

Agency for Change Podcast: Emily Braun, Founder and CEO, My Impact Hub

Connect with Emily and My Impact Hub at:

- Website – <https://myimpacthub.com/>
- LinkedIn – <https://www.linkedin.com/company/myimpacthub/>

Emily Braun: 0:00

Growth and innovation come from friction, so don't shy away from it. Lean into it and see how far it takes you.

Announcer: 0:13

Welcome to Agency for Change, a podcast from KidGlov that brings you the stories of changemakers who are actively working to improve our communities. In every episode, we'll meet with people who are making a lasting impact in the places we call home.

Lyn Wineman: 0:27

Hey everyone, welcome back to the Agency for Change podcast. This is Lyn Wineman, President and Chief Strategist at KidGlov. So I'm guessing you've all heard the definition of insanity, but if not, it is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Anyone out there guilty of insanity by that definition? Well, today we get to talk with somebody who is doing something completely new. Our guest is Emily Braun. She is the CEO and Founder of My Impact Hub, which is a platform designed to help nonprofits achieve their missions by doing social media in a completely new way. Emily, welcome to the podcast. We can't wait to hear what you're up to.

Emily Braun: 1:33

Hi Lyn, Thanks so much for having me. Excited to be here.

Lyn Wineman: 1:36

I am excited to talk to you too, Emily. I'd love to just have you start by telling us more about My Impact Hub.

Emily Braun: 1:50

Absolutely so. My Impact Hub is my company that I founded. It is based in Calgary, Alberta, and we help nonprofits make the most of their social media reach by driving those posts into tangible results. So this means getting more revenue through the door that can be undesignated revenue, driving more event registrants through your door, volunteers, clients, and it all comes without that steep cost of traditional marketing.

Lyn Wineman: 2:15

Emily, I love what you're talking about there, because I think so many people kind of have social media as part of their plan, as something on their list, but they don't really think about what do they want from the social media or what do they want beyond impressions and engagement, and really social media should be ends to the means. Do you see the same thing?

Emily Braun: 2:42

Oh, absolutely. I've personally worked on the nonprofit sector for almost 10 years. I've always filled a fundraising, fund, development, business development position, so I've worked very closely with communications and marketing teams and I found that social media was an expected tool to help us with awareness.

But oftentimes we're just chasing impressions, we're chasing likes, we're chasing reactions and shares, but sometimes those posts aren't actually translating into donations through the door or volunteer signing up, people attending your event. And from my experience, I don't necessarily want a post to focus on impressions or likes if the purpose is to drive money through the door, I need undesignated money to hit my fundraising goals. Likes are not going to help me do that. So let's refocus, reshift, and repurpose those posts to really help us drive those tangible results.

Lyn Wineman: 3:43

Wow, you have just said the magic words. We have talked to a lot of nonprofit leaders lately and that focus right now, in particular on those undesignated funds, is key, isn't it? Because we all need room for that operating budget, the unexpected funds, the things that we don't need or that we don't need or that we don't necessarily know are going to happen, that are above and beyond a specific program or a specific project. So I'm wondering, as you think about your work, what are some of the biggest barriers you've seen, Emily?

Emily Braun: 4:20

Oh, great question. From a marketing perspective, what I see nonprofits really struggling with is, quite frankly, a lack of resources a lack of budget. We work with very lean teams. Sometimes we have a dedicated social media person, sometimes we don't. We're trying to generate more awareness for ourselves but we may not have a digital advertising budget or even a physical print advertising budget, but we're expected to be everywhere. We can't do that. I found, through my experience in the nonprofit sector, lots of people reaching out and saying I never heard of your organization or I've heard of you, but I don't actually know what you do. And then, on the flip side, when I speak with funders, sometimes they push back and say I don't want my dollars going towards marketing, I don't want my dollars going towards advertising. So we're in this tricky spot of trying to serve the population that we're set out to support, but we're not being provided with the resources to help us do that. So that's where the inspiration for My Impact Hub came from.

Lyn Wineman: 5:28

That's great. So, Emily, I love the inspiration. So how did you get started? I mean, were you in social media previously. I know you've got this great non-profit background, but tell me a little bit of the backstory.

Emily Braun: 5:44

So I had no experience whatsoever in communications or marketing, no previous employment in those areas, I don't have an IT background, I don't have a website development background, but it just became this pressing concern that showed up. No matter which organization I was working with, I consistently saw organizations struggling to generate awareness for themselves and we were stuck with these traditional marketing methods that are not working for us, and so I just started doing research, started looking into this and found these different tools, different combinations of things that allowed me to create my impact of myself. So this is completely a passion project for myself, but we're at a point now where we're onboarding organizations into My Impact Hub and we're starting to see that difference for them.

