

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



## SESSION 050

### USING PR TO CONNECT WITH NEW AUDIENCES

#### WITH DEBBIE ALBERT

**Beth:** Hello, and welcome to Driving Participation. I am Beth Brodovsky, and I am here today with my friend, Debbie Albert, who is the Founder of Albert Communications. Albert is a full service public relations firm, and Debbie is also the founder of a nonprofit herself, Guess Who's Coming to Shabbas. Welcome, Debbie.

**Debbie:** Hi Beth. Thanks for having me.

**Beth:** This is great. I always love it when I have the opportunity to have somebody on the show that I actually know in real life, and, oh gosh, Debbie, we've known each other for years. I can't even think of how long.

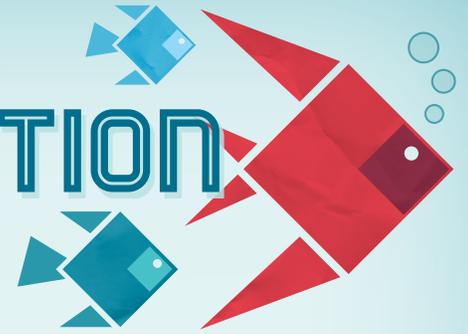
**Debbie:** I don't even remember how it started, but it's been a good time. I'll say that!

**Beth:** Absolutely! Debbie and I were having a conversation around the challenges about having to communicate to two different audiences and I know this is something that a lot of us have been talking about lately. How do you communicate when you have a donor base audience that you need to speak to plus a constituent base, maybe somebody that uses your services and then maybe even an advocacy audience that you need to talk to. It gets complicated, so Debbie said, "I've done that," so I thought that's a perfect person to bring on to talk about it. Debbie, why don't you start off by telling everyone a little bit about who you are and how you wandered into this world of communications?

**Debbie:** OK, I will. I went to school in Washington and was a Journalism major. I left school and went into television news. I was with two stations in Washington, D.C., one of them being CNN, and then I moved back to Philadelphia, which is where I'm from, and I worked at some local TV stations here. I got burned out from the television news industry, which is very easy to do. I wasn't sure what to do next and I ended up in public relations and that evolved from doing PR work for some nonprofits, primarily industry trade associations and then into

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



corporate communications, and then after 15 years in the corporate world, I decided to go out on my own, start my own business and I now have clients that are both in the for-profit world and the nonprofit world and in addition to what you said earlier, I also have recently started my own nonprofit. I'm interested in all of your broadcasts and hearing what people have to say about all of the issues that you talk about regarding participation.

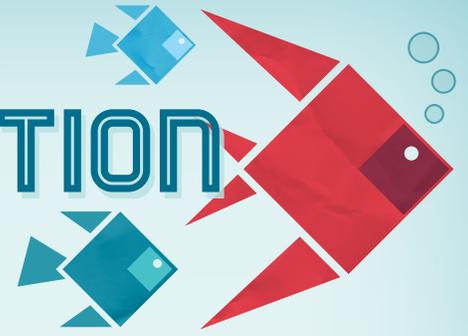
**Beth:** That's so nice. I'm so glad it's been helpful to you, too. This is such a great topic and I think I would like to start with making sure you take a minute to define public relations because I can't even tell you how many times that we'll talk about branding and people will say "press releases" or we'll talk about media and people will say "marketing." It's a lot of times hard for people that don't come up through this industry and lots of people that work in and start nonprofits don't really have a marketing background or didn't come through this world at all. Can you talk a little bit about how would you define public relations as a profession or as a practice?

**Debbie:** Well, Beth, I'm so glad you asked this question because I find myself explaining this at least once a day, and it's a great question. Public relations is earned media and advertising and marketing are paid media. What does that mean? Earned media means that you're using my time and my connections to get your story out into the world, whether it's in the newspaper, on TV, in a magazine or in a trade publication. Earned media has more credibility because it is completely based on information you share with the journalist who is writing the story or who is shooting the story for a local television station. You have no say over the final product. In marketing, you're paying for space and time. You're sending out your direct mail, you're placing ads. You have complete control over the message. With public relations, you're hiring a public relations practitioner who can craft your story, craft your key messages and hopefully have contacts in the media to help tell your story, but then once you tell it in the best way you can, you have to wash your hands of it and hope for the best when it comes out in whatever publication or on TV or wherever you have placed the story. Does that make sense?

**Beth:** That makes perfect sense. That is such a great explanation because it is really confusing. I've had people call us a PR agency, which we are not. We are marketing. We focus more on the craftier story. I have control issues. I don't want to handle the PR side of things.

