



DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

SESSION 144

PERSONALIZING YOUR NETWORKING WITH LINKEDIN

WITH DONALD HALE

BETH: Hello, this is Beth Brodovsky, and welcome to Driving Participation. Today I am on with Donald Hale. Donald found me on LinkedIn, which is always a nice treat and he has a really interesting and complex role. He's the Interim Vice Chancellor for Advancement at the University of South Carolina Upstate, but he's also the Assistant Vice President for Development for the University of South Carolina Main Campus. I'm thrilled that you actually have the time to even speak to me today. Donald, thank you so much for joining me.

DONALD: Thanks for having me, Beth.

BETH: In our first conversation when Donald and I were talking about the different things that we each do, this idea of stewarding your network and connecting with people through LinkedIn, we ended up talking about this because that's how we connected and we got just into an interesting discussion on how you can build your network, connect with people and get to know them on LinkedIn. So I'm really excited to be able to bring a really different perspective on how people can use LinkedIn in the nonprofit and development world today, but before we jump into that, Donald, I always love to know how the heck did you end up with this deep role that you have? How did you get into this work?

DONALD: Well, I think that you know years ago we did not have universities offering degree programs in nonprofit management, and so many of us majored in all of the degrees that are available and then maybe through volunteering or maybe through working in communications in marketing and then somebody, maybe a mentor, brought us into the development world, but it was very eclectic very early on, and today, you know there are a lot of universities that offer a degree program that can be that launching pad and for persons to start out in





DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

nonprofit and all of its facets in marketing, communications, development, data management, stewardship, but usually it takes someone who sees you doing well in another part of the business and invites you and brings you over.

BETH: Right. I've been seeing that a lot, too. Whenever I'm talking to different people I always ask people in person how they ended up doing this work, and it's absolutely true that people like me on the older side of the spectrum have completely different degrees, and I think it's really interesting that colleges and universities are starting to look around and notice that this is a profession with a very specific skill set that people can be guided to and maybe there's enough awareness of it now and people are saying, "Yes, this is something I want to do with my career." It's fascinating to me.

DONALD: Well, it is, and you know corporate models work well and corporate settings, but we know the corporate model doesn't always work well with a nonprofit model and the nonprofit model doesn't always work well with the government model. So I think the specialization over time has really helped us to replicate the level of professionalism we benchmark in corporate, but to have the specialization in nonprofit so that our deliverables to our constituents is at a high level.

BETH: Right. So you have responsibilities for overall organizational advancement and then some specific responsibilities in development, and I always love talking to people that kind of have to have you know one foot in the fundraising and the raising money side of people after they've interacted with a university, but also you know advancement in all the other ways that you move the university forward, potentially marketing and different things. In the work that you do, what does the word "participation" mean to you? How does it show up? How do you count it in a way that helps the university thrive?

DONALD: Well, what's interesting to me, and I think social media has influenced how we define that and how we measure that. So I can remember being in





DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

meetings and maybe they're still going on today where there was a great pressure to get so many "likes" on Facebook and you know, if you had 100 likes, the goal next time was to have 200 likes and keep growing exponentially and now that's shifted into other platforms where maybe Instagram you're trying to get 100 likes, 200 likes, but again as you talked about earlier, is that an active engagement of participation or is that passive, and you know one of the things that I think we're finding is you know some of these platforms in social media, I think we get seduced by the masses. We keep thinking there's millions of people on these sites and we have to have an outreach to the millions and it's never enough, and once you kind of go through this full cycle of, you know, I have to reach the millions and then realizing how elusive that is, it's very interesting how it comes back to who is actively participating in your outreach and if you're not able, for example, let's say on Facebook with likes, if you're not able to convert 100 likes into 10 people attending an event, well, what did that really do? What did that really measure? In the case of LinkedIn, you know there's still a platform to like and share and different things, but where did that passive communication of engagement convert into an active touch point in a way that brought somebody closer, and I think when you do this, initially we're trying to reach the heavens and the globe, but then what is really meaningful? If you have five people who see something and decide to come to an event because they were engaged, I'll take those five people over a thousand likes every day of the week.