Lyn Wineman: 6:40

That's really exciting. Congratulations on that. So, as we talk about differentiating, I'm curious can you talk more about how My Impact Hub offers a different approach to helping those nonprofits grow their visibility through social media?

Emily Braun: 6:57

Absolutely so what makes My Impact Hub unique compared to traditional social media or traditional digital advertising is an organization, a nonprofit, can invite their board members, their employees, their volunteers, their donors, their vendors, their entire community, onto the platform and that organization can share with them prepared social media content that their audience can push out on that organization's behalf. What I really leveraged and leaned on was the concept of peer-to-peer fundraising. We invite our network to host a fundraiser on behalf of our organization. We give them some tools and some guidance to set them up for success. Well, if we can do that with peer-to-peer fundraising, why can't we do that with peer-to-peer marketing?

Lyn Wineman: 7:46

Yeah, that's smart. You know, I've heard that many times, both from boards that I serve on, from clients of KidGlov, about how there's this tension between the boards and the executive director and marketing people from a nonprofit, in that people on the board really do want to share information, because you wouldn't be on a board if you weren't passionate about an organization or a cause. But yet people's time and resources are so limited and they don't want to mess it up and they need the tools in order to get the message out. And on the flip side, I don't know that there's anyone busier in the world than a nonprofit executive director or marketing director. And they want their boards and their advocates to share the information, but they don't know how to get it to them in the right way, and so often it's in an email or it's in a word doc that gets shared and so sounds like through your portal, you're making that so much easier.

Emily Braun: 8:49

Absolutely, and that was really part of the goal was how do we make this as easy, as streamlined for those supporters to share content? Recognizing it feels like perhaps one more thing that they have to do, but within 15 minutes you've just done outreach for an organization without having to worry about how do I write this post. How do I find these graphics? Where was that email buried? We streamline everything and take all of that pressure off of it.

Lyn Wineman: 9:20

Absolutely. That's beautiful. You know, as I'm working with nonprofits I don't know about you, Emily, but I like to think about board members and supporters and advocates as one of their target audiences. Right, like it's easy to go oh well, our target audience is donors and foundation funders and the people we serve. But you know, your board is also a target audience and if you really want them to participate and help out and spread the word and advocate, then you've got to really be thoughtful in how you communicate with them as well. So I'm curious. I know you're just getting started, you're onboarding new clients, but tell me, are there any exciting developments on the horizon for My Impact Hub?

Emily Braun: 10:12

Absolutely. So we have done quite a bit of piloting with some organizations based here in Calgary and through feedback we've been able to add in new features. We've been able to streamline the experience, make it a little bit, you know, just more efficient, more effective for those individual users and also for those organizations as well. So it doesn't feel like another big project that they have to take on, another big channel that they have to work with. Some really great and exciting things coming through. And the best part is, through my experience, I've been able to put in my nonprofit experience into the platform, and now other nonprofits are coming in and putting in their experience into the platform. So it's just compounding all of these different pieces that are making marketing feel so much easier. I love something that you just said, and it was around the board getting involved with sharing those messages. I really love to think of board members, volunteers, staff as an extension of the marketing team. Sometimes we think marketing stays within those. You know select one, two, three people that are part of your communications department, but it's everybody so if we can help share an additional 100 posts, 100, 200 posts a month, that is a game changer for any nonprofit who maybe was only doing 10 or 12 posts a month.

Lyn Wineman: 11:37

Absolutely. Emily, you know one thing I think of when I first started joining boards as a volunteer, somebody told me once your job as a board member is to fill a table at the fundraisers and invite new people in as donors, and it's almost like social media now, post-pandemic social media has become like filling that table at a fundraiser, right, I mean, I think trends are showing that people are maybe less apt to come to that dinner or that gala, but more apt to interact with you on social media, and it's such a great opportunity to get them involved. So I love what you're doing. So tell me this, Emily, for people who are listening might want to find out more. What types of organizations are the best fit for My Impact Hub?