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



**Debbie:** You're a control freak like me. Maybe this is the best position that I could have.

**Beth:** It's like therapy in a job.

**Debbie:** I suppose, although it is risky, and I tell people all the time that because we have no say over the outcome, I can't guarantee anything. So often for a nonprofit I might take a client and say "I'm going to pitch this story because I think you have a great story to tell, but if a journalist doesn't want it or they don't have time for it or they decide it's only worthy of 30 seconds and not 2.5 minutes, that's what it is." The media today is so varied and they have less time, but they're on 24/7. They have less time and less space and so I think it's what you do with nonprofits is perfect because there's so many different outlets through which people get information. Public relations is also about communicating with your internal and external audiences, so whether you're communicating with your board of directors or your donors or the end users of your organization, that's all public relations, but this is much more without complete control of the message at the other end.

**Beth:** You've done more than just public relations. You've got a pretty varied career behind you and so now even though the primary, the name of your firm and your focus is on public relations, you've gotten involved in some broader communications projects to bring that spirit, that different feeling of public relations into other peoples communications and that's a lot of what you're seeing. You're seeing a lot of this need to communicate with different audiences and different times. How is that playing out for you?

**Debbie:** Well, it's a really good point. Because end media is when we don't have control of the message at the end, what we also do is we create websites and we do have control over the message in a website so I guess those things are falling into a public relations bucket these days, but really I think for what you do and for what I do, the key for all of us who are communicators and marketers is to understand your audience and to really have a good handle on who your audiences are before you create any materials or try to tell the story.

**Beth:** That's such a great point and such a key message. It's really coming out of all of these shows that we're doing. When you go about that, do you typically find that you come and start working with a client that already does understand and know their different audiences

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



and know this is my spin on my key message that needs to go differently for each of these or do you find a lot of the time that you need to take a step back and help people really figure that out and understand not just the different audiences, but the different messages that those audiences need?

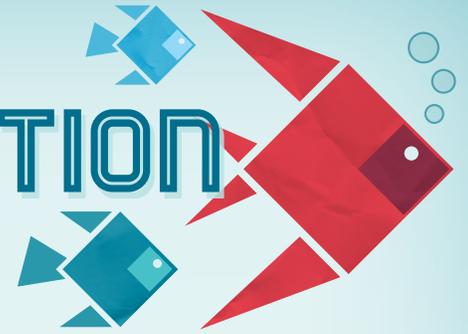
**Debbie:** Certainly the second part of that is true. Understanding the different messages that different audiences need, but I also think even though a lot of organizations think they understand who their primary audience is, they may not understand that there are secondary audiences who are equally, if not more important. For instance, in the nonprofit world and for a client that I have right now, there are two very distinct audiences. It's the donors to the organization and it's also the end users, the people who benefit from the organization, but there are also two other audiences that I don't want to lose sight of: the potential donors and the potential end users. This is an organization that's very focused on the good work that they do in the community and they want more people to be aware of what they do so they can take advantage of what this organization provides, but they also have the current donors and of course, it's the large pot of potential donors out there that I think we really need to be focused on.

**Beth:** I think that's really, really key that while that may look like it's two audiences, it really is four audiences. A lot of the times I talk about what I say and I'm sure I've said this on the podcast many times "the connoisseur versus the consumer message." The difference is how you need to communicate with somebody that's already inside and embedded in your organization's language and terminology and spirit and emotions and the people that are way on the outside that could be put off by really internal language. They're really different in their intent, where they are in their cycle of their relationship. It makes it different how you would communicate to them.

**Debbie:** Very true. The other thing you have to remember is these different audiences have very different needs and they need to be communicated with in different ways. They might differ by economic status, cultural background, languages spoken. We do work for a nonprofit called the Hebrew Free Loan Society in New York and they provide interest-free loans to people who really need throughout the New York metropolitan area. The donors tend to be a high socio-economic class, and the borrowers tend to be the complete opposite. When

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



working on the website, we have to decide right from the beginning, we have to assure people right from the start you're going right or you're going left. Are you a donor or are you a borrower? We have it right to the level that that audience would understand. It's a very fine line.

**Beth:** Absolutely. When people go to the website and I'm looking at it now, but was your intent to say this is our one primary audience that we're going to focus on, but we do need to put these two groups into different ways or did you treat it like these are two equally important things so right from the home page you wanted to split them off into two groups so there really wasn't a lot of blurring of the concept?

**Debbie:** Yes, they're equally important, these two audiences. Right on the home page, and if you're listening to the podcast and you want to go to the site, it's HFLS.org.

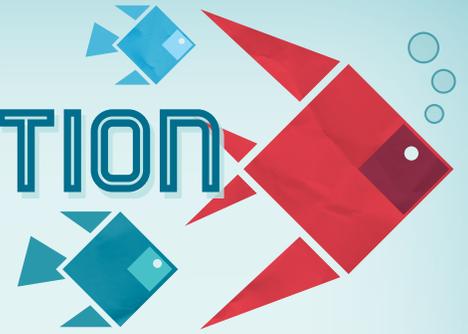
**Beth:** I'll put it in the show notes.

