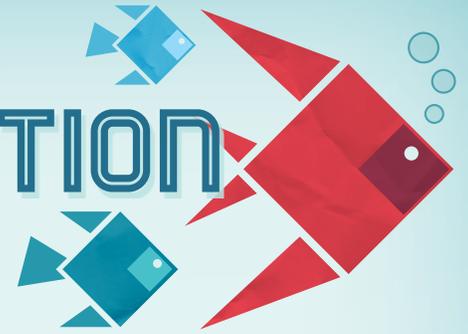


DRIVING PARTICIPATION

with Beth Brodovsky



SESSION 025

DP 025 HOW FASHION CREATES FUN, FUNDS AND NEW FUNDRAISERS WITH MARTHA AULD

Beth: Hello. This is Beth Brodovsky from Driving Participation and I am here today with Martha Auld from To Celebrate Life Breast Cancer Foundation. I am thrilled to have Martha here today. I am still here at the DonorPerfect Conference and Martha is going to tell me a bit about a project that she does. They are a 100% volunteer organization and that brings some really interesting opportunities and some challenges when you have large events and large things that you are planning. Thank you so much for joining me.

Martha: Certainly.

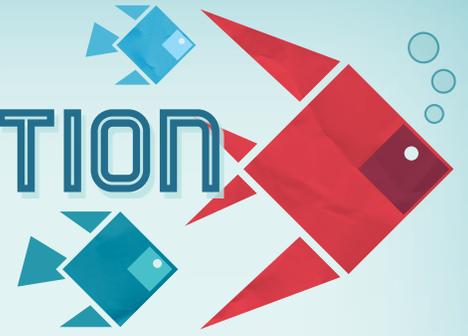
Beth: Martha tell me a little bit about your organization and the event that you've really become known for.

Martha: We're an organization that raises funds to fund other organizations to support women and men living with breast cancer. We fund groups who do support groups, who deliver meals to women who are too sick to cook, might pay rent for two months for a woman going through treatment. So we have been in existence for like nineteen years and we have raised over, given away over \$4 million. We are 100% volunteer. We do pay an accountant to enter stuff into books and we have a little bit of part time work for an administrative assistant, but we have no executive director and we just have been functioning quite well actually and often because of DonorPerfect because nobody has an office. We don't have an office. All our data is in DonorPerfect and so everybody can work from home and it works really well.

Beth: I think that's a really interesting thing that these days there are such opportunities to create different types of organizations through centralized mechanisms, even something as simple as using Google Docs to share things among volunteer groups who are working on a project together, that you can run some pretty big and pretty amazing things while never

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actually seeing each other on a regular basis.

Martha: Correct, correct.

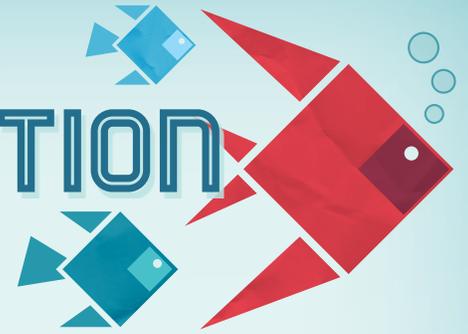
Beth: So you were telling me about this really interesting event and one of the things that I liked about the event you've put together is you didn't just say "we need to raise money, so we're going to have a golf outing" or a softball tournament or something random that people like to raise money. You really tied your event and made it really meaningful to the people that you serve. Tell me a little bit about it.

