



DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

SESSION 168

HOW EXTREME AUDIENCE FOCUS LED TO EXPLOSIVE EVENT GROWTH

WITH CHRIS BLOCKUS

BETH: Hello, this is Beth Brodovsky, and welcome to Driving Participation. Today I am really excited. I have Chris Blockus on the call with me, and Chris and I connected after he took one of my courses and when we had the chance to talk about what he did with what he learned, I was blown away. Chris, thank you so much for joining me today.

CHRIS: Beth, I am so happy to be here. This is really exciting.

BETH: It's so cool for me to actually have taught somebody something, heard that you used it and then heard the amazing things that you did with it. Why don't you first introduce yourself a little bit and talk about your work and what you do.

CHRIS: Sure. My name is Chris Blockus. I work with the Downtown Somerville Alliance, which is an organization; it's an advocacy organization that makes sure the spirit of our downtown in Somerville, NJ, remains alive through the constantly changing cultural and economical landscape. That's always been the case, but especially so now. We serve the businesses in the downtown and we want them to succeed, so we help them with marketing and streetscape improvements, education events, all kinds of stuff.

BETH: That's such an awesome thing. I wish more downtowns had things like that.

CHRIS: Yeah, it's a unique situation that we have. Many of them here in NJ, but I agree. I think it's beneficial for most downtowns.

BETH: As a business owner myself, any time that there's people that are out there looking out for you and trying to help your business be better, we all think that's a wonderful thing.





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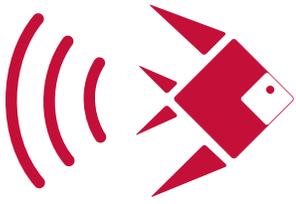
CHRIS: Yeah, it's our job to help you feel confident as a small business owner downtown.

BETH: As everybody who listens to the podcast regularly knows, one of the things I'm obsessed with is this idea of really knowing your audience. Over the years that we've been recording, there's a few things that come up over and over again and when I talk to people about participation and what's really important and what makes it work, this feeling of that they really, really understand their audiences comes up all the time. So much so that I have started to teach classes. I do workshops about it with different clients, and I teach webinars about it, and Chris was actually on one of those webinars, and he learned some things from it that he ended up using in his work, and we're gonna talk about that a little bit today. Chris, before we get into that, the question I like to ask all of my guests is what does the word "participation" mean to you in your work? How does it show up in a way that helps you thrive? I'm curious about what kind of things you guys call participation and what really matters to you.

CHRIS: Yeah, I think that's a really interesting question, especially for the line of work that I do, because we're funded through a special tax, so we don't have an economic component necessarily to how we judge participation. It's not like a nonprofit that would do it through donations or higher ed or anything like that. So what we've done is identified a participation funnel for our business owners that we serve and that goes from unaware of our services to an advocate for our organization. So there's lots of levels of participation that show up on that funnel. From like basically opening an email to serving on our board of directors as the ultimate level of advocacy, and each time the business meets a new criteria to move up on the funnel we have like a little celebration in our office because that's a real win for us.

BETH: I love that it's so tactical that you know very specifically not just what you're general participation is, but you know each little step on your ladder and that you take a moment to go and celebrate a transition. That's so cool!





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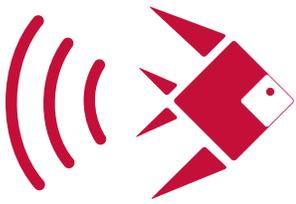
CHRIS: Yeah, it's really important because it is harder I think for us, I don't know that it's harder necessarily, but it was a little bit less clear going into it. It became very important for us to really clarify how do we judge our success and so we were able to get from the strategic level all the way down to that tactical level so that it's like business A has now moved from as you would say a like to a lover and so I think that that gives us a little bit of a leg up at this point.

