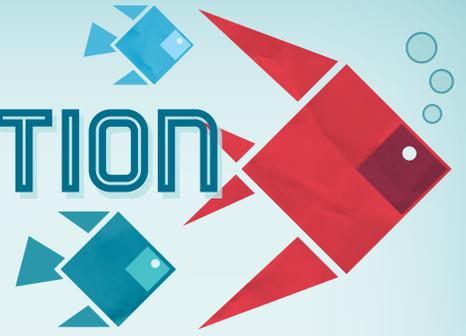


DRIVING PARTICIPATION

with Beth Brodovsky



SESSION 054

USING ANCHOR PAGES TO CREATE ANTICIPATION

WITH ADRIENNE FRANK

Beth: Hello, this is Beth Brodovsky, and welcome to Driving Participation. Today I have Adrienne Frank on the call. Adrienne is the managing editor of American Magazine at American University. Welcome, Adrienne.

Adrienne: Thank you for having me. I'm glad to be here.

Beth: I met Adrienne when I was at the CASE conference. I go to so many conferences, and I always get them all confused. Adrienne did this fabulous presentation about anchor pages in a publication and not only did I think it was really interesting, I thought the whole idea of creating anchor content as a concept to be a really interesting idea. I wanted to talk about it. I realize that not everybody that's a listener does a magazine, but I think the kind of things you're doing with anchor pages could really apply to all different types of content. I thought it would be a great thing for us to talk about.

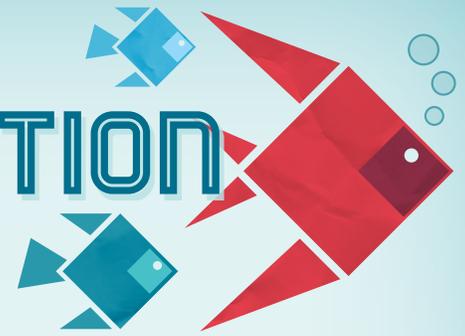
Adrienne: Well, I'm happy to talk about it. I can probably talk your ear off about it.

Beth: I'm so excited. Let's start by talking a little bit about how you ended up doing the work that you do. I'm always interested in how people wandered into this world of nonprofit and education communications.

Adrienne: I think I was born a writer. I always liked doing it as a kid, and I actually started my own magazine when I was 8. It was called "Frankly Speaking," and I did it for my family and I solicited contributions from my grandma for copying and I did all of the illustrations myself. I've always been enamored with magazines, I think, and I did the whole newspaper and yearbook thing in high school. I did a community column for my hometown newspaper. I started when I was a sophomore in high school and that led to a job actually typing in movie times in the newspaper. That's how long ago it was. After I graduated from high school, I worked at the newspaper while I pursued my degree and then in 2004 I moved from Phoenix

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to Washington, DC, because I had always loved DC and wanted to end up here and there was this opening at American University and it was moving into higher education. Obviously it was something new for me, but I love the environment, I love the work that we do here and we have a great team so I'm very happy with the trajectory of my career to this point.

Beth: I think that you're the first person that I've talked to that has absolutely no wandering in their path to get them to where they are.

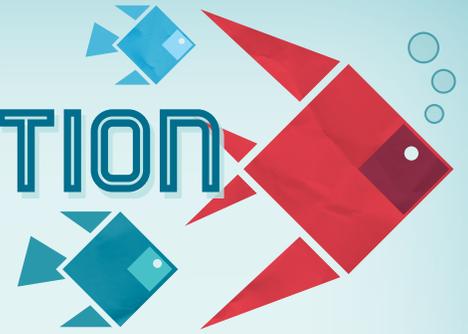
Adrienne: I don't know. I think I was truly born that way because it was always something I had a knack for. Like I said, I started out as a writer and then once I got into this position, I've learned so much from the designers and photographers and illustrators that we work with that I think it's even broadened and deepened my interest in what I do because it's not just writing anymore. It's producing this whole publication, which is just really fun work.

Beth: The interesting thing about publication, one of the things I was asking about before we started recording was it can feel a little like a one-way communication as opposed to some of the new media type things that everyone talks about right now that this drive for this two-way synchronous, get feedback from your people. In working in what some of us might call traditional media, how does participation factor in and how do you get a sense of what people are responding to and what they're liking?

Adrienne: I thought about this question and participation, and I think for me, the magazine is American University's flagship publication. It's delivered to 120,000 alums around the globe and if we're lucky enough to make it from their mail boxes into their homes, which is a big if for every publication I think, we serve as their connection to AU. We remind them of what they loved about their time at AU and DC and the publication also helps them understand where AU is now and where it's going. Hopefully that will lead to their participation and life at the university, either by donating, volunteering, submitting class notes or just spreading a good word about AU. I think what's hard about producing a publication like this, especially putting so much time and effort into it as we do here, sometimes you wonder when it goes out into the world what people think of it and I think it's about engagement for us. Sometimes we don't see that, but we hope that the publication will help reconnect people with the university and will help them want to get involved with what we're doing here, but I will say that we get more letters to the editor, more story ideas than we ever had before and those

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are just precious to me because people are busy and I always appreciate when they take the time to let us know what they love or what we could do better or they have a story to share. I think those are how we measure participation in our world, and we also just did a readership survey. We got a response rate of about 1 percent of our readership, which is great because people don't like to take time to take surveys, and so we're going to use that and look at the response that we got and see what kind of tweaks we can make and also what we're doing well so that we can continue to connect with readers.

