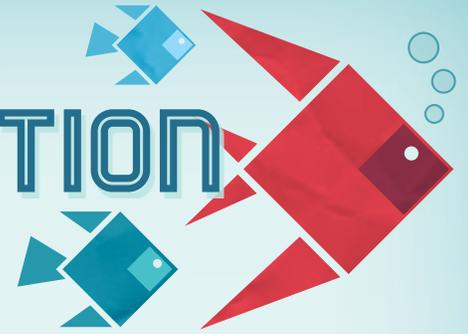


DRIVING PARTICIPATION

with Beth Brodovsky



SESSION 034

UNEXPECTED PLACES FOR LEARNING MORE ABOUT MARKETING WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

This is Beth Brodovsky and Welcome to Driving Participation. If you are listening live, it's the first full week of the new year.

I think I love the new year even more than Christmas. It's like a gift of 365 new days to play with.

So, I thought I would take the first two weeks of the year to talk about the things I do to inspire myself, set goals, and stay focused.

This podcast is something I started to share great marketing ideas with the nonprofit community. And personally, talking with nonprofit marketers who are trying new things is exciting and helps me stay in touch with the problems and solutions that are happening inside organizations.

But it started as an idea I had two years ago. Getting new ideas, projects and programs from concept to existence is hard. It's a lot of time and commitment and work that has to happen on top of all the things you do to keep things going today.

When I started my company 18 years ago, I had no idea what I was in for. I had a Bachelors of Fine Art and the required founder's attitude of "I can do this better myself than working for these guys." But I didn't have much else in the way of skills of training in running a business. You may have felt like that, too, when you started your organization or jumped into fundraising. There are a lot of colleges offering degrees now in nonprofit management, but that's pretty new. Many people who work in nonprofits have had to learn pretty much everything on the job.

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I had been a boss, hiring, firing and managing people since I was 24 years old, but I had no idea what I was in for when it came to finding clients, building systems, developing a strategy and worst of all – bookkeeping.

When I went to Art school, they didn't offer courses in sales and accounting. And to be honest, I wasn't ready to hear it then. I had no idea that I would ever need those skills much less want to learn anything with numbers involved.

When I started working as an employee, I felt like the main goal was to make me the best employee of the company I could be. Granted, this was more than 20 years ago, but still I remember it being years before I knew anything existed like a conference or a training course.

Not being challenged or valued are by far more common reasons people leave than money, benefits of vacation time.

I hope that at your organization learning and developing as a person is valued. But either way, I would encourage you to value it.

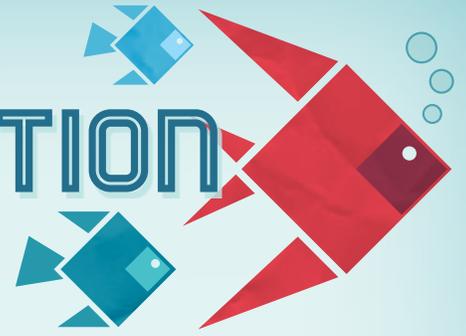
Jim Rohn, who wrote *The Art of Exceptional Living*, said: "Formal education will make you a living; self-education will make you a fortune."

Granted, I know you are all working in nonprofits, so the idea of fortune probably makes you laugh, but I hope you get the idea. And you have no idea what your future holds.

So for this episode I am going to share what I do and where I go to learn more about marketing, business, branding, fundraising, and anything that I think will help me be the best marketing resource for nonprofits.

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Podcasts

Since you are listening to me now, you obviously know how wonderful podcasts are. I used to listen to NPR's Car Talk on the radio, and then my kids' soccer games were always making me get out of the car and miss the show. Someone told me I could download it onto my iPod. Yes, an iPod – it was a long time ago. I found the website and figured out how to set up the feed and voila! I could listen to it whenever I wanted.

It was magical and I was hooked.

I listen to all kinds of podcasts. Marketing, business, humor, health and wellness. Even a podcast on podcasting.

What I like about podcasts and audiobooks is that it's the one way I can multitask effectively. I really believe that doing two tasks at the same time that require the same type of attention is impossible. You simply cannot be listening to a webinar and responding to email and doing them both 100%. But you can listen to a podcast completely absorb new information while doing your dishes, gardening, exercising, or driving.

I know that nonprofit marketers never have enough time to keep up with everything that's happening that interests you. I have stacks of great magazines on my desk that I really want to read but I just can't get to. But I wake up every day and listen to an episode of a podcast while getting ready for work, and I get in to the office with my brain already charged up with new ideas.

I change up what I listen to and I am always looking for new ones. Most podcasts, like mine, only publish once a week so I need a lot to keep the queue filled.