Emily Braun: 12:32

Great question. So we are working with nonprofit organizations those right now that do front serving services or programs for the community. Hopefully, you know you have a dedicated social media person, because that will most likely be the individual in your organization who will be working in and out of My Impact Hub and, I would say, organizations that are looking to do things differently. If you find that you're just spinning your wheels, you feel like you're doing the same thing over and over again. You're spending some money on digital advertising, but you think or you feel that maybe you're reaching a smaller and smaller audience. This is a great way to try something different, try something new and, because of my experience in the nonprofit sector, I want to work really hard to make it work for you.

Lyn Wineman: 13:19

Yeah, absolutely. You want to make sure every dollar of that nonprofit's unrestricted funds that are going towards this project are really invested wisely. So, as a follow-up to that, for our listeners who'd like to learn more, where can they find more information about My Impact Hub?

Emily Braun: 13:38

Absolutely so. Best place is to go to our website, www.myimpacthub.com. You can also find us on LinkedIn. My Impact Hub is our channel name. Feel free to reach out to me. You can find my information on both of those channels and happy to start a conversation.

Lyn Wineman: 13:56

Emily, that's fantastic. We'll make sure to have those links in the show notes as well, and I'm so glad that you got the pure URL myimpacthub.com. It's getting harder and harder these days to find those good URLs. So, as one more follow-up kind of, as we think about your journey and what you're doing and who you serve, I feel like it'd be a mistake if I didn't ask you what advice do you have for nonprofits who are really looking to expand their reach and engagement?

Emily Braun: 14:30

I think my biggest piece of advice is you don't have to do everything and you don't have to be everywhere. So if you really narrow down to focus on where are the channels or where are the opportunities that are going to drive in those tangible results, not just likes, not just impressions, but real dollars through the door more volunteers knocking on your door, more clients that are accessing the services because they know that you exist, focus on those channels. And it's okay to put other things on the shelf. You don't have to put them on the shelf forever. You can come back to them. But just really take a look at how are you spending all of your time, how are you spending all of your resources? And there are so many different social media channels out there Doesn't mean you have to be on everything. Take a look at what is really performing for you and drive those home.

Lyn Wineman: 15:24

Emily, that is such good advice, particularly in the realm of social media. There's so many things you could do, so many places you could be. You could just spend all of your time, you know, working on social media content. But you're right, it's not all created equal and it's not all created equal depending on your goals and who you're trying to reach. I mean, that's one thing. I think that's really great about

the fact that there are different social media options and typically we can find the data you need in order to evaluate that as well, which is something we didn't have back in the days prior to social media and digital media. So that's a great addition and great advice. All right, Emily, I'm going to ask you my favorite question next, because all of our listeners know that I am inspired by motivational quotes. I would love a few words of wisdom from Emily Braun to inspire our listeners.

Emily Braun: 16:32

The words that I can share today are growth and innovation come from friction. So don't shy away from it, lean into it and see how far it takes you.

Lyn Wineman: 16:46

I love it. Great advice. Lean into that friction right, because if you lean away from it, you're essentially just hiding. That is really good advice. And you know what, Emily, I am going to say that quote reminds me of how the two of us met.

We met because you posted this great post on LinkedIn on social media. That was your take on the Barbie manifesto speech for nonprofits and I saw it and I was like this is amazing, I need to meet this person. And we got on the phone and we talked. Well, actually we didn't even get on the phone. We got on Zoom and we talked and here we are doing a podcast and I have a feeling that our paths are going to cross many times over the next few years or decade, but I love that we met through social media in that way.

So, Emily, as we wrap up this time together today, I'd love to hear what is the most important thing you'd like our listeners to remember about the work that you're doing.

Emily Braun: 17:56

I think the most important thing I'd love listeners to remember is, if you feel that the way you're doing your marketing or your advertising is just not working for you, it's okay to look for other options. Maybe that's My Impact Hub, maybe it's not, but what we're looking to do for you is to create an environment where you feel that you're reaching those tangible results, and I'd love to start a conversation and see if we're the right fit for you.

Lyn Wineman: 18:26

That's such a great point, Emily. I really appreciate it. Emily, I'm just going to say I fully believe the world needs more people like you, more organizations like My Impact Hub. Thank you for taking time to share this new opportunity with us today.

Emily Braun: 18:44

Thank you so much, Lyn. Really appreciate the opportunity to come and chat with you.

Announcer: 18:50

We hope you enjoyed today's Agency for Change podcast. To hear all our interviews with those who are making a positive change in our communities or to nominate a changemaker you'd love to hear from. Visit kidglov.com at K-I-D-G-L-O-V.com to get in touch, as always. If you like what you've heard today, be sure to rate, review, subscribe and share. Thanks for listening and we'll see you next time.