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Lesli Moylan and Jamin Bray Of Missouri Environmental Education Association Accelerate Business Development Clarity, Momentum

A strong desire to secure funding to maintain and expand programming and resources for formal environmental educators, nonformal environmental educators, and young leaders led co-directors Lesli Moylan and Jamin Bray of Missouri Environmental Education Association (MEEA) to reach out to Nate Birt at Silver Maple Strategies.

“It was definitely capacity,” Jamin says. “We have a lot of things that we need and want to do that we just did not have enough money for.”

Together, Lesli and Nate co-created a two-month Fundraising Support Engagement spanning weekly sprint-based coaching calls, monthly skills-building conversations, a Fundraising Wayfinding Workshop with MEEA’s Board of Directors, and 24/7 support for updating conference sponsorship, fundraising, and marketing materials to advance MEEA’s goals.

Nimble Capacity-Building Support Makes A Big Difference Fast

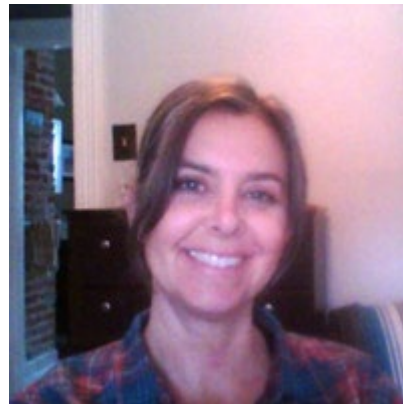
From the beginning of the collaboration, Lesli and Jamin worked with Nate on a combination of business development and fundraising strategies as well as tactical implementation of specific marketing and outreach practices to advance fundraising goals.

“One of the big things that was helpful was Nate’s willingness to be flexible and meet us where we were,” Lesli says. “That kind of nimbleness was really nice. It led to us being able to jump in early with a very specific project: our conference sponsorship package. Then, we moved into longer-term strategy, such as wrangling our prospect list. It was hugely helpful to get that usable again.”

Working with a fully aligned third party made a big difference in the ability to make forward progress.

Case Study

**Lesli Moylan,
MEEA**



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“It was the clear vision that Nate had immediately of our specific needs and goals and objectives,” Jamin says. “In other words, Nate got us immediately, he understood our mission, and we never wavered from that.”

To maintain momentum, the engagement featured weekly sprint calls designed to explore specific fundraising strategy needs and questions.

“I liked the sprints,” Lesli says. “They always framed our action items really quickly. We didn’t waste time. We maximized our time together really well.”

Partnering with a good listener streamlined those discussions and next steps.

“Nate has a gift. Lesli and I never had to repeat what we were needing,” Jamin says. “He’s a really good listener. Whenever we said, ‘This is what we need,’ Nate was like, ‘OK, here are some ideas,’ or, ‘Let me come up with some suggestions for you.’”

‘Concrete Products,’ Tangible Benefits For Environmental Leaders

Case Study

**Jamin Bray,
MEEA**



“It made me feel hopeful, and it made me feel more organized.”

Through collaboration with Nate, the MEEA team walked away feeling more confident and prepared for the next phase of the organization’s growth. They also co-created written resources and templates that will enable them to continue implementing their fundraising strategy.

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The collaborative discussions also will influence how MEEA engages and co-creates projects with funders in the future.

“We have very specific language we use now often when it comes to fundraising that Nate really helped us develop—for example, ‘co-creation,’” Jamin says. “That has been super helpful, and I’ve noticed both of us are using those outcomes already, whether it’s in our

applications for grants or in conversations.”



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Proactive follow-up from Nate made it easy for the MEEA team to keep its Board of Directors updated on the progress and benefits of the engagement.

“It was very easy to articulate what we were doing with Nate to our Board. We collaborated with Nate exactly the way our Board said we needed to. It was easy to interpret that because he is so organized,” Lesli says.

Benefits Include Higher Confidence, Greater Hopefulness, Stress Relief, And Time Savings

MEEA’s co-directors not only made tangible progress securing new funds while working with Nate but also experienced numerous other benefits for healthier daily leadership.

“The collaboration Nate and Lesli put together for sponsorship, there was a watershed of connection there,” Jamin says. “I would honestly say that is a huge part of why our Annual Conference was so good.”

Lesli notes that the engagement saved valuable time, allowing her and Jamin to dive right into a lot of topics quickly and deeply.

“It definitely made me feel positive,” Lesli says. “The conversations were fun and solutions-oriented. That was great to feel during a time that started out pretty stressful. Now, I feel a lot more hopeful. It feels really good to have clarity about our target audiences.”

Jamin agrees.

“It made me feel hopeful, and it made me feel more organized,” she says. “Feeling organized is not just an organizational thing, it’s a stress reliever. Professionally, it has made me personally more confident in using the language of fundraising. I feel very confident asking people for money, and it’s OK to do that because what we do is really, really meaningful.”