Beth: I think it's a really interesting point that you said, that people don't take the time and when they write a letter to the editor it has some meaning. On the online world, getting that feedback and saying what ever is on your mind right now is so easy, that in some ways maybe people just say what they're going to say and hit send without a whole lot of conscious or thought about it so interestingly by being in a less synchronous relationship with your readership, I wonder if the kind of content and what people actually say I really want to tell you this so I'm going to take the effort, I wonder if that really boosts the quality of what you're getting.

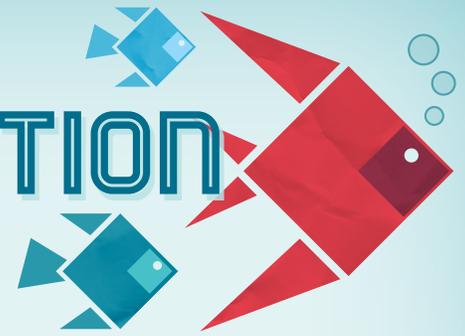
Adrienne: Right, and it does. We just did in our last issue a big story about student veterans on campus and sort of the issues that they grapple with and we got for us a lot of letters, both from young veterans and alums who graduated 50 years ago and those were handwritten to me, and like I said, it's just precious to me because people are so much more apt to complain or even as we said to post something on Facebook and hit send and you're done, than to just sit down and write a letter and be it good or bad, I always appreciate that kind of feedback because whatever we did resonated with them enough that they wanted to respond and give us that feedback.

Beth: Absolutely. It's so much more meaningful now and interestingly you said that people of all ages wrote you a handwritten letter.

Adrienne: Yes, it was mostly from like I said the older generation, but they sent me photos of them when they were in the service or photos of them at the VFW now and talked about how they just liked seeing themselves in the magazine, sort of seeing their story represented. We're getting more of that kind of feedback, which is good, which is how I know we're

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connecting with people and like I said, we go out to 120,000 people. I never expect to hear from the majority of them, but it's great when we hear from some of them because I know a lot of time and thought and effort went into those kinds of communications.

Beth: Before we get into the specifics of what an anchor page is and that detail, I want to ask you, a magazine is an expensive, time-consuming labor of love.

Adrienne: Absolutely.

Beth: Right, so why does the university do it? I've always wanted to know from a business level standpoint, why does an organization say this type of media, why are they doing this type of thing in this form for this audience?

Adrienne: Well, as you know, we've been told that print is dying for decades now.

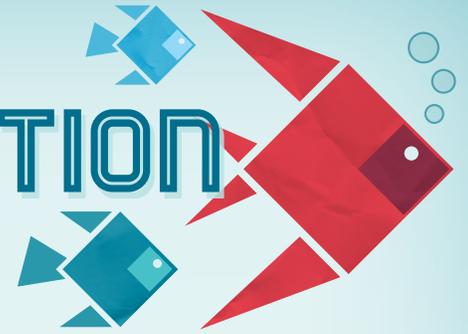
Beth: I was going to say it's been longer than that.

Adrienne: I think in fact it's not dying because this is as I said, this is something that goes into 120,000 mailboxes. If you think about that kind of reach, it's incredible. It's something tangible that people can hold in their hands and I think we'll probably talk about this later, but we redesigned recently and one of the things that we decided to do was invest in better paper and go to a larger size just because it makes a tangible difference. It feels weightier in your hands. It's more inviting. I think our hope is that people might flip through it and maybe something catches their eye and they spend 10, 20, 30 minutes with it and I think you can't underestimate the value of getting something like a magazine into people's houses and into their hands because it's really the only kind of communication that's tangible that they can hold, that they can have that sort of connection with.

Beth: Does anybody at the University struggle with the idea of a lack of ability to really track it with super data and numbers? I found that with a lot of our clients, with everything from doing advertising for example, everybody wants to focus on doing Google Ads or something like that because it's so easy to see. I did this over here. I can actually watch and see what I get from it in a direct clean line and with other types of content marketing and media and stewardship and different things, it's not as clear and 15 years ago, that was all we had to

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work with, was let's put an ad on TV or let's mass mail a package out and put a little tracking code on it and hope that it comes back, but with the internet, there's so many direct trackable things that I'm seeing in my client base the desire to drop everything that's not clearly and clinically trackable to go to the stuff that they can really put numbers around. How is the University handling the fact that a publication just isn't going to show that?