Martha: Well we do have some events that are just for raising money. We used to have a tennis tournament called Rally to Celebrate Life and then we had or we have a golf tournament called Tee it Up to Celebrate Life and that was organized initially by the husbands of the women who worked the big event, which is Stepping Out to Celebrate Life. We make most of our money with Stepping Out and that's what we're really known for and it's an event where breast cancer survivors are models in a fashion show and we work with stores and hair salons who take a whole day off from their business to do the women's hair and the doctors are the escorts down the runway. It is just fabulous and they love it and it really is transformative to many of the women who are the models because they've been going through treatment, they didn't have any hair, they've lost their eyelashes, etc and all of a sudden they're pampered, they're beautiful, they've got these beautiful clothes on and their doctor is smiling and they feel like they've come through it and they're well again and several have written articles in the paper about what a transformative event it was for them. The doctors love it and they encourage all their patients to sign up to be models. We have about 40 models a year and the models get all excited and they invite all of their friends and it's just, you can get tired. It's a lot of work and we're all volunteers. It takes a lot of time and then you go to the event and it's so uplifting and everyone gets so excited and so it's great.

Beth: And that's what's so interesting about it. You do have the other events. I mean there's value in all types of events. I'm sure the guys love their golf outings and there's lots of ways to make money. You can make really good money from that, but to have an event that you've designed, that you raise money through doing something that is your purpose, making these

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people feel transformed. When you're able to come up with an idea for an event that can tie everything together like that and actually deliver the service that you're talking about through a fundraising event, you create an attachment to what you're doing in a way that is so much deeper than "my buddies and I are going to go do this thing together and the money is just going to happen to go to this organization." When you do something like that even the process of being at the event, every attendee sees what you're trying to do and I can just see how the sum is so much more than the total of its parts. Even having the doctors escort their patients by having them involved that brings them in and makes them a part of your organization rather than just an outside person or an attendee and we invited you here for your money or for your contribution, I see so rarely that patients and practitioners are brought together in a way where they're on the same team and it's such a great message you're sending by doing it that way.

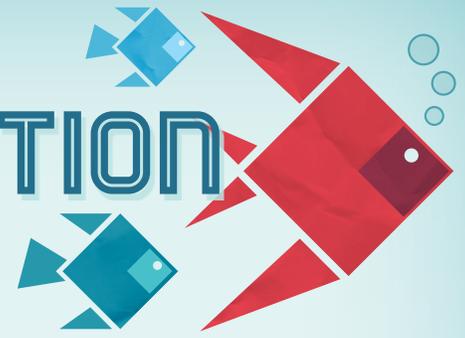
Martha: It's a really neat event.

Beth: I'll have to get out to California some day to see it. So amazing it's hard enough to come up with a great idea, to come up with an event like that much less to have to deliver on an event like this year after year with 100% volunteers. How do you rally enough people and rally the troops to make this happen?

Martha: Well there's a meeting in January about who would like to volunteer and many people have done it for many years and they will sign up. There's one person who can get the alcohol and there's another person who is really good and fills out the forms for the state so it's legal. I mean that's about all she does and she does it every year and she's great at it. A huge number of people want to be involved with the models because a lot of them were models previous years and they realize the value they got and they want to give back to the new people coming along. We have people who go to the stores and they help to choose clothes and then they go to the fittings with these models and they usually have a dresser and a person totally 100% assigned to a model that they help because they have to change their clothes when they go down the runway because they each have like 4 or 5 outfits. I do all the technical support for everything including the auction and reservations, etc, but I'm personally very involved in reservations because it used to be the worst job. At the height we had 750

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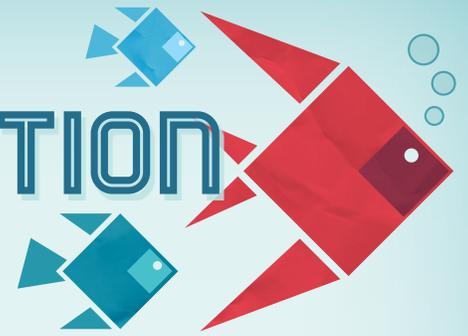
people and they all want to sit as one woman told me only a bunch of women would do this, a person wants to sit with somebody else and they registered differently and we really care about that and we make sure it happens so it takes a little more organization than some and then of course what table you get, based on your view of the runway depends on how much money you give and so there's all sorts of things. The big meeting is the seating meeting when you decide who sits with whom and what table they get, etc.

Beth: It's like planning your daughter's wedding every year.