**Debbie:** Right on the home page, it says "How We Help" and you can apply for a loan or "Can You Help Us?" and the button says "Donate." We made it very clear right from the start that there are two different paths because someone who is going to donate certainly doesn't want any help and someone who needs help is certainly not in a position to donate. We wanted to make it clear and we want to treat them with equal respect so you can't make it look like you care more about one than the other because we don't. The organization does not and we have to make sure that we speak to them in a dignified way, a respectable way no matter who we're talking to and this organization also has issues with languages. Not everyone speaks English who borrows from them so we actually have some pages that are in Russian for a Russian population that uses this organization.

**Beth:** Right, and I did notice that on the website there's one navigation link that's in I guess text that I can't read it, but I'm sure if you went to the site and saw something that you could read, you would probably be tremendously relieved. That's very user-centric. We talk a lot about being donor centric, but it's important to remember that many organizations, most of them, the donors are not your only audience so if you can take that feeling, the feeling of how you would communicate with your donors to make it all about them and make everything all

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



about everyone that you communicate with, it's tremendously helpful for people feeling like they belong there and are welcomed and are valued by an organization.

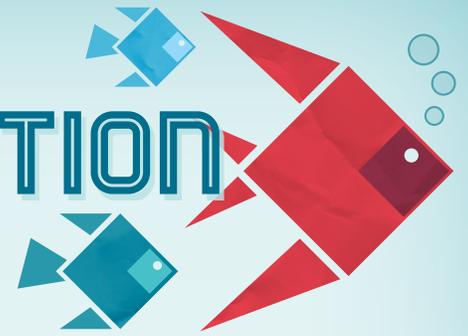
**Debbie:** Correct, and we also have on that site and I'm sure a lot of people listening have the same as we have, sign up to receive our newsletter and the newsletter is written to go to donors and borrowers so we know that we have both audiences signing up for the newsletter so when we send them out quarterly, they have a story that's relevant to a borrower, a story relevant to a donor and then probably one that's relevant to both. It's really important that you don't disrespect or alienate one of these audiences because you need both to make this a perfectly balanced organization.

**Beth:** Now how is that working? You said these are two very, very different audiences and so when you bring them to the website, instantly you want to split them so they don't get put off by or distracted by somebody else's content or story or whatever you're trying to do. Now with the website, obviously the goal is to move people through a process to get them to get to know you and typically it's to get them to take some sort of action, to contact you for a loan or to then move forward and donate. In a newsletter, it's stewardship and keeping people involved so is it the fact that there's a different purpose to the tool of a newsletter that makes it okay to put these two different audiences together? In this case, how is having it together working well in a newsletter even though that's not what you decided to do in a website because I think the tool and what you're trying to do is a big factor in communications and communicating to different audiences.

**Debbie:** Right. The newsletter is a tool like Facebook. We post different things on Facebook. I look at the newsletter as a quarterly Facebook. We post on Facebook for that organization probably twice a week. It could be something that's specific to a borrower. It's usually to a borrower showing them how we've helped other people and we try to spread the word in the communities that borrow from this organization the kind of good work that they do and it's not just giving out interest free loans. They run classes on business development and all sorts of entrepreneur programs for people who are in their 50s who have been out of work and want to start a new career, but I think that reading about the good work that an organization does in one newsletter, even if it's not necessarily written for you specifically as a donor, it still opens people's eyes to the breath and depth of this organization.

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



**Beth:** I think that is a really good point because you have to assume that with the website, there's a high probability that a good percentage of people that are seeing the website don't know anything about the organization or may be going there to donate because it's a memorial gift or something, so it's a first line of defense shall we say or a first line of introduction. That's a bit more of a positive way to say it, but with a newsletter, these are people that already have some interaction so you're really not dealing with those two audiences that you're talking about, potential donors or potential clients or lendees. I'm not sure what the word is for that.

**Debbie:** Borrowers.

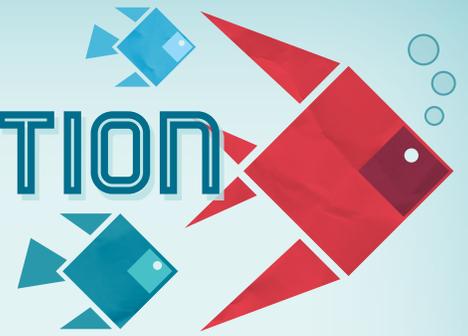
**Beth:** Borrowers. I knew I'd get the wrong word. You don't have those things so these are already just the connoisseur audience so the likelihood now that they have a little awareness could be interested in the bigger story as much higher or they could become interested because somebody that is a borrower for a loan today, who knows what they'll be in the future.

