



ASSESSING COMMUNITY IMPACT

A Plan for University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Public Radio



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Master of Public Administration Program
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KDAQ - Bryan Lane, General Manager
KUAF - Rick Stockdell, Station Manager
KWMU - Jess Luther, Senior Operations Specialist
WBHM - Chuck Holmes, Executive Director
WUCT - Will Davis, Outreach Manager/Producer
WUOT - Regina Dean, General Manager
WKSU - Judith Yasenovsky, Project Operations Coordinator
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Executive Summary

This report describes a sustainable plan for assessing UA Little Rock Public Radio's impact on its stakeholders and the community. The report addresses three major questions: i) how to measure community impact, ii) how to involve stakeholders in assessing impact, and iii) how to use assessment results as part of a strategic planning process. Based on interviews with KLRE/KUAR's stakeholders and with other public radio stations, the research team developed the following answers to these three questions:

Research Question 1: What methods and approaches do stations like UA Little Rock Public Radio use in order to measure the outcomes of its programs and community initiatives on a sustainable basis?

The research team found that most public radio stations periodically conduct some form of listener assessment. Though some public radio stations conducted formal methods of assessment regularly, most stations utilized informal assessment methods. In addition, most public radio stations tend to gather assessment information informally through platforms such as telethon fund drives, feedback via phone, social media, website comments, conversations at community events, and emails from listeners. This theme was transcendent across stations categorized as similar to KLRE/KUAR and stations that were considered starkly different. These common, informal assessment methods predominantly rely on station involvement in community events to solicit feedback.

Research Question 2: In what ways could UA Little Rock Public Radio work with its stakeholders to assess the station's community impact?

The research team found that the level of interest in engagement and relationship cultivation with the station varied across different groups of stakeholders. Community partners and members of the Friends of KLRE/KUAR Board, in particular, indicated the most willingness to engage in station assessment processes. Based on the aforementioned, the research team recommends that UA Little Rock Public Radio engage certain stakeholders intentionally and specifically. Such increased involvement from active stakeholders would improve assessment accuracy while deepening the station's community presence and impact.

Research Question 3: How could UA Little Rock Public Radio incorporate assessment outcomes and reporting into its strategic planning process?

While many of the informal assessment methods mentioned during the interviews serve to measure station outcomes and initiatives, they often have no long-term impact on the stations strategic planning process; assessment findings often go undocumented or are excluded from the

strategic planning process. We recommend that KLRE/KUAR implement a sustainable system to formally document all feedback received from listeners collected via phone, email, social media, and website comments and review documented feedback during staff meetings throughout the year. By actively documenting feedback and suggestions, station staff can incorporate feedback deemed valuable into the station's annual strategic plan.

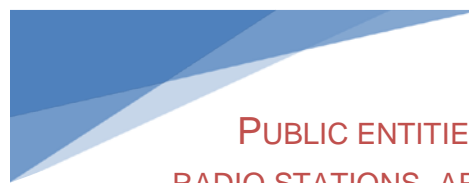


Introduction

In the private radio market, radio stations seek to entertain listeners. In contrast, public radio stations serve a broader mission, working to inform their listeners about local and national current events and to enrich the civic experience (Bennett, 2001). Overall, public radio stations strive to offer their listeners more than just entertaining programming. In this vein, UA Little Rock Public Radio focuses on increasing public awareness and knowledge of current events and civic issues. These goals are embodied in UA Little Rock’s mission statement: “We deepen insight into the human experience, empower decision-making, and enrich the lives of those we serve through quality news and cultural programs” (UA Public Radio, 2019). UA Little Rock Public Radio strives to inform and enrich the lives of the citizens of Central Arkansas through its news and cultural programming on KUAR-FM 89.1 and through its classical music programming on KLRE-FM 90.5.

In recent years, the demand for accurate and effective assessment methods has emerged across disciplines and sectors. Public entities, like public radio stations, are being held to a higher standard of accountability for their performance than in decades past. As a result, nonprofit professionals are seeking program assessment tools that meaningfully inform their planning

processes and that they can sustain given the organization’s resources. Effective program assessment measures allow organizations to identify inefficiencies, highlight productive processes, and develop a set of best practices. In order to survive in sector under continuous scrutiny and an environment with such high expectations, it is necessary for public organizations to employ sustainable assessment methods and utilize assessment findings to adapt to changing times and demands. Like many other public organizations, UA Little Rock Public Radio station management has come to recognize the need for sustainable assessment and for using assessment findings to guide strategic planning.



PUBLIC ENTITIES, LIKE PUBLIC RADIO STATIONS, ARE BEING HELD TO A HIGHER STANDARD OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THEIR PERFORMANCE THAN IN DECADES PAST

Reflecting this heightened interest in accountability and assessment, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock conducted a Strategic Resource Allocation Study conducted in academic year 2018-19 as the beginning of a multi-year effort to measure and improve institutional effectiveness. This study analyzed curricular and non-curricular UA Little Rock programs “in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the institution’s programs with respect to their

support of UA Little Rock’s mission and strategic priorities, as well as their efficiency in a time of reduced resources” (IEC, 2019). As a unit of UA Little Rock (the UA System holds the license to KLRE/KUAR), UA Little Rock Public Radio faces increased demands for an accounting of its community impact. UA Little Rock’s assessment, carried out through its Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC), scores units in the areas of value, vision, and efficiency. The 2018-19 IEC assessment for UA Little Rock Public Radio stated that the station’s public engagement offers “high visibility to the university” and showed that the university’s role as an active community partner is amplified by the work of the public radio station. This underscores the importance to UA Little Rock Public Radio of assessing community impact in forthcoming years.

In the MPA Capstone research team’s initial needs assessment meeting, Nathan Vandiver, KLRE/KUAR General Manager, and Vanessa McQuin, KLRE/KUAR Development Director, noted the station’s need for additional information about its impact on its listeners and its other stakeholders, as well as on Central Arkansas at large. The station expressed interest in deepening its impact on its listeners and within the community for three reasons:

- 1) A central part of UA Little Rock Public Radio’s mission is to educate and inform the community. By broadening their reach within the community, the station hopes to achieve that goal more quickly. In partnership with the Central Arkansas Library System, the League of Women Voters of Pulaski County, and the Little Rock Chapter of the American Association of University Women, UA Little Rock Public Radio produced mayoral forums to highlight candidates running in the 2018 Little Rock Mayoral election (Local Content Services Report, 2018). These forums serve as an example of the enhanced community presence KLRE/KUAR seeks to achieve.
- 2) UA Little Rock Public Radio expressed the need to fundraise more effectively. UA Little Rock Public Radio relies on listener contributions for a major part of their operating budget and hosts on-air fundraisers throughout the year. Engaging the community and broadening their listenership base could help the station to increase fundraising and attain long-term sustainability.
- 3) UA Little Rock Public Radio voiced concerns regarding meeting the needs of their listeners. Arkansas Nielsen Audio research reports that KUAR reaches 52,800 people each week through its broadcast service with an additional 18,700 KLRE weekly listeners (Local Content Services Report, 2018). Fulfilling listener needs is a central goal of the station; station leadership hopes to determine if the station is achieving this goal and work to adapt station practices if not.

The research team has worked to develop recommendations that will inform its effort to develop an assessment process that will address these concerns. The research team organized its work around three questions that are central to the development of an assessment plan:

1. What methods and approaches do stations like UA Little Rock Public Radio use in order to measure the outcomes of its programs and community initiatives on a sustainable basis?
2. In what ways could UA Little Rock Public Radio work with its stakeholders to assess the station’s community impact?
3. How could UA Little Rock Public Radio incorporate assessment outcomes and reporting into its strategic planning process?