BETH: You know, it's so funny. I was at a networking event with our local marketing association chapter last night, and I was talking to a guy who had previously done a lot of infomercials and he was saying that you know when they run infomercials, you can run it at two o'clock in the morning to get four phone calls that convert, and you know a client would say things like, "Oh my gosh, I only got four phone calls," but if it's four phone calls from people that buy something, and it cost you \$100 to do it, then that's a good ROI. You're so right. I love your "seduced by the masses." That's such a great term of that idea that everyone else is doing it and more is always better and I think as we move forward in this new world of marketing and media, we need to start paying





DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

attention to the different types of metrics and segmenting metrics to note to metrics to measure and really identify what is a terminal metric? Like what's a metric that actually matters to the outcome of your work as opposed to these. I was talking to a prospective client a week or so ago, and I was looking at like the report that they give to their board, and they were reporting on things like, "This is how many people came to our website," as like this is a demonstration of our success, and I think people really need to start thinking about are you just kind of filling the pot with numbers and facts that are interesting, but don't really actually measure whether or not you're having an impact on the things that are important to your organization.

DONALD: Yes.

BETH: So one of the things that you and I talked about when we first started connecting was the role of LinkedIn in all of this and the role of social, and just generally the role of networking and how do you meet and sustain relationships with people. How do you connect with and finding people. I know in the role of most fundraisers, a lot of what you have to do is have conversations with people, connect with people, find them. So how has LinkedIn been helping you approach the kind of people that you want to connect with?

DONALD: Well, I think it's interesting. Sometimes frustration can be a real source of inspiration. So for many professionals that are in the nonprofit sector, data is really a challenge. You know, if you were in business school and you heard the term, "the cash is king," one of the princes has to be data right after that, and a lot of us struggle with how do we maintain integrity of our data, but also expand it in a way that we can grow our network and this is certainly true whether you're housed in higher education, health care, social service agencies. Everybody is trying to figure out how can we make our data better, how can we make it more far reaching and how can we do some more sophisticated modeling in a way that allows us to grow our base over time and one of the things that is even though universities both in our country and around the world are immense organizations,





DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

one of the things that's hard for us to admit, in many cases we're so reliant on the alumnus to self report what they're doing. So if you are alumna, you might share home address. You might share a personal email, but I might not know that you're the Principal of a business. I may not know what your job title is. I may not know that your business is housed somewhere outside of your home region and I think what's really led to a lot of persons in the nonprofit sector running to LinkedIn is because we can see and see in full transparency who are the graduates of our university, how can we bring them together and then in some cases, how can we partner with a vendor that has permission and the licensure to recover this data and upload it into our system in a way that we can compensate for something that's traditionally a real weakness.

BETH: OK, so I would guess, I mean if somebody from development from my university contacted me through LinkedIn, I could probably guess what they were contacting me about. So what do you say when you invite people or reach out to them in a way that makes them feel like they want to say yes and accept a connection?

DONALD: Well, I usually separate it into two steps. So the first step would be and I think of it in terms of a 15 second rule. If you are my graduate, I have to figure out in 15 seconds or less why would Beth accept an invitation to connect. So step one, I want to make that connection. For example, I might say something to you and remember you're limited to 300 characters in that initial correspondence. I might say something like "Beth, I rely on this site to try to keep up with thought, industry and community leaders who graduated from our university. After reading your professional profile, I can see you meet this criteria. I'd like to welcome you into my professional network." A couple things there. I think sometimes people, I hear this word, "cyber stalking," like you wouldn't, wait a minute. You read Beth's profile before you connected? Yes, I did because if Beth's our graduate, I want to know, first of all I want to verify it in our internal system. Yes, she is our graduate, and then how is Beth using her degree? Higher ed really has a responsibility, particularly in the context of student debt, which has become a national crisis in





DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

our country, we have a responsibility to our graduates to be able to show that if you invest in your education that it will have a favorable ROI for the rest of your career. I think one of the things that higher education struggles with right now, the cover story in Consumer Reports in August 2016 said that somewhere around \$43 trillion of student debt has been compiled over time just in our country, and we kind of want to set that aside and not be accountable for that. Well, guess what? You can't have glitzy marketing and multi-platinum platforms of outreach for perspective students and not be accountable for student debt. So when we looked at LinkedIn, I think what we're able to get a better handle on is if you invest in your education and you're progressing in your career, then that's something where university can say we're keeping our promise to our graduates that when you come here you will be prepared for life and the second part is hopefully you will say yes to my invitation, the second part is I would want to say something like "Beth," in a follow-up message, "as much as we all enjoy virtual connections, I think we would acknowledge that we benefit for actual ones. What would be the best way to convert this virtual connection to an actual meaningful connection?" and I think that could take many forms, but if you only are focused on only the shiny penny of I want acquire Beth as a connection, but you don't have a part two.