Adrienne: I think it's just a hope that it will. Maybe that sounds naive on my end, but I think it is something that people value. It is something with beautiful photography and shots of campus and Washington, DC. Forty percent of our alums live in Washington, DC, and in the area so that's an important part of our magazine, and we strive to sort of build a community within that magazine where like in talking about the veterans, where the alumni can see themselves and they can remember what their time was like here and hopefully that leads to other sort of measures or engagement or participation with the University and I think we're seeing a lot more magazines either drop a print issue and do one online in order to cut costs and those are real concerns, but I think something is definitely lost when you get rid of the print issue even though it's not trackable. Like I said, we just did a readership survey and we're going to continue to do that every year or every other year in order to see how this is resonating with readers because we don't want to put so much time, effort and money into something without knowing that what we're doing is working so I think it's also important too. You have to know that what you're doing is working or how you can tweak it so it's better.

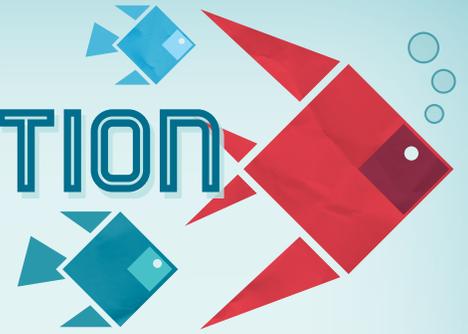
Beth: I think that's a smart idea to do the surveys and stay in touch and do a little report on these things because I hear this all the time from clients and prospects and just people that we talk to of people cutting out print and every single time it's because it's so expensive and it's such a struggle for people to look at the investment in something and the benefit that it produces when it's not an obvious way to be able to say "I can't get rid of this because this produces this income." I mean, obviously it's an alumni magazine, but do you do anything fundraising related? Is there an envelope or any type of ask in the magazine?

Adrienne: No. We don't have, we haven't done that yet.

Beth: So this is really like a community of interest and to keep people connected with the University and the feeling. It's very broad that way as opposed to trying to put in specific asks

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or anything like that.

Adrienne: Other departments throughout the University use the magazine. We have a gentleman who does community relations where he does events with neighbors and community or through the Art Center. We give him copies of the magazine every time it comes out so he can distribute those to the neighbors. We also work with admissions so that prospective parents and students who come to campus can pick up a copy of the magazine at the Welcome Center so that we can sort of broaden that community and begin to build those connections from the time that prospective student steps on campus. I think it's an alumni magazine at its core, but it also has so many other uses for different audiences across the University that really is a tool for a lot of different people.

Beth: Talk a little bit about how you do bring the magazine online and connect it out. How do you deconstruct the content and distribute it so that there's different ways for people to access it?

Adrienne: Our website is sort of a work in progress I will say. We do have a presence at www.American.edu/AmericanMagazine as a shameless plug.

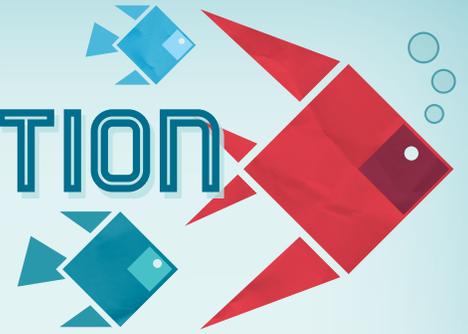
Beth: People are going to want to look at it.

Adrienne: We have our flip book, and then we have archives of past issues. We do have our own Twitter account where we distribute the stories to that audience and also our colleagues in Development and Alumni Relations and also in University Communications distribute the stories either through the home page of the American.edu or through the main Facebook and Twitter accounts for the University so they are distributed to a wider audience that way. In November we also launched an app on iTunes and for Android. That is an enhanced version of the magazine and our hope is that we continue to get downloads that way from people who are interested in the content and want more, be it slide shows, videos, audio clips and those kinds of things that they can get on the app. We're trying to focus really on building that presence, but the stories are distributed in other ways to other audiences outside of the University community.

Beth: I am so fascinated to see what's going to happen with that, with new ways of

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distributing content and through the idea of enhanced media, but one of the things I love about a publication is that there are so many uses for it. It doesn't just die with the print, that it's this effort of creating and curating and building this content around what your community is interested in and once that's done, you have this incredible package of interesting valuable stuff that you can do so much with.

Adrienne: Right and it's also some of the magazine stories that we do are profiles or photography we can use in other projects that my office is working on, the annual report. Last year, the University launched a website called Know Success where we track recent graduates and where they landed and what they're doing and some of the magazine stories appeared on that site for a different purpose so it's also nice to see those pieces re-purposed and given a new life. It just I think makes everyone's jobs easier to not be repeating that effort.

Beth: And because this is an all audio program, I just want to clarify that you mean "Know Success," k-n-o-w and not n-o.

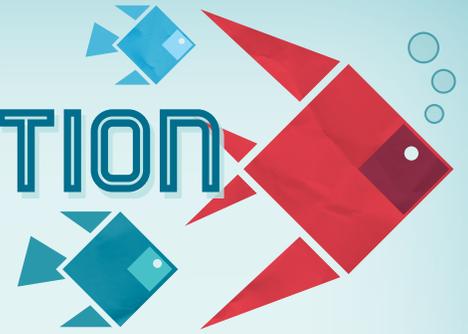
Adrienne: Absolutely. K-n-o-w. I should say our brand campaign is Wonk, w-o-n-k and so we use know, k-n-o-w a lot because of course that's Wonk spelled backwards. Yes it is definitely not n-o success.

