand in de Stad’. To determine the meaning behind the thoughts and feelings of the funders, in-depth interviews are conducted. In-depth interviews are person-to-person encounters in which one person obtains information from another (Merriam, 2009). More specifically; semi-structured in-depth interviews. With the semi-structured interview, the type and order of questions is partly set. The other part of the interview needs to be improvised, which can be relaxing for both the interviewer and interviewee. Every funder has a different perspective on how he can be engaged with the project, a standard set of questions should therefore be rejected. Based on the given answer, the interviewer can decide what question suits the conversation best at that moment.

Another advantage of semi-structured interviews is that, as the interview progresses, the interviewer can raise additional or complementary issues. E.g., when the funder has an extraordinary opinion on how he/she want to be engaged via social media, more data can be gathered by continuing asking related questions. This ‘extra’ data also forms a part of the study’s findings (Bryman, 2012). Hereby the response of the funder could be taken up and presented later to the same funder. The data gathered will be enriched with the thoughts and feelings of the interviewee on his/her preceding responses and statements (Bryman, 2012).

For the semi-structured interviews a list of questions was constructed, presented in appendix 2. After four interviews, the set of questions was slightly adjusted, presented in appendix 3. This had a couple of reasons:

- Some questions were very similar which led to an almost identical answer. The core of interviewee’s reasoning was already retrieved with the first questions, the second only confirmed it without providing extra relevant information. To save up some time and effort for both the interviewer and interviewee, those questions were left out for the last 4 interviews.
- After analysing the first four interviews, a few themes were already retrieved. Based on those themes the interview questions were – where possible – slightly changed. The change of some of the questions allowed the interviewer to go a more in-depth on the partly set themes. It will eventually enrich the research and provide a more extensive analysis.
- Some of the questions were too complicated to understand. Sometimes the interviewer had to repeat the question because the interviewee did not understand it completely the first time. Those questions were rephrased so it became understandable for everybody.

By using open-ended questions, more relevant information is collected. Hereby we can find out what the thoughts and feelings of the funder are instead of obtaining “yes” and “no” answers. An example of an interview question meant for the funder is: “*Why do(n’t) you want to receive updates regarding the crowdfunding campaign of Niemand in de Stad?*”. This question is constructed to obtain insight in how engaged a funder wants to be with this feature film. Also, it determines in what ratio the available communication channels should give the funder in question updates and what updates that might be. This question gives the interviewer the opportunity to continue asking in-depth questions. Questions that might answer the two above mentioned topics, but also the possible negative experiences the funder has had with the updates. Why this is considered a negative experience, what caused the negative experience, how the funder dealt with this feeling, et cetera.

All the interviews are audio recorded (appendix 4). It helps to correct the natural limitations of our memories and a more thorough examination is possible. Along with the audio recording, notes were taken to support the static answers with emotional responses. Transcribing the recorded interview is

done on the same day, with the emotional responses added to it a more complete and coherent interview is obtained. E.g., a funder might have angry feelings when answering the question; “*Why do(n’t) you want to receive updates regarding the crowdfunding campaign of Niemand in de Stad?*”. With audio recording, only the verbal expression is recorded; their actual answer to the question. The non-verbal expressions like facial expressions and body language is recorded by taking notes.

3.1.3 Setting

Prior to conducting the interviews, the participants got in contact with the interviewer. Besides easing them, the interviewees were asked what location they preferred for the interview. According to Bryman (2012) the interviewee should be familiar with the location, e.g. where he/she works or lives. Funders preferred the interview to be conducted at their homes, at De Familie or in café’s. With the interviewees being conducted in a ‘safe’ environment, one feels more comfortable and safe (Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, the interviews are conducted in a quiet and private environment. It ensures that both interviewer and interviewee can fully focus without being overheard. This is significant for this study since it contains very personal information. Besides that, a quiet environment positively influences the audibility of the conversation. This is important during the interview as well as during the analysis, when the recordings are replayed.

3.1.4 Sample

The participants will be derived from the crowdfunding campaign ‘Niemand in de Stad’. De Familie Film constructed a list of all 376 funders. This list includes the names, contact information and the amount of money they funded. Based on the amount they donated, 8 people are picked to conduct an in-depth interview. To pursue a better representation of the funders, low, mid and high donations were all included in the sample. General information of the interviewees is presented in table 2.

	Funders Name	Gender	Age	Amount of money donated	Occupation
1	Iris Kleinsman	Female	29	€25,-	Researcher for documentaries
2	Hansje Quartel	Female	62	€50,-	Director
3	Yvonne Buunk-Werkhoven	Female	50	€50,-	Independent researcher and psychologist
4	Mylene Esmeijer	Female	24	€25,-	Producer for documentaries
5	Willem Korthals Altes	Male	67	€500,-	Judge
6	Peter Clark	Male	53	€50,-	Participation council advisor
7	Bram Bax	Male	28	€25,-	Producer for documentaries

8	Evert de Vries	Male	29	€500,-	Takes care of the finance at a publisher
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Table 2. General information of interview participants.

Since the available time of this research is limited, only 8 people are interviewed. While this amount seems to be minimal, it concerns 8 in-depth interviews of approximately 1 hour each. Those interviews allow us to find out how the funders interpret their experiences with the campaign and what meaning they attribute to these experiences, rather than minimalistic and shallow responses.

3.1.5 Data Collection Procedures

Based on the availability of the funder, a date is picked to conduct the semi-structured interview. All interviews are conducted in April 2017. As briefly discussed in chapter 3.1.1 already, the semi-structured interviews are audio recorded and notes are taken. It helps to correct the natural limitations of our memories and a more thorough examination is possible. The non-verbal expressions like facial expressions and body language is recorded by taking notes.

3.1.6 Measurement Instrument

The measurement instrument of this study is semi-structured interviews. While there are 376 funders to be possibly interviewed, the researcher cannot just pick 8 participants. The funders are picked based on the amount of their donation. With this measurement instrument the researcher controls the sample, he decides which funder to invite. By inviting funder with divers amount of donations, a better representation of the population is assured which results into a more trustworthy survey (Bryman, 2012).

With this measurement instrument, personal contact is present between the researcher and respondent. Hereby - besides the verbal responses - non-verbal communication is included in the process of data collection. Their own interpretation of the experience they have with the crowdfunding campaign becomes visible.

While the questions are partly prepared, it is important to be a good listener while conducting the interviews with the funders. The inability to listen may mean failing to pick up on a really important point or asking an irritatingly pointless question later in the interview. Since the interviews are conducted to find out what their thoughts and opinions are on (not) being engaged with the campaign, they should not be judged. Any indication of (dis)agreement with the funder should be rejected to keep the answers as trustworthy as possible (Bryman, 2012).

3.1.7 Analyses Method

The transcription of a recorded interview is done the same day. The interview is still fresh in memory which enables the interviewer to add the non-verbal communication to the verbal responses. This enriches the interview by giving a deeper meaning (Bryman, 2012). Themes were chosen to represent the findings. Consequently, the themes were compared to the theoretical framework. Based on this comparison plus the responses of the interviewees, a substantiated conclusion can be drawn.

3.1.8 Ethical Considerations

One ethical consideration is the privacy of the funders. The interview reveals intimate personal information about the participant. When the participant gave permission, the names were linked to the concerning interviews. If the participant wanted to stay anonymous, a fictitious name is linked to the interview. Prior to each interview, the interviewee was informed that they are audio recorded. The interviewee was also offered the opportunity to skip any question.

The second ethical consideration concerns the well-being of the interviewees. As mentioned before, the locations of the interviews are devised by the interviewees. This would make them feel more safe and confident.