These questions reflect the elements of an assessment cycle. The assessment cycle begins by determining and prioritizing the outcomes the organization wishes to obtain. From there, the organization must engage with the communities in ways that will meet the outcomes listed. Following engagements, the organization must assess and evaluate those events and how they align with the desired outcomes. The final step of the cycle is to act by revising and reinforcing the findings from the assessment. This is known as “closing the assessment loop.” Closing the assessment loop encompasses analyzing results from outcome assessments, using results to make changes to improve station initiatives, and re-assessing outcomes in order to determine the effect those changes have on the stations. Closing this loop will be essential for UA Little Rock Public Radio to achieve its goals, fulfill its mission, and create lasting impact on the community.

Data and Methods

The research team investigated answers to these three research question using three main data sources:

1. Review of scholarly literature on topics related to organizational assessment, engagement, and implementation
2. Professional interviews with comparable public radio stations across the country
3. Professional interviews with KLRE/KUAR stakeholders

Scholarly Literature

The research team analyzed peer-reviewed articles and research papers regarding assessment metrics for evaluating public media and public radio stations. Specifically, the team reviewed articles focusing on topics such as engaging younger audiences, high-performance boards, collaboration, community impact, public media's role in the digital era, and other relevant factors related to public media.

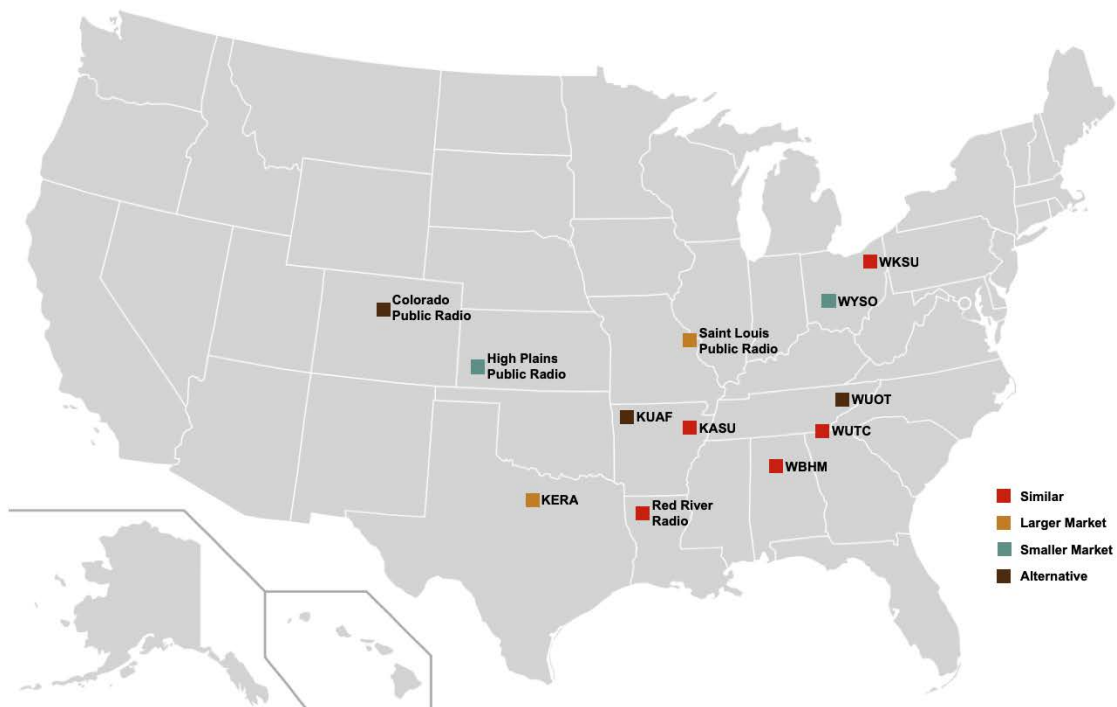
The team also utilized document research by reviewing assessment reports from comparable stations. The team researched relevant news articles related to successful public radio stations, programs, and evaluation methods.

Interviews with Public Radio Stations

The research team used a semi-structured interview format to conduct interviews of two sets of public radio stations: stations similar to UA Little Rock Public Radio in the market they serve, and stations serving much larger and smaller markets. We selected stations in this way to make it possible both to identify assessment practices common for stations like KUAR and KLRE and to obtain information on a broad range of strategies that might be used at stations with more or fewer resources. The team contacted 16 stations and ultimately interviewed 12 representatives of comparable radio stations. The response rate for stations was 75%.

The research team determined that conducting semi-structured interviews would be most valuable to the study because of two specific advantages. First, semi-structured interviews allow for consistency and standardization while maintaining flexibility (Adams, 2015). Questions are composed prior to the interview and are tailored to each respondent. Participating subjects are asked the same set of questions, but may not be asked them in the same order; the researcher possesses the discretion to ask questions in a manner that best fosters conversation. Thus,

questions can be asked in various orders and certain questions may be omitted if they are not applicable to the subject. The second advantage is that semi-structured interviews provide a platform to use open-ended questions to explore and probe (Adams, 2015). Instead of respondents providing single-word answers, they are given the opportunity to expand and provide as much detail as they would like in their responses. Structuring questions in such a manner results in responses based only on the respondent's experience, attitudes, and beliefs. Additionally, semi-structured interviews afford the researcher the opportunity to rephrase a question or provide clarity for those respondents who may not understand.



The research team considered two other options for interviews: surveys and unstructured interviews. Surveys were eliminated due to the risk of misinterpretation of questions by a respondent. Moreover, semi-structured interviews provide opportunities for respondents to discuss options and provide information that a survey would not collect. Another disadvantage of surveys is that respondents have the option to skip questions, which can create an item non-response problem in data analysis. Unstructured interviews were not chosen due to the inconsistency of questions and the random feedback that would be collected from respondents. The team determined it would be nearly impossible to code and analyze data in this format.

Ultimately, the implementation of a semi-structured interview format allowed the team to more adequately collect data from respondents. The team worked diligently to ensure that each

interview was efficient and timely for all parties involved. Indeed, interviews took no longer than 35 minutes to complete.

The goal of the station interviews was to gather information regarding methods of evaluation, community engagement, and incorporation of assessment results. Station interviews allowed the team to compare relevant evaluation practices and determine the most effective and appropriate evaluation strategy recommendations for UA Little Rock Public Radio. Stations interviewed were selected based location, size of service area, similarity of stakeholders (e.g. education level, socioeconomic status, racial demographic), and affiliation with a public university. Afterward, stations were grouped into three categories:

1. Stations similar to UA Little Rock Public Radio
2. Stations serving a larger area or population than UA Little Rock Public Radio
3. Stations serving a smaller area or population than UA Little Rock Public Radio

In order to determine what stations fit into the three categories, the research team utilized estimates and data from the United States Census Bureau (2018). This data identified populations and demographics of the cities chosen. Overall, six of the stations interviewed were categorized as “Similar,” three were considered larger, and three more were considered smaller. Six of the stations interviewed had current ties to a university, and one had recently bought its own license to split from their university.

| Station | Location | Category |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| KASU | Jonesboro, Arkansas | Similar |
| WKSU | Akron, Ohio | Similar |
| WBHM | Birmingham, Alabama | Similar |
| WUCT | Chattanooga, Tennessee | Similar |
| KDAQ | Shreveport, Louisiana | Similar |
| WUOT | Knoxville, Tennessee | Similar |
| Colorado Public Radio | Denver, Colorado | Larger |
| KWMU | Saint Louis, Missouri | Larger |
| KERA | Dallas, Texas | Larger |
| KUAF | Fayetteville, Arkansas | Smaller |
| WYSO | Yellow Springs, Ohio | Smaller |
| High Plains Public Radio | Garden City, Kansas | Smaller |


Table 1 Station Categories

The research team invited the general manager of each station to participate in the interviews, though in several cases the team was referred to another individual in the organization. The goal of the research team was to identify and speak with individuals serving in high-level administrative roles. Amongst those interviewed were general managers, executive directors/CEOs, operation officers, development directors, vice presidents and editors. The team found that the most valuable information came from general managers who were able to speak to aspects of the whole organization whereas departmental leaders focused on limited perspectives.