Beth: The funny thing is I've actually heard a number of people from American present on the Wonk campaign and the concept behind it and I've heard strategy talk about it. You guys have done a really good job getting out there and sharing with the education community, your process and why you did it, but you were the first person that I've heard actually say that Wonk, I've been familiar with that word, was know spelled backwards. I did not know that that's where the word came from.

Adrienne: Absolutely and we might talk about this later, but one of the reasons we developed these anchor pages was to incorporate the brand and we did that a lot through the use of the word "know," k-n-o-w. Rather than being so overt about Wonk, we incorporated it very subtly throughout the magazine and you'll see the word "know" a lot in the magazine.

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Beth: Why don't we move into that? Can you tell us a little bit, first tell us what an anchor page actually is.

Adrienne: Okay. You've heard this spiel before, and I'm sure that your listeners haven't. Whenever I explain the concept to someone, I like to use the example of Baby Bug and for those who are unfamiliar with Baby Bug, it's a magazine for kids ages 3 and under and my son receives the magazine, which appears in our mail box every other month and he especially enjoys something called Kim & Carrots. It's a story of a little girl and her rabbit and I'm embarrassed to tell you how long it actually took me to realize that the rabbit is in fact a stuffed animal, but that's beside the point. In any case, the story is six pages long, it's always in the front of the magazine and my son Owen loves it. By the time he received his third issue of the magazine, when I pulled it out of the magazine out of the mail box, he saw the cover and he said "Kim and Carrots." That's what an anchor page is. It's something the reader anticipates and something that leaves him satisfied even if that's the only thing that he reads. Anchor pages, like Kim and Carrots, are memorable and they resonate with readers and I would like to think that if a 2.5 year old can understand the concept of an anchor page, so can our college-educated readers.

Beth: I love that, and I use that reference a lot because people often think that you have to always be communicating at a very high level and especially we do a lot of university work as well and of all of our clients, there's nobody that wants to communicate in big words with lots of commas and the higher education community so the more we can get them and everyone to understand that people's brains aren't always processing on that level, and it's going to be amazing. This Kim and Carrots, you said it was six pages long and your 2.5 year old son pays attention to a six-page story.

Adrienne: What was amazing to me was like we were talking about earlier, how do you know that what you're doing is working, we were talking about the idea of these anchor pages and how people will, it's more difficult of course with a magazine like ours that comes out three times a year as opposed to something that comes out every month, but we're thinking "These anchor pages, people will know they're there and they will turn to that page," but that's just in theory and so the first time he did in fact say "Kim and Carrots," I thought "Oh my God. It

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actually works. There's something to this." Like I said, they have to think that if it works for, of course my son is super smart.

Beth: Of course he is!

Adrienne: Of course he is, but if a 2.5 year old realizes that, our readers will recognize that as well and hopefully we're putting something, there's some anchor page in our magazine that's resonating with them in the same way.

Beth: Why did you add them into your editorial plan?

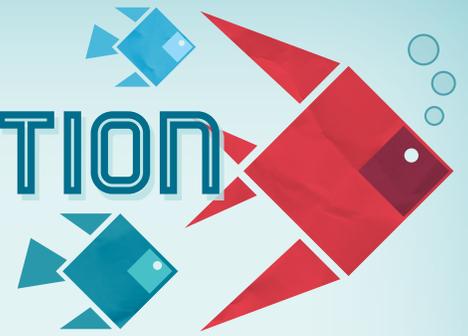
Adrienne: Well the anchor pages came out of our redesign, which we undertook in 2012 and we decided to redesign because the magazine hadn't been updated in more than a decade and it just looked dated. The content was good, but it didn't look good and as I said before, the paper was thin and cheap and it was a smaller size and it just felt like it was time for a refresh and so we were reinventing also from a process standpoint. Things were very haphazard. We were reinventing the wheel with every issue. We didn't have an editorial calendar and it just felt like we needed to be more thoughtful and more purposeful, more strategic and frankly more creative with what we were doing. I should also say that the redesign came at a time of great transition for our magazine team and our office as a whole. We shrunk from six staffers to three so we also needed to learn how to do more with fewer people and be more efficient and more agile and so the anchor pages were born out of the idea we needed to do all of those things, to be more consistent, more purposeful, thoughtful and efficient frankly.

Beth: How has it helped with your overall processing since you've started this?

