



# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

## SESSION 151

### COMMUNICATION STARTS WITH TRUST

WITH JANINE GUGLIELMINO & MYRIAM SIFTAR

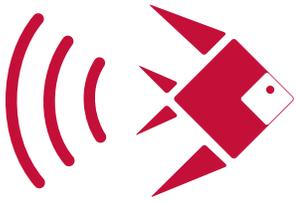
**BETH:** Hello this is Beth Brodovsky. Welcome to Driving Participation. Today we are recording on site at Living Beyond Breast Cancer, which is a wonderful organization here in Philadelphia, and I'm thrilled to have a chance to talk with Janine Guglielmino and Myriam Siftar, who worked on a really terrific project around translating some medical information. It was an educational guide about stage four breast cancer into other languages, and I think that that's a really interesting topic. I'm thrilled to have you guys here. Thank you so much for letting me come in and visit you and talk about this project with you.

**JANINE:** Thanks for coming.

**BETH:** So this is a really nice opportunity for me because a lot of times I talk to consultants like Myriam or I talk to nonprofit leaders like you Janine, but to be able to bring you both together and talk to both of you about a project that you worked on together and why it was meaningful for the organization and what the process of it was is so incredibly interesting. So I thought this would be a perfect opportunity to talk about your project, but before we jump into that, Janine, I just wanted to ask you. In the work that you do here at the organization, what does participation mean to you? What do you look at? What do you value in a way that helps the organization thrive to serve your mission?

**JANINE:** Participation means a lot of different things to us at Living Beyond Breast Cancer. From the perspective of the people we serve, participation means having enough information and being able to access enough information to be able to be an active participant in your health care, and that might mean interacting with Living Beyond Breast Cancer or other organizations like ours. It often can mean that, but that's really core to what we do, is providing education





# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

so people can really participate in their care and not just be a recipient of breast cancer care or recipient of services, but to really empower them to be able to make decisions about their care.

**BETH:** One of the things that I really love about your organization is something that I think a lot of people really struggle with, that somebody will say, “We help people with breast cancer,” and you’ve done a really wonderful job with your branding in both the visual sense of the consistency and uniqueness and specialness of your work. It’s very distinctive, but you know what you do. You know what you do is different from other organizations, and so it probably makes choosing a project like this deciding what you’re going to do so much easier. How has that helped you as an organization? Sort of the clarity and focus around what slice of breast cancer you guys are trying to help?

**JANINE:** Well, we’re always searching for gaps. So with this particular project, we identified a gap that there weren’t materials about this specific diagnosis that were available in other languages so we stay core to our mission, which is to really deliver information while including the perspective of people who are in treatment. So really kind of trying to equalize both the health care side and the patient side, and there’s really no more direct way of doing that than translating some of it into a language that the patient can understand and feels comfortable with, can access the information and really also just be comforted by receiving the information in a language that’s familiar to them.

**BETH:** I can really imagine. So with all the languages that are in the world, what languages did you choose and why?

**JANINE:** We chose five languages that are spoken very frequently in the United States. So we translated this brochure into Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Chinese and Tagalog. Those are the top five languages spoken in the United States in families that don’t use English as their primary language.





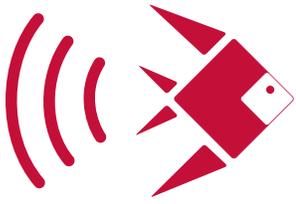
# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

**BETH:** OK, got it. So Myriam, I know that one of the things you do when you start a language translation project is a cultural assessment. Can you talk a little bit about the difference between a regular translation project and doing a cultural assessment, what that is and why it helps when people are moving into language work?