Interviews with UA Little Rock Public Radio Stakeholders

The goal of the stakeholder interviews was to understand stakeholder perspectives on KLRE/KUAR's assessment processes and community engagement. The research team contacted 13 stakeholders and ultimately interviewed 12, resulting in a 92% response rate.

Nathan Vandiver, UA Little Rock Public Radio Station General Manager, identified stakeholders willing to speak with the research team. The research team attempted to interview multiple individuals representing differing groups of stakeholders. Stakeholder groups the team identified included community event partners, underwriters, Friends Board members, volunteers, donors, and university faculty. Ultimately, the team interviewed four current board members, four underwriters, one community partner, one University of Arkansas at Little Rock faculty member, and one current donor/volunteer. As only one member of each of the latter three categories (community partners, university faculty members, and donors/volunteers) were interviewed, these stakeholders were grouped into and analyzed as a single classification. The Friends Board members interviewed represented the most diverse group. Among the board members interviewed by the research team were a social worker, the president of a consulting agency, a lawyer, and the general manager of a local liquor distributor. Each of these members have served varying terms on the board, from fresh to long-tenured, but are equally active.



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Data Analysis

Prior to the interview phase, the research team developed separate interview guides for the two groups. These guides were developed with the three aforementioned research questions in mind. Station interviews consisted of three main questions as well as two to seven detailed follow-up questions. The first two primary questions addressed the topics of community engagement and program assessment while the third question focused on the implementation of assessment findings. The full interview guide can be found in Appendix B. Stakeholder interviews consisted of four main questions along with subsequent questions to ask if applicable. This guide focused on methods by which stakeholders could assist UA Little Rock Public Radio in its assessment processes. The stakeholder interview guide can be found in Appendix C.

Each team member carried out at least three interviews. Following each interview, the team debriefed to determine what gathered information would be the most applicable, beneficial, or relevant. After the completion of the interview phase, the research team coded responses to the interviews. This process involved simultaneously analyzing all responses to each individual question and identifying common themes that applied to the original research questions. The research team coded station responses along six different areas:

1. University affiliation
2. Revision of mission/vision statement
3. Forms of community engagement beyond programming
4. Feedback collection methods
5. Presence of a Community Advisory Board
6. Methods of assessment implementation

The team categorized stakeholder responses as follows:

1. Perception of KLRE/KUAR's responsiveness to feedback
2. Type (if any) of request for feedback by the station
3. Station implementation/consideration of stakeholder suggestions
4. Methods through which stakeholders felt they could contribute to the station's assessment process
5. Ways that stakeholders felt they could assist the station in community engagement

Community Engagement and Assessment

What methods and approaches do stations like UA Little Rock Public Radio use in order to measure the outcomes of its programs and community initiatives on a sustainable basis?

Forms of Community Engagement

In the research team’s interviews with public radio stations, it found that questions about assessing community impact also encouraged respondents to describe the ways in which they engage the community, both in their on-air programming and with community events such as music and arts festivals. For instance, we found that many stations affiliated with public universities maintain a strong interest in university partnerships. These stations sustain a presence on campus through programs with university departments or by focusing solely on

Table 2: Types of Community Engagement by Public Radio Station

| Station | City | Music Festival | Arts | Local Culture/History | Networking | Civic/Electoral Event |
|---------|--------------------|----------------|------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| KASU | Jonesboro, AR | x | | x | | |
| WKSU | Akron, OH | | | | | x |
| WBHM | Birmingham, AL | x | | | | x |
| WUCT | Chattanooga, TN | x | x | x | | |
| WUOT | Knoxville, TN | | x | x | | x |
| KDAQ | Shreveport, LA | x | | x | | |
| | | | | | | |
| KWMU | St. Louis, MO | x | x | | x | x |
| KERA | Dallas, TX | x | | | | x |
| CPR | Denver, CO | x | x | | | x |
| WYSO | Yellow Springs, OH | x | | | x | |
| HPPR | Garden City, KS | x | | | | |
| KUAF | Fayetteville, AR | x | x | | | |

university news content (i.e. live streaming university board meetings on Facebook). WUOT of Knoxville, Tennessee stated that it collaborates with the College of Nursing to co-produce a segment on health and healthcare policy issues. Other university-affiliated stations mentioned partnerships with music or arts departments to produce and broadcast live concerts on campus or in studio. Station managers from university-affiliated stations emphasized the importance of

maintaining a high interest in university partnerships in order to expand brand awareness among younger populations, often viewed as underserved in public radio.

A number of stations also indicated that they host a variety of community events as a way to increase their visibility and engagement in the community. Table 2 describes community events sponsored by the public radio stations we interviewed. The results suggest that most public radio stations of all sorts play some role in local music and arts festivals. Moreover, excepting public radio stations serving smaller or widely dispersed markets (e.g. KUAF, High Plains Public Radio), it is common for public radio stations to participate in local civic or electoral events. Public radio social events hosted often foster environments that are more intimate and reach smaller audiences than festivals and concerts. The public radio station in Saint Louis hosts public events at local restaurants, providing an opportunity for the station to solicit feedback and build relationships with potential listeners and donors. Many other stations expressed hosting a variety of networking events such as events for young professionals, banquets to recognize donors, “Meet the Staff” events, and silent auctions. Additionally, many smaller stations host a variety of community concerts at local restaurants and bars in an effort to display local musical talent. Small networking events have proven to be valuable when expanding station impact beyond programing and news.

Assessing Community Impact

The research team’s interviews found that by far the most common means of assessment used by stations of all sizes was Nielsen and Arbitron ratings surveys. Some station managers, though, referred to ratings surveys as expensive and viewed them as a limited source for assessment. Another very common sort of assessment was the solicitation of comments from listeners and stakeholders during telethon fund drives or call-in programs. Many of the station representatives interviewed indicated telethon events produced the most feedback from listeners. Although this is a very common means of collecting listener feedback, many stations did not have a formal means of incorporating these comments or suggestions into their strategic planning process.

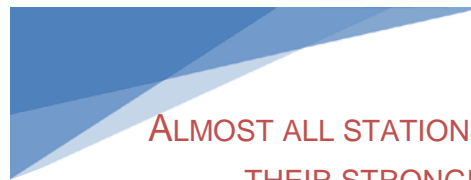
Table 3 describes the most common methods that public radio stations use to assess the quality of their programming and their community impact more broadly. The results here show that online and phone feedback from listeners are particularly common methods. This is notable since comments received on-air, especially during fund drives, are both beneficial and problematic to comprehensive assessment. Individuals providing this type of feedback are donors or individuals who possess interest in the station. Acquiring feedback through only this method

Table 3: Modes of Public Radio Station Assessment, by Station Type

| Station | City | Surveys | | | | | Feedback | | | | | Community Advisory Board | | |
|---------|--------------------|----------|--------|--------------------------|-------------|------------|---------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| | | Listener | Member | Community / Non-listener | Unspecified | Post-Event | Phone/ On-Air | Online (website /social media) | During Fundraisers | In-Person | Featured Story Follow-Up | | | |
| KASU | Jonesboro, AR | X | | | | | X | | | | | | | |
| WKSU | Akron, OH | | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | X |
| WBHM | Birmingham, AL | | | X | | | X | X | X | | | | | |
| WUCT | Chattanooga, TN | | | X | | | X | X | | | | | | X |
| WUOT | Knoxville, TN | | | | | | X | X | X | | | | | X |
| KDAQ | Shreveport, LA | | | | X | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KWMU | St. Louis, MO | | | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| KERA | Dallas, TX | | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| CPR | Denver, CO | | | | X | X | | | | | | | | X |
| WYSO | Yellow Springs, OH | | | | | X | | | X | | | | | |
| HPPR | Garden City, KS | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KUAF | Fayetteville, AR | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

results in incomplete assessment measures and skewed results as it excludes non-listeners. Therefore, this means of assessment cannot truly be considered a community impact assessment method without inclusion of non-listeners. A few stations do, however, go further in seeking out feedback, including survey research methods or by developing a community advisory board. Two stations similar to KLRE/KUAR, WUOT in Knoxville and WBHM in Birmingham, use a broader community survey that includes non-listeners to assess community impact. In this way, these stations may receive information that goes beyond the station's listenership.