Martha: Yeah, it's a little more complicated than a wedding, but it's the same idea exactly. So what we've done especially since we got DonorPerfect, we can break this job of reservations down into like 6 different positions. We have one person who will bring the Weblink. People can register online so we will move the reservations over from Weblink to DonorPerfect and then we have the person who gets the RSVP cards in the mail and will enter in reservations through DonorPerfect Batch Entry 2.0 and then we are training a new person because we try to bring on a new person who is doing just donations and raffle purchases because they are a little simpler than reservations and so she's learning how to find a donor and to use Batch Entry and how to do an instant charge for credit cards, etc and then we have a person, I mean I run the 'thank you' every week and a person who does nothing but print everything that I've run and double check against the RSVP cards that indeed they're correct and we have to be very careful of in memory or in honor of donations that it gets into the system right because sometimes people will give in honor of someone or in memory of somebody and blah, blah, blah, blah and it's really hard to get that into the database records so that the thank you card looks like they have their intentions. We have a checker and then we have a person who meets with the models and finds out who is coming to support them and creates what we call a model table so all the people who are coming because they have a friend who is going to be a model, they don't have 10 people coming so we have table for up to 10 so she'll go through and talk to all these models and then she'll say "these 8 people should sit at the same table and these 6 people should" and so she does all that so then the seating meeting goes pretty easily. So we have all these different people all involved in just a little piece and then we have sponsorship and how we've broken that job down because these we have like 250 people who are attending who are guests of sponsors and we tend not to get

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their reservations until right before the event and so we have one person who will look up the donor IDs of everybody coming, which is a huge job and make sure we have their addresses and emails, etc. and then the other person just enters in the reservation and once they know the donor ID it goes really quickly. The idea is to just break it down so that the job is not overwhelming and they'll want to do it again next year.

Beth: That's such a great idea because people, what I hear about all the time is burn out. You sign up to do something. It's so much more than you expected and after a year or two you've had enough or some people take on a job and think that they're the only one that can do it. Like this is Susan's job and Susan does it Susan's way and no one else in the organization has any idea how Susan does it and it makes it really tough to create a really sustainable program because people move. People retire. People change their interests. These things happen and so having lots of little jobs, it probably helps preserve it, but it probably gets a lot more people involved and I'm sure a lot of the volunteers that are involved also give.

Martha: They bring their own friends and it works really well.

Beth: How do you capture the task? Do you have a written manual? If someone leaves that position and you need a new person to do that position, how do they get trained on that little piece that is their responsibility?

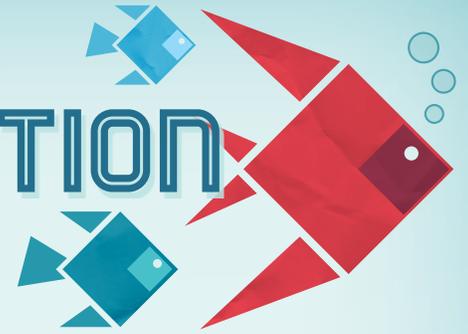
Martha: Well I can't speak to all the other committees, but for reservations I do have a manual and I use a tool called snagit which I love.

Beth: Talk a little about what snagit does.

Martha: Snagit will capture something on a screen. You can capture just a piece of it and then you can go into the snagit editor and you can circle fields and you can write little notes off. This is required or this might not be so I will go down and say "this is the summary of how you do individual reservations" so I will go 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and list the steps that they do and then for each step I probably have a document that is a job aid or how do you enter gifts

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and then I will have snagits of everything they have to do and so usually when someone gets trained they walk out with a packet of like 6 or 7 stapled things together. We'll go through it and I'll train them one-on-one, but people get overwhelmed. They think they got it and they show up at home, even if they type, it's a little disconcerting because I have a different screen or I might have a different mouse than they are used to and you know I'm sure it's all a little overwhelming, but they have the document and then I'm always available or they can call. I can usually talk someone through what the issue is so then if I have the same person do it next year, I only have to call them up and say if you have any questions or do one and let me check to see if there is anything wrong that you forgot or things have changed. If you have a new person, like we had a bunch this year because one person who normally did the Weblink went to Europe for 6 months so she's gone so the person who used to do sponsor reservations has moved into the Weblink area and the person who used to do the donor IDs for sponsors wants to do reservations for sponsors. Now she has a new person called Sue who is doing the donor IDs and actually Diane who is doing sponsor reservations broke her elbow last week. She is still entering them with Sue. They spent all weekend and they entered like 120 reservations.