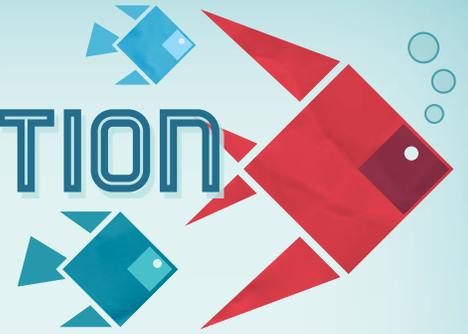
Some of my favorites are:

Marketing Over Coffee

This is a 20-minute show from John Wall and Christopher Penn who are both marketing tech nerds. This show is great because it's timely. They talk about what happened this week in

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marketing technology. New product releases, new tools they have tested and are reported on, company mergers and what that will likely mean for products. It's mass market commercial, but I think it's always good to know what the rest of the world is thinking and working with. Nonprofits often use specialized tech, but there are plenty of mass market media in the mix as well and we need to know what's happening. This is a quick way to get the highlights.

Tony Martignetti – Nonprofit Radio

When I decided to start podcasting about nonprofit marketing, the first thing I did was look in iTunes to see what was there. If you found me there you probably already know there isn't much help coming your way. Except for Tony. Tony covers a much broader range than I do, focusing on all the operational areas that a small nonprofit needs help with but may not be able to afford to get paid help with. He's been around a while with 221 shows under his belt. His guests are terrific – he even had my friend Gail Bower, who was on Driving Participation Episode 8, on his show a few weeks ago in Episode 219.

The shows are typically an hour and really worth your time. Remember you don't have to listen to a whole show at once.

Entrepreneur on Fire

This show is a daily – yes, I mean daily as in seven days a week – podcast from John Lee Dumas. The show interviews an entrepreneur every day in a very structured format. John is obsessed with stories. His format asks the guest to share a success quote, tell a story of a time they failed, then tell a story of success. At the end, he asks for the best advice they ever received, a book recommendation, the most useful technology tool they use and – my favorite – what they would do if they woke up in a brand new world with \$500 and a laptop. Nonprofits thrive on storytelling, and it can be really hard to extract a good story out of an interviewee. We talked about that in the last episode with Matt Hugg. You can find that at www.iriscreative.com/dp033. John gently encourages his guests to be specific and “take us back to a time that you failed and really re-live that moment.” Listen to how emotional his guests are when they talk about the tough times, how they felt and what it meant for them. Even if you are not interested in the subject matter, you feel their pain and struggles. Nonprofits need to be able to do this. It's a combination of asking the question in a way that

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guides the interviewee to talk about what it was like and knowing what you are looking for when you hear it so you can stop people and redirect them if you are not getting the feeling. John is great at it.

I also want you to see John's podcast as a piece of content. Since he asks his guests all the same questions, he's been able to collect all the answers and group them together into new pieces of content. All the book recommendations are now a page on his website. The quotes have prompted him to start another podcast just of quotes. Nonprofits are universally strapped for time and, usually, money. If you can create one thing and turn it into many things that is a bonus in any industry. Maybe your thing isn't a podcast, but if you have a conference, a workshop, a webinar, a program or even interviews you record you have the opportunity to reuse and redistribute the content in other media as promotional content, as a hook to get people to sign up for your email, as thank you gift for a donation like they do on public television or even as a product you sell.

You found me, so I am wondering what else you listen to that has been helpful. I'd love to share it. Email me at beth@iriscreative.com and let me know.

Books

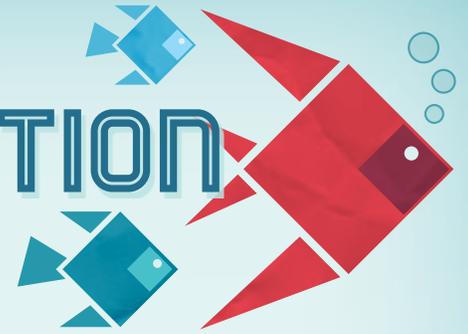
I love to read and like nothing better than to curl up in a comfy chair with a book and a cup of tea. But since I don't always have time for that, I switch from podcasts to audiobooks.

There are a ton of books on fundraising and nonprofit marketing out there. Many of them are great, but I bet you can find them easily yourself. I am going to recommend a few books from the general business shelf that I think would be really helpful.

There are some things about nonprofits that are unique to the donor-focus and funding business model, but there are many other things that are universal. Nonprofits sometimes get so focused on what's different about them that some useful ideas from the for-profit world can be overlooked.

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So here are the top three books I read this year that I think would help nonprofits focus and clarify their message.