3.1.9 Limitations

A limitation of this survey is the sample size. Whereas 376 funders are involved in this crowdfunding campaign, only 8 are interviewed for approximately one hour each. All the funders have their own preference, thoughts and opinions about being engaged. With these 8 interviews a generalization to the wider population is made, whilst the findings might not be representative for the entire population. Also, since the gathered data is based on the subjectivity of participants. This, and the researched bias can lead to difficulties in reliability and validity of findings (Armstrong, 2009).

3.2 METHODOLOGY 2 | CASE STUDY

The third and final sub-question requires a case study. With this case study, the level of engagement of the funders is being measured. As discussed in chapter 2.2.3, the engagement is measured differently with social media and e-mail behaviour. In this chapter will be explained how the analysis is conducted.

3.2.1 Data Collection Method: Case Study; ‘Niemand in de Stad’ Campaign

By analysing the social media behaviour of the funders, we can measure the level of engagement of the funders. The theory about the four stages of participation will be used in this manner. This includes the consumption, curation, creation and collaboration. An extensive explanation of these terms is defined in chapter 2.2.3.1. When the level of participation is measured, the creator knows if the currently used strategy is leading to engaged funders.

The funders’ level of engagement will also be tested based on the newsletters. With the MailChimp statistics, an in-depth analysis will be conducted. The statistics will be compared to the theory of Chittenden and Rettie and the industry standards.

3.2.2 Sample

Regarding the engagement via social media, the interactions will be analyzed. The sample size depends on the amount of interactions people have with the social media platforms. The sample size of the MailChimp analysis is 376. The interactions of each funder are included in the campaign reports of MailChimp.

3.2.3 Data Collection Procedures

The interaction people have with the social media accounts are public and therefore easy to retrieve. Regarding the newsletters; those are sent with MailChimp via one account. Reports are available that explain the interaction funders have had with each e-mail they received. Those reports are easily accessible for everyone with the username and password.

3.2.4 Measurement Instrument

The measurement for the case study is based on the four stages of participation as discussed by Evans & McKee (2010). Every stage will be tested with the social media behaviour of the funders. Since all the interactions with the ‘Niemand in de Stad’ social media platforms are public, all data can be retrieved easily. The newsletters are sent via MailChimp. The MailChimp reports will be used to analyse the funders’ level of engagement. The report provides enough data to write an in-depth analysis on this topic.

3.2.5 Analyses Method

The analysis of the social media interaction will be done based on the theory of Evans & McKee (2010). The interaction of the users will be compared with the four stages of participation. Hereby meaning will be ascribed to the findings and a substantiated conclusion can be drawn. The analysis of the newsletters will be based on the various theories on e-mail marketing engagement, as discussed in chapter 2.2.2.2. The characteristics of each e-mail are analysed and compared with the existing theories.

3.2.6 Ethical Considerations

There is no ethical consideration involved regarding the social media behaviour of the users. This information is visible for everyone and therefore there are no privacy concerns. However, the MailChimp statistics that are presented in this research are private information of the company and the crowdfunders. Although it is not a major issue if a third party sees those statistics, it should be dealt with safely.

3.2.7 Limitations

There are not possible limitations for measuring the engagement by analysing the newsletter statistics. Regarding the social media analysis, however, not all funders are following the feature film on social media platforms. Therefore, the participation results that are derived from the analysis does not include all funders. Besides that the social media platforms are also followed by non-crowdfunders. Thus the analysis includes both the funders as well as the 'regular' users.

4. NIEMAND IN DE STAD CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN (CASE)

In this chapter the crowdfunders' level of engagement will be tested. The case study is related to the third sub-question; *How engaged are the crowdfunders of 'Niemand in de Stad' currently?*

Based on the social media behaviour and e-mail response of the crowdfunders, this question will be answered.

In January 2017 preparations started for reaching the crowdfunders via social media and e-mail. Together with a colleague we had a brainstorm session about the plan of action. This included; setting goals, determining roles and responsibilities and creating a content planning. Based on the meetings we had and based on the input we got from third parties, we decided to actively use Facebook, Instagram and MailChimp for sending newsletters. These channels will be analyzed to investigate how engaged the crowdfunders are. The social media activity is public and therefore easy to collect. The statistics of the newsletter are retrieved from the e-mail account that was used to send the newsletters. Once a newsletter is sent to the crowdfunders, their e-mail activity is gathered in what MailChimp calls 'campaign reports'. This data is presented in table 3. Additional information on the newsletters is presented in table 4.

Newsletter	E-mail subject	Subscribers ¹	Un-subscribers	Opens	Clicks	Most popular link
1	Michiel van Erp: "We gaan beginnen met draaien!"	366	0	68.1% (246)	9.1% (33)	Facebook; 21 unique clicks
2	Michiel van Erp: "Succesvolle eerste draaidagen!"	372	1	64.4% (239)	4.0% (15)	Facebook; 6 unique clicks

Table 3: MailChimp Statistics Crowdfunding Campaign 'Niemand in de Stad'

¹ After newsletter one, eight funders were added to the mailing list. These eight were not supposed to receive the first newsletter.

As shown in table 3, currently 2 newsletters are sent to the crowdfunders. De Familie decided to send the first newsletter 13 April 2017. This is the reason why there are only three newsletters sent so far, and thus included in the table. The term 'Opens' indicates the percentage of the total crowdfunders that opened the e-mail. The term 'Clicks' indicates the percentage of the total crowdfunders that clicked on at least one link.

Newsletter	Date sent	Type of message	Length in words	Images	Videos	Links
1	13 April 2017	Factual	172	1 large image 4 small images	0	8
2	28 April 2017	Personal story; written by Michiel	346	5 large images	0	6

Table 4: Additional information on the newsletters

Table 4 shows additional information about the newsletter. Length in words refers to the amount of words used for the message. ‘Links’ refer to the number of links that were included in the e-mail, excluding the standard MailChimp links.

4.1 Analysis of MailChimp Campaign

In chapter 2.2.3.2 is discussed that the crowdfunders’ level of engagement can be measured based on their e-mail activity. More activity means an higher level of engagement. The open rate started at 68.1% but gradually went down to 64.4% for the second newsletter.

Firstly, the open rate will be analysed. The following factors influence the open rate:

- E-mail subject
- Salutation
- Receiving it in spambox or inbox

All other factors such as number of links, pictures and type of message cannot influence the open rate. Those factors are unknown when the e-mail is not opened yet. MailChimp does not provide statistics on how many times the newsletter ends up in the spambox. Because of this, the ‘spambox factor’ cannot be taken into consideration for this analysis. The e-mail subject and salutation are the only two factors that are included.

The subject lines used for the three newsletters contained a quote of Michiel van Erp. The quote reveals the message of the e-mail, so the crowdfunders know what to expect in the e-mail. The purpose of the quote is to make it personal. A personal message by Michiel is more attracting than a very generic e-mail. As discussed in chapter 2.2.2.2, according to Marinova, Murphy and Massey (2002) subject lines that are relevant to the product or service being promoted generate larger response. The three newsletters

have roughly the same subject line and are all covering its enclosed message. This can be the reason why the open rates do not vary a lot among the e-mails.

The three e-mails had the same salutation: “*Beste crowdfunders en fans van Niemand in de Stad, en wie verder geïnteresseerd is in de film!*” [Dear crowdfunders and fans of ‘Niemand in de Stad’, and who are interested in the film!] Chittenden and Rettie (2013) argue that a personal salutation corresponds positively with the response rate, in comparison to e-mails that are not personalized. The open rate is already quite high for the three campaigns. This can be the result of the rather personal salutation used in the newsletters. Though, the salutation can even be more personal. The personal name of the crowdfunder can be used in the salutation. According to Chittenden and Rettie this will result in a higher response rate.

