Webinar: Strategies to Mobilize Your Social Media Followers

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Speakers: Sameena Usmani, Katherine Russell

**Sameena Usmani** 07:32:14

everyone and welcome to tap Roots webinar strategies to mobilize your social media followers around a cause. My name is Samina Usmani and I'm the Content Manager here at taproot. And before I began just a few logistical notes, I'm joined here by my taproot colleagues, susmitha Chinni, who will be covering the chatbox. During the presentation, all attendees will be muted, but please ask your questions in that chat box. And go ahead right now and introduce yourself and definitely your organization in the chat now, give us your LinkedIn also. And this webinar is being recorded. We will share the recording and an email later today. And as you can see, the we have turned on closed captioning, but you do have the option to turn them off for yourself. In the right sidebar next to the AV pod, you can click on the gear icon, and then you can toggle off or on the turn on captions. And now I'd like to introduce our guest speaker, Catherine Russell. She's the founder and CEO of transformative justice solutions, which offers Strategic Growth consulting for social justice organizations. She has trained Multiple Speakers Bureau cohort cohorts to highlight the voices of people with lived experience in social justice issues. And in the last decade, she has focused on program designed for formerly incarcerated women, survivors of domestic violence and criminal justice reform. And she's a temperate volunteer, which we love. So Katherine, welcome and thank you so much for joining us.

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Thank you for having me, Samina. And thank you for all your help and leading up to this event. And and thank you to taproot for all the work it does, because when I started my company, volunteering through taproot was a wonderful way to connect with people and give back and I'm just so glad I've I've connected with this organization. So as Samina said, my name is Katherine, I use she her pronouns. My company transformative justice Solutions offers strategic consulting around social justice programming, we have specific attention to storytelling in amplifying the voices of people with lived experience. So my company does consulting around building speakers bureaus. We have a repertoire of trainings we offer, and we provide leadership development around social justice. I, myself, grew up with a chronic lung disease, and I'm actually a double lung transplant recipient. 11 years out. My awareness of how I fit into this world has always been built around stories. They've helped me feel context in my healing journey and, and really helped me figure out where I fit.

I participate as a person with lived experience on multiple committees with the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. And I've been a speaker for their fundraisers. And I know what it's like to be in a space where everyone's eyes are on me, because it's something different about me. I've also been on the other end of that. I've spent the past decade pursuing my career in criminal justice, reform and social justice. And I've trained at dozens of women to share their experiences with disease, the criminal justice system, domestic violence, human trafficking, and other forms of trauma. So, my personal experience, combined with that experience, with my professional experience, have really allowed me to identify in some important takeaways around ensuring people feel heard, respected and seen in spaces where they were historically excluded. And today, I want to cover some of those, you know, ethical angles of storytelling, in addition to helping us all think through some social media strategies that can call your followers to participate in your social change campaigns. So I see people are sharing where they're from already. And so, oh, cool. We actually have someone from Cystic Fibrosis Foundation in Atlanta. That's awesome. So I'd like to kind of just get some context on your organization and what causes your championing championing because I think we probably have a broad span here. And any challenges you're hoping to navigate better by attending this this webinar? I think it could also help if you tell me like or share a little bit with each other. how big your communications department is, if you have Have one, because I think we have a range here, especially when it comes to nonprofits, you have multiple individuals wearing a lot of hats. And not everybody has the resources for a comms department. And it can be a lot kind of maintaining social media, and actually being strategic about about how to do that. So let me just take a peek at who's here. Okay. We have people who meet basic needs, rent.

That's great. We see people in housing, peace education. So if we were in the same room, I would probably make a joke, like, look around. These are your competitors. But we're on we're on a webinar. So thankfully, you don't have that tension going on. But no, in all seriousness, we actually, I think, have enough attention spans to go around, there's 4.5 9 billion social media users. And people are spending a lot of time on social media. And I think what you can gather from, from all the variety of attendees today is that there's a lot to care about, there's a lot of causes that need our attention. And so no one no one cause is more important than the other. But how do we get people's attention? How do you get them to care about your cause? And what you're asking them to do? So So I think, you can cut through a lot of the resources and manpower that are demanding your that that social media management demands, by really exploring strategies around how to do it the most effective way possible. So we're gonna start with the question around strategy. What do you want your social media followers to do? I'm wondering if you've asked yourself that question. Because everyone knows you're supposed to have a social media presence, it makes you look relevant, it makes you look, you know, you're doing the work. And it helps really highlight your work. But why are you doing it? What what is the end goal that you want? I think, if you're just posting for the sake of posting, you aren't being strategic and pulling out the results that you want. And the difference between being strategic and tactical, is that the tactics are just the steps you're taking.