Start With Why by Simon Sinek

My favorite read this year is especially appropriate for anyone struggling with trying to connect audiences with the reason you exist. And that should be all of you.

It's *Start with Why* by Simon Sinek. I loved this book and recommend it in every branding talk I give. The book is not written for nonprofits but if you read it, trust me you will see why the principles are critical to successful nonprofit communications.

Most people get locked into talking about what their organizations do and focus on the programs and services they deliver. The book is about focusing first on the reason you do those things.

Now, I am a firm believer in speaking clearly and not getting caught up in trying to impress people by reframing what you do with fancier words. It's easy to talk about the higher calling of what you do and get so caught up in principles that no one knows what you actually deliver. I have been to a ton of websites that use scrabble-worthy words and paragraph-long sentences that say nothing. This book does a great job of sharing why it's so important to lead conversations with "why" instead of "what" and how to do to help people understand you better.

It's on the top of my read-again list, and I am hoping to convince Mr. Sinek to come on the podcast for an interview.

Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make Competition Irrelevant By W. Chan Kim, Renee Mauborgne

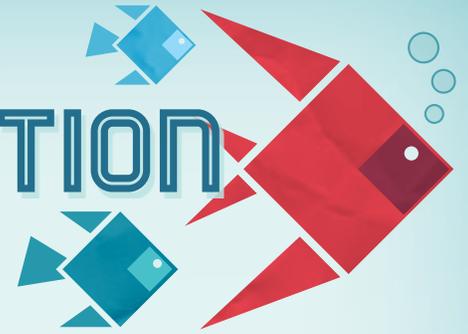
I listened to this book while I painted my hallway this spring. It's funny how I can remember certain books by the project I was working on while I heard it.

If you are getting ready to start a nonprofit or if you are struggling to differentiate an existing organization, this is a must read. The concept is about "blue oceans" as places where there is room to be a leader and "red oceans" as places that are packed with competitors all fighting for attention.

It kills me when I hear an organization describe themselves as "just like organization X" or say "we do what X does." Or when the thing an organization thinks is their brand is something they can't possibly own. For example, if a school says something like "what's unique about

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us is that we really care about student success.” Every school cares about that. But I hear this kind of thing all the time.

Blue Ocean Strategy talks about how to look deeply into the work you are capable of doing and find the things that you excel at that others are not focusing on. Matching up the things you do well with the things that your potential audience is very interested in is the first step in building a valued brand. No matter where you are in your evolution, this book is a good read to help you evaluate how you talk about what you do.

The One Thing by Gary Keller

On the surface, *The One Thing* by Gary Keller seems like a productivity book. But it’s really a book about focus. You will get incredible tips on efficiency and ways to keep your projects moving forward. If you are listening to this at the beginning of the year, this would be the one I’d pick to read first. It’s great for looking at all your goals and stripping things down so you can actually get things accomplished.

I have a million ideas and things I want to do. At the beginning of the year, I tend to make massive lists of all the new things I want to add and forget about all the stuff I have to keep going. It’s like I have this imaginary pot of hours that I spend over and over in my head. With so many things that are possible it can be hard to narrow down to the one thing I should be doing today to have the biggest impact on my business.

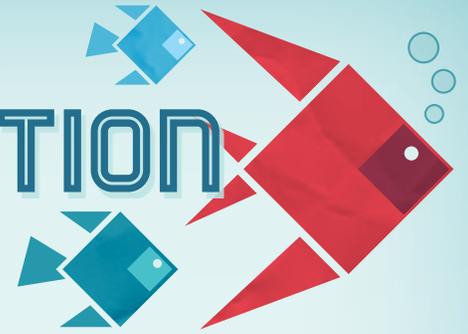
So the productivity help is the obvious use of the book, but the concept of the book is about focusing on the one most important thing and doing that until success. If you read that from the context of branding, it makes so much sense. To truly be branded we have to be willing to be narrowly focused. To choose some things over others. To be the best for one group and be ok that it means we will be wrong for others. It’s really hard. There is always the feeling that if you don’t talk about everything you do all the time no one will know and you’ll lose potential audiences.

It’s actually the complete opposite.

If you don’t focus and clarify exactly how you are the perfect solution for a very particular person, you end up being a middling choice for everyone. And the surprising thing is that once you own that space others come along in the wake.

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Platform by Michael Hyatt

If you are an executive director, president, founder or any kind of leader you may like the book *Platform* by Michael Hyatt. It's probably written more for people like me – consultants with a body of knowledge we want to start turning into a book and speaking engagements. But the tactic of creating a platform is usable by anyone.