Adrienne: It's been tremendous. I mean, we still are a staff of three. We have three people full time, myself and our director who also designs the entire magazine, so we are three people who are on the project. That's our jobs. Then we have other editors who the magazine is one of the pieces in their portfolio and they work with us on editing and a little bit of writing. We also have a university photographer who is fabulous and works with us on the magazine, but also does a variety of other projects across the university so we still are that very small

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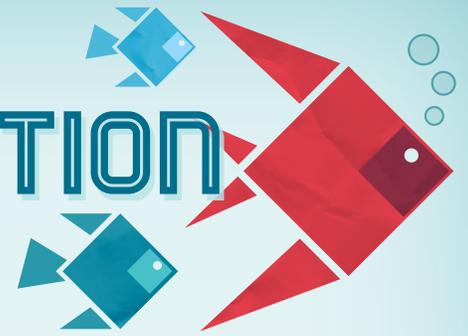
team, but in terms of why the anchor pages work, as I said when we were talking about Kim and Carrot, they build anticipation between issues. Again some things are trickier when you publish three times a year instead of 12 and they set expectations for our readers. Again, Owen knew that when Baby Bugs arrived, Kim and Carrots would be the first thing he saw so in our magazine, the anchor pages appear in the same place and they maintain the same look from issue to issue and we also have word counts for all of those pages. We have 15 different anchor pages which span 21 pages in our magazine so we have word counts for those, which helps the writer and designer alike because the writer is not going to give the designer something that's 200 words too long because we know exactly what to expect from that space and that's super important.

Beth: Let me tell you, as a designer myself, that's my dream!

Adrienne: We've done I think eight redesigned issues and our wonderful art director, Mariah Jackson, gives us word counts for every single element in each of those magazines and so if something is too long, she will come back to us and say "Did you look at the word counts?" and sometimes we say "I tried to squeak something by," but on the whole, it does help because we know how much room we have for that space and it's really non-negotiable and so she's not having to come back to us a million times to cut and we're not saying "All my words are precious," because we know what the expectation is and that's huge. Back to the anchor pages, they also help you entice readers and keep their interests. Our hope is that if you see one thing you like and you're a five-minute reader, then it's sort of an invitation to the rest of the magazine and maybe you'll become a 15-minute reader or a 30-minute reader. It's really an appetizer, if you will. From an editorial planning perspective, the development of anchor pages has helped us tremendously. As I said before, we really didn't have a process and everything was haphazard and so now we're not reinventing the wheel each time. They've given us structure and consistency, which ironically I found has given us more flexibility because we do have a place for every kind of story, and they're particularly useful if you know of an alum or subject who is doing something interesting, but whose story doesn't warrant two or four pages in your feature, so for example for our anchor pages, which I'm happy to talk to you about in more detail, we feature people like a mountain climber, a fighter pilot, a Broadway actor, a world traveler who has visited 100 countries. They're great stories and

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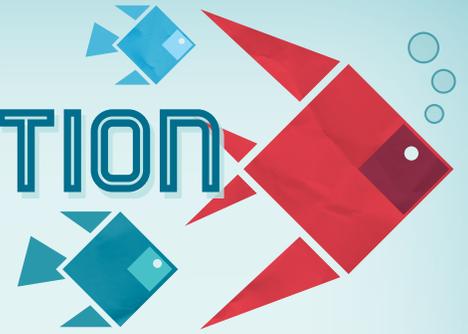
great visuals, but in our old magazine we wouldn't necessarily have had a place for them. As I said before, the anchor pages really help you to incorporate your branding and strategic initiatives in a way that feels organic and subtle. They also give you a place for you to write the kind of stories that we all have to write in a more interesting way. Everywhere we write about commencement obviously or we write about a new dorm or new program and the anchor pages give us more interesting ways to do that so hopefully people will actually read those items instead of just skipping over another news brief and then finally I would say that anchor pages have really helped us to feed our digital presence, which I mentioned we're still building. We launched the app in November and we found that so many of the anchor pages lend themselves to video or audio, which is kind of a whole new world for us. We're still learning how to shoot video and how to edit it, but they take on a new life on the app or online or through social media so they've also enabled us to engage with readers in new and different ways.

Beth: Can you share a couple of the themes that you've created? We're talking about this concept of anchor pages. I want to make sure that people understand what these things actually look like and we'll put some samples and things on the show notes page so you can click through and look at it and we'll put the link to the actual magazine so you can go and see some of these pages, but let's give people an idea of what they should be looking for. Two of my favorites, I love the one page that you do, which is about the metro stops and I would love for you to share a little about why you picked that theme and it's a big photograph. What sort of effort does it take to literally tactically create that? Talk a little about the strategy behind why you did that and then also how do you get it done?

Adrienne: All right, so Metro Center is actually one of my favorites, too. As I said, 40 percent of our alumni stay in the Washington, DC, area so they are not tourists. They are Washington insiders and our old magazine felt a little tourist-y in terms of the kinds of Washington photos that we were featuring. They were lovely, but everyone here has seen cherry blossoms. We wanted to create something that felt more like this is the place where you live and where you work and you play and something that also for those who don't live here anymore, sort of reminded them of what they loved about living in the city. We thought a lot about a common experience and for us, it is the metro, which is Washington, DC's public transit system that

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spans the city. I don't know exactly how many stops there are, but there are a lot. We decided in every issue we were going to feature a different metro stop and we were going to highlight the faculty, the staff, the alumni and students who are doing things in that neighborhood. It could be an internship, it could be a research project. We have a lot of alums who work in the communities where we do these photographs or live or play. Really the options are endless. We go out to the metro stop and we scout it in advance to know exactly where we want our photographer to take the picture. Then I use LinkedIn, which is a fabulous resource and we also do calls and social media to find people who work at institutions in those areas. For example, last issue we did, oh gosh. I'm drawing a blank. I'll remember eventually.

