

Shared Voices, the power of genuine communication

I never considered myself to be a marketer but more likely a musketeer for good causes without the need of a sword. We learn new things by real life experiences all the time and adaptability to uncertain times, given the speed these changes are taking place, force us to be more resourceful, inventive and resilient. As a cultural-social entrepreneur director of Big Bang Lab, we engage and connect communities through creativity using music and digital video, I find myself helping other enterprises by facilitating the process of creating video and audio content for web.

For some reason we are not fully aware of our competences and transferable skills, limited by our beliefs of staying in the comfort zone of our specialized expertise. Have you been in a situation where everyone is an expert on jargon-talking?. That doesn't help the rest of us that could benefit from a touch of wisdom! Being aspirational is a trait which I find stimulating in people but their stories need to be told and shared. It is not about visionaries, stars or leaders but common people around us every day. I have been inspired by so many people that I enjoy inspiring others to connect with their own capacities and abilities, changing established mindset thinking and attitudes. This is the Big Bang. The Lab comes when we explore and learn with curiosity what hides underneath people's minds, accepting ambiguity or sometimes the 'inconvenient' and non always politically correct truth.

"There can be no understanding between the hand and the brain unless the heart acts as a mediator" (Metropolis, Fritz Lang)



If we move to the domain of organisations from private to public, how can we capture the collective knowledge of individuals or the community intelligence and experiences and share it to the world?. Where is the secret key to open the value of knowledge, quality over quantity, thoughts and values that are meaningful to others? Well, I must admit it is very simple. It all starts with a conversation if we are open to listen and talk without preconceptions.

The Good, The Bad and The Honest! I have been actively helping training providers to evaluate their programmes using participatory video methodology and a peer to peer approach. When it comes to evaluating projects I felt that we are all too contempt with a formula as long as it ticks the right boxes. If you are a trainer that doesn't help to improve your work, does it? What about qualitative evaluation? Are evaluation forms the best tool?

The Head, The Brain and The Money! At another stage, I may also help to market their value proposition using the power of the video by allowing a number of stakeholders to talk about the benefits of being involved with a company or enterprise in one way or another. This is - as apparently some real marketer friend told me - the principle of crowd to crowd marketing. We also work with non for profit / charitable organisations, mainly -but not exclusively- in the health and arts sector in order to measure the impact of the video in their fundraising activities. The principle stays the same i.e collective creative input from stakeholders from inside or outside the organisation.

The value for our clients is easily recognized when a diverse representation of stakeholders, beneficiaries and influencers are engaged in the creative process using video interviews and by endorsing in their own way the benefits so the outcome becomes relevant, personal and unique. Moreover we are involved in the production of the video by actively making sure participants interact with each other, shooting or recording and making it happen. We at Big Bang Lab are not lazy. We are facilitators in search of quality of information and sometimes that means losing the control or talking to people in between sandwich bites at events or conferences.



This methodology is unique to Big Bang Lab's core capacities because we use it in our work with communities and training workshops, so it is natural for us. Shared Voices is a form of recycling our experience on participatory video and community music making and applying it to a more functional purpose to help our clients. Videos are a more personal and direct form of communication as well as being more accessible and affordable.

We have embedded the web 2.0 ethos further and incorporated it in our production processes, using social media networks as platforms for online distribution. A good example of client led 'advertising' is the campaign "[It's good to talk](#)" promoted by the British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy where people using therapy explain the benefits and by doing so others are encouraged or less intimidated to seek help.

We make sure that we measure the impact of the video in achieving our client's goals so the return of investment will make our service worthwhile. Did you know that users that engage with video in your website will spend more time in it and that are 53% of webs with videos are more likely to be a first page on google (Forrester) or that press releases that include video receive a 500% increase in views? (Eloqua, April 2010)

Last Summer I had the opportunity to work with the Otakar Kraus Music Trust, a fantastic charity working in the UK and India with disable children with autism and other disabilities by helping them with one to one music therapy. I have to say at this point that my musketeer background is in music, so this time I enjoyed working with the director, Margaret Lobo in delivering unique creative group music workshops with the children and pushing the boundaries. The children were engaged searching new sounds and exploring their inner creativity. I was very happy to being able to interact with them, their carers, parents and siblings and co-create a video for web. This will help OKMT to create awareness and show the intangible value to potentially new funders. In particular I was touched by the open and positive attitude of parents in relation to their children's condition which we hope will touch other families in similar situation as well. Click here to watch an example of this Shared Voices video, [The Joy of Music](http://vimeo.com/18039378) [<http://vimeo.com/18039378>]

Creating films like this without an initial script is like building a puzzle where all the pieces fit together because the organisation's value is real and the quality of their work is touching real people's lives. They manage to deliver what is says on the bin. We help them to achieve their goal and improve their chances for social investment, funding or improve their practise, reaching out to the crowd or to create awareness in a 'noisy' media environment.



Sergio López Figueroa is a Spanish creative producer, social entrepreneur based in London, creator of the Cultural Social Responsibility framework. He is the director of Big Bang Lab, a cultural-social enterprise and creative development agency working from consultancy to production and creative learning, actively promoting participatory video, creative oral history and ethical copyright to engage communities as a means towards sustainability and socio-economic development.

Shared Voices is a B2B video for web production, facilitation and consultancy service from [Big Bang Lab](#). We help our customers to increase funding, customers, branding awareness, membership or improve practice. Applying Web 2.0 and user generated content ethos to our production, we help to communicate and co-design the content using video for web and social media whether for research, fundraising, advocacy, evaluation, promotion or stakeholder engagement purposes.

We involve a number of participants in the shooting and interviewing process co-creating the content with your stakeholders. For some people, this is anarchy. For many it is a new form of communication and engagement. For everyone it is fun! Shared Voices is about capturing genuinely honest inputs and testimonials to endorse the work our clients do. Facilitating the quality of content and information is key to our success!