

Axanar's Crowdfunding Effort to Save Studio Lacks a Crowd

At Halfway Mark, Zero New Donors and Money, and Analysts Predict It'll Miss Even Its Low-Ball Goal

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PART ONE *A crowdfunding campaign — switched at the last minute from Kickstarter to Indiegogo — to save Axanar's donor-built studio launched March 20, 2017, with great sound and fury. Two weeks later, the results appeared to signify nothing.*

A year before, Axanar Productions CEO [Alec Peters](#) and corporate officer/public relations director Mike Bawden had penned a series of blog posts about how to run successful crowdfunding efforts. Faced with having to promote a campaign hobbled by a dubious business plan, unconvincing perks and reputations buffeted by year-long litigation, Peters appeared to ignore his own advice.

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This is one in a series of **AxaMonitor** articles examining Axanar’s crowdfunding efforts, its spending, its goals and how it has reported on those activities. The entire series is [listed here](#).



Grinds to a Halt

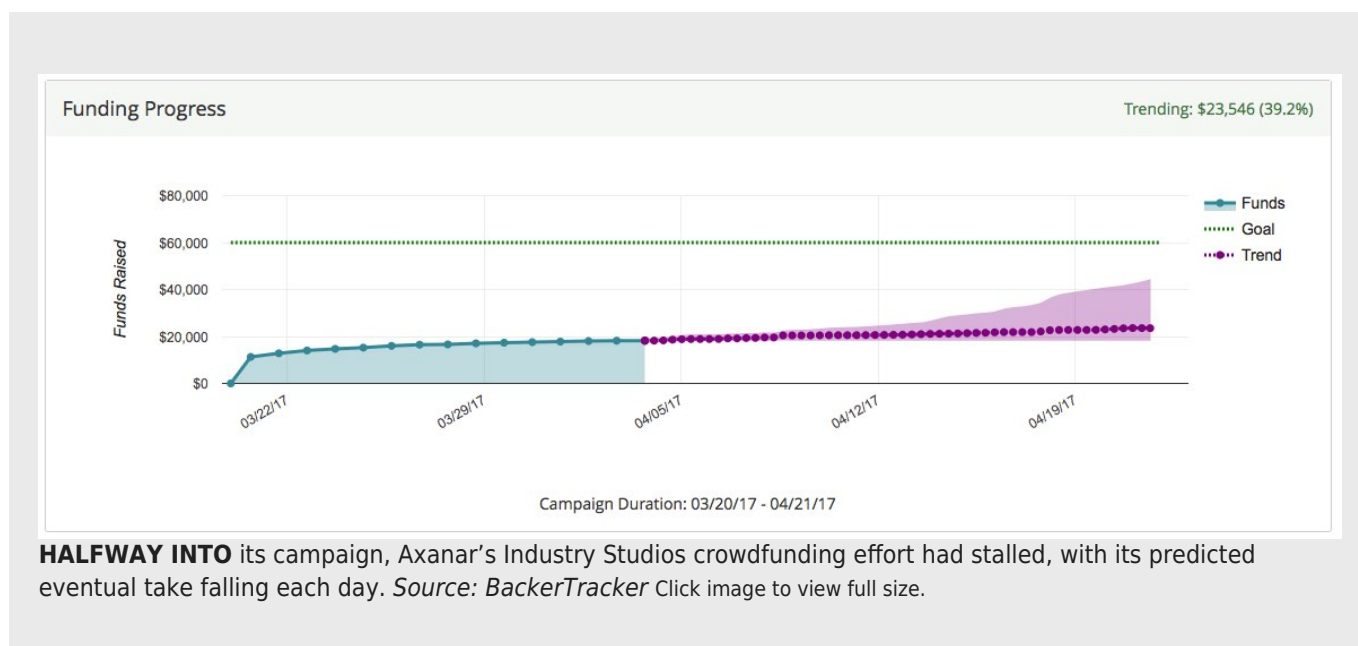
The [30-day campaign](#) to get donors to support a promised non-profit [Industry Studios](#) by paying its \$15,000-\$18,000 monthly rent and expenses had launched with great promise: 149 donors contributed \$11,307 on Day 1. Halfway in, the endeavor never saw daily results anywhere like that again.

Instead, the number of new donors plummeted by the day. On April 4, the campaign ground to a halt — zero new donors, zero new dollars. Days before, even Peters seemed to signal his lack of confidence in the effort.