And if you don't have an overarching plan, you're you're merely taking steps with no direction, you're kind of moving in a direction without an end address or map. So you need to begin with your end goal in mind, what do you want your followers to do? And I think there's probably a range of answers to that question, do you want them to donate? Do you want them to sign your petition? Do you want them to be joining you when you call them to, you know, go out and demonstrate when something happens? Or do you want them to be calling representatives for you. So just some tips around that. You know, always be intentional with your social media, I think that's a very hard thing to do, actually. Because who has time, especially if you don't have a comms department, but never post just for the sake of posting because you're supposed to wear because it's been a while. I think, a lot of times I've seen organizations do that. And they post something that's so irrelevant to their cause are so fluffy that it's not really going to hit anybody, it's not really going to actually do any favors for your social media presence. So why do it at all. So I think you should plan your campaign and plan specific campaigns around outcomes you want to achieve. And think about communications how your communications actually complementing your organization's strategic plan as a whole. So come together as an organization. And be sure that your your comms team is communicating with your general teams that are doing the work. Because I think the most important takeaway from that is you need organizational alignment. You need to be sure that everything that's coming out from your communications is aligning with the work that you're doing, and where you want to go as an organization. Because that's the ultimate goal of cops is to make sure that you get where you want to go.

Now I see the Auto Translate said cops, but it's comes I know that sometimes the closed captions are not always accurate. Okay, so one way to do that is to think about your theories of change. And I don't know if I'm A lot of work organizations have won and overarching theory of change that they have for their programs. But it is something to think about in relation to your communication strategy. So this is probably the most on the nose, one that you can use. And these are great resources from Rs impact.com. And you can actually click on the link when we send this PowerPoint out, to see to explore more. And really, these are frameworks because your theory of change should be a little bit more specific to what your your end goals are for as for your organization. So the messaging and frameworks theory of change is really around the messages that you're disseminating to large audiences. And so if your goal is that you want people to think differently about your cause, then and that's, that's step one. Where do you want that to go? What do you want that to lead to shift in social norms can lead to maybe more supporters joining your cause? More supporters could mean, stronger policy support? Stronger policy support? Could mean you have a larger social impact? So are you thinking about how one message can lead to this to listen to this to this? And that's really what what I mean, by crafting out your strategy, just build it out? And think broadly about, where do you want your messaging to go? And so I think your tactics under that will be about how, what kind of messaging Are you getting? What kind of stories are you telling? And when you do create a call to action? What is that going to be about?

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Here's another group formation theory of change. It's really around creating a group around core attitudes, values, or experiences. And so this is generally one that's about bringing people who are already going to be allies into a group. And so you're reaching out your outreach is mostly going to be for people whose minds you don't need to change. It's people that are going to be allies in your cause. And so your messaging isn't really about changing minds and hearts. It's more about how do we unify people around this cause? How do we get our allies motivated? So the hope is always that our messaging will cause this shift in social norms. But then this one branches off and to your, your next goal is to have strengthened alliances. And really, that's the thinking is that if you have a solid group, that's that all agrees and cares that a cause is important, then you have a network of people working toward this goal. And so when you have this, this network, you can be this communications channel, to bring them together into action. So another thing that might come from this is helping build capacity for organizations, you might be creating messaging that helps direct smaller organizations to action, direct coalition work, provide resources to people.

So if you're following this theory of change, you're really building coalitions of people that can cannot contribute to your your end goals. And here's just one more example is the grassroots theory of change, which this is really more about organizing people. And I think it's more for people who are at advocacy. And they're looking at ways to build capacity for organizers, through their messaging. So if your organization aims to build capacity aims to have change, you should be building your communications plan around that theory of change, and around, you know, what your organizational goals are. So I think, really, I just encourage you to explore these theories of change if you don't have one for your organization or your programs, so that you have a really solid understanding of what exactly your end goals are. And so you're not being just tactical about your social media posts, but you have a strategy and you know where you're going with it, that can make you more intentional with your messaging. Now some tips on calls to action.