Beth: That's terrific!

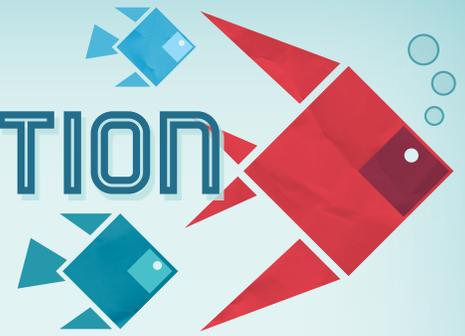
Martha: So then what I do because I had trained Barbara in the Weblink about 4 or 5 years ago, so I pulled out all that documentation and DonorPerfect changed a bit and things have changed a little bit and so then I had to go back and do re-snagits using the same templates so the documentation is now updated.

Beth: Right and I think that's an important point that you've got all of these little volunteers doing, not to demean anything that they do, but these volunteers doing small little pieces, but it sounds like having a couple of people that have continuous relationships with the organization know the history and who are willing to do maybe the overseeing of all of that or take that responsibility for making sure that all those little pieces get done is still pretty critical in the organization.

Martha: And that is my rule. I will run reports every couple of days. I will look at what is

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getting entered. If something is being done wrong or if they're forgetting to do something I will remind them and I'm usually pretty good with criticism so they don't take offense and I will fix stuff and then right about now because the event is in about 10 days, I'll run reports every day and I'll be matching the number attending equal the number paid equal the number of meals and so if we're missing two meals, have you called them? Do you know what they want to eat? I'm very much monitoring because I don't really do any of the work, but I'm very much making sure that it's coming together and it's all integrated and so then a few days before the event things get really busy because we have the seating meeting and we assign table numbers and then I assign bid numbers and print the packets and send a report to the caterer about which meals go to which tables and then we also have the silent auction stuff that we move into our auction...

Beth: So there are a lot of moving parts.

Martha: So the last 3 or 4 days I basically have a full time job.

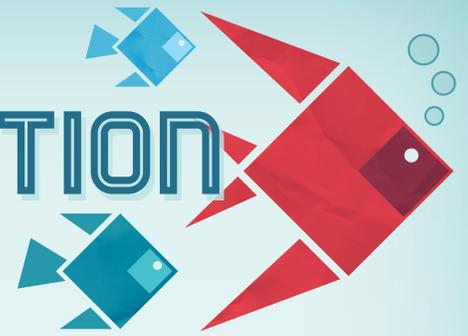
Beth: Right so that's an important thing when thinking about as a volunteer of that organization who are you putting into that role. You obviously have a life at this point where you can put that time in and if it's somebody who takes on a volunteer role that maybe still has a full time job or has little kids or is still maybe suffering from disease to think about it's this level now but at some point the job is going to escalate. Is that same person going to be able to handle it?

Martha: Right and I've actually been talking to the organization about they do need to find somebody to replace me. Last year I did have a health event. I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer and there was absolutely no way, I could hardly do anything last year because I was on a pretty extreme regime of chemotherapy, but you know I had worked with a number of people. I have an understudy and they handled so much stuff.

Beth: I love that word - that you call them an understudy. That is such a great idea. I always call it the formal you know, you need a succession plan, but that's such a welcoming word to

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get organizations to start thinking about who is the person who is going to come in when...