The click rate is the other activity that determines the level of engagement. Clicking on a link requires a higher state of engagement than reading the e-mail. The factors that – in this case – influence the click rate are:

- Type of message
- Length in words
- Images/Videos
- Overall design
- Frequency/Recurrence
- Number of links

The links were in all two newsletters the same. They direct the reader towards the Facebook page, Instagram page and website. The first newsletter had a click rate of 9.1%, which is very high. For the second and third newsletter, the click rate was lower. The type of message for the first e-mail was factual. The second and third contained a more personal story. The results suggest that a factual e-mail leads to a higher click-through rate compared to a personal e-mail.

Chittenden and Rettie argue that the length of an e-mail has a significant effect on the click-through rate. The longer the e-mail the lower the response rate. We can confirm this theory with the findings. The second and third newsletter were in length longer than the first one. As a possible result the click-through rate went down.

With the e-mails getting more visual, the click-through rate goes down. This is very remarkable. It contradicts the findings of Chittenden and Rettie in which they state that a minimal (or no) images included in the e-mails lead to a lower click-through rate. And more images generate greater response. This contradicts the findings. The descending click-through rate could also be the result of receiving the

e-mails from the same sender. Maneesoonthron (2006) explains that instead of becoming obsessed about the first contact companies have with their audience, they should focus on the future. ‘Dropping the ball’ after the first e-mail should be avoided, otherwise readers are less interested in reading future e-mails. Perhaps the first e-mail did not appeal to the interest of a part of the crowdfunders (maybe because it was not personal enough). As a result, the click-through rate goes down because the funders receive a similar e-mail from the same sender.

The two most recent newsletters contained 6 links, whereas the first newsletter had eight links in total. The findings suggest that the number of links influence the click-through rate. The more links, the higher the click-through rate. Though, because the difference in number of links is so minimalistic, the results are not trustworthy enough to base a valid conclusion on this.

In conclusion; the open rate started at 68.1% but gradually went down to 60.5% for the third newsletter. Still, 60.5% is a very high open rate. In table 1 (chapter 2.2.3.2) is shown what the average e-mail campaign statistics are per industry. The most relatable industry is ‘arts and artists’ with an open rate of 27.23% and a click-through rate of 2.85%. With an average open rate of 64.3% the three campaigns extremely exceed the average statistics. In fact, the open rate is more than double the industry average. The click-through rate is almost double the industry average. The two percentages suggest that the crowdfunders of ‘Niemand in de Stad’ are double as engaged as the ‘arts and artists’ audience, based on its industry figures.

4.2 Analysis of Social Media Behavior

The analysis of the social media behavior will be measured with the theory of Evans and McKee. Their theory explains the engagement process for social media. The process consists out of four social action building blocks. Consumption, curation, creation and collaboration. The social actions move the customers to an increasingly engaged state, with customer collaboration as ultimate endpoint.

The first social building block is consumption. This happens when the crowdfunders are reading or watching the social media content. At the moment, the audience consumes the social media updates. The messages, articles, photos and video as published on social media are watched and read by the audience. This social building block is easy to achieve and very approachable for the audience.

The second social building block is curation. This happens when content is described. It includes rating, reviewing, commenting on and tagging. Although the audience of ‘Niemand in de Stad’ has reached this state of engagement both on Facebook and Instagram, it is very minimalistic. Some messages are not described at all by the audience. Most content is poorly described with only a few comments. Besides that, the description of the audience is not described. I.e.; the review of the reviewers. According to

Evans and McKee a review of the reviewers result in a better-informed consumer which leads to a better purchase decision and a satisfied consumer.

Whereas the first and second social building blocks are (partly) expressed by the crowdfunders, the third and fourth are not executed at this moment. The crowdfunders do not share content they have made themselves (creation) and they do not collectively create something together (collaboration). Evans and McKee (2012) explain in their research that one should encourage and empower the audience to create content or to collaborate with peers. When there is no platform or possibility offered to the audience, the audience will never reach a higher state of engagement. The possibility to become more engaged is simply not offered. Therefore, crowdfunders can never reach the highest state of engagement.

At this point, the level of engagement based on the funders' social media behavior is rather poor. Just like any other page, the audience reads, watches and describes the content. Even though describing the content is very approachable for the crowdfunders, it is executed very minimized. To make the audience more engaged they should be offered a platform. In chapter 6 suggestions are presented how De Familie can do this.

5. RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter the findings are presented from the semi-structured interviews with the crowdfunders. After having listened to all the interview recordings for a few times and reading through the notes, certain themes were retrieved. These themes were continuously returning by a minimum of 3 (of the 8 in total) persons. First of all, the findings on engaging the funders are presented, structured in 3 different themes. Consequently, findings about the funders' willingness to fund a future crowdfunding project are presented. This part consists of 3 different themes. The themes are compared to the theoretical framework. Based on this comparison, a substantiated conclusion can be drawn.

A link to the audio recordings of the interviews is available in appendix 4. All 8 interviews are available for replay, sorted on record date, 1 being the first interview conducted, 8 being the last. In the analysis, the quotes are linked to a name and timecode. This indicates who said what at what timecode, which makes it easy to find the quote and replay it.

5.1 Engaging the Funders

5.1.1 Personal Note/Messages

During the interviews the crowdfunders the word exclusivity kept returning. Receiving the e-mails gave the funders an exclusive feeling. This exclusive feeling was partly caused by the fact the e-mail was addressed to the crowdfunders instead of the readers.

Mylene (18:33); *“Ik denk dat een nieuwsbrief nog weer exclusiever is. De aanhef hoe ze beginnen is ook: beste crowdfunder. Dan denk je: dat ben ik, en waarschijnlijk nog 200 anderen. Dan denk je wel dit is echt aan mij gericht en ik krijg nu deze foto's toegestuurd en deze informatie van Michiel omdat ik ge-crowdfund heb. Dan voel ik me meer betrokken. Het persoonlijke contact werkt effectiever dan social media.”*

[I think a newsletter is more exclusive. The salutation how they start is: dear crowdfunders. Then I think: that is me, and probably 200 others. Then I have the impression that it is addressed to me, and I receive these photos and information from Michiel because I crowdfunded the project. I feel more engaged. The personal contact works more effective than social media.]

As discussed, Chittenden & Rettie (2013) argue there are a few variables that influence the engagement of a reader. One of them is the personal note. Readers like a personal salutation, it causes a higher response- and click-rate. As discussed this raises the level of engagement of the readers. The quote

confirms the already existing literature. A ‘personal’ salutation led to a more engaged feeling, even when the salutation was dear crowdfunders instead of dear [Name].

Evert (12:30); *“Ik weet niet of het de exclusiviteit is die mij aanspreekt maar het is semi-persoonlijk. Het is natuurlijk nog steeds niet persoonlijk want het is een mailing die naar iedereen gaat. Maar de crowdfunders worden wel, krijgen meer informatie dan via Facebook. Dat spreekt mij aan.”*

[I don’t know if the exclusivity appeals me, but it is semi-personal. It is still not personal of course, every crowdfunder receives it. But the crowdfunders are getting, do get more information than via Facebook. That appeals me.]

The crowdfunders realize the newsletters are sent to every crowdfunder. Even though they are aware that every crowdfunder receives the same e-mail, they like the fact that it is kind of personalized. It does not include their personal name but the e-mail starts with ‘dear crowdfunders’. That appeals to the crowdfunder and makes him more involved with the project. More than reading the message via social media, where everybody can read it and there is no personal note. A more personal note indeed leads to more engaged crowdfunders, as discussed by Chittenden & Rettie.

Funders appreciated the type of notification they received from De Familie. The crowdfunders noted it was written by someone who experiences the whole process of filmmaking at first hand. The narrative way of telling and the personal note to the message revealed the texts are written by Michiel van Erp himself.