**MYRIAM:** So a cultural assessment is really the process by which we are assessing and testing a cultural fit of particular content. In this particular case, the educational guides for patients to be relevant and meaningful in that particular cultural context, and as Janine mentioned and even you in terms of branding of Living Beyond Breast Cancer is about and their approach to that participation, it's was key for you guys to have that cultural assessment as the first step. Not every language translation project will go through a cultural assessment because in some situations it's not helpful if you're dealing with something that is very dry, like a technical manual, but here again, we are talking about personal medical very difficult, potentially emotional decisions. So it was critical to go through that step and so that step of cultural assessment is really looking at again the cultural fit and how do we validate that the message, the intended message in that educational guide will resonate and not offend and appeal to the values and emotions and address all the concerns. So we went through those guides that were first written in English and looked at the copy, the content, specialized terminology, whether or not it needed to be more terminology, more explanation to be give before a particular cultural audience and also looking at all the visual aspects. So that includes the color, the graphics, the images and so on and so forth. That's really what it does, and so I think you were asking how does it help. It helps because the end result of that first phase of the cultural assessment is comments, reviews and point out the red flags, that then Janine's team basically tailored the English guide for each of the language and each of the cultural audience. This cultural assessment was done after we received an audience profile, which is similar to what marketers will create as persona and the audience profiles really allow us to again provide the right information to this particular piece of content needs to be added and I can give you some examples. There





# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

was, for example, a lot of the Asian culture, so for the Vietnamese, the Chinese and the Tagalog, there was additional content about the US healthcare system or about your rights as a patient to ask for an interpreter and how this is a right and it does not mean that you're demanding, but it's really showing the flip side of asking for an interpreter means you would get appropriate diagnosis and would not lead you in the wrong path. Other things, for the Hispanic culture, it's really the emphasis on the salary. So in terms of the copy itself, it was much more inclusive.

**BETH:** One of the things when you and I were first talking about this and this idea of the cultural assessment, I was really interested in how it crosses over into, I thought this is just gonna tell you the words in translation, but it was so much bigger than that. You were saying that different colors have different meanings to different cultures and a different picture might, like the same picture might be interpreted differently. How did that show up in this project?

**MYRIAM:** So yes, you're right. So definitely the colors, the visual, the pictures, any listener I hope will look at those guides. Those guides have a lot of pictures.

**MYRIAM:** Well, again, like Janine said, this is so critical to a patient's journey towards feeling comfortable with the diagnosis and the treatment and all that. So there's lots of visuals. So examples of what the cultural assessment revealed and made changes, in terms of visuals, images for the Hispanic culture and I believe the Vietnamese culture also needed to include more groups, more family rather than just being woman. So families in the Hispanic culture showing the male, whether it's your father, your sons, your grandfather, again that sense of family. In terms of colors, for the Chinese language, so the original guide in English has a strong orange background and that was not the best choice of color for Chinese color interpretation and preferences so everything was moved towards more of a green. Green, it looks hope and comedy and really good health. So those are some of the tweaks. There were other visual changes, just really specific about some images in one, I think it was in the Vietnamese, one particular image looked





# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

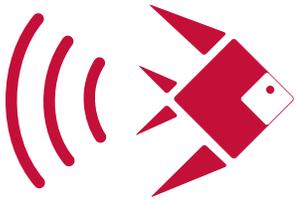
too much like a Buddhist and it was just like too touchy. So that zone of part of the cultural assessment is to reveal things that would be offending or really inappropriate.

**BETH:** I just think it's so fascinating because like I've recently seen even among different Americans, I was at a group where a couple of people were nonprofit development directors for religious-focused organizations, and they said a lot of things that are normally taught for thinking, just putting a thank you out to your donors. It is in their communities considered to be offensive because they consider it their duty to provide money. It's just like when you realize it's this complicated between American English native speakers, how much more complicated it must be for people that are non-native speakers and then dealing with the complexity of healthcare information.

**JANINE:** Exactly, and what we're hoping these brochures will do is serve as tools for healthcare professionals to be able to have some of those types of conversations with their patients because physicians see people from all different types of cultures, all different types of backgrounds who may not have the same familiarity. I know that we learned a lot in this process about really the assumptions that we make and the way we communicate. So some of the things that Myriam was just talking about are not things that we had thought about, that our language might be coming out inadvertently offensive to some people. So it educated our staff about things we should be thinking about even when we're writing in English.