Most stations also use social media as a means of assessment and a way to gain valuable feedback from stakeholders. Almost all stations noted that their strongest means of community impact assessment comes from methods such as phone calls, email, and social media messages and comments. Although these methods are considered informal, these means of engaging listeners seem to be the most streamlined approach of providing stations with valuable feedback. Overall, stations that engage in or host community events seem to receive significant feedback from listeners and stakeholders. The relation between community events hosted by a station and listener feedback and engagement seems to suggest a strong importance in community impact being most effective when engaging listeners off-air and in-person.



ALMOST ALL STATIONS NOTED THAT THEIR STRONGEST MEANS OF COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT COMES FROM METHODS SUCH AS PHONE CALLS, EMAIL, AND SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES AND COMMENTS

While stations affiliated with universities expressed the importance of partnerships with their university, many also noted that stations do not typically involve universities in their strategic planning process or formal assessment processes. Stations also expressed that university events can serve as a channel to receive informal feedback from stakeholders as well as expand listenership among younger and more diverse demographics.

Additionally, some stations similar to KLRE/KUAR used assessment tools like community and listener surveys. Of those that used these survey methods to evaluate station impact, many did not have a long-term plan for use of results or formal plans to include results in strategic planning efforts.

The research team also noted another prominent assessment method among public radio stations: Community Advisory Boards (CAB). In fact, more than half of the stations surveyed in this study have established CABs. CABs act as a thermometer to measure the temperature of the public. Some stations meet with their boards as frequently as every month; others once a quarter.

One station in particular habitually engages with a single member of their board weekly. Interviewed stations reported that community advisory board engagement allows them to assess their impact from the perspective of vested community members.

Recommendations

a. Expand Community Partnerships

Partnerships within the community can be integral when attempting to increase station community engagement and for implementation of effective station practices (D’Elia et al, 2005). As seen from other public radio stations, engaging the community more effectively through additional and expanded community partnerships while maintaining integrity to the station’s mission can prove beneficial to the community, and equally beneficial to station sustainability. While it is common for public radio stations of all sizes to host or sponsor a variety of community culture, arts, and music festivals, our interview data showed that stations affiliated with public universities seem to be the most invested in hosting or sponsoring various festivals. Every university-affiliated station interviewed stated that their largest form of community engagement comes from hosting or sponsoring annual culture, arts, and/or music festivals. Not only does this present an opportunity for stations to market themselves to the community, but it also serves as an opportunity to solicit informal feedback from the community.



EVERY UNIVERSITY-AFFILIATED
STATION INTERVIEWED STATED THAT
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MUSIC FESTIVALS.

Many of the community events hosted by the various stations we interviewed have an impact on the community that goes well beyond listeners. While the festivals and concerts put on by public radio stations are well-advertised to listeners, the impact of these events can often reach non-listeners or those who may have never heard of the radio station. Because of this, it is important to note that assessments of community impact should not only focus on listeners of the station but should also target non-listeners of the community. Additionally, community events can serve as a way to promote the station among non-listeners and communicate with hard-to-reach populations and demographics.

Currently, UA Little Rock Public Radio does utilize partnerships with local organizations in a variety of ways (Local Content Services Report, 2018):

- UAMS - broadcasts “Here’s to Your Health,” a two-minute feature broadcast each weekday regarding health information and medical advice
- Clinton School of Public Service - broadcasts “Clinton School Presents,” a weekly interview show featuring visiting speakers to the Clinton School
- Talk Business Arkansas - broadcasts two weekly business reports, a 4-minute report and a half-hour report, both focusing on Arkansas business and politics as well as provides reporting support to the KUAR newsroom
- Central Arkansas Library System - serves as a media sponsor for the Arkansas Literary Festival and the Arkansas Sounds Music Festival

Though valuable, such partnerships primarily focus on developing content to broadcast. While community events can often be expensive to host or sponsor, we recommend that KLRE/KUAR pursue additional involvement with local festivals and events when possible, nurturing their partnerships with various community-based businesses, civic clubs, economic development agencies, and other local organizations. We also recommend using community events as opportunities to increase brand awareness within the community and solicit feedback from listeners and non-listeners alike.

Literature research highlights the importance of partnerships and collaboration within communities, but especially between public service organizations. Partnerships and collaboration between public media, museums, etc. can have positive long-term effects on children and adults in their prospective service areas (D’Elia et al, 2005). Research has revealed that partnerships lead to benefits for community members and that prospective institutions’ awareness of their resources increased as a result. Literature also discusses the need for new public broadcasting structures and describes the benefits created by partnerships and collaboration among a growing noncommercial media sector, nonprofit news organizations, and public media platforms (Mensing, 2017).


Concerning community engagement and its relationship with assessment, the research team recommends that UA Little Rock Public Radio:

1. Assess their mission statement every three to five years and adapt or revise it accordingly to ensure sustainable relevance
2. Foster existing and cultivate new alliances with local public and nonprofit organizations
3. Create awareness and enhance visibility through additional community-wide events

b. Use Professional Assessment Methods

Although listener feedback is valuable to a station's assessment process, it does not serve as a means to evaluate fully community impact and engagement. Because of this, it is important to note that assessments of community impact should not only focus on listeners of the station but should also target non-listeners in the community. In order truly to gain the perspective of the community in which the station serves, assessment measures should represent and attempt to engage all populations of the community. The research team recommends that KLRE/KUAR consider collaborating with the UA Little Rock Survey Research Center to produce a community survey that targets all stakeholders in the Central Arkansas community. A community survey can help a station identify gaps in its outputs and areas of improvement.

In addition to methods of assessment such as listener surveys, the research team recommends that KLRE/KUAR utilize professional assessment methods that specifically place an emphasis on ensuring sure all groups of the community are involved. Research suggests that involving all groups within your community in your assessment ensures long-term sustainability (Jallov, 2004). In order to achieve this, the research team recommends that the station collaborate with the UA Little Rock Survey Research Center. Housed in Ross Hall, the Survey Research Center (SRC) provides professional research services to the university and local public and nonprofit organizations. Given the station's association with the university, especially the College of Social Sciences and Communications, of which the SRC is a part, such a partnership could allow KLRE/KUAR to actively and sustainably conduct listener, community, and other station assessments. The Survey Research Center could offer the station expertise in assessment and allow the station to delve more deeply and accurately into its listenership and the community. This partnership would allow the station to gain a better understanding of the community. In summary, employing professional assessment methods would allow the station to develop greater scale reporting on the local and regional level, broaden the scope of availability for feedback, and implement and execute polling and surveys more frequently. The station should utilize findings from the Survey Center to adapt their outreach to fit community and listener needs and thusly increase their community impact and engagement.



THE RESEARCH TEAM RECOMMENDS
THAT KLRE/KUAR UTILIZE
PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT
METHODS THAT SPECIFICALLY PLACE
AN EMPHASIS ON ENSURING SURE
ALL GROUPS OF THE COMMUNITY
ARE INVOLVED

c. Evaluate Impact of Local Programming

Local programming and content proved to be extremely beneficial to most of the radio stations interviewed. The stations conducted surveys with radio station representatives and community stakeholders to analyze the impact of the community in radio and to obtain feedback from stakeholders to assess their level of commitment to public radio.

Radio stations in larger markets, such as KWMU in Missouri, WKSU in Ohio, and WBHM in Alabama, focused on local programming to connect to their communities. As a result, these stations have experienced increases in their listenership, higher turnouts at local events and festivals, and more successful fundraising and membership drives. High Plains Public Radio (HPPR) (Garden City, Kansas) gives a great example of what this can be with the intimate, live-music experience for both listeners and featured performers in their ‘Living Room Concerts.’ Hosted by the station as a community service these concerts support independent regional artists and provide listeners with a unique musical experience. Most importantly, HPPR is increasing community exposure to the arts by this series.