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So, here's my advice on a strong call to action. One, it should be timed, constructed specifier urgency, it should create some some time commitment should be time bound. When you have a call to action, give people a deadline. Otherwise as the like, Oh, I could say that fit tomorrow. So always have a strong timeline for when you want this call to action to happen. So it's, we're trying to raise a million dollars by June 15. Okay, but your call to action also needs to be reasonable to break the action into something easily doable for your audience. We're trying to raise a million dollars by June 15. If every one of our supporters or followers on social media gave $5, we would be halfway to our goal. There, you break it down five bucks, or I could do five bucks. You know, Wikipedia does that very well, too. I don't know if you go on there. And they're like, Hey, you're reading this article for free. And if everyone who read an article for free just gave $1.50, we would reach our campaign goal in a day, which is really a great messaging, because it's very doable. And when you read that, you're like, oh, yeah, I can I can do $1.

Okay, should also be instructive, very clear on how you take that action, especially if it's around advocacy, you know, sign this letter. Join us at this time to demonstrate here. You know, click this link to donate should be very clear about what you need them to do, that should also be meaningful, to connect the action that they will take the impact it will have, we're trying to raise a million dollars by June 15th. If every one of our followers gave $5, we would be halfway to our goal to ensure every child in our county has access to healthy school meals every day of the school year. So you've connected it to it's not only five $5. And then look what you can do with $5. And breaking it down that simply is very important in a call to action.

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Here's an example. Three minutes of your time reasonable time bound, can save a life, sign the petition to fund our new cancer study. So people know what it's about. They know what they can do. I wonder, is there anything that you would add to this based on the the trim technique?

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Think maybe we'd add a directive? Yes. Deadline? Very nice. Yes, yeah, having having more directive, having a deadline is not necessarily time bound, just as three minutes of your time. That's the reasonable call. So we definitely need a little bit more detail here. What might you add to this one, maybe improving the wording on this, we need volunteers for our food pantry visit this. know some people do prefer like a concise, like short. And then you know, you click on the link to learn more. I think you run the risk of not grabbing people's interests if you don't have enough detail on impact. Because what you're doing in these, every detail of this, this ad is telling a story. It's showing a volunteer, she's smiling, she's handing something out. Already, someone's going to be making up a story in their minds about what this means. And so, add to the story, make sure that they are compelled by a story. Yeah, volunteer today, because it's not nice to be time bound. Yes, how many volunteers? You know, you could create some urgency around it. Like, we haven't had volunteers, we need volunteers because we don't, you know, people won't get their food if we don't have volunteers. Here's a altered version of it. 1200 of your neighbors in need get groceries from us each month. Then them your hands. So you have that kind of the meaning of the post. What What meaning will come of this action. We have a call to action lend them your hands and more details around seeking volunteers. This is the reasonable call right there so people know what they're getting when they look at it. I think this means there'll be more apt to to click on your link because they've already made certain dishes decisions as they've read through this. Oh, I want to make this kind of impact. Oh, I have time from 12 to three on Mondays and Thursdays to more likely to look at your link to learn more

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whenever you have a call to action should be accompanied by a story. I think we kind of say this to death, right? Like stories are so important when it comes to fundraise. Using when it comes to getting people to care about your cause. People want to hear stories. We're wired for stories. So being compelling, is, of course, not always easy to do. And I think that's the heart of the question for many nonprofits is okay, well, what does that mean? How do we create compelling stories? And I think many people do struggle with that. So we'll get into a little bit of also using the stories of people with lived experience. So that helps you create content. We want to do that in sensitive and ethical ways. Now, I apologize if you have a communications background?

Because this might be a little rudimentary, but I don't know, there's probably a span of attendees here. So you can't be compelling unless you know these the answer these questions, whose attention you want, what interests your audience, and where your audience goes. So I think one thing to kind of think of ahead of time, is, how are you accessing the majority of your social media, on your desktop, on your laptop on your phone. And if you primarily use your phone to access social media, you're like 91% of users. And which is kind of interesting to think about, because how someone is accessing information should determine how you design that information. Accessing as you know, a website on your phone is way different from on your desktop, accessing complicated spreadsheets or reports, very different experience on the phone, versus the laptop or desktop. So social media is also not the only driver of digital information. About 50% of business business inquiries are placed on mobile devices as well. Social media takes about 25% of all digital media consumption. So we're looking at like, the majority of how people are using their phone is for social media, and are a large portion of proportion of how people are using their, their phone. US adults spend five and a half hours daily on their phones. And that number is even higher for for kids.