Beth: I was going to say that when we're talking about publications, you're allowed to turn pages.

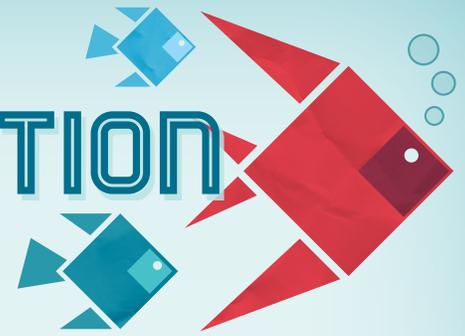
Adrienne: Good, I just did.

Beth: Totally fair.

Adrienne: Last time we did Fairgate North, which is a very busy stop off of K Street in downtown DC where you have lots of lobbyists and lots of people working in policy, lots of important stuff happens there. The Washington Post is nearby and it's very different from some of the other stops where people live or has a very different vibe and that's also the thinking behind Metro Center, that Washington, DC, is more than the capital. It's more than AU. It is this whole collection of really interesting neighborhoods that have their own identity and their own feel. We go out, we collect the alums and we ask them to go out. We give them \$5 Starbucks card, which isn't much, but I think they do it because they love the magazine and they love their alma mater. We've actually never had anyone tell us that they didn't want to do it. Sometimes people have conflicts, but they're always really excited to be part of the shoot. We go out to the neighborhoods or metro stops and we sort of find an iconic view. For example, for Fairgate North, there's a park that anyone who is familiar with that area will recognize the statue and the benches and they're always food trucks around so we did our shoot there and we line up our alum and our subjects in different places and our photographer says "go" and they all start walking or talking to each other so it all looks very

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natural, like these people just happened to be in the neighborhood and they happened to know each other and we just took this picture. In the background you see people lining up at the food trucks, you see people talking at the statue in the center of the park and so that's the thinking behind it and Metro Center spans two pages between the front of the book and the feature. It's a black and white photograph, which really stops you because we have so much color in the magazine. It's eye catching and then we did something clever, a playoff of the Metro logo, which again if you're familiar with the DC area, lived here or visited or ridden the Metro, you'll recognize that. It's not only a really cool eye catching photo, but it also provides some really nice visual relief between like I said the features in the front of the book. It helps us with pacing and it's also just so eye-catching. It's really fun to do. For something that is so visual and so powerful in our magazine, it really doesn't require a lot of effort.

Beth: I think the whole story that you told about that brings up such a key point about the value of the publication and the way that you're doing it. It's so easy to think about a publication as we get a bunch of pictures, we put the words together, we write stuff and it starts there and then push it out and hope people like it and we don't really know. What you guys have done that's really distinctive is that you have really understood your audience, meaning that you know that your people live there so that's something that is a clear differentiator in your audience as opposed to maybe another DC school's audience that comes and gets educated there and then goes off and lives internationally. You really know who your people are and then after understanding who they are and where they live and connecting with that, the next thing that you do is you're going out and asking them and connecting with them on the social media. The social media, I say that like I'm 100 years old. The social media. You're out there doing that which gives you an opportunity to have that one to one real time interface with people that we talked about, it's so difficult sometimes in a magazine. It then lets you steward your alumni by communicating with them and saying "Hey, we still want you to be part of what we're doing right now and we're going to take an afternoon of your time to do that. We are not asking you for money. We're not asking you for anything dramatic and you're going to be part of something that you see every day and probably like it and read it and enjoy and now we're saying please join us in that." All of that is upfront work before it even hits the physical pages of the magazine. Look at the

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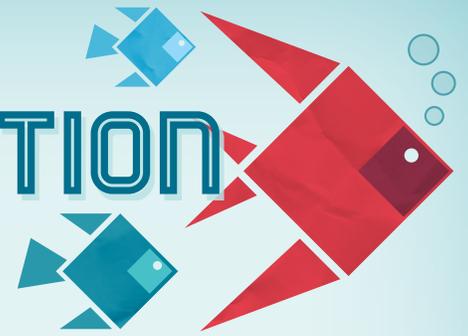
relationship building and the connection with your community because you understand who you're talking to so well so it all starts with understanding your audience and then you get all of these wonderful little gems out of it. I think that that's something people often miss by not doing a publication or not doing it at the level that you're doing it and a lot of other people that do publications will do it with stock photo or left over pictures or just snap shots from an event and just do things like "Hey, we have a new website," or "Hey we have an alumni event. Here's a picture of the alumni standing, looking like the firing squad." You're taking this and putting the effort and I know it's a lot of effort and costs a lot of money, but look what comes out of it.

