

PROPOSED
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

March 28, 2009

Introduction

In April 2008, the Board of Directors unanimously approved a commitment to complete a strategic plan during fiscal year 2008-09. Community Television (CTV) had not done a strategic plan in over 10 years, and the organization wisely chose to devote time and resources to completing one.

The primary purpose of our strategic planning effort was to strengthen the organization through a planning effort that combines the best of what has worked well in the past with new approaches that address the tremendous changes that have occurred since our founding. This effort will strengthen CTV by unifying the board and staff around common organizational goals and strategies. Through this effort, our aim is to enable the organization to serve our community in a more vital way.

Context

In arriving at its recommendations, the committee gave the heaviest weight to financial and technological trends. Changes in these two realms will have substantial impact on CTV over the next 3-5 years.

The financial realities facing CTV are sobering. CTV currently receives 88% of its funding, and access to its cable channels, through the local franchise agreement between the City and County of Santa Cruz and Comcast. This agreement expires between 2009 and 2011 (depending on legal interpretation). A new state-wide cable franchising law (The Digital Infrastructure and Video Competition Act or DIVCA) was adopted in 2006; ending local cable franchises in favor of statewide franchising. The City and County are in fiscal crisis. Communities throughout the state are losing their public access cable services as local governments in fiscal crisis choose to reappropriate all or some of their cable franchise fees. We anticipate that operating expense funding will be stable through 2011, but that there will be no new money for capital expenditures (equipment.) PEG income will decrease by at least 30% in 2014 when the state franchise agreement kicks in. All of these realities had a significant impact on the committee's decision-making process.

The technological challenges are equally daunting. Video production equipment is now relatively affordable for the average person. This new reality makes CTV's effort to provide access to the media through the means of production much less relevant than it once was. In addition, the web has emerged as a viable way to distribute video programming, challenging our business model, which is built around cable television. The rapid pace of technological change is another key challenge. The committee considered all of these factors in arriving at these recommendations.

Strategic Planning Process

The Strategic Planning Committee was appointed by the Board of Directors to develop recommendations for a three to five year Strategic Plan to guide CTV. The Committee met thirteen times for a total of 33 hours between August 2008 and March 2009, facilitated by Diane Brown of The Non-Profit Assistance Group, and participated in a training in Strategy Formation presented by Michaela Hayes of Hayes Marketing and Communications. In addition, the committee led a two-hour Board Study Session with the Board of Directors. The Committee chose to observe Brown Act protocols. Meeting notices, agendas, notes, and background materials were posted on the CTV website and meetings were open to non-Committee observers.

The Committee organized its work around the critical issues the Board, Staff, and Committee members thought CTV must deal with in the coming three to five years. In order to make fact-based recommendations for the future, the Committee started by assessing the current status of the organization and identified demographic, economic, funding, political, regulatory, social, educational, and technological trends likely to affect CTV. Staff presented briefings on current programs, services, audience, finances, PEG contract obligations, personnel, infrastructure, and technology.

Committee members reviewed background reports and materials such as local demographic data, Fall 2007 CTV Schools Survey, trends reports and how other Alliance for Community Media members are planning for the future, a recent KUSP survey, and the February 2008 Needs Assessment Report on the focus groups conducted by Kathy Bisbee.

We sought input from a wide variety of sources on the perception of our current services, what current or different services the community would like us to provide in the future, and their ideas for how to provide those.

Guests representing the Latino and Watsonville communities, youth, and local public radio KUSP joined our discussions. Current and past CTV members were surveyed by email. Interviews were conducted with Santa Cruz Mayor and Assistant City Manager, community television staff around the country, Cabrillo College staff, members of the Santa Cruz County School Superintendents Council, and CTV staff, members, and volunteers.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

MISSION STATEMENT

[Why our organization exists]

Current: *The mission of Community Television is to strengthen the spirit of community and enrich individual lives in Santa Cruz County by fostering communication through television and other electronic media.*

Proposed 1: The mission of Community Television is to foster community dialogue and individual self-expression through television, the internet, and other electronic media.

Proposed 2: The mission of Community TV is to foster communication and self-expression in Santa Cruz County through television, the internet, and other electronic media.

WHO WILL WE FOCUS ON SERVING IN THE NEXT 3-5 YEARS?

Viewers and creators of local content, with particular effort towards:

- Schools
- Youth
- Government
- People interested in local issues
- Web viewers
- The Latino community
- Seniors

WHERE DO WE WANT TO PROVIDE SERVICES IN THE NEXT 3-5 YEARS?

The whole county.

WHAT WILL BE OUR UNIQUE NICHE AND VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY?

- We will be local, non-commercial, and community-based.
- We will connect individuals, government, educators, and nonprofit organizations to the wider community.
- We will provide an electronic venue for free speech.
- We will provide high quality, low-cost training, production equipment, and studio space.
- We will create locally-based video programming.
- We will provide access to a potential 71,000 households through cable television
- We will be a hub of local content on the internet.