Yvonne (20:02): *“Je ziet en leest dat het bericht in de nieuwsbrief door Michiel zelf is geschreven. Als je hem ziet geef hem je complimenten daarvoor, want dat werkt in mijn beleving... Je leest zijn persoonlijke betrokkenheid, je leest echt het persoonlijke... het is gepassioneerd geschreven.”*

[You can see and read that the message in the newsletter is written by Michiel himself. If you see him, give him my compliments, because that works for my experience... You read his personal engagement, you really read the personal note... it is written with passion.]

Willem (15:35); *“Als Michiel het zelf schrijft geeft het iets persoonlijks. Absoluut. Dat is leuker dan wanneer iemand van buiten een soort van op een coole, afstandelijke beschrijving van zijn waarnemingen geeft. Hier krijg je iets meer persoonlijke indrukken. Dat vind ik prettig. Het geeft een persoonlijk karakter. Dat vind ik wel leuk.”*

[When Michiel writes it himself it gives something personal. Absolutely. It is nicer than when someone else writes a cool, detached description of his observations. Now you get a more personal impression. I think that is pleasant. It gives a personal character. I like that.]

Bram (8:37); *“Het verbaasde me wel, dat vond ik wel mooi, dat Michiel zelf die mail had getikt. En dat is natuurlijk wel leuk, dat je een mail krijgt van de regisseur tijdens de draaiperiode van hoe gaat het en dat je op de hoogte gehouden wordt van foto’s enzo.”*

[It did surprise me. I liked it. The fact that Michiel himself wrote the e-mail. It is of course nice to receive an e-mail from the director during the production phase. Updates about how it is going and keeping up-to-date with photos et cetera.]

The very first newsletter (appendix 5) was written by an employee of De Familie. The subject of this e-mail was: Michiel van Erp: *“We gaan beginnen met draaien!”*. The e-mail was closed with; Kind regards, Michiel van Erp. The second newsletter (appendix 6) had a similar subject and had the same closing and salutation as the first one. All three crowdfunders noticed that the second newsletter (Michiel van Erp: *“Succesvolle eerste draaidagen!”*) was written by Michiel himself. This indicates that the way the message is written, is important to the crowdfunders. They were *“surprised”*, they *“liked it”* and *“Give him my compliments”* was mentioned.

Baird and Parasnis wrote in 2011 a theory that supports this finding. They argue that the majority of people only interact with brands when they feel the company’s communication is transparent. Although this research focuses on interaction with brands via social media, the core finding can be compared with newsletter communication. We read that the crowdfunders were convinced that Michiel himself wrote the e-mails. There is no crewmember as up-to-date as the director himself, let alone the personal engagement Michiel has with his own film. He experiences it first hand and that is expressed in the way he formulated the second newsletter. The production process cannot be displayed more purely and truthfully as done by the creator and director himself. The second newsletter gave a good reflection on his personal experience of making the film, it cannot get more transparent than that.

According to their theory, Baird and Parasnis claim that the crowdfunders should have more interaction with the ‘company’ (in this case film) when the communication is transparent. Whereas Bram and Willem did not link the personal transparent communication to the interaction they have with the film, Yvonne did. She explained this type of communication; *“works for my experience.”* Experiencing the personal note can be related to the interaction she has with the project. Which will – according to Baird and Parasnis – lead to more engaged crowdfunders.

5.1.2 The Notifications should be Interesting and Relevant

During the interviews, the crowdfunders were asked what kind of message they find interesting. The answers varied; personal experiences of the crew/cast, insights into the technical process or the progress the crew makes. However, there is one theme that can be retrieved from all these answers. The message should pique their interest and the message should be relevant. Then they will be more engaged with the project.

Evert (28:30); *“In de nieuwsbrief moet iets instaan wat ik nog niet wist. En wat het weten waard is. Het moet extra informatie geven, of een extra beleving.”*

[The newsletter must contain something that I did not know yet. Something worth knowing. It must provide extra information, or an extra experience.]

Peter (27:41); *“De update moet leuk zijn, bijvoorbeeld we zijn nu aan het filmen daar en daar, we hebben die avond daar gefilmd, dit is de cameraman.” “Als ze een update geven maakt het je betrokkenheid groter. En het is leuk dat je weet, je hebt je geld eraan besteed en er gebeurt wat mee.”*

[The update must be nice, for example they are filming there and there, we have filmed that evening there, this is the camera operator. Providing updates makes one more engaged. And it is nice to know, you gave them your money and they are using it.]

The quotes indicate that as long as the message is interesting and relevant for the funder, he/she will become more engaged. In their research, Baird and Parasnis (2011) argue that consumers tend to think very pragmatically; what’s in it for me? It is all about self-interest for the consumer. They do not engage with a brand just to feel connected with the product or service. There must be an advantage or compensation for the consumer. To relate this back to the quotes, the compensation in this case might be the “*extra information*” or “*extra experience*” or “*it is nice to know*” part. This form of compensation might be the reason for being more engaged by reading these updates, as stated by Peter.

Yet, Baird and Parasnis explain that an audience can be engaged by delivering tangible value. This tangible value should be delivered to the audience to compensate the customers’ time and attention he put in it. Baird and Parasnis do not explain what intangible compensations can do for customers’ engagement. Which is in this case applicable. The compensation is an intangible value; an update (information) about the process of ‘Niemand in de Stad’. The quotes prove that the crowdfunders do get more engaged by reading interesting updates.

If one would like his customers to engage with him, he needs to give them a reason for doing so. The audience is much more likely to participate on social media – and therefore be engaged – with content that is appealing to them (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). This theory partly confirms the findings. The updates bring the funder to a higher level of engagement; “*Providing updates makes one more engaged*”. Their change in participation based on the appealing content is not discussed by the funders. We do know – however - that appealing updates lead to more engagement.

5.1.3 Rewards make Funders Engaged

As a compensation for their donation, the crowdfunders received a reward. According to the majority of the funders this reward was important to them. The amount of money they donated was dependent on the reward that was linked to it. I.e.; their decision to donate an x amount of money was heavily influenced by the rewards that were linked to the ‘prices’. Gerber & Hui (2013) confirm this by stating that rewards are an important motivator for supporters. Ironically enough, most of the crowdfunders had to think deeply what their reward was. According to Yvonne, the more you donate, the more you participate in project.

Yvonne (04:33); “*Voor meer geld kan je ook meer participeren in het project. Dan word je bijvoorbeeld uitgenodigd voor zo’n borrel.*”

[When one donates more money, he is able to participate more in the project. Then you are invited for a drink for example.]

As discussed in chapter 2.1.3 by Evans & McKee (2010), engagement is a very broad term that differs among industries and contexts. The pure definition of ‘engaging with’ is “*Participate or become involved in*” (Oxforddictionaries, n.d.). The different (offline) rewards provide the crowdfunders the opportunity to meet the crew, be an actor in the film or get a tour behind the scenes. This is where Yvonne is referring to. By participating in the project – by using the reward – crowdfunders become more engaged.

Willem (14:57); “*Het (betrokkenheid) zou misschien anders kunnen zijn als ik wat meer de mensen zie. Als ik een keer, weet ik wat, daar ben ofzo. Dan wordt de betrokkenheid misschien anders. Dan heb ik een iets meer beeld van de mensen maar nu is het de berichtgeving en wat ik hoor en that’s it.*”

[Perhaps, it (engagement) would have been different when I see the people more. When I am on the set for instance. Then the engagement might change. Then, I have a better image of the people, now it is only the notifications plus what I hear, that's it.]

Iris (32:04); *“De beloningen maken je zeg maar ook weer deelgenoot van het plezier, als het zo meteen af is. Ik denk dat hoe meer je een betrokkenheid krijgt bij het proces dat dat heel erg leuk is voor de crowdfunders. Dat kan door bijvoorbeeld figureren.”*

[The rewards kind of make you a partner of the fun, once the film is finished. I think when a crowdfunder is engaged with the process, it is very nice for him. This can be done by being an actor in the film.]