BETH: How are you gonna use that connection?

DONALD: Yes. So related to your theme earlier, what kind of participation is it? It's very passive if Donald invites Beth to connect, Beth says yes and then that connection goes on the proverbial shelf.

BETH: Right, and that goes to what we were just talking about as far as even metrics and what's a terminal metric. What's a metric that actually demonstrates an outcome versus what is you know, I wouldn't say a useless metric because having more people in your network gives you more people to connect with, but if you don't actually do the connection, it doesn't matter. So being able to say to your boss, "Look, I have 1,500 connections on LinkedIn. Give me a raise," you





DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

know, that's the kind of metrics people were measuring for a long time in social, but it's much more valuable to the actual outcomes in organizations to say, "I'm building all these connections on LinkedIn and that has generated this many appointments and those appointments have generated this much new revenue for the organization."

DONALD: Yes.

BETH: So one of the things I'm always interested in is why LinkedIn? Like what can you do on LinkedIn? You have a database. You were saying that there's things you can find out on LinkedIn. So how is connecting on LinkedIn been better for you in actually generating these meetings, these relationships, these next step communications than maybe just going through your database and are you able to find people that maybe disappeared or maybe you've had trouble finding in other ways?

DONALD: Absolutely. So a couple things up front. I like to say this at some point during the conversation. I am not an employee of LinkedIn. I am not affiliated with them in any way. I don't receive compensation for them. I'm just a very happy and satisfied customer, and one of the things I wanted to mention, early on it was possible to you know move the needle on the free, in the free services offered by LinkedIn, but they have really created so many incentives for a premium membership that you really want to invest in one of the four premium memberships. I personally am on Business Plus, which is the lowest most cost effective one of the four. If you are a recruiter, you'd probably want you know the sales version of this, but for Business Plus, what I like is you can click on the advanced link and on the advanced link I can sort by alumni. In some cases, like for example a business school has its own cohort group, the law school has its own group. I can sort any number of combinations of alumni and I can look at all the demographics. If we were coming to Philadelphia, I can sort and say who are the University of South Carolina alumni that live within a 25-mile radius of Philadelphia. Well, chances are, I'm gonna cast a net on people that are not in our





DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

internal database and find some professionals that we want to come to an event if our president is speaking, if one of our deans, and so that's been tremendously helpful. One key point that I wanted to mention in terms of our strategies. As a supervisor and we all have supervisors, you want to be clear about some techniques are ones you can use on company time because it's providing a deliverable to your employer and some of this may have to be housed on your time in terms of where it may benefit your network, which at times it can benefit your employer, at times it benefits you, but I think it's an important step for any of the supervisors that are listening is you have to police yourself to make sure is this a good use of LinkedIn on company time because we're having an event in Philadelphia and I want to make sure we have the right people around the table. That's work-related, company time good use, good match all the way through, but if you're trying to experiment on some other things, then that really needs to be separated from company time and be conducted after hours or on weekends.

BETH: And what do you mean by that? Are you talking about things as an employee of an organization, you're using because the challenge of LinkedIn is that you're using your personal profile on behalf of your employer. So are you talking about, "Oh well, I'm networking and I'm connecting with people. I'm building my network because I'm trying to think about my next job," or are you talking about something else?