Adrienne: I would say a big printing, magazine aside, it doesn't cost a lot of money to take that extra step because you described exactly what we were doing in our old magazine. We were taking a lot of photos of people at events and podiums, stuff that already existed and when we redesigned, we made a conscious effort to create the art work to if at all use original art work. Again, we have a photographer and we're very lucky to have a staff photographer. I know everyone doesn't have that resource, but for Metro Center, the real investment is our time and even then it's fun and it's time well-spent. We enjoy it. We take a picture with all of the alums after the shoot so we have a picture from every Metro Center that we've done. We don't know what we're going to do with that eventually and I think in our own little way that we are connecting with readers and they do get a kick out of being a part of this and it's not about the Starbucks card. It's not about anything like that. It's about being a part of this cool shoot in the magazine and then we always send them the PDF so that they can share it with their friends and family and everyone says "I want to send it to my mom," so it's our way of really creating good will on a very small scale with readers and it feels good and it's fun and it's not nearly as hard as it probably looks.

Beth: I think that's a really, really good point because when you look at something like that and when people see the picture of it, they're going to look at it and think "What a Herculean effort," but to hear you talk about it like this is one of the things that makes you love your job as opposed to the work of, you were involved in this magazine before the redesign. Collecting all of those existing pictures is also a lot of work, but it doesn't give you the same sense of satisfaction when you've done something that maybe transformed maybe five alumni lives.

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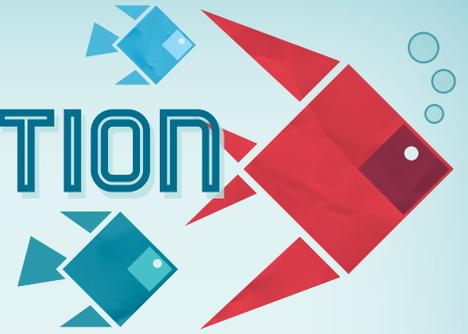
Adrienne: Right and I can't tell you enough how much we all enjoy our jobs and I think that you can see that in the pages of the magazine. We care a lot about what we're doing and details matter and that in terms of going back to the idea of an anchor page, this is now the eighth or ninth time we've done the shoot. The first time, it was difficult. We didn't know exactly what we were doing. We had alumni, it was at Gallery Place Chinatown, which for those of you who are familiar is a very, very busy area with lots of cars and people and noise and we just had three alums who continued to walk all the cross walks in the square and our photographer was snapping pictures and we got something fabulous in the end, but we didn't know exactly what we were doing. Eight or nine issues in, we know exactly how to do it. We go for a scout. Our director takes a ton of pictures around the Metro stop and the area we think we want to feature and then she comes back. She places them in the spread so we know how it will look, where the crease will fall and then we know exactly when we come out with the photographer what angle we want and then he works his magic with the people and I tell them when I pitch this idea and ask them to participate in it that it will only take 15 minutes and we have it down to 15 minutes. We're also respectful of their time and they're either coming at their lunch hour or after work and we don't want to take up too much of their time, but that's the value of an anchor page. Again, you do this so many times that you sort of get it down to a science, and you are more efficient.

Beth: One of the things I am loving about what you're saying overall that I think is an important thing to communicate to people because I am also a creative that runs the process, runs the business now and many people think that the minute you take something and nail it down and make it systematic that you're ruining the creativity and I completely agree with you that when you know what you're supposed to be doing, when there's a guide and a range, that it actually opens up the creativity because the rules actually give you so much opportunity and it's so counter intuitive. I think it's great that you're saying that you're actually experiencing that.

Adrienne: No, you're absolutely right and that's exactly what we experience because when we embarked on this redesign, we started with a stack of magazines, a huge stack of magazines and we just spent hours flipping through and working out what we liked and it was a fun exercise, but when we laid everything out, we were paralyzed because you had so many

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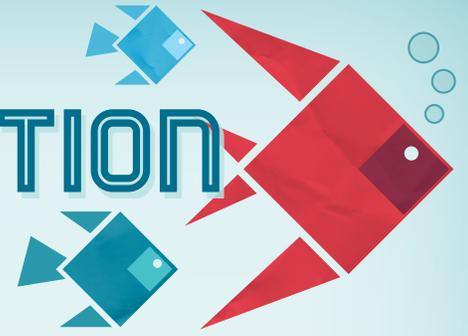
options, so many different ways in which you could go that you didn't know where to start and so I think that actually by setting some boundaries or perimeters that you can be more creative because you know how far you can go and you know it's very important to know yourself and your institution and your publication and the personality of those things so you know what's going to work for you and how far you can push that creativity so I have truly found that the structure and order of things helps us to be more efficient, but also so much more creative.

Beth: So where did you hear about anchor pages? I would love to leave somebody that's listening with a resource or a way that they could learn more about this idea.