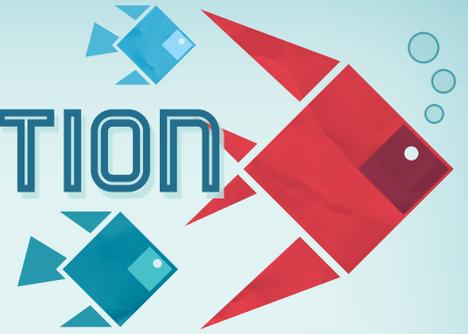
Martha: Yeah and I don't think she really wants to permanently you know take over my role because she just got a full time job and so she doesn't really have the time. The person who is in Europe for 6 months is dynamite and so she took over a huge amount of stuff for me last year because one of the weeks where I wasn't going through chemo I had to document everything that I do because normally I don't document what I do. I document what everyone else does, but I did go through and explain all the reports I run to monitor attendants and to monitor getting ready for the seating meeting and how we do the packets and how we do the bid sheets for the auction and so she did all of that last year for me and I worked with her and helped her out at the very end because the timing was such that I was able to do that. There's some people who can step up and they do, but I'm responsible for the technology because that was my background as in the corporate world so we need to find somebody that can take over because who knows what my health is going to be.

Beth: So speaking of stepping up, you also have the models now engaged in a different way than you had in the past.

Martha: Right. A person had the great idea of getting the models to ask for donations from their friends. Often people will try to come to the event, but they have aunts and uncles and best friends or sorority sisters who live all around the United States. We now use donor pages and we have always built a little biography, a one-page biography with a picture for all the models that we give out at the event. Now that we have that, it's easy – I shouldn't say easy because I don't do it, we build the donor pages for each of the models with the bio that we wrote for them and their picture and they can go in and they can modify it, but they don't have to do anything if they don't want to except they get a link and then they send out to their friends or post it on their Facebook pages so people can donate. You can donate \$25 for a one way walk down the runway or you can donate \$50 for a round trip and some people of course will give \$500 or \$100 and so these donations are coming in from New York and Florida and Alaska and I just heard a talk that we should be signing up or registering with these states for fundraising.

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Beth: We'll get Laura on to talk about that!

Martha: I think last year we earned \$12,000 this way and I think at the moment we're at \$15,000-\$16,000 and they just love it. It's a way for people to support someone who is going through this at a pretty minimal level, but it adds up.

Beth: I really like that. I mean \$12,000-\$15,000 is a nice amount of money, but it's not hundreds of thousands of dollars so it's not just about the money. By giving the models a chance to fundraise, it lets them really share their story with their friends and get their community involved, which does get their community involved with you and gives you new donors, but it's more about that storytelling and buying and participation and letting them feel like they have something to contribute too and it's nice that you see it as more than "oh that's another way for us to get a few more dollars into the pot", but you recognize that it's important for them to feel like they're doing something and contributing and that they're not just there walking down the runway.

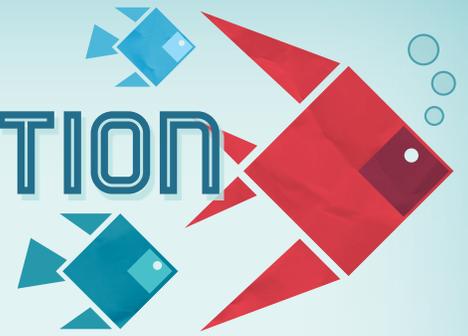
Martha: People love to tell their stories.

Beth: Right. They really, really do and it's a great way for you to capture the stories and I also love that you tied the donation amount to something specific that is related to the event. A one-way walk down the runway or a walk two ways down the runway. That is so clever and it's like a little marketing hook. You may not recognize that that is what it is, but it really is. It makes every little piece of your event tie together and probably encourages people to say "they've got to walk out the runway and then they've got to walk back so I might as well give the \$50". Who knows what people will do with it, but the fact that you put some logic and some branding even around the donation amount. I think it's a really, really clever way to get people's attention and make it such a well thought out event.