DONALD: Well, I think the presumption is if you're on LinkedIn you're looking for a job. I'm glad you said that because I think a lot of supervisors get really nervous about that right off the bat. I'll give you two examples and then see if this makes the distinctions. So if we're trying to generate strong attendance at alumni events, locally, regionally, nationally and we're using this tool to network with alumni of our university or donors to our nonprofit, that's all directly related. I think I mentioned to you that I was working on an international issue just to see how I could network with other nonprofit professionals on a global scale. So we had a weekend not too long ago where it was clear. The weather was going to be terrible. We were gonna be indoors all weekend, and I launched this little





DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

experiment to see how possible would it be to network with other development officers around the world, and one of the things you can do through the Premium Business Plus feature is you can use keywords in a job title. Let's say director of development and you can segment all 200+ countries and one by one identify who are the directors of development or as close to that function anywhere in the world, and I worked on an outreach on my own time to figure out could I network with development officers in the UK, in India, in Australia, Canada, Mexico, everywhere where there's someone serving in that capacity and what I found, which was really at a time now when we're very sensitive on international relations, is that my fulfillment rate of people reaching back and saying yes was extraordinarily high and I think you could replicate this you know with marketing professionals, communications professionals, with data professionals. There's something very collaborative about the nonprofit sector and we know we have to support each other and we know we have to share best practices and the nice thing about it in many cases, we're not competing head to head for the same stakeholders. We just want to be more efficient with the stakeholders we have.

BETH: Yeah, I think that's a really good point. I think that's a good explanation of that sort of level of are you on LinkedIn searching for alumni or are you on LinkedIn to broaden your network? The challenge of broadening your network thing is there's a ton of value by being able to be connected to a development director in Portugal. You might learn some really interesting things that are valuable and you can bring to the current job that you have, but you are also building a network of advisors and colleagues that could help you grow, and I think probably every organization is gonna interpret that differently. Hopefully we're in a world where people have employees, have relationships that they trust and aren't thinking, I remember when a lot of these social medias came out we work on this, we do these kind of things for our clients so we have to be on them, but, you know, I would walk out of my office and walk past where all my staff was sitting and there's still that moment where you're like "Facebook is up." What are they doing? Even before all of this, do you remember like when there was iChat? There were these messaging things and people were obsessed with them and I





DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

would come out and I remember one time seeing one of my designers and there was the iChat bar up and there were like 24 names on it and all I could think of was, “I’m paying him to sit here and work and there’s this iChat thing up,” but I decided I’m old and he’s young. Am I freaking out over nothing. Is he getting his work done and is he getting his work done with the most efficiency and at the top level? Is it impacting his quality or impacting his production? Over time, I felt it’s really not impacting anything. You know and he ended up starting to use the thing, the iChat. He had a friend who was a video producer so he used these tools to connect to people on behalf of the work that he did and he stayed and worked with me for nine years, but it’s hard as a boss. I’m a boss, you’re a boss to kind of figure these things out and decide what’s OK. How do you deal with it? Do you have direct reports?

DONALD: Yes.

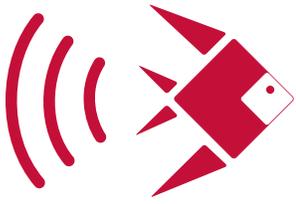
BETH: So what do they do? Do they use LinkedIn in the work that they do?

DONALD: Well, it’s interesting that you said that. So one of the things that I like to do for several reasons is I do a training program with all the direct reports that have external relations or development to make sure that they’re benefiting from what I’ve learned on LinkedIn over the last ten years of being a member and what I try to do is by modeling those best practices is I’m showing them what I think is an effective use of the tool and asking them to mirror that rather than to leave that open for interpretation.

BETH: Oh, that’s really good. I never thought about that. That’s a really great idea.

DONALD: And so that way there’s no guess work, gray area and a lot of times you know our development staff is spread out all over campus so they’re housed remotely. I couldn’t walk by and see how many websites they have open at a time even if I wanted to. So I like to try to say these are the techniques I’ve used to get personal appointments. These are the techniques I used to help with alumni





DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

engagement for events and then for example, one of the things that I like them to do is many of them report directly to a dean and I'll say related to international, can you work with the dean's assistant and figure out where is the dean traveling internationally during the next academic year as all these deans want to be attending the international conferences. So let's say for example, the music dean is going to be in Berlin for a global music conference. Well, one of the things I like to do in training with the development officer that supports music is to say who are the University of South Carolina alumni in Berlin, whether they majored in music or not. Do we have kind of a quorum there and can you negotiate with your dean? Could he stay an extra afternoon or maybe an evening and can we facilitate the dean hosting University of South Carolina alumni maybe at a musical performance or maybe just gathering around a table at a restaurant and engage those people who in many cases, when they leave the continental 48 we've given them a free pass, but now can we use this tool in a new way to raise the school flag, have a champion of the university in a leadership role reach out throughout all disciplines and say whether you're in Berlin, Germany, or someplace else, you know your passport as our alumnus is universal and we want to stay consistent in supporting you.

