

Local Service Initiatives

Name of Initiative: The Minnesota Collaborative

Station: Twin Cities Public Television (*tpt*)

Contact Person: Bill Hanley, Executive Vice President, MN Productions

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Briefly describe the initiative and be as specific as you can be about the products or services that the initiative includes.

The Minnesota Collaborative is a new strategic initiative of Twin Cities Public Television. Its purpose is to share the power of television with Minnesota's finest nonprofit and mission-centered organizations - to magnify their impact by helping them reach a broader audience. For MN Collaborative projects, *tpt* and its non-profit partners share editorial, financial and ownership responsibilities, governed by TPT Editorial Guidelines, to coproduce programs. Broadcast and promotion costs are contributed by *tpt*. The result is a powerful outreach tool - TV broadcasts which can be coupled with other forms of distribution, such as DVDs and web streaming. Examples of programs include lectures and town meetings; documentaries on local issues; local concerts and performances; and local history productions. MN Collaborative coproductions are broadcast multiple times on *tpt*'s MN Channel.

How does this initiative fit into your "portfolio" of other Local Service Initiatives? Is it one of many initiatives and projects, or does it take the bulk of your "Local" resources?

The Minnesota Collaborative is our key strategic local initiative. It is seen as the first step of developing into a full-service "media" resource for the public sector. We will also program a DTV Minnesota Channel comprised of partner projects, *tpt*'s own local shows currently in production and in our archives, and local shows from other PTV stations. We will also continue to dedicate resources to our own non-partner productions focusing mainly on civic/political issues and history.

What station assets, competencies and/or relationships does the initiative build upon?

This takes advantage of three assets: our media production skills; our ability and capacity to package and deliver content to over 3 million people; and our reputation for quality and integrity. It also builds on relationships that our staff, Board and major donors have with other non-profit organizations. A number of referrals and funding have come through Board and major donors.

How would you describe the community benefit of this work? What needs are being addressed?

The Collaborative amplifies the voice and extends the reach of non-profit, educational, cultural and civic organizations. It strengthens the public sector and their work and through them benefits the community. In our partnerships we meet needs in the community ranging from preventing domestic abuse, to understanding cultural diversity, to global understanding.

Who is the "customer?"

The partner organization is the customer.

How do you know or measure if the customer's needs are being met?

After each project partners are asked to complete an online evaluation – anonymously if they like. We also track if they return to do more work with us. Repeat projects are a sign that we are meeting a need. We try to have the partner organization clearly articulate what they wish to accomplish and if possible have them measure the effect of the project. For example, if a health related show for the Hmong community is intended to encourage people to get flu shots, we encourage the partner to track that.

Who benefits from the initiative?

The partner and the community are both beneficiaries.

How do you measure the benefits?

Don't know.

Describe the financial model for the initiative, being as specific as possible. How much does it cost? What are the sources and amount of revenue? How does it fit into your station's overall economic model?

Funding includes partner fees, tpt support from its operating budget and philanthropic support. When fully realized our goal is to have 75% of funding come from partner and philanthropic funding and 25% from our general operating revenue.

Partners pay for production costs. There are 7.5 FTEs funded through tpt's operating budget. They are expected to create 140 projects this year and generate between \$1.5-\$2 million in gross revenue. The "net" which offsets expenses in our operating budget is planned be \$1 million. Even at that level, when fully cost-accounted, the effort does not break even. (Note: out of the 7.5 FTEs, 3.75 were already on staff but re-assigned to the Collaborative.)

Could other stations use this idea or model? Would it work for any size station or licensee type?

Yes. This concept is absolutely scaleable. However, just like with a major gifts program, this only works if someone is paying attention to the relationship, need of the partners and managing that relationship. Major advice – this is not "vanity television." The station needs to have a strong set of editorial guidelines that will help them and their partners what types of projects are and are not acceptable. Also, it cannot look or feel like public access programming.

***Please send this information to Brian Edstrom: bedstrom@tpt.org**