**Debbie:** We just had a great story where someone who borrowed from us had lost everything after Hurricane Sandy. They've gotten back on their feet thanks to a loan from the Hebrew Free Loan Society, and they're now donors to the organization and they're going to be highlighted in the next newsletter. That's the circle of life. You can't ask for more than that.

**Beth:** No, you really, really can't, and that is so valuable. We're not talking about a hard and fast rule that you should always separate your audiences. Now there definitely are reasons sometimes that you need separate newsletters for separate audiences, but I think what Debbie is saying is really think it through and think about what's the benefit to your organization, but also is putting this content together going to benefit and help the reader of the content get to know you better. I love how you compared a newsletter to your Facebook content because a lot of people talk about Facebook that it's a big party and you wander around and you pick off the content that you want and you read, but you just let other stuff go, just like how you walk in and out of content and conversations when you're at a cocktail party. I never heard anybody describe a newsletter like that, but that's really not a bad way to

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



look at it.

**Debbie:** Yeah, that really is and then I have to say the way we really get to potential donors and users is through the media relations, that really is traditional public relations where I put together a story about someone who was successful after they borrowed from the organization, how it helped their business and what they're doing now and I pitch it to a reporter and publication that would be of interest to potential donors and potential borrowers. That's where the media relations really comes in because a potential donor isn't on our mailing list yet and a potential borrower isn't on the mailing list yet, but if I get a story in the New York Times or New York Business or on New York 1 TV, then I might grab a new borrower or a new donor.

**Beth:** I think that's a really good point to bring up. We actually haven't talked at all about public relations at all on the podcast so this is the first time we'll really get a chance to get into it and everyone always says "I want more awareness," and "I want people to know about us," but then people say "I don't have the money or time to do public relations," and I think it's easy to think that you can just put a press release together on your own, send it out to a reporter, and then people say they never pick anything up.

**Debbie:** Well the press release is the dinosaur of the industry. There's no question about it, and if people keep referring to press releases, they really don't understand what public relations can do. A press release is valuable now and I know we're changing gears here into PR, but a press release is useful now if you send it out on the wire because it infiltrates search engines so you get it out there on the wire. You'll come up in the search and you can use it on your website and post it on LinkedIn and Facebook and all the other outlets, but to really get your story out there and this is what I'll tell people first and foremost, you have to have a good story. You can't go out there, you can't kid a kidder and you can't go out there with a story that you think is great, but there's really nothing compelling about it so you need a really compelling story that has to be framed in a very short way and then sent to a specific journalist so when people hire upper communications to do PR for them, we really look at whether they have a story to tell and if we don't feel they have a good story, we tell them that we can't take them on as a client. We would prefer to get stories that we think really are,

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



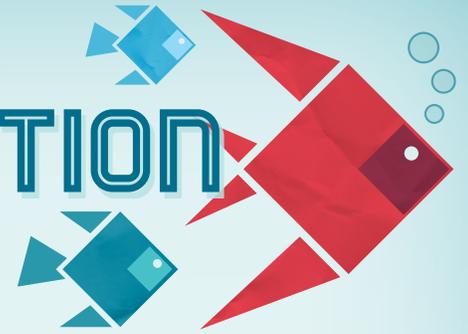
I keep using the word compelling or meaningful, and then finding the exact right journalist and the exact right outlet to tell the story so I might have a story that's terrific for a Jewish newspaper in New York, but not good for the Wall Street Journal and then once I find that specific Jewish newspaper, I need to find who is the right writer at that newspaper for it, and I look up other things that that writer has written and I craft my pitch to really get to that writer. Sometimes you're successful and sometimes you're not. Sometimes you start with the Wall Street Journal and sometimes you work your way down or you start at a local TV station and work your way up. Some stories are better for TV than newspaper. Some are better for newspaper. Some are better for radio.

**Beth:** But it's actually the same thing. Don't you think? What we're talking about is how to deal with it and deal with communications when you have more than one audience and when we were talking about the website, you talked about how to have one tool that includes more than one audience and then how to segment them off so that they can each get the content that they want. Now while we're talking about PR, you're talking about the same thing, but you're talking about it the opposite way. How can you then pull out the individual stories, the specific content and split it apart and then send it to the right resource and find the right reporter? It's still about how do you deal with having multiple stories and multiple audiences and sometimes even when you bring it together, you still need ways to make sure that the individual that wants the information gets connected with the specific information that's interesting to them. It's really no different from what you were saying on the website.