BETH: I think it's so great for our listeners to hear that, because it's so easy when we talk about participation to think that that means I'm getting volunteers or I'm getting donors and I'm getting more of them or I'm getting the ones that I have to do more things. It's really easy to focus on the financial transaction being the only thing that's important and I feel like sometimes we can all hang out in the too extremes where we'd spend too much time focused on the non-tangible participation, like getting really excited about and reporting back to your board that you've had a successful participation year because you got a certain amount of likes on your Facebook page, which is a very long way from financial sustainability. Unless you actually have these steps that you guys are tracking and have created that path that says, "Here's how we're going from unaware to like or to lover," it's really hard to demonstrate that that's actually getting you anyplace. On the flip side, people can sometimes get overly focused on the financial outcome so that that's the only thing that's measurable. I'm starting to see this a lot with people because of digital marketing, knowing so much and becoming so popular and so successful and so trackable. A lot of times our clients and people that come to us, they only want to do things that are immediately measurable in an outcome way. I'm finding that it's like these two extremes and that middle piece of where does that transition gets lost, which is exactly why I created this podcast so that we can talk about what are you doing. How did you guys come up with the steps? How did you figure out what the different pieces are?

CHRIS: That's a really good question.

BETH: I didn't warn you I was gonna ask this one. I'm sorry!





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CHRIS: No that's OK because it was a really interesting process. So what we did was we took a traditional marketing funnel for like a corporation or whatever, a nonprofit organization from awareness all the way through like an advocate that not only donates, but evangelizes for you and we applied that to our model and we thought, OK, so even though we're not dealing with donations, we still have an audience that we rely upon that we have to serve. So what do these different levels look like and we broke just kind of what we thought was appropriate into each level of the marketing funnel and it wound up believe it or not, the actions looked kind of the same even though there's no financial transaction from people going from consideration to so they're thinking about maybe participating in a program or they're thinking about coming to a board meeting or something like that to a transaction happening. We just define a transaction differently from, it's not buying a product. Instead it's buying into an idea and taking actions that show that they buy into the idea to loyalty, taking part in these ideas all the time, somebody that we can depend on to come to a committee meeting, let's say, and then all the way up to advocacy where they are not only coming to let's say an educational seminar all the time, but they are helping to give their expertise to help teach the seminar, beyond loyalty advocacy.

BETH: Right. I call it the "Grab your friend and drag them over" stage.

CHRIS: I agree. That's exactly it.

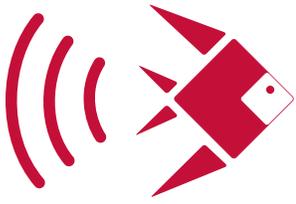
BETH: Right, when people are going out, they're going, "I'm part of this cool thing. You have to do this."

CHRIS: Yep, and this is really beneficial to us.

BETH: Yeah, exactly, and then you've got those business owners going, "Oh no, no, no. You've got to rent in downtown. You've got to bring your business here because of how great it is."

CHRIS: And that is the ultimate goal of all this. The ultimate goal of all this is for





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the business that's going to thrive in our downtown to hear about it and see it from their peers and know that "Hey, I feel welcome here. I feel wanted here." The whole wanted-ness concept is important to us.

BETH: What are you actually doing, I'm sure people would kill me if I didn't ask this question, what are you doing to move them from those different stages?

CHRIS: Sure. So just like traditional marketing funnel, we have a communications funnel. So we start by looking at who participates, who looks at our emails, that type of thing and who is open to further communication and then we reach out more personally to those people.

BETH: In what way?

CHRIS: In more emails.

BETH: More emails, OK.

CHRIS: Personalized emails, phone calls. We're a relatively small downtown, I mean, that's hard to say because it's relative.

BETH: You say small is relative. Right. Like how many businesses?

CHRIS: So there's about 150 first floor businesses. We have about 350-400 total businesses, including vertical, second and third floor businesses. We also have a good deal of residents that live on the main street and things like that. It's a lot of people to juggle. That's a lot of people to get to know and we're only an office of two people. So responsibilities are really shared. So there is a good deal of actually going to see people and actually talking to them on the phone and there's a lot of committee work. It's an organization that's led by a board of directors so there's a lot of volunteer participation. So there's committee work and that's another thing. Once people have shown interest in what we're





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doing, then we reach out to them and talk about committees, talk to them about participation and events and focus groups and things like that.

BETH: Right, and so one of the big things that you get involved with that's really growing recently is these events that you have, these events that you're having for the business community and when we first started talking, you told me about something like in the way that we teach, something that we teach that was helpful to you and really changed the way that you're communicating with your business owners. Why don't you share a little bit about your event that you started with and how you handled it differently once you decided to focus on your audience?

CHRIS: Yeah, sure, absolutely. So the event that we were talking about is called Girls' Night Out, which is we've now had that event two times. The first year we held it was the year before I arrived and then I arrived like literally the month after it was held, and we held it one more time.

