

There is already a glut of crowdfunding start-ups trying to lay claim to their piece of the crowdfunding pie Plum Alley, launched in October, is hoping there's room for another -- one that's devoted to women creators.

Though the site only has two entertainment-based projects at the moment, it's likely to attract women filmmakers looking for support for their projects. At the moment, the site has just two film or TV projects. The first is [This Place Matters](#), a documentary series by [Cindy Convery](#), which profiles endangered places that hold communities together, and hold memories of who we are as a country. PBS affiliate WGBH World has agreed to air the documentary in a primetime broadcast to 160 stations nationwide.

The second project is [Smart Women Smart Ideas](#), which bills itself as the first multi-screen reality competition TV show for female entrepreneurs of product companies. SWSI is endorsed by the Kauffman Foundation and early pilot participants include MSNBC's Jennifer Hill, Julie Roehm, former SVP Walmart & Daimler Chrysler and Alana Muller, President of Kauffman FastTrac.

But, is there room for a niche crowdfunding site? Do women need their own crowdfunding site? We posed these questions to Plum Alley founder and CEO Deborah Jackson. Her answers are below.

### **Why do women need their own crowdfunding site?**

Plum Alley Fund was not created to be another niche crowdfunding site. It arose from a problem we saw with women's access to capital, and was a natural extension of Plum Alley's mission to support and advance women economically.

For years I have been watching women as they go about raising money for their ideas and companies. It has not been easy and data shows there is huge disparity in women raising capital versus their male counterpart. Time and time again, I hear women say "if I just had enough money to build that prototype or buy the materials I need, I would go for it." So many women, including some of our entrepreneurs featured on Plum Alley Commerce, have visions and ideas yet to be translated into creations. At the same time, I know so many women and men (husbands, fathers, boyfriends and brothers) who want to support women in reaching their dreams or doing good for the world.

For women creators, there are distinct advantages of using Plum Alley Fund over other crowdfunding platforms. Many projects will be created to solve problems and needs that are unique to women. Our Plum Alley audience is comprised of enthused individuals who are not only excited about women entrepreneurship,

but can directly relate with many of the causes and projects that will be fundraising on our site.

Further, Plum Alley has an existing e-commerce platform where project creators can subsequently sell any product that rises from crowdfunding and benefit from additional exposure. Our e-commerce and crowdfunding services and audiences are complementary, and we hope to be recognized as the brand to highlight, support and advance amazing women.

### **Why should film and TV projects use Plum Alley instead of IndieGogo, Kickstarter or other more established crowdfunding sites?**

There isn't a distinct category (ie; film/TV) that should use Plum Alley over other sites -- we expect all types of projects, from passion projects, do-good-in-the-world projects, creative projects, business projects and more.

The potential for crowdfunding world wide is huge. According to Massolution, crowdfunding sites are globally expected to reach close to \$5.1 billion in transactions for 2013. There is room for many players, each with a different focus and audience. Some of the other platforms have gotten so large and it is difficult for a new project to get any attention. After working with women entrepreneurs and creative women, we heard time and again from our constituents that they were looking for an alternative place that would offer other resources to help them achieve success.

We carefully curate all the content on our site and work with each of the project creators to craft their campaign. We recently held a private event for our project creators to present their projects as they went live for funding on our site, and offered media training beforehand. We are also launching a service to connect our project creators with experts that they may choose to hire on a project basis.

Many of the projects that will fundraise are apt to appeal to the larger Plum Alley audience as they stem from products and companies driven from personal experiences and needs that are unique to women. Women also have specific interests and want to see products created that may not be of interest to men.

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### **What is your long term goal?**

My long term goal is for Plum Alley to be the destination site where women entrepreneurs and creators can access funding, experts and an integrated e-commerce function, resources vital to the success of a company. The overall mission is to direct power and wealth to women, and easily enable anyone who wants to support women the opportunity to do so.

Funding: I'd like to go global with reward-based crowdfunding for women anywhere who have a dream, an idea, a movement, or a cultural project.

Experts: I want to increase employment and income for women who need to work and are under utilized. Women can go to Plum Alley to find flexible work projects for pay, or in reverse, hire the best talent to help them.

Commerce: I want women entrepreneurs to come forward and sell their products on Plum Alley to increase their visibility and sales. All of this matters for women to reach their potential. Doing it piecemeal is not efficient or effective.