So depending on who your audience is. And website traffic is usually about 60% comes from mobile phones. And so people are have had their phones on them. So what point I'm getting at here is that thinking about how people are accessing your content should drive the type of content you're creating. And so I think looking at your own habits can help reflect like the habits of additional users. So, you know, think about how many, how much you browse your phone before you fall asleep? What about the moment you wake up? What about during your commute? So that also can inform your timing. You notice most people on their commute? If they're taking public transportation or looking at their phones. Most people are waking up and immediately looking at their phones. So knowing that helps you possibly time your posts Well, time your calls to action, well, when is someone most likely to take action? You know, maybe it isn't first thing in the morning, maybe they are opening to browse their phone and get some news and just wake up. And maybe they're most likely to take action, you know, before bed or during dinner time. These are trends that you want to like, keep an eye on social media is a ever evolving machine. So always using that data to kind of figure out where's your audience going? And what is making them click on your content, what content has the most generated interest

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and also thinking about types of social media that different age demographics use we know older. Social media users tend toward Facebook, younger users tend to or Tik Tok. Millennials tend toward Instagram. So knowing like the age demographics and where they are trending might inform you Where to post stuff if you're trying to reach like an older intellectual audience, you know, maybe it's not worth your time to use a tick tock account set that up. It might not anyway, because it's really going to get banned. But But again, like I said, social media is an evolving machine, it's always going to be changing so. So yeah, thinking about about where your audience is. And this is probably driving that point. Ever, ever more. Marketing is no longer about the stuff that you make. But about the stories you tell. And this is cross industries. Like it's not just for nonprofits, not just for causes, this is across brands across industries.

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We know that what makes a story compelling, is it has to have conflict, you have to be telling a story about the challenge or the problem that you're seeing. It has to have context. So you're making sure that the audience understands where and when something is happening into who you might be giving the why of what led up to it. So giving that that background information, giving some context. And then it a compelling story also has to have momentum needs to end on a note of where are we going from here. And if you hold the solution, you should be alluding to that at the end, this story has momentum, because we are going somewhere with it, we know what to do, and you can be a part of it. So always, when you're you're crafting your story, be sure there's conflict, it's not a story, if there's no conflict, there's context and only the relevant details that the audience needs.

And there's momentum. There's something happening next. I think a really great platform, a great account that I follow is Humans of New York, and I don't know, we a lot of people follow that account. But I think it's a great example of storytelling, it's really a great way to show these short, well written concise stories that you know, within a matter of a paragraph can have you crying can have you laughing, and just that one image can pull at your heartstrings can pull your soul. And so I think making sure that you're exploring these other successful storytelling platforms to pick up on their techniques and see how they're doing it. And that's an account that I definitely recommend. Um, so if your strategy is storytelling, to connect followers to your cause and call to action, some tactics that you might be using or humor, pulling at the heartstrings. I know, you know, that is definitely a fine line across when you are doing it ethically, because I think it's important not to use people, as props. create empathy with issues that overlap. And that's an important one. So many people can relate to issues that are affected by your issue. And I think I'm getting at that, because working in criminal justice, not many people care about criminal justice issues. When I'm in my little bubble, of course, everybody cares about it. And then when I step out of that bubble, I realized, Oh, the general public is not really as passionate as I am about criminal justice reform. And that might be true for for a multitude of causes. People are in their, their own world, their own zone, worrying about the kids worrying about the house, whatever. And not thinking about how passionately they should care about your cause.

For me, making sure that people relate to issues that are related to incarceration, if they don't feel that they are personally affected by it, or tell a story that helps them empathize. You know, the majority of people who are incarcerated have experienced early childhood trauma. If we just address early childhood trauma, the rates of incarceration will go down. Can tell a story about how pregnant women are being shackled. During their their births, and during their pregnancy, and the impact this has on a baby. People care about innocent lives that are impacted by the system. So if you have a challenging cause, find that common thread of empathy, what issues overlap with yours, that you can tell a story that connects them instantly to it. So someone who has never had a relative or never been incarcerated? It will be able to resonate with that story because, well, if they have children, or if they they know someone who's had children, most people can relate to this understanding of WoW, childbirth while shackled, that sounds terrible. Let's do something about it.