Willem and Iris explain that their level of engagement changes by ‘using’ their rewards. Willem argues he has a better idea of what is happening on the set, what people are involved et cetera. Iris focuses more on the actual participation part of the reward. Besides seeing the set, the funder can experience what it is like being an actor. It makes the funder engaged with the process of making the film. Gerber & Hui explain that in a crowdfunding model the creator gives the people the opportunity to be involved in something that they maybe otherwise would not have the opportunity to be involved in. This is addressed by Willem in his quote, normally he would only receive an e-mail or hear something, but now the crowdfunding reward enables him to get a tour behind the scenes and meet the crew. Something he otherwise would not have done.

Iris, Yvonne and Willem were not the only funders explaining that the rewards made them more engaged with the project. Bram explained that with those rewards he had the feeling that he was ‘included’ in the project. Rewards are not only an important motivator for crowdfunders to participate in crowdfunding campaign, but they also make funder more engaged throughout the process.

5.2 Funders' willingness to support a future Project

5.2.1 The Connection with the Creator

Gerber and Hui (2014) researched what the motivations and deterrents are for participating in crowdfunding. One of the reasons for the funder was to help a creator with whom they have a strong connection with. Their study is focused on the crowdfunders supporting a project for the first time, and not on the motivations and deterrents for supporting a similar project for the second time.

Mylene (30:39) *“Ik denk dat je toch een binding moet hebben met wie het organiseert, of met hetgeen waar de funding voor is.”*

[I think you must have a connection with the person that organizes it, or with the purpose of the funding.]

Mylene explained that – for a future crowdfunding project – there must be a connection somehow to fund a future project. If there is no connection with the creator of the campaign, there should be a connection with the project. As discussed in the first paragraph of this sub-chapter, Gerber and Hui stated the same. Although their focus is on funding for the ‘first’ time, the findings are similar. After having supported a crowdfunding campaign, funders (still) find the connection with the creator important for their decision making. Hansje and Bram even think the end product is not important in their decision making to fund a future campaign.

Hansje (2:25); *“Als de film flopt dan is dat jammer, maar tegenwoordig moet je gewoon met crowdfunding werken. Je krijgt het anders niet voor elkaar.” “Als er weer een verzoek komt van Michiel dan doe ik gewoon mee.”*

[If the film flops it is unfortunate, but nowadays you just have to set up a crowdfunding campaign. Otherwise you will not manage. If there is a request from Michiel again, I will participate.]

Bram (26:04 / 36:04); *“Ik gun Michiel gewoon goede projecten, ik ken Michiel natuurlijk persoonlijk.”* Q: *“Als deze film tegen zou vallen zou je dan volgende keer twijfel hebben om te crowdfunden?”*

A: *“Nee want Michiel heeft zo veel goede dingen gemaakt. Als dit een keer wat minder is dan is het een incident, denk ik.”*

[I grant Michiel good projects, I know Michiel personally of course. Q: If this film disappoints you, would you doubt to participate in crowdfunding next time?

A: No, because Michiel has created beautiful things. If this is a little under average that would be an incident, I think.]

Their decision is not influenced by the end product of the first crowdfunding campaign. This goes beyond the argumentation of Mylene. Bram and Hansje are so familiar and trusted with Michiel's work, even if the film flops it would not affect their decision to support a similar project. Bram also knows Michiel personally. This confirms the theory of Gerber and Hui again. Because Mylene, Bram and Hansje have a very strong connection with the creator and his work, they are willing to fund a future project of Michiel right away.

5.2.2 Level of Engagement

The main research question suggests that the willingness to fund a future project is dependant on the engagement of the crowdfunders. However, in chapter 5.2.1 is explained that the connection with the creator is important for their willingness to fund a future project. Does the engagement with the project influence the willingness to fund a future project? The crowdfunders were unanimously about this.

Yvonne (38:56); *“Als De Familie mij helemaal niet betrokken maakt dan zou ik denken van dan hoef ik de volgende keer niet nog een keer weer te doneren. Want dat was wel heel schraal.”*

[If De Familie does not involve me at all, I would think by myself; I do not want to donate the next time. Because it was really poor.]

Iris (35:32); *“Ja ik denk als mijn betrokkenheid nu wordt getriggerd. Dus als ik me echt betrokken voel door dingen te bekijken, dat je er echt een beetje onderdeel van uit maakt voor je gevoel. Dan denk ik dat dat wel zou helpen met een volgende keer het weer doen.”*

[Yes, I think when my engagement is triggered. So, when I really feel engaged by reading and watching things, you have the feeling you are part of it. I think this feeling will encourage me to fund again next time.]

Iris and Yvonne state that when the creator keeps them engaged, they are more likely to fund a future project. There is no accurate research done that confirms or contradicts this finding. However, Gerber and Hui researched that delaying or cancelling the promised rewards (and thus engagement) deters people to donate again. By cancelling the rewards, people are less engaged. This is relatable to the quotes of Iris and Yvonne. They need to be engaged (by for example receiving rewards) to fund a future crowdfunding project.

Peter (34:01); *“Als je betrokken bent met het thema. Als dat goed uitgewerkt wordt, als hij weer met zo 'n thema komt, wat mij weer aanspreekt. Dan geef je sneller geld.”*

[If you are engaged with the theme. If it is worked out properly, if he comes up with a similar theme, which is appealing to me. Then, one is more motivated to give money.]

Peter's focus is more on his engagement with the theme of the film. It should be worked out properly and it should appeal his interest. Then, he is more motivated to fund again. Being updated is for him less important. Iris and Yvonne – however – also feel engaged, but overall with the whole project, rather than with the theme only. Based on the quotes of these three we can conclude that the engagement of the funder positively influences the willingness to fund future projects. Whereas one can also be engaged with a smaller part of the whole project.

5.2.3 Receiving Updates

The crowdfunders like the fact that De Familie updates them properly. It gives the funders a better insight into the progress and what happens with their money (the funders were not concerned at all about this). In chapter 5.1 is discussed that updates make the crowdfunders more engaged with the project. This chapter is very similar to chapter 5.2.2. Receiving updates about the projects is related to being engaged in this case. It is different though. Being engaged might influence the willingness to fund a future project, while receiving updates can be experienced as annoying and deter future participation. I.e.; a crowdfunder can be engaged with a theme (like Peter) or the overall project without needing the updates.

Mylene (29:26); *“Ja dat [nog een keer funden] zou ik denk ik wel doen. En dan voornamelijk omdat we heel netjes op de hoogte gehouden worden van de vorderingen van de film. Vanaf het allereerste begin al.”*

[Yes, I would be willing to do that [fund again]. Especially because we are updated properly on the progress of the film. Already from the very beginning.]

Hansje (25:20); *“Ik denk dat het absoluut belangrijk is dat je op de hoogte wordt gehouden van het geheel. Anders heb je het gevoel dat je geld geeft en verder hoor je nooit meer wat. Omdat de Familie dat heel zorgvuldig doet, vergroot dat de kans om weer mee te doen.”*

[I definitely think receiving updates on the whole thing are important. Otherwise you have the feeling you gave money and then you do not hear anything anymore. Because De Familie is doing this properly, it enlarges the chance to participate the next.]

Bram (12:38); *“Betrokkenheid beïnvloedt mijn bereidheid om nog een keer mee te doen. Helemaal als het van dezelfde maker is. Als je ergens je geld in steekt en ergens vertrouwen in toont en interesse door dat te doen, als je er niks van terug hoort of ziet. Dat zou jammer zijn.”*

[The level of engagement influences my willingness to support a second time. Especially if the campaign is from the same creator. If you put your money, trust and interest in a project, and you do not hear or see anything in return. That would be unfortunate.]

