

Podcast Interview Transcript

Nancy L. Winterbauer, Kathy C. Garrett, and Darius Tandon

In each volume of the Journal, the editors select one article for our Beyond the Manuscript post-study interview with the authors. Beyond the Manuscript provides the authors the opportunity to tell listeners what they would want to know about the project beyond what went into the final manuscript. The associate editors who handled the articles conduct our Beyond the Manuscript interviews. This edition of Beyond the Manuscript features Nancy Winterbauer and Kathy Garrett authors of *A Communications Tool to Recruit Policymakers to a CBPR Partnership for Childhood Obesity Prevention*, and PCHP Editor-in-Chief Darius Tandon.

Darius Tandon:

Good afternoon and thanks for taking the time to talk a little bit more about your manuscript that's being published in *Progress and Community Health Partnerships*.

The first question I have for the two of you is if you could talk a little bit more about why the partners that you were working with felt that a video was the right approach to take to reach policy makers? You write in the article that you thought a video would be effective for communicating the voice of the community, but there are probably other ways that you could have done that beyond the video. I'm interested in hearing a little bit more about why you gravitated toward the idea of developing a video?

Nancy Winterbauer:

We state in the article that we wanted a product that would reach a large number of policy makers but take-up a very little bit of their time, but also something that would appeal to their emotions and in that way draw them into the project. That was the motivation for the video.

Kathy Garrett:

I'll build on that a little bit Nancy. I think one of the challenges that we had getting in front of the policy makers as Nancy mentioned was the time aspect. There were a lot of other ways this could have been achieved. We could have used brochures or fact sheets to tell the story of those who live in food deserts and are food challenged. We could have had them meet with the representatives and policy makers and that would have been effective, but number one that's a timing and scheduling nightmare sometimes.

I think what we really wanted to do is bring a voice to the individuals who were food challenged. We wanted them to tell the story in their own words knowing that would be the most compelling. In addition to being able to tell it in their own words, we were able to go to various places within the community to demonstrate that this just isn't in one little pocket. We actually shot in various different locations to demonstrate needs and what the issue were affecting the constituents in those food deserts and challenged

areas. So we were able to tell the story in a very compelling way in the own voice of the people that we were representing in an emotionally compelling way that reached across a lot of geographically dispersed areas.

Darius Tandon:

One of the other things that struck me in reading the article was how actively your different community partners were contributing to the creation of the video. We publish a lot of different examples of community university partnerships and don't always see as much active engagement from community partners. Do you think that there's something unique about working on this video that perhaps fostered this strong engagement from your different partners?

Nancy Winterbauer:

Going back to that storytelling aspect the video was a representation of the people who were involved and they knew that their community and their constituencies were going to be visually represented. That really fostered a lot more ownership and active contribution as a result. Again, the article refers to the number of iterations we went through in terms of viewing and first shooting, but then viewing and editing the video and I think that that really speaks to again the idea that these communities were going to be represented and our members wanted to be certain that they were being represented accurately.

Kathy Garrett:

In addition to community representation, would be the early engagement of communications professionals within this process. Just the fact that you had people who understood the complexities of telling this story via video and having the project management skills to be able to address and manage all of the different pieces to this puzzle as it came together.

I think a lot of times when you get active with community groups and a project of this style it's hard to pull that together if you don't have someone who's managing the project and understanding the process. So as an advertising marketing communication partner our firm was really happy to work with the coalition, because they were really involved and I think it actually helped with the management of the process to have us there so we could actually make sure that the product spoke to what they wanted and it was reflective of the stories that they were trying to tell. Also, the individual agencies participating in the coalition were able to focus on how they were best going to tell the story and who would tell that story for them versus having to worry about all of the backend work.

Nancy Winterbauer:

I don't know if you're going to go this way Darius, but I wanted to add that the communications firm which Kathy represents was an active member of the coalition, so I wanted to be sure that people understand that we didn't hire Kathy's firm to do this video.

Kathy Garrett:

Correct.

Nancy Winterbauer:

That they were active members of the coalition prior to the video production.