**Debbie:** You're right. I mean when you reach out, you create the website for your current donors and borrowers and you want to drive traffic there, but when you really want to spread the word of your organization wider, if you have a compelling story, one of the ways to do that is through traditional media relations/public relations and reaching out to identify reporters with a story. That is how I've been most successful in my career, getting a story placed with the right reporter in the right outlet. There are stories I placed in a newspaper that I would never think to try to get onto a television station. They're just not that kind of story. They're not visual. They are more the kind of story you have to read and think about and then there's stories that are the other way where the visual aspect is television makes it much, much more compelling and a newspaper story would never do that for it. You really have to understand

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



the nuances of a story. Is your executive director TV-friendly? Do you have people who are users of your organization who you feel like would give a good interview or even if you trained them, gave them media training, would they be able to speak beautifully on TV or would they be better talking to a print reporter? All of these things play into it.

**Beth:** That's really interesting. I don't think I've ever really thought about it in depth that way. I am obviously not a PR expert. The only public relations success I've ever had is getting my son's wedding into the newspaper.

**Debbie:** Well, that's pretty good!

**Beth:** It was pretty good, but they had a pretty good story. I don't know if I've ever mentioned it in here before.

**Debbie:** I actually saw that story, Beth. I saw it!

**Beth:** All right. If I could only get that for the company. I don't know. When you're the overbearing control-freak mother and you marry one of your sons to one of your employees, I guess it's a good story.

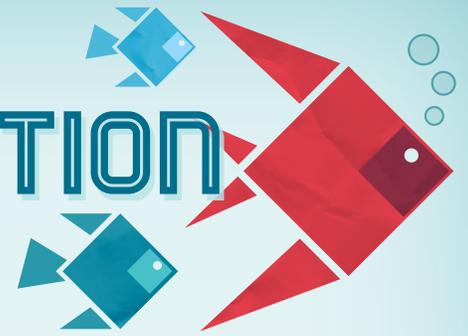
**Debbie:** It was a great story!

**Beth:** I have to say, I actually wrote a blog post about it. I will have a link to it in the show notes, that I learned a lot from doing that, and one of the things that I learned is when I was pitching this to the reporter, first of all I read the weddings. I'm such a dork. I read the wedding section all the time so I really knew the structure of how she wanted things written, I knew her name, I knew the pattern that she mixed some things up. My son also happens to be in the military, he had just been commissioned as a Naval officer so I was able to note that she hadn't had a military wedding in awhile and really being able to write in my pitch to her all the little details that I knew about her writing and about the pattern of her column, on top of the fact that it was just a hilarious story.

**Debbie:** It was a good story. I must admit.

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



**Beth:** I'll link to it so you can see and the other thing is I was writing it on behalf of my son. People would say why should I have somebody outside do something like that. When I wrote it, I wrote it for my son with a mother's passion about how awesome her kid is and how awesome this relationship is. When I try to write a press release for my own organization, you know, all of a sudden I get all stiff and awkward and start putting in that horrible corporate speak that says we are the kind of organization and you don't have that authenticity. It's sort of surprising that sometimes a third party can be more authentic on your behalf than you can for yourself.

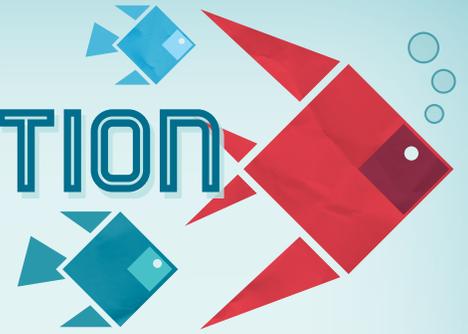
**Debbie:** Well, a third party has to ask tough questions and there are times when I go into a client and I say "I'm not your lawyer, but you have to tell me the truth because I'm the one who has to spin it." I will only take on clients who I feel have a lot of integrity. I've been in situations where I have crisis communications that I have to deal with and I have to say to a CEO of the company "I need to know the truth." With a nonprofit, I'll give you a great example. I was called in once to help with a nonprofit which had a lot of money stolen from it, and I hope no one listening to this ever has to go through this, but I had to work with the leadership of this organization to help them protect their image, and the money was stolen by an employee. I had to help them protect their image. I had to help them keep their base together. I had to help them craft messages to the public. It was a very, very personal thing and unfortunately there was one on TV last night about someone who stole from a Girl Scout troop. These things happen, and there are a lot of audiences to consider when crafting responses and I think that's very important for people who run nonprofits to realize that you might be faced with a crisis one day, too, and there are many, many, many audiences to consider during that time. Your board of directors, the public, the press. That's a lot of nuance communication, all of which should probably have consistent core messaging and the nuance for each audience.

**Beth:** When you mean nuance, do you mean tone, style, subject matter?

**Debbie:** Yes. All of them because think about having a crisis. A Girl Scout troop leader steals all the cookie money. You have the kids in the troop that you have to talk to as children. You have their parents you have to talk to. You have the media you have to talk to. You have your

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



community to speak with and the core messaging is the same, but your language and your tone and your style and your delivery changes for each one of those audiences. The Girl Scouts themselves, you're going to meet with them in person. The parents, you're going to meet with them in person, and you're going to have the same honest messaging that you're going to have for the press, but it's going to be delivered in different ways.