As the leader of a nonprofit, professional association or a school, you need to be visible and you need to be clear about what you stand for. Who knows, maybe you will write a book. Check out what Adam Braun of Pencils of Promise did for his organization with his book, *The Promise of a Pencil* or Jim Ziolkowski of buildOn with his book *Walk in Their Shoes*.

Adam is using his book to be everywhere. I have seen him on talk shows and as a guest on every podcast I seem to listen to. I had never heard of him or his organization, and now he's like a nonprofit rock star.

The more people you know and the more who know you the easier it will be to attract what you want whether that is donors, grants, members or students.

No BS Direct Marketing by Dan Kennedy

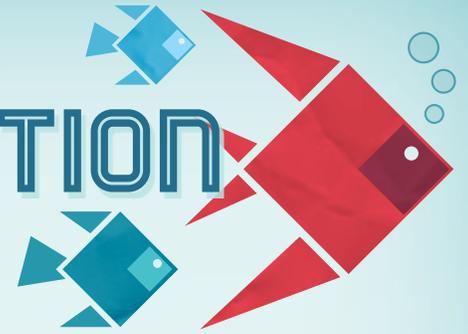
As someone who values branding, communications, stewardship and content marketing this book was a bit of a tough pill to swallow for me at first.

Dan Kennedy writes a whole "No BS" series, and he has been incredibly successful. The central premise of this book is that no dollar should be spent on marketing without the assurance that it will return at least two dollars back. I think this is very good advice for direct response advertising. I think it is best applied to making sure that direct response tactics are used in direct response media. Where people run into trouble is using brand advertising in direct response channels. I completely agree with Dan that spending money on something like a billboard or a Google Ad just to get your name out is a waste of money.

That being said, when reading this book, remember that while he says "marketing" he means direct marketing – like your fundraising. There are other things that fall under the helm of marketing that may not have the same direct return on investment, like your blog, many of your emails, a newsletter and developing your brand identity materials.

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So I have to remember when reading it that Dan's brand is to take a strong opinion. His ideas on using simple direct, action oriented messages are really good choices for people looking for a conversion through fundraising, student applications and member sign ups.

On my nightstand right now are Sarah Durham's Brandraising and Kivi Leroux Miller's Nonprofit Marketing Guide. I have a lot of respect for them both and thought it was time that I read their perspectives on nonprofit marketing.

So what did you read this year? I'd love to know the book you have read that has been most helpful in marketing your organization. Tweet your favorite book to me @bethbrodovsky on Twitter using the hashtag #DP034 so everyone can follow what you post.

Courses

Last, I spent a lot of time trying out different types of online courses this year. I learned about different ways to run webinars, how to create a Facebook advertising campaign, and I'm just starting one on using texting for a direct call to action. You will probably see me using all these techniques in the podcast over the next year, so I will be able to report to you how they work.

I also took the courses to see the different ways courses are structured from email to webinars to live programs. If you are an organization that delivers education in any form, taking other people's courses can be very valuable both for the education and for picking up new ideas on marketing and delivery of programming.

If you have any type of programming that you offer, it likely can be presented in some kind of online delivery. This is an amazing way to expand your circle of influence. Even if you don't want to start running courses, you probably have a talk that you or someone in your organization gives about your work that could be recorded as a slideshow with a voiceover and made available on your website. You could even use it as a hook for signing up for your mailing list.

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There are so many great resources out there to learn from. I spend a lot of time reading, listening and watching content that is designed for nonprofits and much that is not. Throughout 2015, I'll be continuing to track what's new and what's working and translate what I learn into ideas that could work for you. I hope this is helpful to you. Please feel free to drop me a note any time at beth@iriscreative.com to let me know what you are interested in and what your biggest marketing frustration is right now. Knowing what you are struggling with helps me to go hunt down the people who have found solutions and share them with you.

Happy New Year and here's to a fabulous 2015.

Thanks for listening to Driving Participation. This podcast is only useful if people get to hear it. So I have an offer for you. If you could support me by taking a moment to leave a rating and a review in iTunes I would so appreciate it. You can find the show at bit.ly/DPpodcast.

To thank you for contributing, I am creating a Donor Love Toolkit with a Valentine's Day theme on my Nonprofit Toolkit site. If you write a review, take a screenshot of it and email it to me at beth@iriscreative.com by January 28th, everyone who posts will get a toolkit for free, no sign up or anything required.

AND as a bonus - If you also share your current biggest marketing frustration with me, I will add you into a drawing to get one of the books I reviewed in this podcast sent to you. The winner gets to choose. The winner's frustration will be the subject of the February 18th episode. Just email me your screen shot and a note with a question or a description of the marketing, communication or design problem that plagues you the most right now.

Thank you again for listening to Driving Participation. I truly appreciate you joining me each week and sharing your ideas.

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