BETH: I think that's such a great idea and I feel that's an idea like literally anyone could use. You don't have to be a university with a dean going to an international conference. You could be you know a regional charity that's going to a different part of your state or there's a segment, anybody that has a different segment you could utilize that idea. Another thing I really liked about what you said is that you didn't insert yourself into the process. One of the favorite nonprofit words, you empowered. You let the people that have the direct relationship with that dean continue and build on that relationship, letting them kind of facilitate this. It both utilizes a relationship that's already existing and probably more powerful than your relationship with that dean, it keeps it from turning into a power struggle which I know can sometimes be a huge thing at universities and it lets you show the people that are your reports that you value and trust their skills. There's so





DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

much good that can come out of that approach.

DONALD: Well, and remember, you know, even though I used my personal time to build my development network, you know, globally, I had a very interesting response to a job post. Just yesterday I posted a development job based here in South Carolina and I received a message from a gentleman who is a director of development in South Africa. He was educated at Vanderbilt in Nashville. He saw the posting. He'd like to be considered, and I thought, that investment of my personal time to raise the university flag is now having a global outreach and I looked at his profile and he has directly related experience working in university setting in South Africa, educated here and you know, it stretches your mind just a little bit. You know, it was budget neutral. Somebody in Nashville could have applied and now somebody in Johannesburg can apply because I've tried to incorporate people who are like-minded and like industry, and again I keep coming back to just as you and I created a virtual connection and now an actual one, the nonprofit sector, we really do support each other. It's one of the reasons I've stayed in the field for so long. Certainly there are times when we are competitive and we all want to be number one in terms of hitting our goals, but overall, I think there's a real collaborative nature and I think related to your earlier point, if we as supervisors are growing our talent, we'll never have trouble filling our lines.

BETH: Right. So I want to speak to this idea of collaboration because in a lot of organizations, even internally, it's shockingly tough, especially in large organizations. Sometimes I call it fiefdoms and different people own different parts of things or want to be the top banana that is making all the key decisions that everyone else has to follow and that can sometimes be tough and you've had some great success kind of working with other departments to do these kinds of things and I love that. Another thing that I wanted to get into was something that we address a lot here in my business. We're a visual communications firm so we do a lot of this and it's easy for people to look at LinkedIn and see all the resumes and all of the information and think that it's not a visual network and that there's





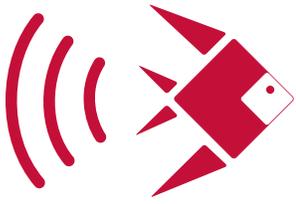
DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

no need for pictures, other than your head shot being not some weird party picture with a random hand around your shoulder, you know that it's not really visual other than that. So can you talk a little bit about the impact of the visual side, visual communication in LinkedIn?

DONALD: Yes. You know, at its core, LinkedIn as a corporation makes 60 percent or more of their revenue based on talent. You know talent is the big enchilada in their business model. Marketing is second and premium subscriptions is growing fast as third, but one of the things that we find is that if we're only thinking on a linear scale as far as HR sends us a three-page or four-page document, it's heavy on copy and all the requirements of position, this, that and the other. Even if you created a PDF and posted that, that's not gonna get you the hook that you need to get people to apply and one of the things that I've been reminded of, you know, on a routine basis is if you could take one more step, partner with your marketing and communications people and say, "What's the best photo we have to celebrate this job opportunity?" Is it an aerial view? Is it people shot? What is the best visual so that I can kind of bring people in and what I'm starting to find is that if you have a strong picture and maybe three lines of copy, again it somewhat relates to that 15 second rule, then maybe somebody will click and say, "Hey, I'd like to know more," but sometimes it's hard to kind of keep the HR mentality at kind of at arm's length. We want to follow our protocol, yes we want to make sure that we're transparent in our hiring process, but when it really comes to casting a wide net, the photo of what we use, so one example is where we recruit for director of development in athletics at the USC Upstate campus where I'm partnered with the athletic department and our marketing department to get a really great photograph of one of our point guards being defended. It's a real clear crisp shot. Well, you don't see that on LinkedIn every day and the views are way up and the people reaching back want to be considered for this is way up and it's because not because I sent the four or five page document that HR sent me. It's because I had the marketing people help me get the best photo. Not some iPhone blurry something that wasn't really popping, but something that was you know, shot professionally and it really pops and it helps engage people





