

John Sutton & Associates

WNCW Staff and CAB Retreat February 12-13, 2005

WNCW hired John Sutton & Associates (JSA) to review the station's current audience and financial positions and to help staff and management set goals for the next 24 months. JSA was also asked to facilitate a retreat with the station's Community Advisory Board (CAB). To accomplish this, JSA led a two-day process that included an all staff meeting, one-on-one meetings with staff and management, and an all day retreat with staff, management and members of the CAB.

State of the Station Summary

- Listening is up 5% compared to two years ago
- The station has audience growth opportunities, specifically between 8:30a and 10a
- Net membership and net underwriting revenue are down due to staff turnover and shortages
- At 36-cents, the cost of raising a dollar is average for a public radio station
- Until the recent decline, underwriting revenue was above average compared to other public radio stations (controlling for the size of the audience)
- Membership revenue was below average compared to other public radio stations
 - There is an opportunity for to acquire 1,500 more members from the current audience
 - That's \$135,000 gross revenue
 - On-air drives are highly efficient AND account for more than 50% of membership revenue
 - There is opportunity for off-air growth and possible expansion of on-air pledging

Staff Meeting

The staff reviewed goals and objectives from the 2003 retreat. There was discussion about goals that were met, unmet but still relevant, and unmet but no longer appropriate given changed circumstances.

Goals Met

- Meet translator-filing deadlines
- Ensure power supplies at the transmitter site
- Have another planning session such as this one
- Assess membership fundraising performance
- Institute \$1,000+ giver plan
- Underwriting staffing/resource **plan** to raise \$650,000+ annually beginning in July 2005

Ongoing Goals

- Develop a system to regularly demonstrate that WNCW broadcasts distinctive programming that will inform, enlighten, inspire and entertain audiences from diverse cultural, educational and socio-economic backgrounds
- Be able to pay competitive salaries and reward staff for exceptional performance
- Self-sufficiency: day-to-day operations do not depend on state or CPB funding
- Available state and CPB funding is used for program innovation, new projects, and improving infrastructure
- Begin implementing a grass roots networking and marketing plan

Tabled Goals

- Have a telecommuting policy and capacity to enhance productivity for staff in all departments
- Capable of launching capital campaign
- Create a system of tracking programming-hours and listener-hours to the indigenous music of the Appalachian region, both recorded and live

Staff tabled the telecommuting goal because it is not practical given ICC policies. The other two goals were put on hold due to available resources and immediate priorities.

After a review of the state of the station, the discussion turned to new goals. Building on the 2003 retreat goals still in play, the staff focused on more short-term, specific membership, underwriting, marketing, and audience goals.

Membership Goals

- By 2/25, a plan to generate at least \$25,000 in unrealized direct mail income by 6/30
- By 2/25, a plan to strategically generate \$75,000 in unrealized off-air fundraising income by 12/31

Underwriting Goals

- By close of FY 07, \$400,000 net UW revenue
- By close of FY 08, \$460,000 net UW revenue (+15%)
- By close of FY 09, \$506,000 net UW revenue (+10%)

Programming Goal

- By 3/25 – develop a plan to generate more tune-ins weekdays between 8:30a and 10a

Marketing Goal

- By 3/18, refine and prioritize the new marketing plan

Members of each department met with John Sutton later in the day to discuss activities and tactics that can help them achieve these goals.

CAB Discussion

The agenda for the CAB discussion was similar to the agenda for the staff meeting. The CAB reviewed goals and objectives from the previous retreat. The group saw the State of the Station presentation and discussed the programming and financial findings. The staff's new goals were reviewed and discussed.

The board then participated in several discussions about the future of the station.

Marketing

This was a brainstorming session focused helping the Marketing department develop new language to position and market the station.

HD Radio/Podcasting

There was agreement that WCNW should investigate HD Radio (a second digital channel) but not at the expense of the station's primary service. If the stations were to start a second channel, bluegrass would be a good option. Podcasting, while new and exciting, is something to pursue with caution. John Sutton pointed out that second service, streaming, and podcasts would have to be subsidized from income generated by the primary service.

Major Giving

The station is prepared to engage in a major giving campaign (gifts of \$1,000 and up). The CAB discussed how it could jump-start the campaign. CAB members thought it was appropriate to provide management with names of major donor prospects. Some board members felt comfortable with asking on behalf of the station, provided that the request was based on a good understanding of how the money would be used. This was referred to as purpose-driven giving.

The entire group also discussed whether WNCW could form a friends group or endowment to facilitate the receiving and distribution of major donor money. Manager David Gordon was to investigate.