BETH: So like the Macy's Parade where like the parade finishes and they start planning the next year.

CHRIS: That's pretty much it! Yep, and so this is a very business-friendly event. As you might guess, it is for women to come and have an evening out with their family and friends. So it's female-centric and so the first year was successful. I wasn't there, but it was successful. It did struggle a little bit for an identity, though. There's probably a million different concepts for what a girls' night out could be. It wasn't quite thematically where it needed to be the first year. So right after that, we decided hey, let's make this thing. We got some responses from the business owners saying because this lacks a theme and because it could be anything, it was a little challenging for us to understand exactly how to participate. So we dug in right there and we changed. We made it much more specific and much more helpful for the business owners. I don't know how detailed you want to go into here. If you want to ask me specific questions or if





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you just want me to keep talking.

BETH: No, no. Keep going! So one of the things that's interesting because we talk about audience a lot. So you have one audience which is very fixed, which is the business owners, and you don't necessarily get to choose who those people are. It's not like you're going out and saying we're gonna communicate to the people in the next town. Your job is to serve the specific set. So that's one audience for you, but in reality, like that's one type of communication you need to do with them to get them involved, to get them valuing being in downtown, but to make those people happy, your other goal is to bring people to downtown.

CHRIS: Yeah, the type of people that they want. They're our audience. That's it, but we also have a much broader readership and viewership of guests that come that we want to find the right mix of people to keep these guys supported, and so that was one of the pieces of this puzzle to understand what this event should be. So we dug in right there. We had information luckily from the previous year. One thing they did really well before I arrived, and my executive director is a whiz at this, was collecting the information of the guests of the previous year. So obviously those are the people who you want to understand in order to pick a theme.

BETH: How did you guys do that? Did people sign up to go to this event or did they just show up downtown?

CHRIS: So there were 500 tickets, and some of those were sold in stores. Some of them were sold online, and obviously when you have online ticket sales, it's very easy to get, and the in-store data was a little bit more challenging to gather, but they did a pretty good job with it. So we knew zip codes and we knew names. Those were two of the things that were important to gather. So we knew off the bat it's very easy to sort based on zip code, but it was a little, we found it to be a little bit more challenging. Like what are we gonna do? Facebook search every single person with their name? Many people have private profiles. We were





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kind of stumped there and that's when I took your webinar, the perfect person webinar, and you gave us that little trick about name sorting, which I'll go over now because I'm sure ...

BETH: Yes. Since not everybody has been, we're giving you a little piece of this webinar because it's one of these bizarre little magical things that we've developed that it seems so simple and almost a little silly on the surface, but it's transforming when you do it. Why don't you explain what the technique is and how you use it?

CHRIS: I want to start off by saying this is a super powerful tool that I agree sounds a little bit like, I don't know. It sounds almost silly.

BETH: It does. It sounds silly when you talk about it.

CHRIS: But this is something that I will never let go of out of my toolbox because it's so fast and so helpful. So we had all the names of the guests. All of the first names and last names. So we sorted an Excel sheet based on alphabetically the names and then we used a little formula to tell us how many of each first name there was.

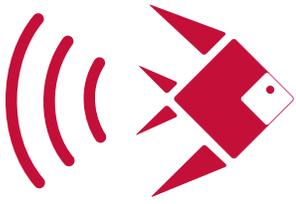
BETH: Oh wow! You're even fancier than me! I usually tell people to grab the first column and just do a first name sort.

CHRIS: Yeah, so that's what we started with.

BETH: Yeah! You went even further into the formula for it.

CHRIS: Yeah and it's not a hard formula. Excel will do it for you. So you can do it really quickly. Then we just went to this exists and it's awesome, this online name database that gives you frequency of names by decade and so it became super easy to know. So "Jennifer," for example, was just an incredibly popular name in





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the 80s and so your trick, you said look at the top three. We went a little further because we had so many names. We looked at the top five. Many of them tied so ...

BETH: OK, got it.

CHRIS: And even in the top five the results were so clear that our two groups of people, the decades they were born in, some of them were in there, one big group was in their late 50s and the other big group was their early 30s. So then we had how old people were and we had where they lived and we could fill in from that point, we could use census data and GIS data, which is the geographic information system, that we paid for, but you don't even need that. You can just use the census data. It's free. It's out there. We filled in so many blanks about these people. I wrote down a couple of ...