Being updated is important for the decision-making process for a future crowdfunding project. If the funder does not receive any updates or messages during the whole process of making the film it would influence their willingness to donate again.

There is a similar theory about the influence of receiving updates on acquiring the target amount in crowdfunding. Kuppuswamy and Bayus (2014) claim that updates have a positive influence on acquiring the target amount. The topic of the update can vary from updating on the project itself or the progress of the target amount, as long as it informs the crowdfunder. The updates will generate more excitement among the crowdfunders and can subsequently create awareness among people that did not donate yet. Whereas the study of Kuppuswamy and Bayus focus more on the excitement feeling that causes extra donation, Bram and Yvonne rather focus on the disappointing feeling because of not receiving updates. Both these findings and the study of Kuppuswamy and Bayus agree on the fact that updating the audience influences the willingness to give financial support.

5.3 Summary Conclusions

The preceding literature describes the crowdfund process from the creator's initiative till the moment the money is (partly) raised. The basic aspects such as the purpose of crowdfunding, forms of financing, motivations and deterrents for participating and reaching the right crowd are covered. In addition to this generic research, this study investigates what strategies can be adopted to engage the crowdfunders of a Dutch feature film. The findings are retrieved from in-depth interviews and a case study. These findings were partly identical to what has already been researched. About crowdfunding in general as well as engaging an audience via social media and e-mail.

The findings show that crowdfunders' engagement is influenced by three major themes. The personal note in messages engage the crowdfunders. This includes a personal salutation as well as the personal message itself. Crowdfunders become engaged when they receive interesting and relevant notifications. And lastly, besides the rewards being an important motivator for the crowdfunders to donate, it also engages them with the project.

Moreover, the findings show that the crowdfunders' willingness to fund a future campaign is dependent on three aspects. The connection with the creator and work influences the crowdfunders' willingness. Whereas the quality of the end product is not very important. Secondly, funders with a high state of engagement are more willing to fund again than funders not being engaged at all. Finally, not being updated with notifications is a deterrent for participating in future crowdfunding campaigns. A creator who wishes his crowdfunders to fund again, should update the funders (frequently).

The third sub-question aims to measure the level of engagement of the crowdfunders of 'Niemand in de Stad'. This is measured with their social media and e-mail behavior. The analysis shows that the social media behavior includes the first two (of the four in total) social building blocks. The level of engagement is rather poor. The e-mail activity exceeds the average open rate and click-through rate. With an average open rate of 64.3% and a click-through rate of 5.4%, the audience is double as engaged as people in the 'arts and artists' industry.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is caused by the fact that there was no employee available at De Familie with enough online communication skills to engage the crowdfunders. This problem resulted in the main research question of this study: “What strategies can be adopted by De Familie Film & TV to keep the funders of the crowdfunding campaign for ‘Niemand in de Stad’ engaged to enlarge the chance they fund future projects?” This chapter is devoted to answer this question.

The recommendations in this chapter are written for campaign creators of Dutch feature films. The findings may be retrieved from one crowdfunding campaign, but they are still relevant for the whole industry. The term industry relates in this case to campaign creators of Dutch feature films.

6.1 Recommendations for Crowdfunding Campaigns for Dutch feature films

The main research question suggests that there is a relation between being engaged and willingness to fund a future project. A finding is derived from the interviews that engagement positively influences the funders’ willingness to support a future project. For a creator who plans to execute a second campaign in the future, it is of great value to find out what strategy to adopt to engage the funders. Especially for these creators it is worth spending time, energy and perhaps money in it. The investment will return in terms of acquiring the necessary funding during the second crowdfunding campaign.

As derived from the interviews, the findings show that providing updates is important to engage the crowdfunders. By providing updates, the funder has a better idea of how the film is made. Creators should use this opportunity to engage their audience. Besides this there is another result. Providing updates result into a higher willingness to donate again. The kind of updates that should be sent to the crowdfunders is discussed in the next paragraph.

When a creator plans to send messages to his funders, a few things should be taken into consideration. It is not important how or with what frequency these messages are delivered, but rather what the message is. To engage the audience the messages should be interesting and relevant to them. Messages that are personal and contain a personal salutation, also engage the crowdfunders. Crowdfunders tend to be more engaged when they receive those kinds of updates. It provides the foundation for an engaged audience. Via this way creators can also propose how the funders can ‘consume’ their reward.

The findings in chapter four show that sending e-mails as a way of communication to the funders requires some pointers. In this manner, the response rate to the e-mails determines the level of engagement. To reach an high response rate, the e-mails should not be too long in length. It should

include visuals and the subject line should relate to the content of the message. An high response rate means the funder having more contact time with the project, which leads to an higher level of engagement.

Besides rewards being a great motivator for funders to participate in crowdfunding (chapter 2.2.1), it enables them to engage with the project. As derived from the findings in chapter 5.1.3, one who strives for an engaged audience, better maps out relevant rewards that allow the crowdfunders to participate. Rewards that positively influence the funders' engagement concern activities whereby they can participate offline. Rewards should either reveal the process of making the film, meet the crew and cast, or have a behind the scenes tour. As long as they get in touch with the people that are making the film and are able to participate, it will get them more engaged. This engagement results into more willingness to fund future projects.

To bring the audience to the highest state of engagement on social media, creators must take action. As derived from chapter four, the first and second level of engagement is reached by the audience. These levels are relatively easy to reach. To let the funders reach the third and fourth level of engagement, content creation should be more approachable. An audience is more likely to create when they are given a possibility to do so. The creator can introduce a platform where the crowdfunders can easily display the content they created. This platform can be a 'hashtag', a YouTube page or website. For example; the creator can ask the funders to give a (comprehensive) review on the trailer or film, when these are released. Based on this content people can interact with each other to give meaning to the review. When this happens, collaboration occurs; they have reached the highest state of engagement. The fact that people like to share what they are doing and want to be recognized for their own contributions within the larger community drives to create content. Additionally, the created content is free publicity for the film.

As derived from the results in chapter 5.2.1 is the importance of the link with the creator. It does not matter whether this is a personal connection or a link with the work. Crowdfunders trust in the capabilities of the creator. To enlarge the funders' willingness to fund a future project, the creator should somehow generate a connection with the funder. Either by having personal contact, or by linking the previous work to the current crowdfunders. If there already is a link with the creator, this connection should be maintained.

Finally, crowdfunding is very easy to set up, but rather time-consuming when the money is acquired. All the rewards should be taken care of, newsletters need to be sent, social media should be kept up to date. Ideally, one person should oversee the whole crowdfunding campaign. The process will be more

structured which leads to a better campaign performance and eventually pays off by more funding for a future project.

6.2 Recommendations for Future Research

Preceding literature and this study show that rewards are important for crowdfunding, for both the creator and supporter. It is a motivator for people to participate in crowdfunding and it engages them with the project. More research should be done on these rewards. The type of rewards are relevant for the audience, how to use them as a creator and how can they spice up the crowdfunding experience.

This study investigates how the crowdfunders can be engaged. As discussed in chapter 2, each context requires its own interpretation of the definition engagement. For crowdfunding for feature films, this definition is not determined yet. Is the term engaged similar to being involved or attracted to the film? What are the differences if there are any? When these terms are defined, the creator knows what ‘state’ is most beneficial for him. An engaged, involved or attracted audience.

Crowdfunding is known as a tool to acquire funds. But it can also be used as a promotional device to increase ticket sale when the feature film is in cinemas. Different strategies and tactics can be adopted by a creator to promote his feature film. Which one works best for the audience? Does this differ among genres? Also, the motivations and deterrents to use crowdfunding as a promotional device can be researched, both for supporters as creators.