DRIVING PARTICIPATION

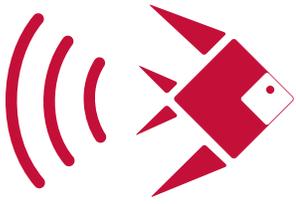
WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

in an active way.

BETH: Right. I think that's such a great example of what the real true meaning of how collaboration can be valuable in an organization. If you just sort of stayed in the channel, taking what HR gave you and posted it, you know, you would have gotten candidates actually, but this idea that by collaborating with the, not just HR department, but with the athletics department and the marketing department to say I loved your term, "celebrate the job opportunity." Nobody talks about filling roles with that term. Like how can you get somebody that's really engaged? One of the things when we hire, I have one quality that I look for above everything else and that's curiosity, and the second thing that I look for is that I don't want people that want to work. I want people that want to do this work and that's you know, when you put out a picture, a gorgeous picture of basketball and you're looking for somebody to do development in the athletics field, you want somebody that thinks, that's gonna be compelled by basketball picture that thinks sports and athletics are awesome and valuable. You know, you can't teach that. Trust me. My kids have tried to teach me! So I love that sort of combination story on the value of collaborating with other departments outside of your department to really create the best solution as opposed to just executing a solution and also a reminder that human beings are visual. We talk all the time about visual stuff on Facebook, on how what Twitter is doing, you know, Instagram and all these visual platforms. How people are loving video, but I really haven't had people talk about and really explain how this stuff can be valuable on LinkedIn. You know, one of the other things you mentioned the other day was how you know the shareability of that how likely somebody is to share a picture, not even necessarily thinking about the job opportunity that's even attached to it, but they're gonna share a great picture or like a great picture that then gets exposure in a way that they're not necessarily gonna like a wordy description for a job posting and that's not what they're looking for right now.

DONALD: Oh I agree. The photos, and the nice thing is when you talk about collaboration, our colleagues in marketing communications want us to ask for





DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

those. That's why they invest in that professional photography. The worst thing in the world is to either have an in-house photographer or videographer and not use their work. They are happy and I agree with you that I'm surprised that this isn't more muscle memory by now, but once you do it and you're rewarded for it, you won't go back.

BETH: I completely agree. I definitely want to reinforce marketing does want you to do this. As somebody who is on the marketing side, we've all stood in the back of the room and watched somebody you know, open up a power point presentation that's like totally looks like their 12-year-old did it and like you've got all of these brand assets that are like right there for the taking that you spend money and craft and try to communicate to people that you have them and then people just do what they do. Like I never really know why. I don't know if it's a control issue or if it's just they've got to get this done in their own time to like go deal with marketing. Why do you think people don't reach out to their marketing departments to help support different issues like this?

DONALD: Well, staying with the theme of basketball, I was recently reminded of a John Wooden quote, the infamous UCLA basketball coach ...

BETH: Even I know who he is!

DONALD: ... who won 10 championships and the quote is, let me make sure that I get it correctly. "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, you need a team." No one has been able to replicate what he did with teams in college basketball, and I think, to your point, sometimes we either create a sense of urgency ourselves or maybe it's imposed on us and when we're kind of in urgent panic mode, we're not gonna do our most creative work. We're not gonna be curious. We're gonna be, you know, nervous more than anything and ...

BETH: Right and crisis, I would say crisis is the antipathy of like that's gonna prevent curiosity.





DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

DONALD: Right, so when you're in crisis mode, you're not thinking I'm one email, one phone call, one walk down the hall from marketing to say, "If I ask nicely can I have this photograph before the close of business today?" and most of the time, you know, if you're asking the right person, it's not a big deal. Most of the time they have an inventory. You provide some of the keywords, they do the sort, they give you and we have permission to use the photo, which people skip over the rights of that all the time, but I feel much better about using an image that we have the rights to and we own instead of just kind of ...