**BETH:** Right. I think that's so fascinating. One of the things Myriam mentioned that I think is so powerful and important for us to communicate, what comes up I think in practically every single podcast that I do is this idea of knowing your audience, like really understanding people. You did this project to make sure that you were understanding these new audiences better, but you went into it with audience profiles knowing some of your people already. So how did this process, how has it helped Myriam by knowing that before you went in? Was it helpful?





# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

Was it restrictive?

**MYRIAM:** Well, I think it was helpful. Some folks could say it was restrictive because Janine and her team had to make choices.

**MYRIAM:** It's both communication 101, marketing 101. If we don't know who we are targeting and who the potential audience targeted is, we're not going to be able to adapt and tweak the message and make it relevant. So yes, it was helpful and a little bit tricky. I mean you can only imagine if you take Spanish, there are many groups of Spanish-speaking families and folks here in the US, so we had to take the common denominator, again this is for women patients and so that's how the profile was being built.

**BETH:** Right, and that's what's so hard. It's like saying that you need to focus on this middle lane of where's the most impact gonna be created and it's hard, but what a great exercise to help you really see the value of focus because everyone I ever talk to says, "I want everyone to know this," and how much less valuable the product ends up being if that's the approach that you take. Janine, what did you learn? I'm curious about what is different now that you understand your audience versus before you did this project?

**JANINE:** I think we know a lot at Living Beyond Breast Cancer about people's experiences with breast cancer, but have not been thinking as much about the larger lens of the way they communicate, the way they interact with their families, the way they interact with their loved ones. I think it's made us more sensitive to those issues and to thinking about questioning assumptions that we're making and the ways that we communicate. What kind of messages are we sending by the pictures that we choose? About the amount of resources a person may have around them? What sort of barriers they might have and I think those are lessons that we're gonna carry with us as we move forward both with publications for people who do not use English as their primary language<sup>3</sup> and with what we do.

**BETH:** I think it's really cool because when we do profile work with people, we're





# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

always trying to push and encourage people to identify we call it their perfect person, but in a deep, deep way, this way that takes you from 'I know what piece of information I need to give them' to 'I know what keeps them up at night'. I know how they spend their time on the weekends. Really speak to somebody, write somebody in a way that connects with them more deeply because you can at least what they might be going through and it's so much more powerful. I'm curious about how this language project is filtering back into your English language work. Are you seeing some of the things that came out of this showing up when you're communicating in your other work now?

**JANINE:** Well one thing I want to add to what you said about it being important, it's really vital for us to connect with people on that level because they won't trust us. They won't trust that the information that we're providing is useful to them if they don't see themselves in it and that's the attitude that we've always taken about our English language, but we really only through about it through the lens of the issue that we're focusing on, which is breast cancer. So this is really thinking about it in a different way, about thinking about people as whole people in the way that they communicate and the way they interact and realizing that breast cancer is a part of their life, but it's not the central frame through which they're looking at their life.

**BETH:** I think that's so interesting that like a project like this made you see that and that it's kind of bringing this new flavor, this new aspect to all the different things that you do. You know, the other thing that you talked about was the colors and the colors had different impressions for the people in different languages. When we work with organizations and do branding work with people and we talk a lot about getting focused and being consistent. What kind of conversations happened here around the color changes that you needed to make to react and present to this audience effectively after all of the hard work you've put into really becoming a brand-communicating organization?

**JANINE:** I really appreciate that question, Beth, because as you said, we put a





# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

lot of time and energy into creating a particular look and brand. So when we were presented with the recommendation, for example, that we change one of the colors of these guides so that it's off-brand, we were really challenged with whether we really wanted to do that and I would encourage other organizations facing this kind of question to do is to ask themselves how flexible they can be and what is the goal of what they're trying to communicate. So after some examination and discussion here with the staff, we thought it was more important for us to make this adjustment than to retain that brand look because we need to reach people to give them the information and that in this particular instance, is more important to us than keeping this particular branding look and feel.