OUR 2009-2012 GOALS WILL BE:

1. Strengthen and diversify our revenue streams to create greater financial security and flexibility.
2. Increase the number and variety of viewers and content providers to build a broader base of community support.
3. Increase the quality and scope of programming to make CTV a primary source for community information and dialogue.
4. Strengthen CTV's production quality and accessibility.

5. Strengthen the organization so it can successfully accomplish the strategic goals.

RECOMMENDED 2009-12 GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1. Strengthen and diversify our revenue streams to create greater financial security and flexibility.

Strategies:

1.1 Renew our contracts with the city and county of Santa Cruz to provide public, educational, and government programming via cable.

- a. Charge the Finance Committee with responsibility to oversee contract negotiations. (2009-2010)
- b. Meet with City and County representatives at least 6-8 months before they begin negotiations with Comcast, to discuss mutual needs and priorities. (2009-2010)
- c. Keep members, viewers and other stakeholders informed about contract renewals, to solicit their support. (2010-2011)

1.2 Expand CTV membership to include viewers and other stakeholders.

- a. Revise membership categories, fees, and benefits to encourage wider participation. (2009-2010)
- b. Create a membership marketing plan, using the public radio model. (2009-2010)
- c. Survey membership annually to evaluate programming preferences. (2010-2011)

1.3 Create a Fund Development Plan to build community-based support.

- a. Develop a Fund Development Committee of the Board with expert community participation to create the plan. (2009-2010)
- b. Initiate annual fund raising campaigns. (2010-2011)
- c. Develop an underwriting program. (2010-2011)
- d. Identify and pursue grant opportunities for specific programs and projects. (2009-2010)
- e. Develop fundraising campaigns for specific programs and projects. (2010-2011)

1.4 Expand fee-for-service programs.

- a. Develop fee-for service programs that are related to our mission and utilize our core strengths (e.g., professional production, studio rental, personal training) (2010-2011)

- b. Review fees annually to maximize revenue, while retaining or increasing service levels. (2009-2010)
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Goal 2: Increase the number and variety of viewers and content providers to build a broader base of community support.

Strategies:

2.1 Brand our government and education channels together as community affairs programming.

- a. Market this channel with a separate logo and tagline. (2009-2010)
- c. Promote this channel as having curated standards. (2009-2010)

2.2 Create a separate brand for the public access programming.

- a. Brand it as a non-curated “Free Speech” channel. (2009-2010)
- b. Market this channel with a separate logo and tagline. (2009-2010)
- c. Promote content submission by the public, whether they use CTV facilities or not. (2009-2010)

2.3 Establish a special Marketing Taskforce with internal and external experts to create a detailed promotional plan. (2009-2010)

2.5 Make CTV program schedule easier to find and understand.

- a. Ensure and maintain programming schedules that are predictable, clear, and consistent. (2009-2010)
- b. Make the listing schedule more complete and searchable. (2009-2010)
- c. Email programming highlights to members with click-thru’s to our website. (2009-2010)
- d. Consider programming blocks such as themed nights or periods. (2009-2010)
- e. Advertise community event coverage in advance, at the event and by e-mail, and create a calendar of annual event coverage. (2009-2010)

2.6 Expand services in South County.

- a. Develop long-term relationships with individuals, schools, government agencies, and community organizations in South County. (2009-2010)
- b. Establish a physical presence in South County through partnerships with established facilities. (2011-2012)
- c. Hire staff or contractors from the South County to develop programs in the South County. (2010-2011)

- d. Recruit South County representatives to serve on the CTV Board, staff, and committees. (2009-2010)
- e. Work collaboratively to develop programming of interest to South County viewers. (2010-2011)

2.7 Broaden community representation on CTV Board and committees. (2009-2010)

2.8 Develop methods to document the impact we make in the community. (2011-2012)

2.9 Develop partnerships with other local media that widen our community impact. (2011-2012)

Goal 3. Increase the quality and scope of programming to make CTV a primary source for community information and dialogue.

Strategies:

3.1 Expand services to government and education.

- a. Create high quality programs that provide balanced information and discussion of important local issues before they are considered by a governing body. (2010-2011)
- b. Partner with government and schools to create programs that increase public awareness of their programs, operations and issues. (2009-2010)
- c. Provide training, facilities, and services that enable government and education officials to create and cablecast informational videos, quickly and inexpensively. (2010-2011)
- d. Partner with schools to provide on-demand educational programming, for students, teachers, or parents. (2011-2012)
- e. Explore live streaming of government meetings on the Web. (2011-2012)
- f. Explore providing Web access to our archive of government meeting videos. (2011-2012)
- g. Establish regular meetings with government and education officials to discuss how we can better serve their specific needs. (2009-2010)
- h. Explore interest in developing a Government Advisory Board to share communication technology needs and solutions, including the I-Net (Institutional Network) option in cable contracts. (2009-2010)