Darius Tandon:

I think that was leading into my next question, which is talking a little bit about how the marketing partners were initially recruited to the partnership and discussing why you think that they were interested in working with researchers and other stakeholders on this important issue.

Nancy Winterbauer:

I was really impressed when I got involved with the coalition that there was a marketing partner, a very active marketing partner onboard when I became involved. Kathy's firm really is very much of a social justice kind of firm. I just want to make sure that that point is made that they have a genuine interest in social justice and then Kathy maybe you can speak to how you all got involved with the coalition.

Kathy Garrett:

I do think that that is an important point to reiterate about finding the right marketing partner for the right reason. We came to join the coalition based on our community work with members of the coalition outside of the coalition. So we were very active in partnerships with health organizations - Nemours, Wolfson Children's Hospital. We were very active with War on Poverty, which was another one of the partners. So through our community involvement we came to partner with the coalition and from our standpoint we are very cause marketing and social marketing where that's a majority of our client base.

I think from our standpoint the research that was going into this particular activity was very attractive to us and aligned with our agency and our mission and goals to serve the greater community, but also to participate in evidence-based research. So it was a natural fit for us. We understood what we were getting into in the process and the evolution of the coalition as to what its mission was. We knew it wasn't something that it would be basically set it and forget it so to speak. We're still active with the coalition to this day.

Darius Tandon:

So perhaps for the folks who are reading this transcript and listening into the podcast you could expand a little bit. It sounds like you're marketing firm, Kathy, was very much interested in social justice issues. Is that something that other research teams and other partnership and coalitions are likely to find around the country, marketing firms that are interested in social justice issues and if they're not is there a way that they might be able to get some of the marketing firms to be more interested and involved in some of these social justice issues?

Kathy Garrett:

I think that a lot of marketing firms are interested in social justice. Jacksonville is not a large advertising marketing hub per se as a Chicago, so I would if I was speaking to other researchers who wanted to engage other marketing firms to take a look around at the clients that they're working with and see what they really are all about.

For us it was just a natural fit, because we're a group of individuals that already are aware and involved in various social justice issues. But I think you shouldn't approach that it's just an agency that you have to go after. Social justice is a very personal thing and there's a lot of resources of people who might represent a firm and have access to working with the resources that they're communication firm has, which is a way around budgetary issues and things like that. So I think that the best way to pursue it is to kind of looking within your own community; like-minded people usually gravitate towards each other. There's probably someone who has marketing and communication experience and works for a firm or for a corporation and that person can be the conduit to a lot of different resources.

Nancy Winterbauer:

I'd like to add to that as well. The article points out that it was a fairly low-tech production. Certainly some if not all of the pieces of it were shot with a cell phone. So the production itself was low tech, but then it strikes me that you can encounter people with the kind of expertise that Kathy's firm has in marketing classes, at universities, individuals who have had prior experience with marketing. In fact, even on our own team there were other people who had sort of advertising or marketing experience who contributed ideas as well. So I think you can look for people in nooks and crannies that where you share a similar philosophy and either have prior experience, current experience, or you can hook up with universities, so there are other ways to create the kind of product that we did other than having a marketing firm as a coalition partner.

Kathy Garrett:

I'd like to comment on that a little bit, Nancy, as to just some of the background of why we decided to pursue something that could be perceived as a little bit lower tech. Yes, we did film quite a bit of it on the cell phone and we edited it ourselves. Meaning the members in my agency that were active within this project, we did not take it to a production company we edited it ourselves on our MacBook. Do we have a little bit more experience than some? Yes, but by no means are we a production company.

But back to the point of why it was shot on the cell phone and why it was somewhat low-tech in the production side was not only because of budget, but also we wanted to capture the authenticity of the individuals that we were filming. We wanted to film them in a way that they would maintain being comfortable and speak from their heart. I think the means of using that technology made them more familiar, which made the story more authentic, which ultimately would resonate more with policy makers, not only reflect well on the budget of the coalition.