As discussed in chapter 4, there is no average industry statistics for crowdfunding available. This is remarkable since every creator can update the crowdfunders on the process. At the moment, the e-mail response cannot be compared to the industry standard. The creator cannot evaluate his campaign performance.

6.3 Limitations

In this sub chapter the potential limitations are discussed. The first limitation concerns the number of interviews conducted. Due to the limited time, there was available for conducting the interviews, only 8 crowdfunders are interviewed. In total there are 376 funders, who all have their unique opinion and point of view. The results will be more trustworthy when more crowdfunders were interviewed.

The second limitation concerns the relation the crowdfunders have with the campaign creators. As quoted in chapter 5.2.1, Bram has for example a personal connection with the campaign creator. This can result into biased answers. Furthermore it can influence their openness in answering. Their reasoning might not be as transparent as a ‘regular’ crowdfunder, who does not have a personal connection with the creator.

Since social media platforms are public and free to join, the social media behavior also includes the ‘regular’ audience. The analysis is not purely based on the crowdfunders’ behavior. The results would have been a little different when the regular audience is filtered out.

In chapter 4 the e-mail statistics are analyzed. Since there are no industry statistics available for the crowdfunding industry, the comparison is done with the stats of ‘arts and artists’. The conclusion is that the crowdfunders are twice as engaged as this industry. However, this comparison is questionable. Drawing a fair conclusion on the level of engagement can only be done when there are crowdfunding statistics (of other campaigns) available for comparison. It is comparing apples to oranges.

The final limitation concerns the number of newsletters. At this point, only three newsletters are sent to the crowdfunders. The whole e-mail engagement analysis is based on the results of those three newsletters. If there were more newsletters (and data) to be analyzed the results will be more trustworthy. An analyzed ‘trend’ in the e-mail behavior of the crowdfunders can be a coincidence due to other factors. When more newsletters are analyzed the retrieved trends are more trustworthy.

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8. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The ‘price’ of the rewards

Amount	Name	Reward
€25,-	Fan	- Name in the credits
€35,-	Friend	- Name in the credits - Receive a signed script/DVD box/Book
€50,-	Student	- Name in the credits - Invited for a pre-premiere
€75,-	Family member	- Name in the credits - Invited for the ‘over-the-hill’ drink
€100,-	Big fan	- Name in the credits - Invited for Michiels theater show
€150,-	Director	- Name in the credits - Invited on the film set for a tour
€200,-	Producer	- Name in the credits - Tour in a student house
€500,-	Figurant	- Name in the credits - Role as figurant in the film
€1000,-	Actor	- Name in the credits - Invited for a diner at De Familie
€1500,-	Chaperonne	- Name in the credits - Invited to go with Michiel to the premiere
€3500,-	Endboss	- Name in the credits - Invited to watch the film in ‘het Ketelhuis’ which is reserved for the funder and his friends

Appendix 2: Set of questions interviews 1-4

Algemeen

- Hoe ben je op deze crowdfunding campagne gekomen?
- Op een schaal van 1-10 hoe betrokken ben je? Waarom?

SUB vraag 1

Algemeen

- Hoe veel heb je gedoneerd? Waarom dit bedrag?
- Zou je betrokkenheid veranderen als je een ander bedrag had gegeven? Waarom?
- Hoe maakt de familie je momenteel betrokken met het project?
- Wil je door De Familie betrokken gemaakt worden? Hoe? Waarom?
- Zou je meer of minder betrokken willen raken? Waarom?
- Is je betrokkenheid veranderd vanaf de start van de campagne naar nu? Waarom niet of wel?
- Hoe is je betrokkenheid veranderd van start van de campagne naar nu? Waarom?
- Vind je dit een prettige of onprettige ontwikkeling?
- Vind je dat iemand die een crowdfunding campagne opzet, verplicht is de crowdfunders betrokken te houden? Waarom?

Social media gebruik

- Gebruik je momenteel social media? Welke platformen?
- Volg je momenteel de ontwikkelingen van ‘Niemand in de Stad’ op social media? Waarom wel of niet?
- Welke social media kanalen volg je ‘Niemand in de Stad’? Waarom volg je de kanalen?
- Heb je wel eens interactie met de social media van ‘Niemand in de Stad’? Wat voor interactie? Waarom wel of niet?
- Wat voor updates vind je interessant om te krijgen? Waarom?
- Hoe vaak wil je dit soort updates ontvangen? Waarom?
- Is het voor jou belangrijk hoe vaak er berichten op social media gezet worden? Beïnvloed dit je betrokkenheid?
- Beïnvloed het social media gedrag (dus aantal posts, reageren onder posts) jou betrokkenheid?
- Is het voor jou belangrijk dat je kan participeren op Facebook door bijvoorbeeld te reageren? Waarom?

Nieuwsbrief

- Heb je de nieuwsbrief gelezen?
- Hoe ervaar je het om zo’n update nieuwsbrief van de Familie te krijgen?
- Heb je het idee dat je daardoor meer betrokken raakt? Waarom?

- Zijn er bepaalde elementen in de nieuwsbrief dat je erg aansprak/ dat je onthouden hebt?
- Hoe regelmatig wil jij updates ontvangen? Waarom?

Afsluitend

- Zijn er nog andere kanalen of mogelijkheden waar de familie jou op kan bereiken?
- Vind je dat de familie je online betrokkenheid kan beïnvloeden? En hoe dan?

SUB vraag 2

- Waarom heb je besloten om dit project te funden? Waarom?
- Wat waren de factoren die er toe leidden dat je besloten hebt om geld te doneren? Waarom?
- Wat waren de factoren waardoor je aan het twijfelen gebracht werd? Waarom?
- Wat gaf voor jou de doorslag om mee te doen aan de crowdfunding?
- Zou je voor een tweede keer funden? Waarom wel of niet?
- Waar is dit van afhankelijk? Waarom?
- Kan de familie jou keuze om nog een keer te doneren beïnvloeden? Hoe dan/wat kunnen ze doen? Waarom helpt dat?
- Kunnen ze dit ook online beïnvloeden? Op welke manieren? Waarom?
- Is er voor jou momenteel een reden waarom je nog een keer financiële steun zou geven? Welke? Waarom?
- Is er voor jou momenteel een reden waarom je niet nog een keer financiële steun zou geven? Welke? Waarom?
- Denk je dat je betrokkenheid iets te maken heeft met voor een tweede keer meedoen?

Overig

- Wat zijn je plannen voor crowdfunding in de toekomst? Waarom?
- Ga je op internet op zoek naar dingen die je wat lijken? Waarom niet?

Afsluitend

- Kan je op de volgende brede vragen een antwoord geven:
- Hoe kunnen crowdfunders betrokken raken gedurende de hele crowdfunding campagne?
- Wat is je motivatie om nog een keer aan zo'n crowdfunding mee te doen?
- Wat schrikt jou af om nog een keer aan z'n crowdfunding mee te doen?

- Heb jij nog toevoegingen, opmerkingen of aanmerkingen?

Appendix 3: Set of questions interviews 5-8 (slightly revised)

Algemeen:

- Hoe ben je op deze crowdfunding campagne gekomen?
- Op een schaal van 1-10 (1 totaal niet betrokken, 10 volledig betrokken bij het project) hoe betrokken ben je? Waarom?
- Wat is volgens jou de definitie van betrokkenheid?

SUB vraag 1

Algemeen

- Hoe veel heb je gedoneerd? Waarom dit bedrag?
- Zou je betrokkenheid veranderen als je een ander bedrag had gegeven? Waarom?
- Hoe maakt de familie je momenteel betrokken met het project?
- Wil je door De Familie betrokken gemaakt worden? Hoe? Waarom?
- Zou je meer of minder betrokken willen raken? Waarom?
- Is je betrokkenheid veranderd vanaf de start van de campagne naar nu? Waarom niet of wel?
- Als dit jou crowdfunding project was, hoe zou jij het aanpakken om jou funders betrokken te houden? Waarom?