3.2 Increase coverage of local issues.

- a. Find a feasible way to provide regular local news programming. (2010-2011)

- i. Research citizen journalism and other models used by community television stations across the country.
 - ii. Consider partnerships with other local media, e.g. Good Times, KUSP.
 - b. Cover local issues with consistent quality of content, presentation, and technical production. (2009-2010)
- 3.3 Establish a Programming Committee with internal and external experts to create on-going programming guidelines and develop specific initiatives. (2009-2010)**
- 3.4 Outreach to the community to encourage independently produced videos for cablecast. (2010-2011)**
- 3.5 Develop programming for underrepresented/underserved members of our county. (2009-2010)**
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Goal 4. Strengthen CTV's production quality and accessibility.

Strategies:

4.1 Improve quality and timeliness of staff productions.

- a. Schedule and budget for pre-production. (2009-2010)
- b. Develop a competitive client rate structure for production. (2009-2010)
- c. Develop pay rates for producers that attract and retain qualified people. (2009-2010)
- d. Set and adhere to production quality standards. (2009-2010)
- e. Ensure agreement with clients on quality related expectations. (2009-2010)
- f. Be more selective about which events to cover (quantity vs. quality). (2009-2010)
- g. Improve training for staff and volunteers. (2009-2010)
- g. Develop ways to expand staff productions with volunteers and apprentices. (2009-2010)

4.2 Improve quality of public access productions.

- a. Foster professionalism among producers. (2009-2010)
- b. Set recommended standards of production among producers. (2009-2010)
- c. Encourage peer interactions/mentorship among producers. (2009-2010)

4.3 Expand the accessibility of our programming on the Internet.

- a. Establish an on-going Technology Taskforce, with internal and external experts, to make recommendations to the Board on how to best use the internet and other technology to provide better services, including: (2009-2010)
 - i. making CTV programs available on-demand via Internet and Comcast.
 - ii. live streaming all programming on the Internet.
- b. Integrate and utilize web-based communication tools to communicate with viewers. (2009-2010)
- c. Explore using online program submission and assurance of online posting as an incentive to attract non-CTV programs. (2010-2011)
- d. Make our website a hub of local content. (2010-2011)

4.4 Use technology to expand public information and access whenever possible.

- a. Continually evaluate the effect of technology changes on the CTV's mission, goals and services. (2009-2010)
- b. Be prepared to reconsider and change CTV services as needed, and as possible, to meet new technology demands and opportunities. (2009-2010)
- c. Seek creative and flexible solutions to keeping CTV current with technology changes. (2009-2010)
- d. Charge the Technology Taskforce with making recommendations to the Board on how best to use current technology to provide services. (2009-2010)

4.5 Expand quality and scope of training programs.

- a. Offer comprehensive, project-based training that gives participants a solid grounding in all aspects of production. (2009-2010)
- b. Update and improve our training curriculum and materials. (2009-2010)
- c. Seek professional trainers to expand curriculum offerings. (2009-2010)

4.6 Expand production access to Youth and the Latino Community.

- a. Develop consistent partnerships with schools, libraries, and nonprofit community organizations. (2010-2011)
- b. Establish off-station sites with local residents as staff. (2010-2011)

Goal 5. Strengthen the organization so it can successfully accomplish the strategic goals.

Strategies:

- 5.1 Review and revise by-laws to strengthen organizational ability to meet current mission and goals. (2009-2010)**
- 5.2 Develop responsible annual budgets to fulfill our contract obligations and pursue new goals and strategies.**
 - a. Ensure all operations are performed as efficiently as possible. (2009-2010)
 - b. Prioritize operations and projects each year to strategically apply financial resources. (2009-2010)
- 5.3 Evaluate and revise the organizational structure to strengthen our ability to accomplish identified goals. (2009-2010)**
- 5.4 Evaluate and revise personnel policies to strengthen our ability to accomplish identified goals. (2009-2010)**
 - a. Develop clear and specific job descriptions for each staff and contract position, with required minimum qualifications. (2009-2010)
 - b. Develop strong recruitment and selection procedures to ensure the hiring of well-qualified staff. (2009-2010)
 - c. Develop regular and effective performance evaluation procedures for all staff positions, to include annual goals. (2009-2010)
 - d. Develop a policy regarding regular staff training opportunities.
- 5.5 Recruit and train board members to provide strong leadership toward meeting current mission and goals. (2009-2010)**
- 5.6 Recruit and train a larger number of volunteers to support expanded services. (2010-2011)**
- 5.7 Strengthen the cultural diversity of the organization to better serve our community.**
 - a. Develop cultural awareness programs for staff and producers. (2009-2010)
 - b. Develop linguistic support, training, and other materials in Spanish. (2011-2012)
 - c. Recruit a skilled and diverse board, staff, and membership. (2009-2010)