

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

February 4, 2009

Committee members: Joyce Anderson (Board), Kathy D'Angelo (Staff), Tess Fitzgerald (Board), Kwai Lam (Board), Trink Praxel (Board), Alan Pagano (Superintendent of Santa Cruz City Schools), John Patterson (Executive Director)

Why we are doing Strategic Planning

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 is 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 called 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 the majority of their cable franchise fees. We anticipate that operating expense funding will be stable 2009-2011, but that there will be no new money for capital expenditures (equipment.) PEG income will decrease by 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 To Date

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 eleven times for a total of 30 hours between August 2008 and January 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. 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.

Next Steps

The Strategic Planning Committee requests feedback on these Recommendations from the Board of Directors during their February 4th Study Session. The Committee will then meet in February to integrate the Board feedback and draft a Strategic Plan document. The Staff and Board Committees will then develop Action Plans and budget projections

for each goal. On March 28th at their annual retreat the Board will review the Action Plans.

The Strategic Plan will be submitted for final approval at the April 16th Board meeting, when the Board will receive a short training in Strategy Formation and decide how they will monitor progress and continue to update the Plan.

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.*

Recommended change: The mission of Community Television is to foster community dialogue through television and the Internet.

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

Viewers and creators of local content:

- Government
- Schools
- Youth
- Web viewers
- People interested in local issues
- Nonprofit organizations
- The Arts Community
- The Latino Community
- Spanish speakers throughout the County

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

The whole county.

WHAT IS OUR UNIQUE NICHE AND VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY?

- We are local, non-commercial, and community-based.
- We connect individuals, government, educators, and nonprofit organizations to the wider community.
- We provide an electronic venue for free speech.
- We provide high quality, low-cost training and studio space.
- We provide people easy access to distribute their work on cable television with the potential to reach 71,000 households. Community Television of Santa Cruz County.

RECOMMENDED 2009-12 GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1. Secure our financial future by proving our value to our stakeholders.

Strategies:

1.1 Make our programs and services of such value within the community that supporters will advocate for continued funding during contract negotiations.

- a. Redefine and expand membership to identify and better serve our viewers.
- b. Broaden community representation on committees and taskforces.
- c. Recruit key community leaders onto CTV Board and committees.
- d. Focus on key identity and service goals included above.

1.2 Identify and promote the indispensable services we provide to government and education.

- a. Demonstrate our value to government including:
 - i. Promoting the transparency and public accessibility of government.
 - ii. Making it easier for government to reach a wide range of the community.
 - iii. Assisting the government in meeting ADA access requirements by televising meetings.
 - iv. Encouraging the community to get involved and express their opinions in a timely manner.
 - v. Saving money for government through fewer requests for information and documentation.

- vi. Making government more accessible by cablecasting meetings in peoples' homes, and cablecasting daytime meetings in the evenings.
- b. Demonstrate our value to the education community including:
 - i. Providing exposure of how the education community functions.
 - ii. Assisting school administrators in communicating with the public.
 - iii. Highlighting the positive achievements of young people in our community.
 - iv. Providing a vehicle for life-long learning, from K-12 classrooms to parenting classes to hands-on vocational training.
- c. Develop methods to document the impact we make in the community, i.e. numbers of viewers, website visits, students, producers, etc.

1.3 Develop a clear list of our priorities to be included in the upcoming negotiations between the City, County and Comcast.

1.4 Create a Fund Development Plan to expand community-based fundraising while also looking for cost-saving opportunities.

- a. Consider mission-related fee-for-service possibilities that use our strengths, e.g., professional production, studio rental, personal training.
- b. Consider increasing fees.
- c. Consider developing an underwriting program, especially if block or themed night programming is implemented.
- d. Investigate grant opportunities for programs.
- e. Partner with community organizations to put their resources on the air.
- f. Discuss fundraising expectations of Board members during the Board training.
- g. Initiate fundraising campaigns for specific projects.

1.5 Develop mutually beneficial partnerships with other local media outlets that widen our community impact and enhance our bottom line.

Goal 2: CTV is well known and widely used throughout the county.

2.1 Create separate identities for CTV's public information vs. public access programming.

2.2 Combine government and education channels and brand them together as community affairs programming.

- a. Market this channel with a separate logo, slogan, and message.
- b. This is our strength; use it as an anchor to cross-promote other programs and channels via station IDs, PSA's and videos.
- c. Promote this channel as having curated standards.

2.3 Create a separate brand for the public access programming.

- a. Brand it as a non-curated "Free Speech" channel to replace the "wacky TV" perception.
- b. Market this channel with a separate logo, slogan, and message.
- c. Promote content submission by the public, whether they use CTV facilities or not.

2.4 Create a "bug" onscreen to identify these separate brands.

2.5 Make CTV more visible in the community.

- a. Develop these brands through consistent messaging and promotion.
- b. Establish a special Marketing Taskforce with internal and external experts to create a detailed promotional plan for this revised branding.

2.6 Shift our focus from serving producers to serving the viewers of our programs.

- a. Expand CTV membership to include viewers and stakeholders.
- b. Promote membership in the public radio model.
- c. Make membership very affordable.
- d. Survey membership annually to evaluate programming preferences.
- e. Create a membership marketing plan.