**BETH:** Did you keep anything?

**JANINE:** Yes.

**MYRIAM:** I do want to add that indeed Living Beyond Breast Cancer has very strong guidelines, and they were challenging for my team beyond that color decision. So I think I can venture and say that the color change was the only thing that was really changed of their branding guidelines. So part of the project for us was to actually review that branding guideline before so like the way it works, you do the cultural assessment, then you do the translation of the content and because this is gonna be printed and also online visually and layout intensive guide, there's a third step, which is the desktop publishing, the formatting and languages. Foreign languages, when you're dealing with Chinese, Vietnamese or even Spanish, there's a lot of things that change. There's text expansion, taking more room, you have to reorganize where you do the break of the page, the break of the paragraphs and so on and so forth, and Living Beyond Breast Cancer has very strong guidelines in terms of this formatting and so it was, we had to adapt font size, the various details, but in general I would say for most readers and even some team marketers like you, Beth, if you review the Chinese or the Vietnamese and maybe the color scheme is different, I would say that you would see a very strong branding consistency in the details.





# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

**BETH:** Now going forward, you've got tons of different projects going on here. How do you manage to keep your branding guides, especially one of the things we see is the minute there's a little crack, and "Oh, they see green on something," there's that I call brand migration where it's all of a sudden it just kind of flows. What kind of things do you do here to both maintain and keep that brand consistent, but also create a culture here so that when a project like this comes up that there can be this sort of valuable open discussion and it doesn't become just like a free for all. Myriam said to make it green and then it's all thrown off, but that balance for where it needs to sit is very hard for organizations. How are you guys managing it?

**JANINE:** We do it through a lot of communication, a lot of collaboration. So we have our brand guidelines. They're printed guidelines which we share. We share with any consultants that we work with whether they're graphic designers, communications professionals and then we have a conversation about it and we do take the recommendation seriously and Myriam and team have been a fantastic partner in helping us to understand where we can make changes, where it's not appropriate to make changes. I think it's keeping the lines of communication open and always focusing on what is your end goal in terms of communicating with our users.

**BETH:** Right, terrific. So now that these projects are done and they're out there in the world, are you seeing any impact from it?

**JANINE:** We only just started marketing the products and we started with focusing on our Spanish language translation. So in addition to the publications that we've been talking about, we also translated about 10 pages of website content, and we're pushing all of that material out through healthcare professionals and then also directly to patients. A lot of that work involves outreach to organizations and building trusting relationships with organizations who are serving people who need these services. So it's gonna take some time to develop those relationships and also just to make people aware that we're





# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

here and that we have the products. So we're doing it through direct outreach, but doing it through media relations. We're doing it through search engine optimization. We're using all different kinds of methods to try and get our message out that these products are available.

**BETH:** I think that's so important because a lot of times people will take on any kind of a project, but without the marketing delivery, the distribution plan behind it, it can feel sometimes like how was that even worth it or did it really happen. Part of it is the branding and part of it, the middle part is executing a project around it, but getting it out there is gonna be interesting. Are you gonna see things? You got these materials, this focus on language, does that kind of populate back into other work or other projects that you're doing now that you see the impact of being able to speak from a cultural place with people?

**JANINE:** Absolutely! We've actually been able to raise some money this year to translate more of our materials and then we're starting to think down the line about other ways we can serve particularly Spanish speakers, whether there's other programs where we might be able to deliver some of the content in Spanish. So we're s of doing that. So we're just beginning to explore that, but we want to be able to grow it and it's something that we're speaking about very frequently with funders to see whether they can support our efforts because obviously we need their support to be able to do this work and really is the way we got a large grant to do these translations and if it weren't for that financial support, it would have been difficult for us to do it.