**Beth:** That is a great example. I love it. You also talked about what a founder of a nonprofit has to do and you should know because you are the founder of a nonprofit. I want to make sure we spend a little bit of time talking about what made you decide to start a nonprofit and what have you learned about communications from doing it?

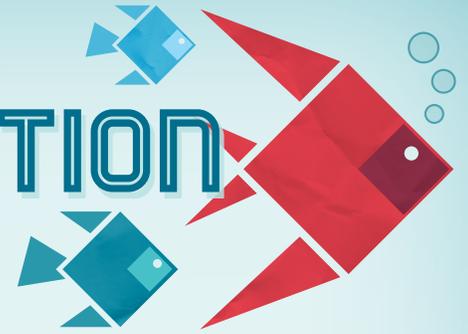
**Debbie:** Well, it's actually pretty funny because I had no intention of starting a nonprofit. I started a program at my synagogue to try to engage the members of the synagogue through Friday night Sabbath dinners in their homes, having them invite other people. The program and I branded it and I did all the things a PR person is supposed to do.

**Beth:** Right, as one does.

**Debbie:** As one does. The kickoff was mad. In an organization that's pretty apathetic, there was great interest in this program so the good PR person, I called the man at the local newspaper and I told him the story and I ended up with a story in the Philadelphia Inquirer and of course that's when the poop hit the fan and other synagogues wanted to do the same thing. I quickly had to make all the materials en masse and I also wanted to protect the brand, so I got a registered trademark for the name and then I filed for nonprofit status and now I am focused on getting this program out to as many different synagogues around North America as I can so this nonprofit is starting out focused on the end user, and I haven't focused on donors at all. I don't know how to focus on donors. I happen to have someone on my board of directors who knows of a foundation that made a nice donation to get us moving, but I have not gone after donors in any way. Number one because I haven't listened to enough of your podcasts and number two because I run a separate business and I just haven't had time to do it. I see that nonprofits really have to be focused I guess as a startup on one or the other if it's just you running it, which in my case it is. I do have a board of directors that gives me some

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



great ideas, but

**Beth:** You don't do the work.

**Debbie:** I'm a one-man band. I'm a one-man band, and I'm only doing it on the side when other communications are keeping me busy. I'm focused on getting a lot of other synagogues to run the program and then my hope is that that will feed into spreading the word about the program so people will want to donate to it, but I am not focused on that yet.

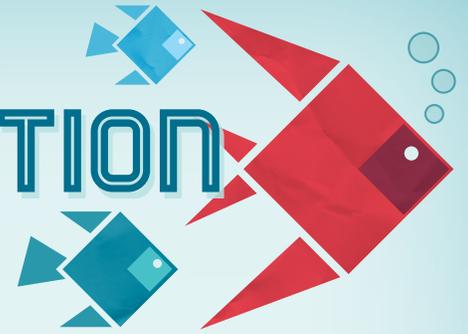
**Beth:** I bet there's a lot of people listening who were at that place at one point or are at that place now that they're still a small shop, or yes, it's my job, everything kind of people. Just out of curiosity I think it's a great thing to share. You're starting this up and you have the advantage of being able to start up a nonprofit with a background in public relations. What have you found for the nonprofit has been the most helpful in growing your audience and getting people driving your participation? I swear that the number one thing that people ask me is about how do we grow our audience? It's the number one thing I get asked. That and how.

**Debbie:** You know it's funny because the way we grew the audience was through traditional public relations. We have a story in the Philadelphia Inquirer. That started it, and then there was a story in the local Jewish newspaper which continued to trend and then I was asked by a national publication geared to this audience to write something about the program and then it went crazy. In this case, talking about the success of this program and why people liked it through tradition, getting the word out through traditional public relations/media relations channels is what got us great participation. Now I've built up a mailing list and I run periodic webinars about how organization can put this program into motion in their own synagogue and that's how I'm getting more synagogues on board, but the next thing is, I'm the classic case of the shoemaker with the kids without shoes. We only have a one-page website. It's just a standalone page, like how to get more information, and it links some of the stories, but I haven't even had time to build up the website for anything yet.

**Beth:** It's so true. I had to send somebody samples of our work the other day because we

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



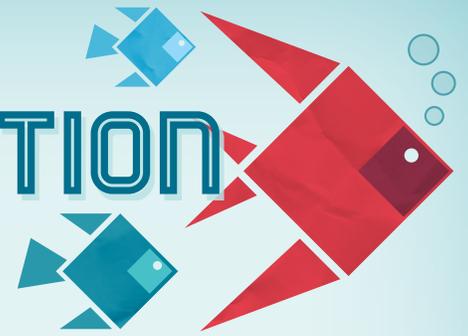
haven't had time to update and put current things on the website. Don't, we're all the worst examples, but I think these two stories are so interesting because you know through the work at the Hebrew Free Loan Society, you talked about an organization that's working really hard to make sure that they are integrating their multiple audiences, that they're far enough along that they do have more than one person that they need to talk to and you as a start up organization, you're only one person. You have to focus and what you focused on was building up the actual participation in the organization. I think that's really interesting and important for people to hear that depending on where you are in lifecycle, there may be a different answer to this question for you. It's not a one size or one time fits all.