Research suggests that local engagement increases when a sense of community is formed. When large groups identify similar interests, they become a part of a distinct group (Reader, 2007). Research also describes methods used by public radio stations to engage listeners and their prospective communities by including excerpts from listener letters as a part of their programming (Reader, 2007). If utilized by UA Little Rock Public Radio, such a practice could increase listenership and community engagement and impact.



KLRE/KUAR Stakeholder Engagement

In what ways could UA Little Rock Public Radio work with its stakeholders to assess the station's community impact?

Assessment is often difficult to execute, especially when measuring outcomes (e.g. the lasting effects of a public radio's programming on civic health) as opposed to outputs (e.g. the number of people who listen to the station regularly). Reflected thematically in scholarly literature, assessment is often overlooked, perceived as unnecessary, or conducted sloppily and half-heartedly. Public radio stations in particular can struggle with assessment due to a lack of resources and access to quantitative measures. While an increase in membership over a given year may provide insight regarding a station's health, such a metric will not determine whether the station is fulfilling its mission to "deepen insight into the human experience." Alaez (2010) highlights this lack of objective outputs by which to measure the effects of radio programming within a community and determines that subjective measures of evaluation and assessment are necessary.



PUBLIC RADIO STATIONS IN PARTICULAR CAN STRUGGLE WITH ASSESSMENT DUE TO A LACK OF RESOURCES AND ACCESS TO QUANTITATIVE MEASURES.

Yet, even when organizations passionately pursue assessment measures, stakeholders tend to be excluded from engaging in the process. Vanhaeght (2019) discusses the need to determine what value audiences attach to participatory opportunities offered by their public service media outlets. The study interviewed non-participating public radio listeners to determine their specific values in relation to public service radio and found that "a strong disconnect on the implementation of public value strategies still exists between the strategy and the production levels of public broadcasters" (Vanhaeght, 2019). Essentially, a crisis of values divides public radio producers and public radio consumers. It is evident, therefore, that assessment of stakeholder needs, in general, and listener needs, in particular, is vital to the survival of a public media outlet.

Findings from KLRE/KUAR Stakeholder Interviews

As evident in their practices, programming, and mission statement, UA Little Rock Public Radio seeks to enrich the lives of the people of Central Arkansas. To better understand

UA Little Rock Public Radio’s assessment practices, the research team interviewed eleven representatives of organizations that may be considered stakeholders in UA Little Rock Public Radio. These stakeholders include the station’s underwriters, its listeners (represented by KLRE/KUAR’s Friends Board), and community partners, such as units with which it collaborates at UA Little Rock. Specifically, the research team analyzed ways through which stakeholders collaborated and engaged in assessment feedback with KLRE/KUAR. UA Little Rock Public Radio staff assisted in identifying appropriate representatives of the stakeholder organization the research team interviewed. Appendix B lists the interview questions.

As indicated in Table 4, one important finding from our stakeholder interviews is that most felt that UA Little Rock Public Radio valued the input that they gave. Nearly all respondents indicated that the station has generally been receptive to feedback that they have provided, whether solicited or unsolicited. This receptiveness is a necessary condition for cultivating additional stakeholder input as part of an on-going community impact assessment.

Table 4: Perceived Receptiveness of KLRE/KUAR to Stakeholder Feedback

| Stakeholder Type | Very Receptive | Fairly Receptive | Fairly Unreceptive | Very Unreceptive | No Data |
|-------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------|
| Board Member | x | | | | |
| Board Member | | x | | | |
| Board Member | | x | | | |
| Board Member | | x | | | |
| Community Partner | | x | | | |
| Community Partner | | x | | | |
| Community Partner | | x | | | |
| Underwriter | | | | | x |
| Underwriter | | | x | | |
| Underwriter | | x | | | |
| Underwriter | | | | | x |

Moreover, we can say that a significant proportion of stakeholders recognized that their input had been taken seriously enough that KLRE/KUAR had acted on it. Table 5 indicates that four of the eleven respondents had identified particular ways KLRE/KUAR had made changes that aligned with a suggestion that stakeholder had made. This result should not be interpreted, of course, as indicating that the station should act on all stakeholder input. Nevertheless, it does serve as an indicator that many of the station’s stakeholders feel they have voice in the station’s management.

Table 5: KLRE/KUAR Acted on Stakeholder Input

| Stakeholder Type | Yes | No |
|-------------------|-----|----|
| Board Member | x | |
| Board Member | x | |
| Board Member | | x |
| Board Member | | x |
| Community Partner | | x |
| Community Partner | x | |
| Community Partner | x | |
| Underwriter | | x |
| Underwriter | | x |
| Underwriter | | x |
| Underwriter | | x |

In this vein, the research team sought to gauge stakeholder interest in participating in UA Little Rock Public Radio’s efforts to assess its community impact. The results, summarized in Table 6, indicate that for the most part, KLRE/KUAR’s stakeholders either already participate in providing feedback, or are willing to do so if asked. The exception tends to be underwriters, who because of the transactional nature of their relationship with UA Little Rock Public Radio do not see their participation as in their interest.

Table 6: Stakeholder Willingness to Participate in Community Impact Assessment

| | Currently Providing Input | Currently Not Providing Input, but Willing | Not Providing Input and Uninterested in Assessment | Other |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--|--|-------|
| Board Member | | x | | |
| Board Member | x | | | |
| Board Member | x | | | |
| Board Member | x | | | |
| Community Partner | x | | | |
| Community Partner | x | x | | |
| Community Partner | | x | | |
| Underwriter | | | | x |
| Underwriter | | x | | |
| Underwriter | | | x | |
| Underwriter | | | x | |

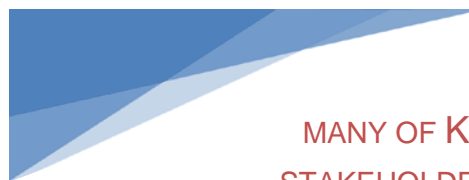
Underwriters: The research team found that in general, KLRE/KUAR’s underwriters view their relationship with KLRE/KUAR in transactional terms. At its most rudimentary level, underwriting benefits the station financially while the underwriter receives brand recognition. Adhering to this outlook, the underwriters interviewed did not believe it appropriate or necessary

to provide feedback on or assist the station in its strategic planning processes. Similarly, underwriters reported that just as they do not provide assessment feedback to the station, the station does not actively seek their input. In fact, the research team found that the primary interaction between UA Little Rock Public Radio and its underwriters occur during discussions of the terms of their agreement. Despite the transactional nature of the relationship with KLRE/KUAR, underwriters indicated they were generally satisfied with and benefitted from this relationship. The disinterest in UA Little Rock Public Radio's assessment processes, therefore, must not be mistaken for indifference or apathy towards the success of the station. As vested partners, underwriters are extremely concerned with the station's prosperity and indicated intense satisfaction with the benefits they receive from the relationship.

KLRE/KUAR Friends Board: In contrast to underwriters, KLRE/KUAR Friends Board members indicated more comfort with providing feedback to the station. Though the Friends Board serves as an advisory body rather than a governing entity, the station regularly requests their input on a variety of issues. All board members interviewed spoke highly of the organization and its leadership and appeared satisfied with the ways in which they have been asked to contribute. In fact, three out of four of the respondents in this category identified times in which the station heavily considered or actually implemented an original idea of theirs. Overall, board members were the most willing of the stakeholders to continue active participation and potentially expand their role in regard to providing additional feedback.