Of course, using statistics and data is very important. Tie it with with a narrative, because, you know, it resonates with some people that they just want to see, you know, the problem and the outcomes. And so how you weave those together is really important. And then individualize an issue illustrate your your direct impact on someone's life, telling one person's story can help illustrate that, even though it fits not totally representing the 1000s that you serve. And part of doing that is including the voices of people with lived experience. So I want to give a more silly example than talking about criminal justice reform. But, you know, people who are working to save a snail species from going extinct. That's not necessarily a cause that inspires a lot of passion for people. But this article, I felt really found a way to get people to care. And I think this might be an overused title, where people say, here's why that matters. But it gets a lot of clicks. So finding a way to wordsmith this is happening. This is why you should care. Right off the bat. It's very pointed title. Of course, they use humor, which I think is a great technique. For an issue like this, it really catches the reader's interest, and also acknowledges that, hey, most people don't really care about this issue. But then they move into connecting it to a larger cause we can care about. So maybe you don't care about these specific snail species, they don't have anything to do with your life. But you should care because they affect the whole ecosystem. And they go into talking about how this species relies on this snail species. And, you know, the cure for this, this disease or this is using this medicine. And if these snails go extinct, then this this also will be in jeopardy. So really helping connect to this broader understanding of why people should care. And I think the ensuring that you're, you're hitting on that large scope is really important.

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That's great. So I'm looking at some questions in here. Facebook fundraisers have been successful. Yeah, I think those are great.

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And then, let's see, with so much content being sent to us on a daily basis, how do we make our story stand out for the story be kept short, with a link to read more, perhaps, short is better? Short is always better, because people are consuming so much content. And 500 words is too long. It's too long for for the average reader. And so I would, I would keep it you know, 150 words, and really try to trim it to the most interesting details. So the most important details and just follow that that story structure of your opening quickly with with what is the conflict, giving the context.

And then what's next. And just try to follow that that compelling story arc. And I think if you have someone creative on your team, creating compelling titles, is really important too. There's all sorts of other tricks that like are kind of hard to pin down. There's one study about how more emails are opened when there's a typo in the title, which like, is so bad for your brand to have typos in your title, but apparently more people want to see oh, they did a typo. I want to open this and look for more. So actually, that's it's kind of interesting. You're, you're scientist of human behavior as you observe what works and what doesn't. So I thought this Instagram series was really interesting. Of course, it's easy to be interesting when you have beautiful animals that you're you're sharing pictures out But this is from a US conservation Australia conservation. And they have an Instagram story with multiple slides, which I recommend, don't try to fit it all in one. And they start with the drama, they start with the conflict, almost a creature a day was added to the national Threatened Species List. They show the picture. And what's what's going on with that species, then they go with to that, that call to action. Extinction is a choice. We need to stop destroying wildlife habitat if our children and their children are going to be able to appreciate Australian birds and animals like we can. So what what common empathy, common ground? Are they going out here? It's not just about the birds, right? It's about children, your children, the future of your children, they're pulling that piece of empathy for you. Not necessarily like, Hey, do you like birds? We do, too. It's about the future of your children. And so they really pulled in a broader thing to care about in order to be compelling. And so the last piece is momentum. This is what's next, this is a solvable problem. And this is what we can do about it.

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Here's some more examples of creating empathy and hard to reach places. This was a really interesting one, it was humanizing plants. And they did this, you know, highlighting this, this study of plants make noises they have, you know, they, they've been studied and found that they make noises in certain environments be reacting to certain things. And so like when a tomato plant is thirsty, has a different frequency of noise that it makes, you know, and actually, you can't see it, because it's a video, but they show here like that. You see in the middle of their screen, the the sound it makes, and so you can actually listen to the sounds they make.