BETH: Yeah, so like what kind of blanks? This is the thing that I think it's amazing is that it starts with just their first name, which is a free thing. Any time you're building a list you're going to get somebody's first name and the more fields you put onto any kind of sign up form the more friction it creates for people to sign up and what people always want to do is they want to add a whole bunch of fields so that they can tell me all this stuff. What people don't realize is that you're gonna sometimes limit the amount of people that get on your list and that you can go in and back fill this stuff much more easily than you would think with some general, like maybe they're generalizations. Now I tell people all the time, Chris maybe your person is 33-year-old Jennifer.

CHRIS: That's so funny. That's exactly what we did! That's incredible.

BETH: It's funny. Like I have to say Jennifer is a very popular name that when we do this exercise, Jennifer comes up a lot. Ashley.

CHRIS: What we had also was a whole lot of Lindas.





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BETH: Really? Linda is more my generation.

CHRIS: Well, there you go.

BETH: I was gonna say Linda is a little bit older than me, the late 50s.

CHRIS: That's exactly it. So you can get really sneaky with this and use census data like I said and we were able to, just based on the name and location, we were able to figure out like the professions, family sizes, marital and housing status, education level, disposable income. We were even able to figure out beyond disposable income like how likely this person is to spend on clothes, how much they're likely to spend on food and drink out. All that kind of stuff.

BETH: Now what data points did you find that helped you figure that out?

CHRIS: So we use and actually this is a free resource that everybody can use. It's really incredible. It's called Tapestry Segmentation from a company called [Esri](#), E-s-r-i.

BETH: I'll put a link to it on the show notes.

CHRIS: Yeah, this would be a great link to provide everybody because we were blown away that this was free. So what you can do is if you go to this link, you can type in any zip code and it will provide you with a kind of market profile for the dominant type of person that lives in that zip code. Of course there are many other types of people that live in that zip code and if you pay for the Esri program you can find out about them too, but to start you off, after the name sorting, this is probably the most helpful tip I can give tactically is to check out this Tapestry Segmentation market profile from Esri. It will give you a breakdown of here are some likely things that they might do. They might be nurses. They might be in the medical profession. They might be educators. It's pretty powerful.

BETH: That's great! That's really helpful. Another thing that I often tell people





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to do is people often forget that Twitter and LinkedIn and Facebook all have analytics behind them, and Twitter's analytics are especially cool because there's analytics in there that will tell you if your followers are married, what their income is. So you can look at the people. If you're not doing this, like you were doing this for a specific group of people that signed up for an event, but if you want to do this based on your general organizations profile, go in and look at some of the demographics that are on your social media site and they can really give you a sense of things that might be important to you.

CHRIS: Yep. Absolutely. We went in, we go even deeper. We use Google Analytics and there's some pretty incredible stuff, but I wanted to add one more thing about just how powerful the name sort is. We were so surprised at how stark the groups were and how insightful this was that we couldn't believe it at first.

BETH: Did your board think you were crazy when you said that this is what you were gonna do?

CHRIS: No, we did this, this is kind of a tactical thing that we did so we didn't communicate this particular part to the board.

BETH: That's good advice!

CHRIS: We wanted to verify because we were like, "This is too good to be true," and so we went back and we looked at, we had a photo booth last year and all of the guests took photos in the photo booth with their groups so we had pictures of all of the guests. So independently my executive director and I both went and estimated the ages of the people in the photos, added them up and then compared them to the name sort and it was uncanny how accurate it was. So you know, it's not foolproof, but I was so grateful that you had given me that piece of advice.

BETH: I'm so glad! For me to be able to have you on and have somebody actually





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talking about the fact that they took this very simple idea and put it into practice and how it worked, I think it's really helpful for people because telling people I want you to export your list of people that have actually done a thing that's valuable to you. Like we call it a desirable action. So your desirable action, do your names, export your list that have done that action and do a first name sort. People are like, OK, and I'm like, "trust me." Now I can say, "trust Chris."

CHRIS: Yep, it's really very good.

BETH: So now let's talk about, so you now have your profile. I'm guessing so one is Jennifer. You've got Jennifer and Linda. Once you had that, what were you guys able to do?