Social media gebruik

- Gebruik je momenteel social media? Welke platformen?
- Volg je momenteel de ontwikkelingen van ‘Niemand in de Stad’ op social media? Waarom wel of niet?
- Welke social media kanalen volg je ‘Niemand in de Stad’? Waarom volg je de kanalen?
- Heb je wel eens interactie met de social media van ‘Niemand in de Stad’? Wat voor interactie? Waarom wel of niet?
- Wat voor updates vind je interessant om te krijgen? Waarom?
- Hoe vaak wil je dit soort updates ontvangen? Waarom?
- Is het voor jou belangrijk hoe vaak er berichten op social media gezet worden? Beïnvloed dit je betrokkenheid?
- Beïnvloed het social media gedrag (dus aantal posts, reageren onder posts) jou betrokkenheid?
- Is het voor jou belangrijk dat je kan participeren op Facebook door bijvoorbeeld te reageren? Waarom?

Nieuwsbrief

- Heb je de nieuwsbrief gelezen?
- Hoe ervaar je het om zo'n update nieuwsbrief van de Familie te krijgen?

- Heb je het idee dat je daardoor meer betrokken raakt? Waarom?
- Zijn er bepaalde elementen in de nieuwsbrief dat je erg aansprak/ dat je onthouden hebt?
- Heb je liever een persoonlijke nieuwsbrief of een algemene, waarom?
- Maakt de tekst veel uit die er in staat voor jou? Wat voor soort tekst verwacht je?
- Hoe regelmatig wil jij updates ontvangen? Waarom?

Afsluitend

- Vind je dat de familie je online betrokkenheid kan beïnvloeden? En hoe dan?

SUB vraag 2

- Wat gaf voor jou de doorslag om mee te doen aan de crowdfunding?
- Wat waren de factoren waardoor je aan het twijfelen gebracht werd? Waarom?
- Zou je voor een tweede keer funden? Waarom wel of niet?
- Waar is dit van afhankelijk? Waarom?
- Kan de familie jou keuze om nog een keer te doneren beïnvloeden? Hoe dan/wat kunnen ze doen? Waarom helpt dat?
- Kunnen ze dit ook online beïnvloeden? Op welke manieren? Waarom?
- Denk je dat je betrokkenheid iets te maken heeft met voor een tweede keer meedoen? Ben je tevreden met hoe de familie je behandelt momenteel? Schrikt dit af voor komende campagne?

Overig

- Wat zijn je plannen voor crowdfunding in de toekomst? Waarom?
- Ga je op internet op zoek naar dingen die je wat lijken? Waarom niet?

Afsluitend:

- Kan je op de volgende brede vragen een antwoord geven:
- Hoe kunnen crowdfunders betrokken raken gedurende de hele crowdfunding campagne?
- Wat is je motivatie om nog een keer aan zo'n crowdfunding mee te doen?
- Wat schrikt jou af om nog een keer aan z'n crowdfunding mee te doen?

- Heb jij nog toevoegingen, opmerkingen of aanmerkingen?

Appendix 4: Link to audio files of the interviews

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/t85m5730qri9mnv/AABTBcKIU5DcmKcTKN58KNJMa?dl=0>

Appendix 5: Newsletter 1

NIEMAND IN DE STAD

EEN FILM VAN MICHIEL VAN ERP NAAR HET BOEK VAN PHILIP HUFF

NIEUWSBRIEF 2017 - 1

Beste crowdfunders en fans van Niemand in de Stad, en wie verder geïnteresseerd is in de film!

Tweede Paasdag, aanstaande maandag 17 april is het eindelijk zover: dan start de draaiperiode voor Niemand in de Stad. Op kantoor wordt hard gewerkt aan de allerlaatste voorbereidingen en mijn agenda staat vol met locatiebezoeken, testdagen en repetities met de cast. Een deel van de cast wordt morgen bekend gemaakt!

Via deze nieuwsbrief wil ik jullie graag op de hoogte houden van de komende periode en laat ik jullie graag meekijken achter de schermen tijdens de draaidagen. Like [Facebook](#), houd de pagina in de gaten voor updates en volg ons op [Instagram](#)!

Lijkt het je leuk om een dagje te figureren op de set of ken je nog iemand die hier voor geschikt is? We zijn op zoek naar figuranten in de leeftijd van 18-25 jaar! Stuur een mailtje met je naam, leeftijd, telefoonnummer en een duidelijke foto naar figuratie@defamilie.net

Hartelijke groet, ook namens het hele team van Niemand in de Stad,

Michiel van Erp



Een kijkje achter de schermen bij de opnames van Niemand in de Stad



(continued)



April 2017: cameratest, locatiebezoeken en repetities.

Volg Niemand In de Stad op Facebook!

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Contact informatie
info@defamilie.net

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

Niemand in de Stad - de film

This email was sent to << Test Email Address >>
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)
De Familie · Geef een locatie op · Amstelveen, Nh 1181 AA · USA



Appendix 6: Newsletter 2

NIEMAND IN DE STAD

EEN FILM VAN MICHIEL VAN ERP NAAR HET BOEK VAN PHILIP HUFF

Volg ons op Facebook!

NIEUWSBRIEF 2017 - 2

Beste crowdfunders en fans van Niemand in de Stad, en wie verder geïnteresseerd is in onze film!

De eerste zeven draaidagen zitten er op. Het voelt als een rollercoaster: Dagen die zich vullen met talloze beslissingen over laatste tekst, kostuums, licht en locatie-aanpassingen. De jonge hoofdrolspelers lijken vooral veel plezier te hebben op de set en vervullen hun rol met verve. We waren zes dagen te gast in het studentenhuis van het dispuut: H.E.B.E. Enerverende dagen: Terwijl wij scènes opnamen in de echte kamers van de studenten, stonden zij onder hun eigen douche, keken zij op zolder naar Ajax-Schalke, figureerden ze mee in de film of bleven gewoon in bed liggen. Want meestal maakten zij het net zo laat als wij.



De laatste dagen hebben we ook op straat gefilmd. Een belangrijke scène speelt zich af in de Warmoesstraat. Door het erg mooie weer en leken alle toeristen van Amsterdam die dag de Wallen te bezoeken, maar dankzij een onze 'crowd-controllers' en kordaat werk van de rest van de crew zijn de opnames goed gelukt.

(continued)

Het zijn dagen waarop ik trots ben op de crew. Met goed weer of in de regen, te midden van dronken toeristen, toch proberen de opnames beheerst te laten verlopen. Deze week hebben we afgerond met opnames die zich voornamelijk afspelen rond het verval van het personage Jacob in de film. Hij verlaat in de film het studentenhuus om zichzelf te gaan ontdekken. De opnames spelen zich af op een woonboot en uitgaansgelegenheden als Club Church in Amsterdam.



Aankomend weekend wordt het spannend: dan draaien we de sociëteitsopnames. Drie dagen met heel veel figuranten. Die opnames gaan we maken in het sociëteitsgebouw van het Utrechtsch Studenten Corps (USC). We hebben nog een aantal figuranten nodig, dus ben je of ken je mensen in de leeftijd van 16-30 jaar? Stuur een mailtje met naam, leeftijd, telefoonnummer en een duidelijke foto naar figuratie@defamilie.net. Like [Facebook](#), houd de pagina in de gaten voor updates en volg ons op [Instagram](#)!

Hartelijke groet, ook namens het hele team van Niemand in de Stad,

Michiel van Erp



(continued)



Foto 1: Cameraman Jasper Wolf met assistent director Anne

Foto 2: Avond opnames op straat

Foto 3: Minne in het H.E.B.E.-huis



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