When a great fight is being cut, it makes a different frequency of noise. So this was an interesting way to connect human emotion to to something that is inanimate in a way. But let's talk about people. And so we've touched on. Oh, I think there was a question about call to action. So the call to action is really around the environment minister on what they can do. You're right, that they should, they could have a prompt that says you can encourage the Minister to do this. And so that that would be a make this a stronger next step. And I think that's that was a great point, there's nothing that they're really connecting to the reader necessarily. It's possible that their goal is just to get the attention and have tagged the environmental minister, and it's more of an education campaign around an election. So I think it might depend on what exactly they want their followers to do. So when we're telling people stories, and the term now is people with lived experience, and I like to define that, because the definition comes from you from your cause people with lived experience with your cause. And I think it's important to define that so that we're not using it as a blanket term for people who have experienced poverty or people who have experienced homelessness, that were using it very intentionally, and not using it in a way that ends up othering people. So people with lived experience are people who have gained knowledge through direct firsthand involvement in everyday events, rather than through assumptions and constructs from other people research or media. And so you don't want to be that that piece of media that's contributing to these assumptions and contracts. So highlighting people's stories, in order to further your cause or raise money can be exploitative, if it's not done intentionally.

What I mean by othering people is when it's it's kind of a new verb that has come up in the past several years. But other thing is when you create a group out of someone else that points out their difference, and makes that their sole identifier. So othering might be say being like, Oh, those are disabled people. And rather than saying there are people who have disabilities, or you know making them out to be a separate group, from yours. Using people's stories can cause harm. If you're not intentional, you can re traumatize people, especially if they're sharing a deep experience about their lives. So I think ultimately, what we want to do is aim to be more than inclusive of voices. We want to bring people to the table with respect and genuine desire to have them be a part of the cause. In many cases, ceding power to let them have that space to be a voice in your cause. I think old practice would be, we want to highlight your story, Aren't you lucky, the new practice is we want you to be a part of this with us, we want you to be a standing voice next to us. And so being intentional that that's your angle. Because our previous approach was more exploitative. So I think it's important to be intentional about how you ask people to be a part of it. And how you do that. So ethical storytelling should always be based in respect, have created three tenets around this based on my work.

And based on what I've observed people's experience to be. And then based on my own personal experience, and what it's been like sharing my story, actually designed a whole training around this for staff to make sure that they've developed the skills and best practices for working with people with lived experience and bringing them into the fold. So always ensure your questions are tailored with empathy. Use person first language, like I said before, you know, instead of saying a disabled person, you say, a person with disability. I'm also preferring, you know, person who has experienced homelessness. And instead of people who are homeless, I know that's very difficult to navigate, because it's constantly changing in our field. There's definitely guides out there on that are being continuously updated. And I'm happy to link those if people will find that useful. It is an ever changing landscape. And I think it can be frustrating for for people who are championing because because you have to always stay on the up. But it's, it's a worthy effort, because our language does make a difference. And it can impact the way someone is seen and felt in the space.

We always want to make sure that we're paying people to share their stories, treated them like their time and insight is expertise. Because it it's it's just because they didn't go to school and get their PhD. And it doesn't mean they don't have expertise. So I think it's very important as part of honoring their time honoring their stories to really compensate. And always consider what resources they need to take this time to share their stories, you know, do they need childcare assistance, they have access to Wi Fi? Do they need translation or interpretation? Do they need a quiet space to take the call? This is all stuff you should be asking when you ask someone in to share their story, whether you're interviewing over zoom, or you're having them come in person? Do they need transportation? How this is all, you know, even if you're giving them compensation is it all going to be sucked up by childcare expenses. And so really thinking these things through and then approaching people to share their stories always begins with trust. So be sure you've built those those trusting relationships before you're really making that ask, I'm assuming that you probably do have those relationships if you're highlighting a client that you've served. But I know in a lot of advocacy spaces, there's that disconnect. You have a research side and you don't necessarily have that connection to the community.

So I recommend really building events around community and creating maybe a liaison relationship with someone in the community that is that bridge of trust, and really being intentional about having that relationship developed. Key number two transparency. Always make participants aware of what they will be asked to share. And be very clear on the medium will be a video podcast. It's gonna be in the newsletter social media, is it gonna be used for a political campaign? Talk about how it will be used and for how long and who will see it. I think all of that stuff is very important. You might have new information come up during the interview. And at one point, you're writing about their experience with House lessness. And suddenly, you're talking about their experience with sexual assault. Well, whatever happens in the course of an interview, maybe the participant might not be expecting, so always clarify with them. Do you want me to include this in the story? Is there anything that's off limits, and really have that conversation about where it's going to be shared? And the most important, this actually should be number one is control. Always be clear on who owns the story after it's published. Believe it or not, people think, Oh, you're going to own my story. Now. It's gonna limit where I can tell my story. Always be clear about it. You know, you own the video, you own the newsletter article, but you don't own their story. And always ensure participants have the ability set boundaries around what and how they share. So it's really important to be upfront and say, you can say no, there's no consequences to saying no, during this interview, or no one response to giving the interview, especially if you're in the service industry, you want to be clear that participating and sharing their story is not going to result in you know, some consequences to their service backlash or frustration from you.