2.7 Make CTV program schedule easier to find and understand.

- a. Create programming schedules that are predictable, clear, and consistent.
- b. Make the listing schedule more complete and searchable.
- c. Email the schedule to members with click-thru's to our website.
- d. Consider programming blocks such as themed nights or periods.
- e. Coordinate production and cablecast of community event coverage to allow schedules to be advertised in advance at the event and by e-mail.
- f. Create and promote a calendar of annual event coverage.

2.8 Expand viewership and services in South County.

- a. Develop long-term relationships with individuals, schools, government agencies, and community organizations in South County.
 - b. Establish a physical presence in South County through partnerships with established facilities.
 - c. Hire staff from the South County to develop programs in the South County.
 - d. Recruit South County representatives to serve on the CTV Board, Staff, and committees.
 - e. Work collaboratively to develop programming that is of the highest interest to South County viewers.
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Goal 3. CTV is a primary source for community information and dialogue.

Strategies:

3.1 Expand services to government stakeholders.

- a. Create high quality programs that provide the public with balanced information and discussion of important local issues before they are considered by a governing body.
- b. Partner with government to create programs that increase public awareness of government programs, operations and issues.
- c. Provide training, facilities (ex. hotline studio), and services that allow government officials to create and cablecast informational videos, quickly and inexpensively.
- d. Create programming that provides opportunities for dialogue between government officials and the public.
- e. Create live streaming of government meetings on the Web.
- f. Provide Web access to our archive of government meeting videos.
- g. Establish regular meetings with each government agencies to discuss how we can better serve their specific needs.
- 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.

3.2 Expand services to the education community.

- a. Create high quality programs that provide the public with balanced information and discussion of local educational issues.
- b. Partner with schools to create programs that increase public awareness of educational programs, operations and issues.

- c. Develop on-site training services for teachers and students, to help them produce their own videos for broadcast.
- d. Partner with schools to provide on-demand educational programming, for students, teachers, or parents.
- e. Create programming that highlights student accomplishments.
- f. Establish regular meetings with teachers and school officials to discuss how we can better serve their specific needs.
- g. Consistently communicate examples of tangible and practical products of past successful collaborations to spur the involvement of superintendents and teachers.

3.3 Increase coverage of local issues.

- a. Find a feasible way to provide regular local news programming.
 - 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.
- c. Establish a special New Programming Taskforce with internal and external experts to consider these ideas and detail specific initiatives.

3.4 Outreach to the community to encourage independently produced videos for cablecast.

Goal 4. CTV is known for its production quality and accessibility.

Strategies:

4.1 Improve quality and timeliness of staff productions.

- a. Schedule and budget for pre-production.
- b. Develop a competitive client rate structure for production.
- c. Develop pay rates for producers that attract and retain qualified people.
- d. Set and adhere to production quality standards.
- e. Ensure high quality coverage of events by clearly communicating expectations to clients.
- f. Be more selective about which events to cover (quantity vs. quality).
- g. Improve training for staff and volunteers.
- h. Look for opportunities to introduce production apprentices carefully into staff and public access productions.
- g. Develop ways to expand staff productions with volunteer assistance.

4.2 Significantly expand the accessibility of our programming on the Internet.

- a. Establish a Web Taskforce with internal and external experts to determine how we can best expand our services on the internet, including:
 - i. making CTV programs available on-demand via Internet and Comcast.
 - ii. archiving CTV programming on the Internet.
 - iii. live streaming of all programming on the Internet.
- b. Integrate and utilize web-based communication tools to communicate with viewers.
- c. Use online program submission and assurance of online posting as an incentive to attract non-CTV programs.
- d. Add the web into our current distribution model, but do not expect it to replace our cable television services.

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

- a. Stay attuned to changes in technology development and use.
- b. Continually evaluate the effect of technology changes on the CTV's mission, goals and services.
- c. Be prepared to reconsider and change CTV services as needed, and as possible, to meet new technology demands and opportunities.
- d. Seek creative and flexible solutions to keeping CTV current with technology changes.
- e. Establish a special Technology Taskforce with internal and external experts to consider ideas and make recommendations.

Goal 5. CTV is well known for its training and access opportunities.

Strategies:

5.1 Expand quality and scope of training programs.

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

5.2 Improve quality of public access productions.

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

5.3 Expand production access to Youth and the Latino Community

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

Goal 6. Strengthen the organization so it can successfully accomplish the strategic goals.

Strategies:

6.1 Develop a budget to support the Strategic Plan goals and priorities.

- a. Continue to meet our contract obligations (88% of our budget) with income from our contracts.
- b. Expand discretionary spending (12% of our budget) from community-based fundraising
- c. Look for cost-savings.
 - i. Re-prioritize staff, volunteer, and financial resources
 - ii. Explore new ways to get things done, i.e. hybrid staff/volunteer productions.

6.2 Use organizational goals to guide our efforts to build a diverse organization that more accurately reflects the demographics of the County.

- a. Develop cultural awareness.
- b. Develop linguistic support, training, and other materials in Spanish.
- c. Recruit a highly skilled and diverse board and staff that can help us accomplish our goals.

6.3 Re-examine staff structure to accomplish identified goals.

6.4 Update and revise by-laws to strengthen organizational accountability and functioning.

- 6.5 Invest in ongoing training and development of the board to ensure that board functions at a high level in service of organizational goals.**
- 6.6 Establish task forces to continue research where necessary and develop action plans.**