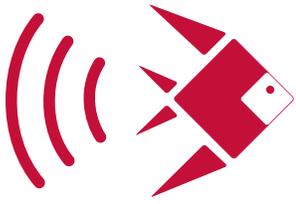
CHRIS: So we took all that data, we wrote two narratives about imaginary women. We went through and we used pictures of those two women that were real pictures, but imaginary lives. We used pictures of what their houses might look like. We gave pictures of what their car might look like and what they might do. and we created stories, two stories. We took those two stories and we shared them with focus groups consisting in businesses in each sector that might participate. So that was retail groups, food service, professional service, the fitness people downtown, all that kind of stuff. So with feedback from them and what they felt they could do for these women and what they wanted the event to look like, we generated a theme. So this year, or last year, our theme was the Downtown Summerville Glam Squad. I don't know if you know what a glam squad is. I didn't at first.

BETH: I have to say I'm a Linda, so, no, I do not.

CHRIS: A glam squad is the group of people, the entourage of people that keep a celebrity looking ...

BETH: Oh, I'm not cool enough to know.





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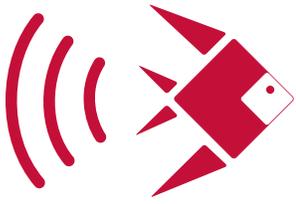
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CHRIS: I wasn't either, so don't feel bad. This is the fun stuff that you learn in this line of work when you do this audience analysis. You find fun stuff out. The entire idea was that the guests who were coming to downtown were coming for a red carpet event and that downtown merchants were their glam squad. Once we had that theme and we had all the information about the audience, we were able to put together this insiders guide for all of the businesses that were participating. You can see there we used our funnel and that we had one group that was really involved that we included in the focus group and then the next level we had the people who were participating. The participants benefited from the advocates work and so everybody got the insiders guide. It gave a lot of tips on what type of experience to plan for that evening and then it gave the full profiles, but it also gave a quick table breakdown of just some words and statistics that defined each profile woman and those Tapestry Segmentations. It wound up being very big, but you could thumb through it and get worthwhile information quickly.

BETH: Chris has generously shared that with me and that will go onto the show notes page for all of you to take a look at what's in there, which I think will be really, really helpful.

CHRIS: In addition to that, I just told you what we did for the businesses, but for the guests themselves, we shifted the tone of our voice and all of our communications as well, we used really deep what I would consider really deep Facebook targeting using look alike audiences and kind of beyond that as well for all of our advertisements. It was so helpful to us to know how to shift the tone of our voice and to know exactly who to reach out to on Facebook. There was no guessing. We knew geographically and psycho-graphically we knew who those people were. There were gifts that were given to guests the year before. They called it a swag bag. There was, it was kind of a mixed response to that. Some people really loved it. Some people didn't find it worthwhile to them. So we changed that based on our profile. We changed that from a swag bag to a glam bag that was a summer purse filled with essentials, seasonal essentials for the





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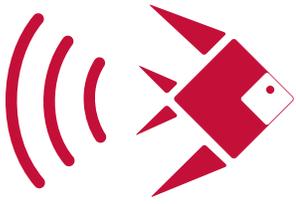
personas that were chosen by the merchants in the focus group. So it was like a scarf and some high-end nail products, high-end hair products, and instead of complaints this year, we just kind of had women vying for their favorite color of purse. Everybody wanted one. It was a huge success in that way.

BETH: I think to me what is really amazing about making this shift to an audience focused plan for marketing is that you get participation from both ends, that it's like this circle that happens. We're starting to call it co-creation because when you are building your personas based on when people are taking an action that's already desirable to the people that want something to happen, then you bring them that information and then have them weight in and help create the experience for those people, then those people come and start doing the things that they want them to do again. It's this circle that starts to build and feed and when you have participation from everybody in the circle, the lift that you get is amazing.

CHRIS: Yeah, I agree. I think that's the perfect term for it because the things that the merchants wound up coming up with were so creative and so amazing that it went far beyond my expectations of the event. The way that they collaborated with one another, they took this idea of being a glam squad very seriously and so in a lot of cases, they even created these paths for a particular persona. I don't know if they did this consciously, but it was like so the woman felt so taken care of she didn't even have to think about what she was going to do next. The path was almost laid out ahead of time that she would have this amazing experience all night. People obviously really enjoyed it. It was a huge success.