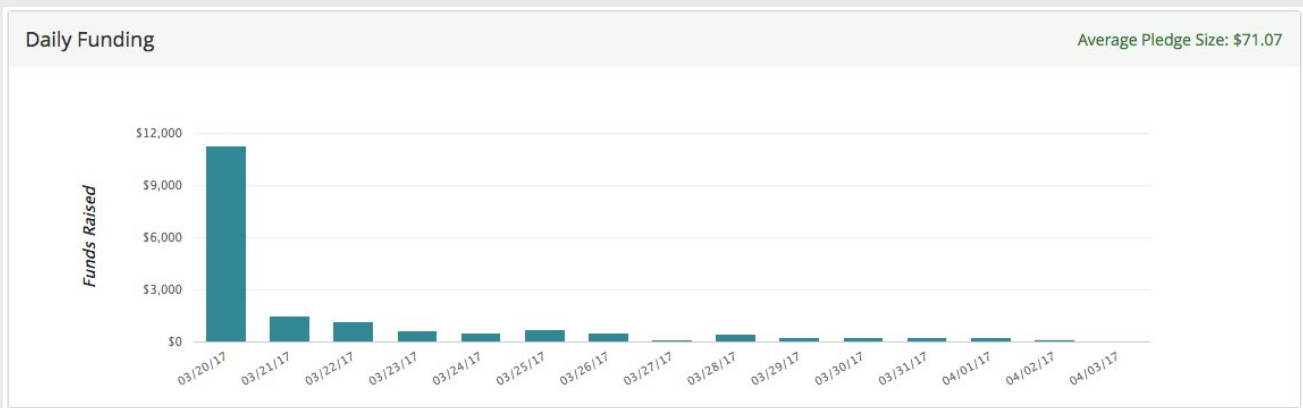
Graphs Tell the Tale

BackerTracker is an analysis service provided BackerKit, a company that aids large crowdfunders with the logistics of fulfilling their perks. [Its algorithm](#) predicted the Industry Studios campaign would fail to meet its stated \$60,000 goal, much less the \$200,000 “stretch goal” Peters needed in order to actually set his studio on a sound financial footing.

Funding Progress

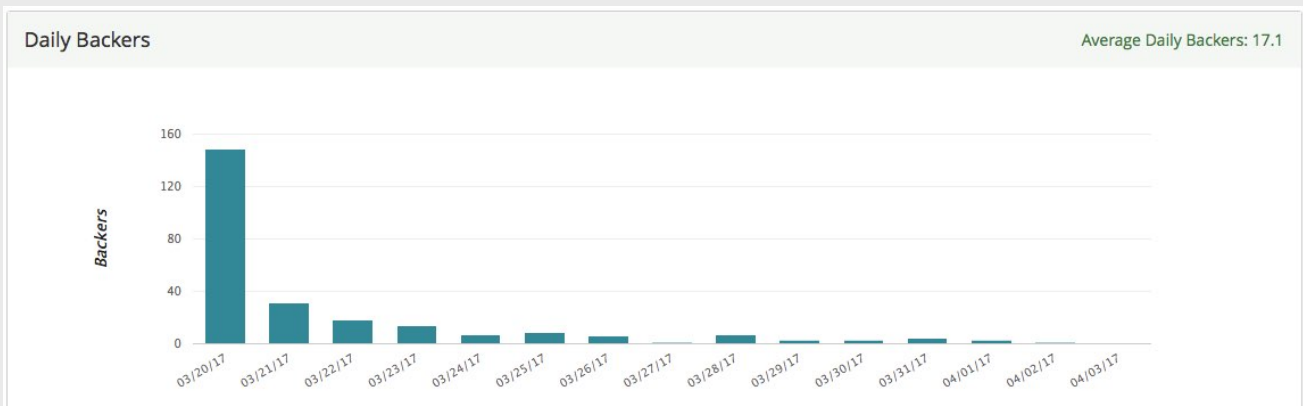


Daily Funding



WRONG DIRECTION After a spectacular opening, the number of new donations plummeted by the day, eventually reaching its nadir — zero — on April 3. *Source: BackerTracker* Click image to view full size.

Daily Backers



UNINSPIRED by either the concept or Peters’ lackluster promotional efforts, his vaunted 15,000 [Axanar supporters](#) stayed away, with the number of new donors reaching zero on April 3. It was their money Peters had funneled into building his never-used studio, having delayed production of the promised *Axanar* feature film. *Source: BackerTracker* Click image to view full size.

Axanar: BackerKit Competitor

Ironically, Axanar was a former BackerKit customer whose dissatisfaction led to the creation of the troubled [Ares Digital](#) platform as a competitor. What few perks had been manufactured sat in boxes for months because of the system’s inability to generate the proper shipping labels.

[Ares Digital](#), once promised to be a revenue source for Axanar, never took off, even after a [relaunch](#) of the platform.



SWING AND A MISS Alec Peters' [pitch video](#) painted a rosy picture of Industry Studios but flaws appeared early, such as the last-minute switch in crowdfunding platforms. The video intended for Kickstarter appeared in an Indiegogo campaign, still referring to itself as a Kickstarter endeavor.

Beleaguered Studio

Peters' pitch video for Industry Studios painted a bright picture of a modern, well-appointed soundstage facility that would serve cash-strapped independent film producers and fan filmmakers.

In reality, the warehouse he had leased for three years (with a year's rent required up front, paid with donors' money) had become a money pit. Hampered by the copyright suit brought by [CBS](#) and [Paramount Pictures](#), Peters worked to complete the soundstage build-out, constantly assuring donors he had lined up film productions to rent the facility.

Months and hundreds of thousands of dollars later, the studio remained incomplete — a soundstage that literally [lacked soundproofing](#). All the donors' money was gone, with nothing filmed of *Axanar* but the Vulcan Scene that was supposed to spur continued rounds of crowdfunding Peters needed for what had become a \$2 million project.

The Vulcan Scene, by the way, was shot in the parking lot — outdoors. [👁️](#)



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Keywords

[Analysis](#), [Crowdfunding](#), [Financial](#), [Studio](#)

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