

TRAC's Local Programming Initiative

Local Success

TRAC Media proposes to develop a new tool for local success . . . a project that will create a viable, self-sustaining local programming model, identify best practices and dramatically improve your ROI. Our premise for the project is simple. Popular local programs are a powerful predictor of a successful and prosperous local brand. Local programming develops a sense of “localness” in public media audiences. A station’s prosperity flows from viewers who understand localness and become members, and from community partnerships that support local programming initiatives.

TRAC has identified the different strands of local programming that successfully attract local audiences. Each market and region responds somewhat differently to local programming formats. Do your local shows mesh with your local audiences? In some instances it is the wrong program for that market, while in others the program just needs a tweak.

The project will:

- Review the system's local programming, generating individual reports for participating stations with performance assessed against peer group members.
- Develop case studies of best practices and local program formats that are transferable to other stations.
- Assess the business models that allow for sustainable local program strands.
- TRAC will develop and put in place an Internet based viewer panel for collecting viewer feedback for assessing program effectiveness.

Why TRAC?

You know us. We have worked in public media for more than a quarter of a century; TRAC understands the mission, goals and relationships. Through years of quantitative and qualitative research, Listening Projects and pledge programming studies, TRAC has collaborated with stations to translate research-ese into actionable information. TRAC can tell you why loyal viewers stop watching, pledging and renewing and, what affects and motivates individual attitudes towards local stations. TRAC has the experience, the acumen and the data to help a station turn its mission into leverage for community support. TRAC is uniquely positioned to make this opportunity a success. We ask you to invest in the project and join us as we identify practices that generate the greatest local impact. **For more information contact Don Thigpen (207-677-2822).**



Word cloud of FCC's 2008 Report on Broadcast Localism

Phase I Deliverables

Local Goals Appraisal. Local programming goals and top local programming success stories

Delivery: First Quarter 2012

Local Programming Assessment. System-wide program characteristics, market attributes and peer group analysis.

Delivery: First Quarter 2012

Success Story Analysis.

Delivery: Second Quarter 2012

Phase II Deliverables

Case Study Depth Analysis. In-depth studies of individual success stories. Emphasis on production and funding models.

Delivery: Third and Fourth Quarters 2012

Viewer Review Panel. Regular tests of local program content - members recruited and tests conducted online.

Delivery: First Quarter 2013

Dissemination Workshops. Industry meeting add-ons for station management and producers.

Delivery: Fourth Quarter 2012 & First Quarter 2013



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Expanded Phase I Deliverables

Goal Appraisal. How do your local programming goals compare to other stations? TRAC will survey all participating stations asking about local programming goals and top local programming success stories. We will compare and contrast station responses in a summary report that will look at hours of programming, audiences served and types of goals. We will briefly review the success story findings as they will be covered in more detail under the Success Story Analysis.

Delivery: First Quarter 2012

Local Programming Assessment. Do your local programming efforts match others in the system? There are four areas that can influence local programming success - the programs themselves, the station, market attributes and “beyond program” elements. We will examine system-wide program characteristics such as program types, program length, or broadcast hours and compare across stations. The impact of station-level features like license type or duopolies will be studied. In addition, TRAC will use proprietary data and a collection of third party information to take unique and comprehensive look at market attributes. The fourth area will examine how a station connects the program content to the audience, measuring via questionnaire elements such as letters and telephone calls, underwriter comments, web traffic, and online companion material. We will use these four areas to assign stations to similarly performing peer groups that can be used to identify under- and over-performing local programs. Studying these areas will allow stations to benchmark against their peers and use their meager local programming resources wisely.

Delivery: First Quarter 2012

Success Story Analysis. What are the qualities associated with local programming success? The analysis will take a bird’s eye view of stations’ successful local programming efforts. We will report on the genres of programs described as successful and the kinds of reasons stations used to describe their success. This will help us identify the most prevalent program models leading to positive community outcomes. From the above two deliverables, we will focus on how successful local programming differs from typical local programming. Why are we doing this? There is no need to use valuable station resources to re-invent program models that have worked at other markets or some instances, stations did not even know such program formats existed. This will be the first time a national set of local programming success stories will have been collected in one dataset. Our focus is on how successful local broadcast programming greatly enhances the station’s use of social media, outreach and community improvement projects.

Delivery: Second Quarter 2012

Expanded Phase II Deliverables

Case Study Depth Analysis. TRAC will write in-depth case studies of local programming genres that are successful from a consensus of station managers. The studies besides examining program specific issues, will focus on “beyond program” elements such as: identifying underwriting, cultivating partnerships, and examining related business model issues (i.e., how do programs sustain themselves). The primary goal in this section will be to develop blueprints so the case study findings can be replicated at other stations.

Delivery: Third and Fourth Quarters 2012

Viewer Review Panel. Viewer panels can be efficient and powerful tools for public television stations. Membership lists and on-air can be used to efficiently drive viewers to participate and when used properly, viewer feedback will lead to successful programming efforts. TRAC will recruit online viewer panels from on-air and station membership rolls. Then we will identify the most salient elements of successful productions for testing and refinement. Each participating station will be able to test content with the viewer panels. The Resource Optimization Panel will have three distinct advantages – low costs, ease of implementation across markets, and the flexibility to test a wide variety of public media questions.

Delivery: First Quarter 2013

Dissemination Workshops. Local Programming Initiative outcomes will be presented and discussed at add-ons to PBS, NETA and any other relevant industry meetings.

Delivery: Fourth Quarter 2012 & First Quarter 2013