BETH: It's just so brilliant! Just like you said, whether they did it on purpose or not, it doesn't actually matter. If it became so ingrained in how they were thinking about the event and the experience, whether they did it consciously or it was just natural from that experience, it creates a better outcome. I mean, what we often talk about in branding is that it lives in the experience and if they're in there and co-creating it for this person, not only does it create the better experience for the





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participant, when they're part of co-creating it, this buy in, it sort of hits every trigger. When we talk about participation, the things that people say are buy in, collaboration, audience focus, experience. This takes every box. For this kind of a thing until you get all of those things working, you don't shift into this space where participation is this voluntary collaborative thing. I go out and I talk to people all the time, and what they say is "Well, how do I get people to want to do the things we want them to do?" I'm like, "Have you ever had a child?" I talk about that all the time that you can't get people to want to do the things that you want to do, but if you do it this way, it happens.

CHRIS: Yep, yep. I totally agree.

BETH: So what happened for you guys? You created these great tools for people, people were part of creating them, they embraced them. They took it and ran with it. What was the outcome for you guys?

CHRIS: I mean, it was way beyond my expectations. The first year we sold out at 500 tickets. We set a really ambitious goal for ourselves to increase that by 50 percent. I think that we could have increased it by 75 percent. We sold out 750 tickets more than a week beforehand, and the thing that I really am proud of about that is a much larger, very well-known and liked downtown was having a very similar event the same event, and it was free. We brought a couple people from that town to our event that night. They bought tickets. So that was really great. I was really proud. Really, more importantly, the business owners had a banner night that night. The specialty cake decoration shop that is way on the far side of our downtown, they were doing these cupcake decorations, you could decorate a cupcake. They thought like 75 people were gonna come. They went through those in like the first hour and a half or something and they were so excited. Of course, they didn't like turning people away so what they wound up doing was giving them a pass to come back and ...

BETH: Oh, wonderful!





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CHRIS: And a discount on a class in the future. That's amazing, right. The specialty, the high-end lingerie boutique was offering these personalized fittings. They just had so many people sign up ahead of time that they had to scramble around and find, they had to bring in all these fitters from around the area that night, and obviously that was a little bit stressful for them, but they wound up, I think she said they wound up doing four times the amount of business they normally do that night. The, shoot, what was I gonna tell you, Beth? The wine tasting. One of my favorite that somebody did that night are wine, there's a really nice wine store that opened up and they have a tasting room. Someone there organized a tasting of a flight of wines by all female-owned vineyards, which is, there aren't that many of them.

BETH: That's brilliant!

CHRIS: It was! I was so excited.

BETH: It's so cool to see people kind of taking the concept and like running with it.

CHRIS: So exciting! That's not something that I would have even thought of, and they were so excited about it and they sold their wine tastings out like weeks in advance. You couldn't even get in there. I was so pleased that this concept worked out so well for them. That was really the reward for me because, you know, ...

BETH: That's what I was just gonna ask you. What do you think was the best thing about using this approach and starting from the space, which it looks like you start from sorting the names, but it really starts with looking at who took a desirable action in the past in understanding those people. I just read this really great article from Charlie Hulme from DonorVoice who does a lot of work with SOFII in England, and it was all about the fact that you can't segment based on what people have, like the actions they have taken. You can start with





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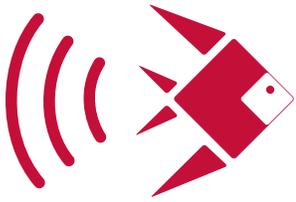
understanding the actions that you're taking, but if you really want to understand people, you have to start at the action and then look at who the people are and what they value and what their attitudes and interests are because if it were just a matter of segmenting on 30-year-olds and 55-year-olds come to this event, you could make a lot of general assumptions that may or may not be right, but you guys really got in deep with it to understand what the lives and, I often tell people when we do our exercises, I could often say, "If you have 57 year old Linda, is she married? Does she have kids? If she has kids, how old are they?" Let's just say that they're 20 years old. What are they doing? They're in college. What does that mean she's doing on the weekends? You can take it so far and if you can understand what a 57-year-old woman with a 20-year-old that goes to school in town and plays for a sports team and what that person is doing on the weekends, if you're a nonprofit, you can plan a different event. I'm curious about that. Now that you understand these people that are coming, what's it doing for the actual structure of the event?

