

Local Service Initiatives

Name of Initiative: *Real Orange*

Station: KOCE Orange County Public Television

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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.

Real Orange is the five night per week focus of KOCE's pursuit of its mission to unite the 3.2 million people of Orange County into one cohesive community. Because OC is 50 miles from LA, the commercial news stations in Los Angeles fail to cover most issues, events, institutions, and leaders in Orange County. OC non-profit organizations such as the Pacific Symphony, Pacific Chorale, live theaters, galleries, the OC Performing Arts Center, Children's Hospital, United Way, and countless other worthy causes have difficulty reaching out to the community without media. *Real Orange* fills that need and more. It is the place where local politicians and government leaders speak to their constituents, where business leaders talk of products and payrolls, where education is analyzed and improved. It is the only place where OC citizens can see *live shots* of their issues, events and each other, in their family rooms. The program airs at 6:30 and 11:00 p.m. five nights per week.

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?

KOCE's Mission is to Unite and Reveal Orange County. The station's overarching strategy is to *be live, be local, create content, & create community*. *Real Orange* is the most significant part of the effort to achieve the mission and strategy. Local programs such as *Inside OC with Rick Reiff*, *KOCE Classroom Live*, *Help Me Grow* and *Bookmark with Maria Hall Brown* are other programs that are part of KOCE's local portfolio. KOCE's multiple media partnerships with local not for profit worthy causes bring visibility to important OC activities via interstitial PSAs. KOCE's various outreach projects address Medicare reform, senior driver safety, local job training, and various health issues. All are part of mission fulfillment but *Real Orange*, which costs \$1 million per year, consumes the largest part of KOCE local resources.

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

Real Orange takes advantage of three assets: our media production skills; our ability and capacity to package and deliver content to over 15 million people including 3.2 million in OC; 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, businesses and institutions. Assets including a satellite truck for live shot capacity, a venerated news anchor who is a household name in Orange County (Ed Arnold), and a content partnership with the Orange County Register for assistance in covering a huge County, make *Real Orange* and indispensable part of the fabric of OC.

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

Most communities get to see their issues, events, leaders, institutions, and each other on their television sets each evening. That experience is part of developing sense of community, a feeling for the ethos of the place and what it means to be a part of it. Without *Real Orange*, 3.2 million OC residents are without an entity linking them with one another as citizens of a community.

Who is the "customer?"

The citizens of OC are the customers as both viewers and objects of the editorial efforts of the program.

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

Nielsen Ratings tell us that two thirds of OC Residents watch KOCE regularly and anecdotal data says that local movers and shakers watch *Real Orange* regularly.

Who benefits from the initiative?

The entire community benefits as local social capital is increased through the growing sense of OC as our hometown and a place that all who live here must support and sustain.

How do you measure the benefits?

Tough to measure but when it looked like KOCE's former licensee, the Coast College District, was about to sell the station to a televangelist group, countless OC residents came to hearings, filled auditoriums, wrote letters to the editor and started "save KOCE" websites. The reason most often cited was local news via *Real Orange*.

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?

Direct funding comes from corporate underwriters totaling about \$600 thousand annually for *Real Orange* and *Inside OC* sponsorships. Indirect support is seen in KOCE Foundation's successful raising of \$8 million for the down payment to save the station and significant member and member dollar growth since launching *Real Orange*. *Real Orange* consumes \$1million of KOCE's \$9.5 million annual budget. *Real Orange* costs equal what KOCE spends on all program acquisitions combined.

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

Local news is expensive. It is not essential in markets where commercial media are meeting that need. It is only scalable in OC by launching additional hours of local news on a commercial cable channel...with commercial sponsors. We may have taken non-commercial local news as far as is possible in OC.

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