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And then always allow an out during the conversation if the participant needs it. It's important, we talked kind of have this already, but to ask how they want to be defined in your language. So might not assume that they want to be part of person first language. See how ask what they use, always ask for their pronouns, be conscientious around how they they want to be spoken about. I think it's also important around the client's safety to be very clear about how much details they want changed, especially if they're a domestic violence survivor. or, excuse me, if they're a domestic violence survivor, or they're having custody issues, any of that can be used against them. And surprisingly, and if you look at the Violence Against Women Act, programs that are providing services to women with with experienced domestic violence, protecting their information is so critical for their safety, even given the number of children and their ages is too much information to provide publicly. So be very, be sure you have a conversation with them about their their safety and make sure that you know there's an if there's any details, they want change that they've informed you. And then, if possible, give participants the ability to see the content before it's released and approve it.

Especially if you're doing a newsletter article. You might want to use some flowery language and details. Give them some some participation in that process. Yes, yes. Yeah. Debbie says I would think the storyteller would have final approval over communication prior to publishing. Yes, that's true. Surprisingly, does not always happen. I've given my interview to companies about my my transplant story and really opened up, never saw the end result. And, you know, it's like they took the story and then disappeared. And that can be, you know, really damaging for some people that are opening up for the first time or reliving a trauma when they get their story. I wanted to share tips on content generation to kind of make it an easier lift. I did see some questions about that. I'll be sharing it through Samina, who will give a follow up to this. But using a free resources like Canva, making sure that you have photos that are have a free copyright license Pexels is my go to, I'll share that in the document. And just using as much free resources that make it easy to craft quickly. And Canva really is is amazing for that if you're just trying to create a compelling visual post. It's a it's a great tool to use. And if you do have the budget or the investment in pro because you get all these stock images for free, and you can rest assured that they're not taken and violating some copyright license. So we'll be sharing that

08:22:19

So I am opening for questions. So let me see, I didn't know if Samina wanted to jump in with some questions that she's read, as this has gone on.

**Sameena Usmani** 08:22:33

Yeah, I can, I can jump in and help you if that's if that's cool, because we've had some great ones. So I just want to thank everyone. And please keep entering the questions in the chat. Because whatever is not been answered, we are going to hand over to Katherine to see if she can get back to she has given Catherines given some amazing information. And we'll try and answer as many as we can and time remaining. But we also want to let you know that taproot is here, our volunteers can help you with your storytelling, your social media strategy. So please, after this, go to temporary plus.org. And sign up, you know, make an account if you haven't already. So first, let's get into the questions. Natalie has asked how should we balance the text and the ask on the graphic, as opposed to in the caption for a social media post.

08:23:31

So I just would remind you that the way people are using this, the content is they're scrolling, scrolling, scrolling on their phones, and so think about what catches your eye first. It's not the caption, it's the image. You don't want the image to be overwhelming with details. So I think you might split up, you know, the link, click the link or Yeah, you don't want it too bogged down with details. But you know, I think I always start with self observation. What just made me stop and look at this, this post, what was it about this post that made me made me stop, people are more likely to stop for a video. People, you know, just having that movement, it doesn't even have to be a special video. So um, you know, the more compelling you can make the image for, for instance, for an Instagram or LinkedIn post. And having people, images of people can actually make make it more compelling as well. People will immediately want to understand the story of the photo that they're seeing.

**Sameena Usmani** 08:24:46

Okay, we have another question by I'm sorry, I might totally butcher your name. Let's Shanta. What are some best practices? If you do not have a full comps team? I think that's probably most folks on this call.