CHRIS: Yeah, like I said, it kind of changed it structurally in terms of how we map things out and how we ask the merchants to think about it. So we heard from the merchants that they were not interested in I think what this type of event often is is a night of kind of sales that allow women to kind of tear through and find things. Our merchants were in no way interested in that.

BETH: In having their stores rampaged by wine-infused women?

CHRIS: Yeah, and we heard a lot of that. We heard a lot of the merchants were really reluctant to participate, and so we assured them, "Hey, look. We're here to serve you and that's not our town. Our town is not huge blowout sales and craziness." So we had to ensure that everyone that was participating, it's like so women can only do a certain number of activities in the night. It's only several hours long. So make sure that what you're providing is really experiential and so that shifted things from sales to mini DIY classes or limousine rides or a wine





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tasting or a personalized fitting or a specialty drink where you're not throwing something back and running out.

BETH: Right. It's not a progressive dinner, you know.

CHRIS: So the event became both a larger event, but also a more intimate event and we also hired some entertainment at the further ends of the downtown to make sure that people felt involved at all points, and it was entertainment that we believed the women would appreciate, and it turned out they really did. We had a mind reader and we had a fortune teller.

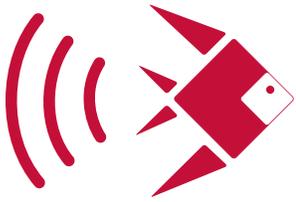
BETH: That's awesome!

CHRIS: It was really great. The people that we had were great, too, so we loved that.

BETH: Now that you've like gone through this whole process, had this great success with Girls' Night Out, what are you gonna do going forward? How are you gonna use this experience to plan things for the future for the town?

CHRIS: Yeah, I mean, everything is absolutely gonna be an audience-first strategy in everything that we can do to different degrees, and I think that's something that is important to understand. I think for a smaller organization, you might not be able to do this degree of depth on every single event or every single fundraising drive or every single thing that you do, but you can do different degrees of it. For example, we just wrapped up our huge holiday event, which is a free event. So as you can imagine, it's much more challenging to generate data from a free event. It's tough. So our analysis can't be as in depth as Girls' Night Out because we don't even necessarily have enough names to do a name sort because people aren't signing up for anything, but what we can do is keep track of other things, provide those things for the merchants because we have zip codes and group sizes and things like that and we can remember that our





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primary audience is the business owners. So that becomes very easy to lose sight of. Everything has to be audience first, and our first audience is the business owner, so how can we make these, using the lessons that we learned from Girls' Night Out, how can we make even a free community event more friendly for our primary audience, the business owners, while entertaining the guests? It's tough, but there's always steps you can take, even if they're small ones.

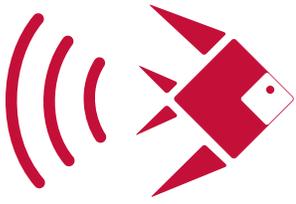
BETH: Well, that I think is fabulous advice for people. Of course I hate to wrap up this. This was especially interesting to me because just sitting here and listening and talking to you about this, something that I'm clearly very passionate about and want people to learn from and be able to get the benefit from, but to hear somebody that did come to some of our programs and to see that you have benefited from it and that your work has benefited, your town and your community, it brings joy to my heart! So I'm ...

CHRIS: We've benefited immensely, and I've said thanks before and I'll say it again. Not just the name trick. Just the reinforcement of audience-centric, understanding your audience, many of the theoretical approaches that you advocate for are priceless. So listen up, people!

BETH: That's very sweet, and I appreciate it! Chris, if people wanted to ask you more or had more questions for you about this, what's a good place for them to reach out to you?

CHRIS: Yeah, I am certainly willing to field any questions or help anybody out because I have been helped out so much on my way. It's [ChrisBlockus](#) on Twitter and LinkedIn. Those are the best places to get at me. Also a wonderful blog that my wife writes, and she's much better at this than me, is [MarketingForOne.com](#). So there's awesome, awesome, awesome advice there for how to conquer. It's less about the things to do in marketing and more about conquering today's obstacles and getting back to marketing so I would recommend that as well.





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BETH: Fabulous. Well, thank you so much for joining me today and sharing your knowledge and your experiences with both me and our nonprofit community. I truly appreciate it.

CHRIS: Beth, this was a pleasure! Thank you so much for having me on.

BETH: All right, terrific, and we'll see everyone next time.