Community Partners: Finally, the research team interviewed other stakeholders throughout the community. Stakeholders in this category included a community partner, volunteer and donor, and a UA Little Rock faculty member. Overall, opinions from these community partners developed a middle ground between underwriters and board members concerning feedback and assessment planning. This group did not regularly offer input nor did the station request it. However, these stakeholders perceived KLRE/KUAR's receptiveness to unsolicited feedback to be positive. They indicated that station staff expressed appreciation for their feedback and indicated that their comments would be given careful consideration. Two of the three interviewees classified in this category spoke of specific examples where KLRE/KUAR acted on or heavily considered the stakeholder's feedback.

In summary, many of KLRE/KUAR's stakeholders indicated willingness to participate in a station assessment process. However, some felt that the opportunity for them to do so had been unavailable. Others felt that involvement in assessment



MANY OF KLRE/KUAR'S
STAKEHOLDERS INDICATED
WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN A
STATION ASSESSMENT PROCESS.

processes extended beyond the scope of their relationship with the station. Based on the team's research and interviews, variation in feedback is not uncommon. Stakeholders more active in the organization (i.e. donors, volunteers, and board members or other governing agency representatives) have naturally developed a more personal relationship with station leadership. Contrastingly, stakeholders that are less involved (i.e. underwriters) exhibit a less developed personal relationship with the station and its leadership. However, actively involved and less involved stakeholders alike report a positive professional or working relationship with station leadership.

Recommendations

a. Engage Stakeholders

Based on the data obtained through interviews, the research team recommends that UA Little Rock Public Radio engage certain stakeholders intentionally and specifically. As discussed, the level of interest in engagement and relationship cultivation with the station varied across different groups of stakeholders. With that in mind, UA Little Rock Public Radio could benefit from engaging those that have indicated willingness to participate more regularly in their assessment processes. Such increased involvement from willing stakeholders would improve assessment accuracy while deepening the station's community presence and impact.

b. Expand Partnerships with UA Little Rock

Research examines the relationship between young people and community radio by focusing on youth who use community radio as a voice and platform for social inclusion (Wilkinson, 2015). Community radio can serve as a platform for community members to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives, can provide youth with a sense of ownership in a given community, and can give a voice to marginalized population (Wilkinson, 2015). Community radio encourages youth to participate in civic engagement, directly relating to a goal of KUAR public radio (Wilkinson, 2015).

UA Little Rock Public Radio works regularly with the following campus departments (Local Content Services Report, 2018):

- UA Little Rock History Department and the UA Little Rock Anderson Institute on Race and Ethnicity to produce Arkansas Moments, a one-minute feature broadcast each day that presents historical information about Arkansas

- UA Little Rock English Department to produce Facts about Fiction, a one-minute feature broadcast each day that presents information about writers and writing and to produce Arts and Letters, a half-hour program that highlights the arts and humanities
- UA Little Rock Anthropology Program to produce Being Human, a one-minute feature broadcast each day that presents anthropological research
- UA Little Rock Art Gallery to produce Picture This, a one-minute feature broadcast each day about art exhibits in Arkansas
- UA Little Rock Speech Communication Department to produce Communication Matters, a one-minute feature broadcast each day that presents research about communication

Though these partnerships are valuable and extensive (our list is not comprehensive), these partnerships are primarily broadcast content based. As mentioned, interviews revealed that comparable stations exercise extensive partnerships with other campus functions, specifically collaboration with their prospective campus marketing staff.

Specifically, the Capstone Team recommends the following to KLRE/KUAR:

- Increase awareness and enhance visibility through on-campus events and partnerships
- Expand and foster existing and new relationships within educational and other departments
- Utilize the University's established strategic marketing techniques and develop continuous partnership with the marketing department
- Develop a strong presence on campus with incoming and present students through advertising, surveys, and events

Research indicates that public radio stations across the country have had trouble when marketing services and reaching a younger audience (Atkins & McCardle, 2015). Research has determined that the preferences and demands of younger listeners are distinctly different from older demographics (Falk, 2017). UA Little Rock Public Radio noted these challenges during the initial meeting with the research team. Based on that concern, the team has concluded that campus targeted initiatives and campus involvement would be beneficial to the station when attempting to fundraise, market, and reach a younger demographic.

c. Expansion of the Role of the Friends of KLRE/KUAR Board

Structurally, the University of Arkansas System governs UA Little Rock Public Radio. Both KLRE and KUAR are licensed to the Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas System on behalf of UA Little Rock. A non-governing advisory board, Friends of KLRE/KUAR, has also been established to assist the station with fundraising, volunteer opportunities, and serve in a general advisory capacity.

Station interviews and research reflected the use of advisory boards across public media outlets for a multitude of reasons leading to more accurate assessment of station communities as well as increased engagement with the station. The research team found that stations of all sizes make use of community advisory boards. Research showed that the most effective community advisory boards are comprised of members that represent all backgrounds of the community, including populations considered hard to reach or may not currently have any interest in public radio. The community advisory board serves in a variety of capacities that ultimately acts as a community voice. The advisory board advocates for the station, advises and assists in the strategic planning process, and ultimately serves as a community engagement tool that promotes the station in the community.

The research team recommends that UA Little Rock Public Radio expand the role of the Friends of KLRE/KUAR Advisory Board (Friends Board). As outlined in their by-laws, the mission of the Friends Board is to “offer financial and logistical support as well as community outreach” (Friends of KLRE/KUAR, 2013). With their mission in mind, the research team recommends that their role in community assessment, as well as community engagement, be expanded and encouraged.

An expansion of the Friends Board role does not imply a change in its organizational function. The Friends Board simply operates in an advisory capacity to aid and support the station. Moving forward, the team recommends that the Friends Board continue to operate in that advisory role, but with a focus on community assessment and engagement. Members should serve as engagement liaisons within the community, spearheading KLRE/KUAR events throughout the community and acting as ambassadors to current and potential listeners throughout the community.

Research and interviews also indicate that an expanded board can allow stations to overcome the gap between the station and its community, as well as to benefit from direct feedback and assessment from more community members (Knack & Kropf, 2003). Saint Louis Public radio’s community advisory board serves in an advisory capacity, and actively evaluates station programming and policy decisions. Their focus is to ensure the station is meeting the educational and cultural needs of the community. The team recommends that the Friends Board play a more active role in assessing the needs of the community and relaying those needs to KLRE/KUAR. The Friends Board is a vested group of individuals seeking to make strategic recommendations to the station and so it is in the station’s interest to use it as a source of input in strategic planning and assessment. The team recommends extending the role of the Friends Board in identifying opportunities to collaborate in community civic and arts events and in soliciting feedback from elements of the community the station often does not reach.

d. Consistency & Diversity

Interviews with comparable stations indicated that soliciting input from stakeholders, such as underwriters and community partners, is beneficial to the health of their prospective public radio stations. Regularly assessing the perspectives of their stakeholders lends to more relevant programming, events, and greater constituency satisfaction. Thus, the Capstone team recommends that UA Little Rock Public radio increase its engagement consistency with stakeholders, such as donors and governing university faculty members, and should solicit feedback on a consistent and regular basis.

As mentioned, the team recommends an expansion of the Friends Board. An increased number of Friends Board members provides an opportunity to diversify and expand feedback while an increased frequency of Friends Board meetings would increase the consistency of feedback. Through research and interviews, the team has discovered a positive correlation between increased board activity and consistent feedback. Station KERA of Dallas, TX has an advisory board made up of 50 people who represent diverse interests in the community. Additionally, each member of the advisory board meets individually with the station general manager once a year to express interests and feedback from their represented population. With 20 current Friends Board members (twelve women, eight men, two minorities represented), KLRE/KUAR could benefit from an expansion of the Friends Board with a focus on consistency of assessment & feedback and diversity of board members.