08:25:00

Yeah, absolutely. I think I've seen some people mentioned in there, you know, relying on volunteers is really important. I think having a strategy is going to cut a lot of your time, you know, by a great percentage, because you're you're posting with direction, and you're able to plan out a full campaign based on what results you want. Rather than, Oh, today we got to post and kind of flying by the seat of your pants kind of posting. So that's, that's my first best practice is plan ahead. Just sit down for a day, create the strategy. Use tools, like Canva. Use volunteers who can maybe help with photo creation when you have a big event or a giveaway day, making sure that you know you have a photographer there to help take photos, always with the consciousness of clients who are receiving service should not have their photo taken. If you want to do an interview with a client who's opened having their photos taken, that's a great way to substitute that in. You know, of course with some compensation. And you're taking taking images of staff giving out things, I think, is also a good way to kind of capture a moment. But really mining for talent in your volunteers mind for talent in your staff. I mean, I just did an event. And the coordinators like Oh, I'm really good at photography. Okay, well, we need you to be the photographer through the event. And so it's really mining for talent where you can find it.

**Sameena Usmani** 08:26:48

And I'm going to push a little plug, you know, if you don't have a team taproot is here. That's my, my last team. My last little push. We also have Debbie and Michael, and I'm sure other folks they're interested in how to convert people who are social media followers into sustaining donors. Do you have any advice on that?

08:27:09

It's such a good question. Engagement. You have to engage people who are following you? Don't take their legs for granted. Don't take their comments for granted, engage with them, and let them know there's a person behind your logo. And I think the most important way to transition into a relationship with them is, hey, they posted on your social media, maybe you have an opportunity for them to show up in person and get to know you better. Send them a direct message or send them a comment in the chat. Or yeah, underneath the post. And that's how you keep people coming back and feeling attached to your your organization.

**Sameena Usmani** 08:27:51

Okay, Jenny asked, How do you reconcile the thought that paying people for testimonials? Seems as though you're almost paying them for reviews? I can't imagine my donors feeling good, that we are paying people for their stories.

08:28:07

Yes, yeah, absolutely. And I think there's also that question of, if you're paying someone to testify to you don't want to seem like you're paying for lobbying. So the distinction is always we are paying you for your time, we are compensating you for transportation, and you're wording it in that light. Rather than, you know, we're paying for a good review. I think that's the the honest truth of what you're doing. Not paying someone is exploitative of your clients, and making sure that they're compensated for their time, not for their good review. And so also setting that expectation before your interview, hey, you can say whatever you want about our organization, you don't need to endorse us. We just want to be able to share your story.

**Sameena Usmani** 08:29:03

Okay, and Hannah is asking, working in the mental health space, most of her quote unquote compelling stories cannot be shared publicly. And what other content would you recommend instead? Should we create personas based on the stories? Yes,

08:29:19

that's a great question. And I do recommend creating personas around kind of collectively. amalgamating your data, you know, in what is your typical client, that you're, you know, the data around your typical client? What is the story arc for your typical client? And I think, just making sure you're not copying too many close details about their lives. And just being conscious of that. And then you can always, instead of doing direct approaches put out a call to participate in storytelling, and an offer, you know, we can compensate you, we're doing a storytelling day, this will be shared in our newsletter. So only if you're comfortable sharing about your mental health journey, which a lot of people actually are.

**Sameena Usmani** 08:30:14

Okay, and Jose is asking a pertinent platform specific question. And you might already know what this is. Are you seeing organizations continue to use Twitter? Or are they going away? And if they are using it? Are they using the Twitter blue? I guess it's the blue check. And if they aren't, have there been any other good alternatives that you've noticed?

08:30:39

Yeah, so I'm, I'm, I'm not on Twitter. I know Twitter's lost a great many followers in the past several months. And Twitter blew was not the success they expected it to be, especially after the whole fake account creation. I do recommend starting to explore alternatives to Twitter. I can't predict what's going to happen to it, but I would just follow it closely. And I think for some organizations, Elon Musk might present a conflict of values, so I would consider that as well.

**Sameena Usmani** 08:31:20

Okay, great. Well, we have come to the end of the of the hour here. And again, keep at and add, I see a lot of folks please keep adding questions, and we will send them over to Kathryn. And just a another little reminder, like I said, taproot plus, volunteers are here. And we'd also like to invite you to our next webinar on May 11. It is grants 102 persuasive storytelling for grant writers. And if you've missed grants 101 The link will be available in the registration form. And in our follow up email. And on behalf of taproot, I really like to give a huge thank you to Catherine. We will be sending an email later today. Not just with the recording of this webinar, but Catherine mentioned she has a great list of free tools. So we'll also be sharing that and thank you to all of you for joining in we appreciate and we hope to see you next time bye bye

08:32:23

thank you