**BETH:** I think that's a good thing to be talking as well because projects like this, projects that need this kind of funding so we need organizations to go out there and see the value of communications in funding and something that I see so little of. It's really, as somebody that does this sort of work that needs to be funded like Myriam, it's so hard. I'm curious, what are the things that you think that you said to, how did you convey this project in a way that made them value it as something to fund?





# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

**JANINE:** We spoke to them about our desire to reach people who are typically very hard to reach and our understanding that we really were not reaching these types of people and they understood. They implicitly understood that this is a very specialized group of people, that it's not just people who don't use English as their primary language. It's people with a stage four breast cancer diagnosis. It's a very specialized targeted tailored group and they were enthusiastic about helping us achieve those goals.

**BETH:** That's really wonderful, and I think that's helpful for people to know. I mean what you did was you talked about the outcome that you wanted to provide and then took them back on a journey for how you were gonna do it, and I think sometimes people will go in and say, "I don't like my logo anymore," or they think of it just as purely the visual sense, which the visual is the hook, the thing that helps connect people to that trust, but the purpose and the story has to be there and you have to know the kind of outcome you're trying to create.

**JANINE:** And I also think we have a track record as an organization of approaching projects from a culturally sensitive point of view, which is it really hasn't talked about language before. We've talked about other racial and ethnic groups in the United States and tailoring our programming to those types of differences and being inclusive, but not around language. So we were able to talk with our funders about our past history of being able to do this successfully and being able to market it successfully and reach people.

**BETH:** I think that really means a lot and gets them thinking. So Myriam, you do these kinds of projects and specifically the cultural assessment projects for lots of clients. I'm curious. In general, in the work that you do across the board, what kind of changes do you see your clients making and how they operate what they're capable of doing after they do a project like this and kind of have their eyes opened about what's happening in different cultures?

**MYRIAM:** Well, I think the biggest eye-opener would be that it seems like you





# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

want to be neutral in your comment, in your messaging and it's really not feasible or it's not the right vehicle. It's not what you want to go for because of this need to match your message and your content to a specific audience and their specific profile. So the biggest lesson is we're not gonna try to be neutral, but we're gonna build in this cultural assessment, this review. We want to build in that we'll be defining our audience on different cultures and different profiles and personas and go through that step of validating and assessing what we have built for our original audience and test whether or not it works with others. Over time, some clients might develop their own internal knowledge about a specific foreign culture or different culture, but overall I think the biggest takeaway is that it's becoming an eye opener that we really should plan for that and build it in the timeline and so our work, it's mostly and I would say the biggest success would be advertising and marketing agencies who trust us for one project and then they see the results and the impact it has on their clients processing global campaign and so they're like now it's becoming a habit building the original development of first thing, first round of the campaign.

**BETH:** As opposed to be like, "Here's an option. You could get this." It's like you can't do the project and that's what we've discovered. Without understanding your audience, I really can't do anything for you. My favorite thing that you said, neutral is not feasible and I think what people tend to think is that neutral isn't necessarily effective. I've been talking a lot about trying to have this audience of everyone and put your arms around everything in one thing isn't effective, but what you've kind of opened my eyes to today is not only is it not effective, that it's literally impossible because of the differences within your audience that there is no such thing as neutral. There is no such thing as a generic general message and so if you're trying to do that, it's basically gonna fail for everyone. It's not even like it's gonna hit most of the audience and then it just won't work for these people, that effort and neutrality just genericizes things to the point that it's very likely that zero people in your audience are getting any benefit from it.

**JANINE:** I think another lesson to learn and something that I learned in doing this





# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

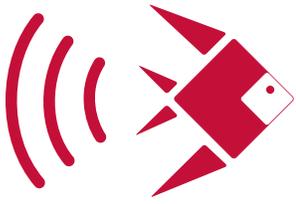
project is that I thought our language was neutral, but it really isn't neutral at all. It really speaks to a particular kind of experience, a particular class experience, a particular breast cancer experience, and that is a lesson that I will take with me as we continue to create more products. I also don't think we live in a neutral world. People are looking for a point of view and perspective that's similar to the one that they are using as they're walking around in the world. So as nonprofit organizations, we really have to be thinking about how is it that people are going to access the messages that we're trying to send them, and we're gonna have to speak with them on a level that they will take in that information.