Martha: It worked and people seem to like it and the models don't have to send a single one if they don't want to. It's not like some of these events where you have to have a minimum of so much money in order to participate and this is not that way at all. I mean they don't have

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to do a single thing if they don't want to.

Beth: So it's not a barrier for being chosen as a model?

Martha: Absolutely not.

Beth: And that's nice. I can see the reasons for doing it the other way, but it's nice that in your event you've made it possible for somebody that wants to utilize this to share their story to do that and somebody that may be is more private or isn't comfortable with fundraising this year, she can still participate in a way that works for her. It's so donor-centric and people-centric about really being careful and caring of your constituents.

Martha: We don't even actually suggest it until they have a model's tea in August and that's where all the models get together and they get their picture taken for the bio booklet that we give out and at that point we have built all their pages except for their picture. So then the idea gets introduced and it's explained if they would like to do it, how they do it and there is somebody there to hold their hand if they're not comfortable with the technology.

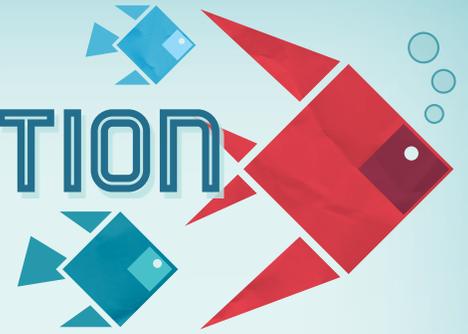
Beth: That is brilliant on so many levels. You bring them together so you don't have to go around chasing them to get their picture taken. You create an event for them which pretty much brings them all into the same room so that you can do something that you need done, but to them it's welcoming. It lets them meet each other. It makes them feel like they are a part of a community, which I'm sure when you're suffering and going through something like breast cancer any opportunity that you can meet and connect with other people is probably a wonderful opportunity for you and it makes them feel how much you appreciate that they're participating in this event. On so many levels that's such a lovely idea.

Martha: It really works well and I will say also as for the people who have worked in the organization and have volunteered, some of my best friends now I met there.

Beth: Really?

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Martha: Because we have so much in common. Most of us have had breast cancer, not everybody and we've worked together and you just turn into really good friends. It's really nice.

Beth: That is terrific! Is there any you have for someone trying to run a 100% volunteer organization and get things done in communication with people, communicating with their constituents, bringing people together? What's one thing you would say "this would really, really be a help for the people"?

Martha: Oh dear. I think finding a mission that everyone really gets at heart and really understands because you have to have passion and you have to see the value and then I think you just leverage off of that. You've got to listen to people's ideas and things. It just builds. Don't expect too much at first and we also always have a big thank you dinner in November for all of the volunteers. The volunteers do the event, but we also have people who look at all the grants and decide who gets money and all those people and those are doctors and all the county health guys on the committee. So they all get invited and so we thank everybody and that's just how much money we made and how much will be granted and then we also have a big grant ceremony after the grants. Everyone who receives the money comes and we invite people who have donated over 'x' amount of money, etc. That's great because they all can tell their story about where the money went and what it's going to be used for and it feels so good. You know you've brought how many meals to families or how many people did you save from not being on the street or how many women attended support groups. You really realize why you're doing it.

Beth: That's so, so important to connect people, not so much to your organization, but to connect people to the impact. We've been talking a lot about storytelling and you know it's easy to talk about the word 'storytelling' instead of big broad term, but people always ask "well what story should I be telling" and the fact that you're bringing people together to share the actual impact, the results of what you're doing and what they are doing by being part of your organization. It has to really resonate with them.

Martha: I think one of the reasons that we do well in terms of getting repeat sponsors etc is

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because we're 100% volunteer. We have very low overhead. We pay for DonorPerfect and we pay for Quickbooks and you know we have some basic expenses, but for the most part every dollar you give us goes to the grant and as opposed to paying for staff and people really like that idea.

Beth: Right. That is lovely. Thank you so much for joining me. I really appreciate you sharing your story and letting people know how you make it all happen with a lot of volunteers