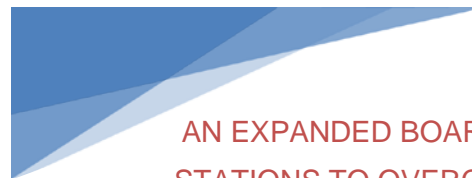
e. Incorporate Key Performance Indicators

For organizations to effectively and efficiently assess their audience listenership and determine whether they are successful with the content and level of programming presented, they must first determine what they want to accomplish within the organization. Developing a set of organizational goals and a framework to support those goals is important in establishing performance indicators within the organization. An article by Steve Mulder, Director of Audience Insights (NPR) and Mark Furst, Director of Public Media Futures Forum discusses how organizations who engage audiences through digital platforms can utilize core metrics and key performance indicators to assess how to attract and retain listeners and find out what works and what does not (Mulder & Furst, 2018). Fifteen public media organizations within the United States including Saint Louis Public radio, NPR, PBS, American Public Media, and other public radio stations met to discuss how public media organizations should work toward building and engaging audiences. From this meeting the various media groups developed a framework that if utilized could improve audience listenership and organizational success.

Indeed, National Public Radio uses this framework to focus on common goals of public media organizations and is referred to as Grow, Know, Engage, and Monetize. Organizations should seek to grow their audiences to increase their presence in markets, and expand their content and audience; know the audience to be able to inform, educate, and create relationships that encourage membership; engage the audience to encourage loyalty, membership, support, and to build rapport.

Key performance indicators measure performance and success within an organization, while core metrics are the values or numbers that track performance and progress (Mulder & Furst, 2018). Generally key performance indicators are tied to organizational goals, easy to remember and limited in number, familiar and understandable. One way of identifying what key performance indicators are chosen is to identify the most important shared goals of other public media organizations and their missions. Second, determine which of the metrics or values align with the organizational goals or what the public media organization is trying to accomplish. Third, implement a process that would encourage inclusive adoption of these key performance indicators as a customary resolution of success. Finally, avoid “metrics creep,” that is, refrain from using too many metrics, start small and build upon more metrics over time.

The public media forum identified key performance indicators for each of the shared organizational goals presented previously; Grow, Know, Engage, and Monetize (Mulder & Furst, 2018). For growing the audience, the forum team used key performance indicator examples such as tracking the number of social media followers who engage in posts. For knowing the audience, the forum team highlighted examples such as number of new emails, and number of people that might register for events as having been successful KPI’s in the past. For engaging the audience, key performance indicators should indicate things such as how many times a person returns to the website or the sessions per user across a week or month. Finally, for monetizing the audience, KPIs that track new members and revenue that drive a specific plan of action are necessary and most often utilized (Mulder & Furst, 2018).



AN EXPANDED BOARD CAN ALLOW STATIONS TO OVERCOME THE GAP BETWEEN THE STATION AND ITS COMMUNITY, AS WELL AS TO BENEFIT FROM DIRECT FEEDBACK AND ASSESSMENT FROM MORE COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The forum convened with recommendations for public media organizations across platforms that if utilized, would allow public media organizations to create an organizational culture based on a framework of creating key performance indicators designed to engage audiences more authentically, know their audiences, grow their audiences and result in increased

membership, funding, and success. Key Points in Incorporating Core Metrics and Key Performance Indicators are to build and engage the public radio audience: First, meet with key personnel within your organization to determine which KPI's are most relevant to your specific organization. Second, create a short master list of audience goals and key performance indicators that are clear and understandable to those within your organization (Mulder & Furst, 2018). Thirdly, create a weekly or monthly report so that those within your organization can see progress to assist in making the organizational goals those of the entire organization. Lastly, identify targets for the KPIs that represent the organization's most crucial priorities (Mulder & Furst, 2018).

Using Assessment Results

How could UA Little Rock Public Radio incorporate assessment outcomes and reporting into its strategic planning process?

Findings from Station Interviews

Though most public radio stations have found some way of assessing what stakeholders want, difficulty arises when applying those assessment findings to a station's daily operation. The goal for UA Little Rock Public Radio should be to close the assessment loop, i.e. bridge the gap between assessment and using assessment findings to inform station goals, planning, and practices.

At its core, the strategic planning process is an internal assessment designed to identify inefficiencies that may be limiting the achievement, reach, revenue, or vision of a particular organization. In essence, strategic planning is predicated on the idea that an organization's current methods and activities represent a status quo that is less than ideal and could be improved. While methods of using assessment findings may differ across organizations, the key is to take the received information and adapt current practices based on updated information, thereby bridging the newfound gap between what organizations offer and stakeholder needs and desires.

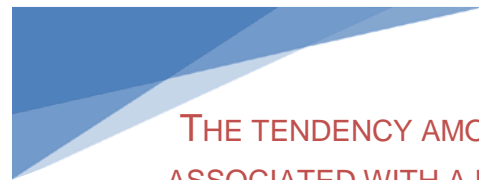
Even so, the research team found that the overwhelming majority of stations interviewed did not actively address implementation of assessment findings. Indeed, the strategic planning process itself tended to be overlooked or neglected. The lack of implementation, however, is not an indication that public radio stations ignore feedback or reject suggestions. Rather, the issue resides in discovering effective methods by which to incorporate feedback. Stations that attempted to close the assessment loop typically did so through standard three- or five-year strategic plans. Other stations revised their mission or vision statement periodically to maintain relevance. The most common reaction to feedback, though, were adjustments in programming. Such changes appeared to be nominal, however.

Implementation of assessment data can be disruptive to station operation, but is beneficial to a station's long-term success. Successful public radio stations engage in continuous communication with their various stakeholders and incorporate their feedback regarding station activities. They strive to ensure that assessment data is used continuously as part of an ongoing organizational improvement process. As such, it requires improving and sustaining of both the process and the outcome. Moreover, in the case of UA Little Rock Public Radio, outcome assessment has become a part of the culture of the University and non-academic units of the

campus will increasingly be expected to not only carry out assessment, but guide decision-making based on assessment findings.

Incorporating assessment findings to improve practices, however, requires organizations effectively utilize feedback, particularly information regarding stakeholder interests, attitudes, and preferences. This planning process, therefore, must include continuous communication with its stakeholders.

The research team found that stakeholder involvement in the strategic planning process among public radio stations varies based on the station's leadership structure. The tendency among stations associated with a university is to include university leadership when developing a strategic plan. WUCT on the campus of UT-Chattanooga, for example, utilizes a formal, top-down approach which involves the president of the Tennessee College System, the campus chancellor, an advisory board for programing and fundraising, and a combination of both community and university leaders. Not all university- affiliated stations, though, engage university faculty to the extent that WUCT does. Nonetheless, some degree of university involvement in the strategic planning process among university- affiliated stations is expected, given that the institution holds the license to the station.



THE TENDENCY AMONG STATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH A UNIVERSITY IS TO INCLUDE UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP WHEN DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLAN

In contrast, stations not affiliated with a university, revealed a more community-oriented strategic planning process. KDAQ in Shreveport, Louisiana, involves seven staff members including the station manager, a select number of board members, the station finance department, fundraising leadership, a communications representative, selected underwriters, and various volunteers.

Recommendations

a. Inclusion of Feedback

While many of the informal assessment methods mentioned during the interviews serve to measure station outcomes and initiatives, they often have no long-term impact on the stations strategic planning process; assessment findings often go undocumented or are excluded from the

strategic planning process. We recommend that KLRE/KUAR implement a sustainable policy to formally document all feedback received from listeners collected via phone, email, social media, and website comments and review documented feedback during staff meetings throughout the year. By actively documenting feedback and suggestions, station staff can incorporate feedback deemed valuable into the stations annual strategic planning session.

The research team recommends that once an assessment has been conducted, such as a listener survey or Nielsen report, the station consider adjusting their programming to suit the feedback received. Interviews with other comparable stations revealed success when implementing change based on listener preferences and needs. That said, some interviewees cautioned of over adjusting in response to listener feedback. Interviewees noted that in order to appropriately adjust to listener feedback, a station must be confident that their survey or assessment encompasses a broad spectrum of listeners. In other words, the team recommends that the station thoroughly and sustainably utilized listener feedback, but in a way that does not alter the station's mission or intent. The team recommends that the station focus on balancing assessment feedback with the integrity of the station's mission to create the most relevant and beneficial programming possible to serve the community.