**BETH:** I think that's really huge. I feel like because we work with, we're nonprofit organizations that are doing good work, there's that feeling of "I want everyone to love us. I want us to be right for everybody. Of course our work is so good that it's meaningful to everyone." You of course have a specific disease. Everyone has a specific something and they think everyone that has any connection with that something should want to help us and be part of our work, but it's hard to really grow bigger and get deeper and really have the impact that you want unless you're willing to kind of take a stand and say this is what what we're willing to talk about and if it bothers some people or doesn't serve some people, that's gonna have to be OK, and it's so hard.

**JANINE:** It is hard because you're gonna have to make choices, but part of our central core goal at Living Beyond Breast Cancer is to meet people where they are and that means different things to different groups of people that we're trying to serve.

**BETH:** You've gotten a lot of ideas. You've talked about a lot of different things. So you've learned a lot from this kind of a project. How could anybody that might be listening to this learn from your experience and take some of the ideas that they have and use it in their work, no matter whether it's a school or a museum or a homeless shelter?





# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

**JANINE:** Well, as I mentioned, we got a significant grant and it would have been difficult to impossible to do it without that funding, but if there's one thing we learned through this project is that it's important to listen and it doesn't cost anything to listen. So if you are listening to the community that you want to serve and hearing about their life experiences, about what do they need to hear to receive your messages. You can do that in your communications without necessarily spending a lot of money and that's the piece that we would use again and again and again, whether we are fortunate enough to get additional funding for such projects or not.

**BETH:** How about you, Myriam?

**MYRIAM:** I think I will have to go back to that neutral believing that the answer or the easy pass or the answer is being neutral, culturally neutral and that just does not exist. It's not feasible. So I think that would be the key lesson that everybody should keep in mind and the flip side of it, if people really don't like the negative of neutral, I think the flip side, the positive is it starts with your personal cultural background. What do you bring to the table? Back to what Janine was saying how they reflected and so the way they're writing has its own baggage. So that's the first step, know your own cultural awareness and then build your cultural awareness about everything that's around you. So through listening, being open-minded and so on.

**BETH:** I think that that's really great advice, and it's so hard because you know, people might think things like, "Well, I'm a whatever, a conservative or a liberal, and so I feel this way," but I always say being liberal doesn't necessarily mean you're open-minded. It just means that there's this set of stuff over here that I agree with and it's just as hard to accept cultural differences, political differences or religious differences that are just different because they're so unfamiliar, even when you think you are an open-minded person to really start to question those things and really look at what you might believe that might be limiting your vision for how you view people. I have a client from England and she was talking about





# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

going to a cancer dress ball and I thought she was going to a gala, but no, she was going to a Halloween party, It's just the littlest things you understand and that's the same language! So thank you both so much for joining me today. This was terrific. Janine, if people had questions for you about this project, is there a way you would like people to get in touch with you?

**JANINE:** Absolutely. People are welcome to contact me via email. My email address is [Janine@LBBC.org](mailto:Janine@LBBC.org).

**BETH:** And you'll all be grateful that her last name is not in her email address.

**JANINE:** Yes!

**BETH:** Myriam, if people are interested in this idea of these cultural assessments and translation work, what's the best way for them to reach out to you?

**MYRIAM:** Well they can reach me directly through LinkedIn on MyriamSiftar or through my email address, which is my last name [siftar@mtmlinguasoft.com](mailto:siftar@mtmlinguasoft.com) or through our website.

**BETH:** I will have links to all of these different places to reach out to these wonderful ladies. Thank you both so much. This was so interesting and engaging. I really value your time to have this conversation with me and to share your knowledge and expertise with the entire nonprofit community. Thanks again, and thanks everybody for joining us today.