**Debbie:** I do want to make two other points that came up in my board meeting. I tried to figure out what would be the most compelling thing I could show a potential synagogue to adopt a program or a donor to give to the program. What would be the most compelling thing and we talked about it at my own board meeting and we came up with the idea that we really should have a video showing how success for the program is and interviewing people who have taken part in the program and the changes they've seen. We're in the process of producing a short three- or four-minute video about the program that we can also get out there through a lot of different channels. That was one thing. The second thing was let me see if I can remember what it was. Wait, there were two things. It was, oh I know, collecting data. I have never done any kind of survey for the synagogues that have purchased the program to see how it's really impacted with really strong hard numbers and so that's another thing we're doing now. We're going to be sending out a Survey Monkey probably to some of the organizations that have purchased the program to see how it's impacted their organization. I think those are two powerful things. Having the data to show what works and also putting together a video. We live in such a visual world right now that having a video showing how things work I think is going to be very compelling.

**Beth:** I think the video is going to be huge and I will also since you say you do listen, point you to actually this week's podcast with Amanda Kaiser, which is episode 37, that's all about conducting member interviews and how there are certain things that a survey is really good for when you're looking for a lot of qualitative and a lot of people's why, like the reasons why the deeper stuff, that a lot of times making a process of interviewing people will get you more

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



actionable information, more actionable data, even though it's not easily tabulatable than sometimes that we get on a survey. I don't discourage people from doing surveys, but take a moment to listen to Amanda's episode.

**Debbie:** I will. I will. Right before we got on the phone together, I popped it up to listen to it.

**Beth:** Finish that one up definitely. I love it. It's so funny how many times somebody brings up something that a person I just interviewed just talked about. It's fascinating the themes that are coming out of the stories that people tell me. It's really, I'm hoping that the listeners are starting to hear some of the themes and some of the trends that are coming out of the conversations that we're doing, which is things like collaboration and audience building and being clear and specific and defining your audiences. These are a couple of trends that are really coming out of everyone. I'm talking to consultants and nonprofits and associations and education and everyone is saying a lot of the same things.

**Debbie:** You and I have spoken about this offline, too, that you don't have to recreate the wheel. There are people out there who are happy, like you, to share information and want people to feel successful and capable, and so there are a lot of resources out there, even just picking up the phone and calling someone who you heard speak or you know of or you read a book. I think that's a wonderful way to go.

**Beth:** That's a perfect segue into this question, which is if you had one key resource that you would suggest to somebody if they wanted to learn more about this area, where would you send them?

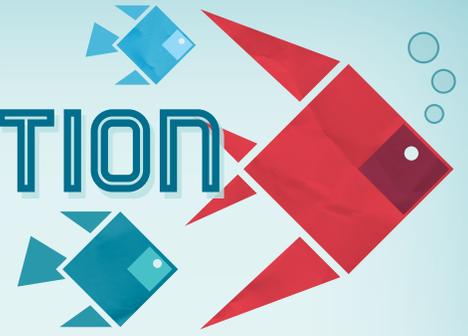
**Debbie:** Well, don't laugh, but I would send them right to you.

**Beth:** Aw, you're so sweet!

**Debbie:** You have helped my head get focused on what we need to do and since I picked up a few nonprofit clients throughout the communications, you've helped me expand my thinking about what I should be offering them or what I should even be discussing with them to help expand how they think about participation.

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



**Beth:** Well, that's lovely, and I swear everyone listening, I did not coach her to say that.

**Debbie:** She did not.

**Beth:** I'm glad because that's important to me. That's what we want to be doing here, helping people connect with things that really matter to them and understand things. I want to be putting that information out there that people are saying yes that helped me move further and understand marketing better and connect with my community. It's so important to me and I'm so happy that the times that we've had a chance to talk about things that that's helpful for you.

**Debbie:** Yes, it's been great.

**Beth:** So is there one take away that you would leave people with that out of all the things we've talked of if somebody really wanted to get started thinking about their audiences and how to figure out what were the key ones for them and how they needed to communicate with them, what would you say would be step one for them?

**Debbie:** I think you have to sit down with a piece of paper and brainstorm who are the other audiences are because you're probably missing one. Really think about who they are, anyone you want to reach and then break that up into what's next for, how do they want to be communicated with? What are the messages you want to send their way? What do you want their take aways to be? What's the best way to reach those specific audiences?