Adrienne: I wish I could tell you that I invented it, but I didn't. We hired a consultant to sort of do some research before the redesign to tell us what we already knew, which was that we needed to redesign. It was a term that he used just randomly. I don't know where he got it from. I haven't found any books or resources about it. In the magazine world you often call them departments but I think that an anchor page is different from a department because it stands out more. It's by the numbers is a department and I guarantee you when your magazine arrives, no one is saying "I can't wait to see by the numbers this issue." Hopefully they'll say "I can't wait to see Metro Center." I think it's just a terminology that someone started at some point, and we picked it up. We found that a lot of people don't know or haven't heard it before, but once we explain it, it makes sense to them because it really does anchor your editorial planning and it anchors your publication, but in terms of resources that might be of use to your listeners, I am on Instagram all the time. I follow a lot of publications on there, National Geographic, Smithsonian, New York Magazine, Real Simple, Getty Images, even Instagram accounts like PaperSource or Rightful Paper Company or clothing companies, because they always have interesting visuals. I'm always getting ideas from the things that I see on there. I also think that Etsy is a great resource in terms of infographics or art work as a jumping off place. There are so many interesting cool things that people are doing that you can adapt and make your own and I would also say for us, Pinterest is a great resource. I follow a number of different designers on there where we get ideas for spreads, where we get ideas for infographics. There's a whole collection of magazine covers on there from commercial publications and I think what's key to this work is that your constantly looking for

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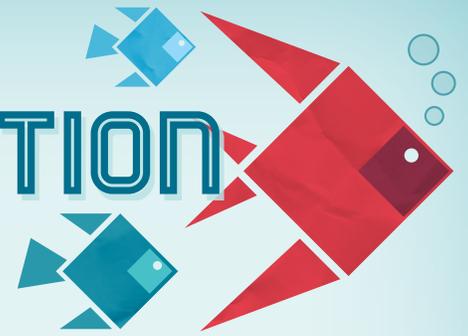
ideas. You're soaking up as much as you can and I found in terms of the development of our anchor pages and then as we moved forward, rethinking some of them and developing new ones. That it's great to use those kinds of resources where you can see what other creative people are doing and how you might adapt that for your own uses.

Beth: If somebody wanted to get started and tried doing this now and maybe they don't have a full 50 page magazine. Maybe they have a smaller magazine. You had said that yours was only 12-16 pages before you started. Maybe somebody has just a four page newsletter or even just an email publication. How could somebody get started? What would be the very first thing that you would suggest to somebody that had any sort of recurring publication could do to begin to integrate this idea?

Adrienne: I think what's key and it sounds like a silly exercise and I thought it was a silly exercise at the time, but we created a mission statement and I think whether you're doing an email newsletter, whether you're doing something on social media, whatever your product is, it's important to know what you're doing and why you're doing it and for whom you're doing it. As I said before, when there's a universe of possibilities it can be overwhelming so you need to really write down what your mission is and for us it was to be to engage with readers and to really focus on being Washington-centric and to remind readers about what they loved about AU and also where AU is going and that helped guide us in the creation of our pages because we could go back to that and say "Is this fulfilling the mission statement?" It's not something that any external audience ever saw, but it's something that helped guide the process. I think again before you start creating, you need to know why you're doing it and sort of set up those boundaries for yourself. After that, I think it's a matter of collecting everything that you can and we create notebooks where we keep pages from magazines or newspapers or websites that we copy and print out and it's important to just start collecting those ideas so that you can begin to sort through them and see what fits and I think that you can take something that we do in our current publication and you could adapt it for something different like a newsletter or something like that. I thought about in preparation for our conversation, I was thinking about another one of our anchor pages, which is called "Impact," and it's in the back of the magazine and the thinking behind that is that for Wonks, who are very passionate about what they do, the items in their bags reflect their expertise

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and their passion. For that page we have this great environmental portrait of someone, we've done an elementary school teacher and we've done a Buzz Feed reporter. We just did a comic strip artist so the top panel is their environmental portrait. The portrait below that are the items in their bag. It's a little bit of planning, but they are all of their items and there is some reason or interesting story about the items that tells you more about who they are and what they do and so I was thinking about how something like that could be adapted to an email or social media. It could be that you do something like that on a subject and maybe each day you take a picture of one little item and you give a description of it without giving away who the subject is and at the end of the week, maybe you reveal the person and everything in their bag and that's how you tell the story of this donor or alum or subject or whoever you need to tell the story about. There are ways that I think all of these things could be adapted and if you're doing a four-page newsletter, obviously you're not going to have 15 of these anchor pages. We have 48 pages to fill and covers and so it's a different animal, but I think if you hone in on a few really good ideas that reflect who you are and what you're trying to achieve, that you can sustain them and you will find that it will resonate with people and it starts to get momentum and people will want to be a part of those things.

Beth: That is fabulous. I love it and if anyone that's listening tries any of these ideas, please tweet to me @BethBrodovsky on Twitter and I have my name and the spelling of it everywhere so I'm sure you can find me. If somebody had any questions, do you have any contact information you can share?

Adrienne: Sure. My email is AFrank@American.edu and I'm also on LinkedIn. I would just say when we were undergoing this redesign that we reached out to a lot of different people in higher ed, a lot of different editors and designers who were all incredibly helpful and so not that we're experts by any stretch of the imagination, but it's always nice to be able to help people and to talk about our experiences and so if anyone has any questions or wants examples or wants a copy of our print magazine, I'm happy to help because I just think that it's really fun work and I hope other people can take something from what we've done.

Beth: Fabulous. Thank you so much for sharing your experience and your ideas with me and the nonprofit community. I truly appreciate your insight.

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Adrienne: Thank you for having me. This was fun.

Beth: All right. Thanks.

Adrienne: Thank you!