So it was very purposeful of why we did that. That was a decision that was made by many members of the team. We discussed it and we weighed the pros and cons. So back to Nancy's point is the fact that there are people in nooks and crannies that do have a lot of experience and a passion for social justice in particular causes that needs to be brought to the table.

Darius Tandon:

One of the things that you didn't mention in the article and I think the last few minutes of the conversations have started to touch on are issues related to cost in producing the video. This is something that would be important for others to hear about. Could you speak to the type of costs that was involved in producing your video?

Nancy Winterbauer:

The article does touch on how many hours were devoted to different aspects, but Kathy would probably be able to say more what that would cost.

Kathy Garrett:

I think that it goes back to the mission of our agency and our passion about this particular subject. But as I had mentioned before just the fact that we kept the production quality at a very minimal level; that the content and the message was not sacrificed because we shot it on our cell phones.

I think now especially if we're speaking to other researchers and other coalitions and groups that want to get their message out there, with the prevalence of social media, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, the more authentic approach goes a very long way.

Kathy Garrett:

And I don't think that people should be intimidated because they have tools at their disposal that they might not think would be appropriate. But in truth when you're talking about these social justice issues sometimes the worst mistake that you can make is not to be authentic and to really go for very high production and very glossy. You need to stay authentic to your cause and your message and that should drive your production in how you tell the story.

There were lots of pieces that went along with this. We did the video and then we also did a report to the community. I cannot quote those figures off the top of my head, but it was a very compelling piece, but yet we had cost-saving measures of how it was produced and how it was printed. They were very well within the budget constraints of the coalition; that was first and foremost.

We never wanted to present them with an option that they could not afford and therefore would be frustrated and not be able to tell their story.

Darius Tandon:

One final question. The editors were appreciative of the candid assessment that you mentioned in the paper about how some of the folks you talked to felt that the video you produced was perhaps underutilized in terms of its ability to reach a broader policy audience. Reflecting on the work that you did, would you have done anything differently?

Nancy Winterbauer:

I always love that question, because I almost always wish that I had done it differently. In this particular case we were presented with a challenge of the time constraints that policy makers have to live within and our needs to get our message across. This particular effort was around including policy makers in the development of a participatory research project. That in and of itself means that ideally to my mind at least the policy makers would have been in from the ground floor on developing what that research question might have been, along with our other community partners.

We quickly realized that that was not an option. That's in part why we went the video route, because we couldn't claim too much of their time. So what that meant was the community, our coalition, made the decision about which strategy we wanted to use, which research question we wanted to address in our work without the policy makers. So we put together a case for why we chose that route and the video captures that. But ideally we would have included the policy makers in that kind of decision making.

Some of the policy makers, the people who we were able to reach were appreciative of that and wanted to have had a larger role in the decision making process. But it's kind of a toss-up which way do you go? Do you try to get the policy makers and people who have no time, do you try to get them involved in the decision making from the get-go or do you choose the other route just the way that we went? I think in the long run we were better off with the way that we ended up going, which was focusing on the research question that we developed and inviting the policy makers in to share that with us.

The idea of involving policy makers and coalitions moving toward policy is fairly recent at least in Jacksonville, which had primarily been concerned with programming that had been the main emphasis of coalition. So when we were putting this project together the coalition was itself moving more towards engagement with policy makers.

Nancy Winterbauer:

So do I wish we had done it differently? I think we took the best course that we could, but there's always that nagging question about what would have transpired if we had done it the other way?

Kathy, what do you think?

Kathy Garrett:

I agree 100 percent. The only thing that I would have to add to that is that in addition to involving policy makers in the process it would have been nice had we had the time; if we would have been able to engage with the policy makers in helping to formulate the research questions. Then we could go back and test that among the policy makers' constituents to ensure that there was a match.

I mean there was lots of information and anecdotal information we knew we were on the right track, but I think that it would have been even more beneficial if we could have taken that extra step with some of the research before we posed the research question.

Darius Tandon:

Well Nancy, Kathy, thank you for taking the time to talk with us a little bit more today about your article. We wish you the best of luck in the future with all of your work.