

The State of Us: 8 Takeaways From the 2019 Collaborative

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Meredith Kavanagh Posted June 17th, 2019

7. It's Time to Revolutionize How We Think About Nonprofit Marketing

Nonprofit storytelling remains a pillar of effective nonprofit strategy because sharing stories allows you to reach, connect, and steward your supporters while maintaining the emotional connection that drew them to your organization in the first place. With so many organizations leveraging storytelling in their marketing, we dug into a few ways that your organization can stand out from the rest.



Leverage Humor

In his session, comedic financial speaker Colin Ryan showed attendees how the building blocks of comedy can be leveraged in storytelling to engage and empower donors and amplify a nonprofit's impact. Colin shared comedy trade secrets about how to collect a relatable moment and successfully share it in five STEPS:

- **Save:** Capture any funny and relatable moment. If people are laughing—write it down.
- **Test:** Retell that story to gain feedback. When did I lose you? If I lost you, how do I get you back? The feedback allows you to pivot your messaging and gives you an opportunity to build confidence in telling the story.
- **Edit:** Boil it down to the shortest form possible. Tell us a scene rather than the whole story because it gets to the point quicker.
- **Practice:** Sometimes we focus on content and wording more than being present and 100% in the moment of telling the story. Practice gives you comfort and confidence.
- **Share:** How many stages can you share this on? Your website, social media, newsletters, and emails are places are opportunities to share this moment.

Colin expressed the importance of following those STEPS and also shared how to use “humor” when nonprofits are facing situations that don’t have an obvious comedic thread.

According to Colin, the reason humor lands is because it’s relatable, and people form a connection with the story or joke being told. If a nonprofit is trying to relate to their audience in a lighthearted way, they can lean on their surroundings to connect with people.

Do you have a unique workplace location (a couch in the basement)? Have you had one epic fail of a fundraising event (3 people showed up)? Colin recommends sharing those moments with your supporters through the lens of: “We put up with these challenges because the people we serve put up with so much more. This is why we do what we do.”