BETH: Doing a Google search.

DONALD: Going to the internet and grabbing whatever is close and hope for the best and we don't have the rights and that's a whole other podcast.

BETH: Right, I probably should do a whole podcast on that. So, as we wrap up here, when it comes to this idea and I love the term that you used, this idea of stewarding your network using LinkedIn. What's one tip, what's one sort of insider to say if you do nothing else, do this that you could leave for people that say, "I'm really not using LinkedIn as much as possible." What would you suggest they focus on?

DONALD: Well, I'm glad you asked that. So one of the things again that kind of inspires us is what we see when something isn't working and how can we do better. So for example, about once a week I receive a group email. LinkedIn provides for up to 49 professionals can be grouped in a broadcast email and somebody will put something out and say, "Oh, you should come to this event," or "Maybe you want to read this article," but to me, that's the prototype of a passive communication. If you're gonna send out to 49 other people, most of us are gonna give yourself permission to say, "Well, I'm not gonna respond. There's 49 other people that can respond," but I recently was contacted by a woman named Gail who moved to Charlotte, North Carolina. We're based in Columbia, South Carolina, and she reached out, we connected and then she followed up and said





DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

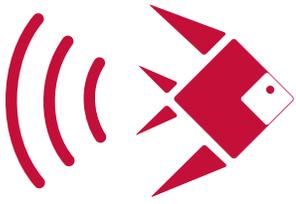
“I’m new to the area. I’m just trying to build my base in Charlotte,” and I thought to myself, “I’m not gonna do the 49 random nonprofit professionals and replicate what annoys me, I have to figure out a better way,” and so what I did was using the premium feature to go in and look at nonprofit professionals within a 25 mile radius of Charlotte, North Carolina, I found eight people, and I thought to myself, “If any one of these eight people reach back for Gail, it’s a good thing and they will be helpful,” and instead of doing the 49, I did a group of three: me, Gail and one of the eight, and I sent a customized personal message. Let’s say, Beth, if you were the professional, I would do a virtual introduction. “Beth, this is Gail; Gail, this is Beth. Gail’s new to the market. Beth, you have a lot of connections in this area. Would you be willing to offer some coaching to Gail? I know she could benefit from your expertise,” and then step back and the nice thing about this, six out of the eight professionals reached back just because I asked nicely and probably had no typos in my message, and said, “Yes, I will help Gail,” and I saw six completely different strategies on how to do it. One person said, “Let’s meet for coffee Friday,” one person provided links of all the professional organizations for nonprofit professionals and women, one said, “These are some colleagues that I have on campus you might want to network with.” In six completely different outreaches to the same email and again contrasting a passive engagement and participation by feeling good. I just had 48-49 touches, but what did it amount to, versus I was very strategic and thoughtful about eight and six of the eight are now partnering with this colleague because we are collaborative, and we do want to add value and that’s a way to really steward our relationships in a way that doesn’t keep LinkedIn on a shelf.

BETH: So wait, one question. So you used the paid feature, but were these eight people people that were already level one connections with you?

DONALD: Yes.

BETH: I just wanted to make sure that I was clear about this. You didn’t use it to just randomly find eight people in Charlotte. You used it to hunt through your





DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

many connections to find eight people that already knew you that were in that region.

DONALD: And the nice thing about that is Gail was not connected to any one of the eight.

BETH: So she got new connections.

DONALD: This creates a direct path for them if they choose to, to reach back for each other, now Gail has an opportunity to engage each of the eight and maybe they invite her to connect, but you're right. It doesn't work if the professional is the second connection, that wouldn't work, but Gail and I were connected. The eight professionals and I were connected and then I was able to do one at a time, and that's really the amazing thing about LinkedIn is it's still based on one connection at a time, being thoughtful one at a time, whether you're trying to convert a second to a one or trying to be thoughtful about the ones you already have in your network.

BETH: I think that is such great advice and just goes along with the whole idea that if you want to drive participation, it's all about personalization. Thank you so much for joining me today. I so appreciate you sharing your insights with both me and our whole nonprofit community. Much appreciated!

DONALD: It was a pleasure to be with you. Thank you, Beth.

BETH: Thank you.