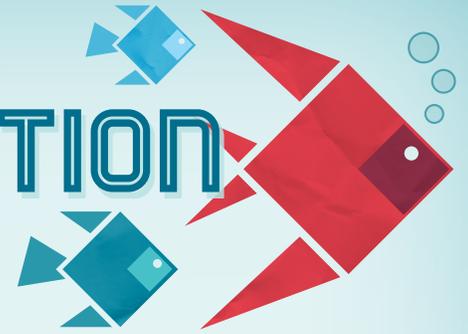
**Beth:** I think those are really good points and I would add to that what do they want from you?

**Debbie:** That's for sure.

**Beth:** Exactly. One of the things I wanted to ask you, and I know this was supposed to be the last question, but I do actually want to ask this. When it comes to creating these profiles of people, do you think that an organization should sort of have a key person in mind? A lot of people call it a persona, or I call it the perfect person. I find that can be very helpful

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



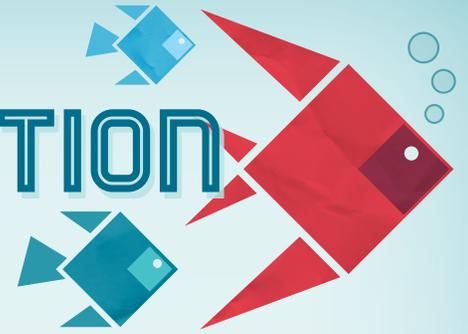
when people are struggling with audiences and communication to think about if they could communicate with only one person right now in their organization, like you with your organization, to literally I'm going to use the word dig in, which is the jargon word everybody on my staff hates when I use that word, but to really look deeply at who that person is and identify them as more than just a demographic and more than just a survey response or some general profiling and get to know who they are as a person so that really when you're writing and thinking about meeting that person's needs, that you are able to address them as a human being as opposed to as a statistical person in a segment.

**Debbie:** I know that you wanted to talk about that, and I don't 100 percent agree because I think that there's more than one and I think that we all operate from our own little world of knowledge and the world is a very big place and people are very different today and you know, you're not talking just male, female, black, white. I mean there's so much more that goes into a picture and I don't know if you can find a perfect persona. I don't know if that's doable anymore, especially even with the Hebrew Free Loan Society. There's not one. I might be able to get to three, but there's not one because my donor, I might be able to get to the perfect persona, but for the people who are using, who are borrowing the money and taking the classes and really benefiting from all that this society has to offer, I probably could come up with three different personas of three very different kinds of people that would benefit so I personally wouldn't want to put my audiences in one box like that. I think that it's very important to keep your eyes wide open thinking about it, especially not just because of how different people are today, but because of how messages are delivered today. I mean, you and I could say newspaper, TV, radio, web, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and I'm not even hitting them all and people are getting their messaging from so many different places that to make one persona, I think you're going to lose potential audience.

**Beth:** Interesting, and I think that's why I love to ask these questions, that different people have slightly different perspectives, and I don't disagree with you. I just think that people often get caught up in doing the opposite and saying everybody that we have is so different and so unique that they don't clarify or don't focus at some of the common traits or they overly segment and I think that if you don't have the need to or the ability to deliver different communications in different venues, if say you have an email and you don't have the

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

*with Beth Brodovsky*



capabilities yet to write three or four different emails to have a bunch, four or five different personas, different programs that you have in your mind, can be detrimental to your ability to communicate correctly. That's one of the things that I would weigh on the other side of it.

**Debbie:** I think there are a lot of different ways to communicate, and I was just having a conversation about this today with one of my colleagues on my team and I said "I can't keep up with LinkedIn and this and that," and he quoted someone we used to work with together and he said "They need to give people options. You have to give them options," so what I post for Albert Communications on Facebook, I might not post on LinkedIn. What I post on LinkedIn might not be what I put in my newsletter. What I put in my newsletter might not be what I post on my Facebook page. It's just, you know what I mean.

**Beth:** Exactly.

**Debbie:** You have to think of a perfect persona for each thing you're doing.

**Beth:** Perfect. I think that's exactly the right way to think about it. That's great. So, Debbie, this was fabulous. It's always great to talk to you. Thank you so much for joining me, and how can people get in touch with you if they'd like to follow up or learn any more?

**Debbie:** It's very easy. The web address is [AlbertCommunications.com](http://AlbertCommunications.com) and you can send me an email at [Debbie@AlbertCommunications.com](mailto:Debbie@AlbertCommunications.com), or through the website and I'd be more than happy to help in any way I can.

**Beth:** Thank you so much. All of Debbie's contact information and the links from this episode will be available on the show notes page and I will catch you soon.

**Debbie:** All right, take care, Beth.

**Beth:** Bye.

**Debbie:** Bye.