The team also recommends that the station create community events based on need and feedback. Interviews revealed that most stations respond individually to listener feedback and inquire for additional information from those giving feedback. This can be accomplished by documenting the impact of significant local events and tracking attendance at festivals or other such engagements.

b. Younger Audience Engagement

UA Little Rock Public Radio faces an additional obligation to create visible community impact that the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) can understand as they seek to affirm relevancy. Certainly, in the current environment, all non-academic units are being evaluated based on how well they fulfill the mission of enrolling, retaining, educating, and graduating UA Little Rock students. Because of that, any student-lead or student-oriented event on campus can be used as a benchmark of the IEC assessment process.

Conclusion

In today's world, public organizations face an unprecedented level of scrutiny. Ever changing demands from the communities they serve and constant pressure from stakeholders vested in their organizations create a difficult landscape for public organizations and administrators to navigate. Public administrators must attempt to manage elevated scrutiny from the public, governing boards, and organizational leadership while simultaneously working to achieve their organizational goals and remain true to their mission. Public administrators are utilizing assessment methods in an effort to identify inefficiencies within their organizations and develop a set of best practices to mitigate them. However, organizations across sectors are also combatting what is known as the assessment loop, defined as the gap between assessment and effective implementation of assessment findings (Banta & Blaich, 2011). In order to more effectively manage public organizations and meet constantly evolving demands, public administrators are seeking efficient and sustainable assessment measures and methods of implementation to utilize within their organizations. Like other public organizations, UA Little Rock Public Radio KLRE/KUAR is seeking those assessment methods to apply within their organization in an effort to better serve their community and achieve their mission.

In conclusion, the research team developed this technical report in an effort to aide UA Little Rock Public radio in determining a set of sustainable assessment methods and overcoming the assessment loop through effective implementation strategies. The team researched comparable stations as well as research articles and literature reviews outlining best practices for station assessment and evaluation methods. Based on research, the team developed this technical report to serve as a results summary including functional and sustainable evaluation methods for the utilization of UA Little Rock Public Radio.

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EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS

- Bylaws of The Friends of KLRE/KUAR, 2013
- KLRE-KUAR Local Content Services Report, 2018
- KUAR - Telling Public Radio’s Story, 2016

Appendix A: Principal Investigators

Mike Collins, an alumnus of UA-Little Rock and a current MPA candidate graduating in May, is the Senior Community Economic Development Specialist for the Arkansas Economic Development Institute (AEDI). Previously, he served as the Industrial Manufacturing Sector Manager for the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC).

Othenia M. Dowell has received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in International Studies from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Othenia was a McNair Scholar, and studied Spanish language at the University of Granada in Spain. Othenia has worked for the non-profit and private sectors and completed an internship in the Communications Department at the Arkansas State Capitol while the 91st General Assembly was in session. Othenia is currently finishing a Master of Public Administration degree and a Graduate Certificate in Management under the College of Business. Othenia has taken classes pertaining to political and global issues, management, and plans to work in the public sector or for an international organization in the near future.

Joanna Fureigh is a Little Rock native with a degree in Agricultural Business from UA Fayetteville. Joanna has previously worked in sales, marketing, and as a Graduate Assistant for the City of Bryant. She is currently working as a Development Associate for the Department of Institutional Advancement at UAMS and will be graduating from the MPA program in May 2019.

J. Braxton Furlong is an Advocate Supervisor at Pulaski County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), a nationwide nonprofit that utilizes community volunteers to advocate for foster children. Mr. Furlong graduated with a Bachelor of Social Work from Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas in 2017. He is currently pursuing a Master of Public Administration as well as a Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management at the University of Arkansas in Little Rock and anticipates completion of his degrees in May 2019.

Jagur Klemann is a graduate assistant at the Patrick Henry Hays Senior Center for the city of North Little Rock. Mr. Klemann received his Bachelor of Science in Sports Studies with a minor in Business Administration from Mississippi State University in 2017. He is currently in his last semester of the Master of Public Administration Program at UA Little Rock where he is also getting a certificate in Nonprofit Management. Mr. Klemann hopes to begin a career in nonprofit or local government operations.

Eddie L. Thomas serves as Regional Workforce Manager for Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District. In this role, he has provided leadership and support in the areas of workforce and economic development to ten counties, for over 15 years. Eddie obtained a

Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Management, a Master of Arts in Teaching from the University of Central Arkansas, a Nonprofit Management Graduate Certificate from UA Little Rock (Student of the Year-2017) and is a candidate for graduation (May 2019) from UA Little Rock with a Master of Public Administration. Thomas is a graduate of the Cornerstone Leadership Development Institute and was recently selected by Governor Asa Hutchinson as 1 of 6 Arkansans representing the state as a fellow in the Delta Regional Authority-Delta Leadership Institute Executive Academy. Most recently, he was chosen by Arkansas Business Journal as one of Arkansas's 40 Under 40 business leaders in the state.

William Jacob Waller has recently departed his position as a Title Curative Specialist at a large real estate law firm in Little Rock, Arkansas. Jacob obtained his Bachelor of Arts, Religious Studies from a small liberal arts college in Texas, and an Associate of Arts, Education from the local college in his hometown. He is currently completing the Master of Public Administration program at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock and will be moving to Denver, Colorado after graduation. Jacob is passionate about leisure science (public lands, parks, & tourism), public transportation, and urban development.

Appendix B: Interview Questionnaires

Station Interview Guide

1. What impact does the station aim to have on the community?
 - a. How would you describe the station's mission?
 - b. How did you develop the mission?
 - i. Who was involved? Stakeholders? Staff?
 - ii. What factors or goals were the most significant in developing that mission?
 - c. How integral of a role does community impact play in the station's mission?
 - d. What sort of community events does the station host or organize?
 - i. What type (if any) follow up is conducted post community events?
 - e. To what extent does your station focus on national or local programming/content?
 - f. Is the station concerned about the local impact of their programming?
2. How does the station collect feedback from the community?
 - a. How often does the station follow up with subjects of featured stories?
 - b. How often do you conduct listener surveys?
 - i. What questions do the surveys ask of listeners?
 - ii. How does the station determine which listeners to survey?
 - iii. What is the scope of the surveys? Typically how many listeners are surveyed and how often?
 - c. What assessment measures are used?
 - d. Do you utilize an ongoing assessment process?
 - e. Does the station conduct yearly or monthly or any other type of regularly scheduled assessment?
 - f. Would you categorize your assessments as formal or informal?
 - g. Who is involved/plays a role in the assessment process?
3. How do you incorporate the assessment into the planning process?
 - a. How do you use listener feedback?
 - i. How do other stakeholders help you assess your community impact?
 - b. How do you use that information when deciding on types of programming? Local content?

KLRE/KUAR Stakeholder Interview Guide

1. Tell us about your relationship with KUAR.
 - a. How and why did you get involved?
 - b. How does KUAR affect you/your organization?
 - c. In what ways has your relationship with KUAR benefited you as an underwriter/community partner?
2. What would you say are the most important ways that KUAR affects the community (i.e. Central Arkansas)?
 - a. What are its major strengths?
 - b. In what ways could its impact be improved?
 - c. In what ways do you feel KUAR supports the vitality of the community?
 - d. How engaged would you say KUAR is with the community? How much impact do they provide?
 - e. What is the most valuable service/product that KUAR provides?
3. In what ways does UA Little Rock Public Radio reach out to you for feedback?
4. How do you feel about the ways in which KUAR reaches out to you for input as a stakeholder?
 - a. How receptive is KUAR to your feedback?
 - b. Can you tell us about a time where an original idea of yours has been implemented?
 - c. How satisfied are you with the ways KUAR asks for feedback?
 - d. What would you change about the ways KUAR asks for feedback?
 - e. To what extent does KUAR involve you in strategic planning/setting goals/making plans for the future/assessing its impact on the community?

*Feedback/Input - Use the one most appropriate to the interviewee

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