

Partnerships Among Public Radio Stations

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As the environment ebbs and flows the way it would in any rapidly changing society, organizations often times need to partner with similar entities in order to survive. A partnership, or strategic alliance, is a calculated business move that is made in order to join two or more organizations that will gain mutual advantage. This change must be carefully thought out as both organizations will take on each other's functions and risks. To be successful, partners must adjust their organizational structure to incorporate both sets of values. Public radio stations are prone to partnerships with other non-profit organizations because they are funded by the public and members.

Methodology

Content Analysis

- ❖ *LexusNexus* website to catalog pertinent newspaper articles, 2010-2015
- ❖ Coded articles based on various categories, including "partnerships"
 - ❖ Round 1: classifieds, duplicates, index of stories, obituaries, online directories, wedding notices, and articles without content on the station were eliminated
 - ❖ Round 2: coding was based on 3 categories – news value, key message, and dominance – each of which had several subcategories
- ❖ 1,849 articles were coded for 11 public radio stations

Inter-Coder Reliability

- ❖ Cohen's Kappa test: the degree to which two or more coders assign communication behaviors to the same categories
 - ❖ 0.41-0.60: moderate agreement between coders
 - ❖ 0.61-0.80: substantial agreement
 - ❖ 1: near perfect agreement
 - ❖ This project was measured with a moderate degree of agreement at 0.51

Radio Station	Number of Articles Mentioning Partnership(s)
MPR Minnesota Public Radio	44
WNYC New York Public Radio	39
KQED Public Media for Northern California	18
WBUR Boston's NPR News Station	17
KPCC Southern California Public Radio	15
WLRN Southern Florida Public Radio	11
WBEZ Chicago Public Radio	8
KCRW Southern California National Public Radio	4
KUHF Houston Public Radio	4
KPBS San Diego Public Radio	1
OPB Oregon Public Broadcasting	1



Discussion

Six common themes for partnerships between public radio stations and other organizations were found. The themes included the following: content sharing, event sponsorship, project collaboration, mergers and/or acquisitions, a mention of the parent company that owns the radio station, and legal circumstances/lawsuits. Of the articles chosen, there was little talk of an individual station's social media use to engage its audiences. In this age of technology, social media is absolutely crucial in disseminating information. And while there were journal articles stressing the importance of this move, the newspaper articles coded for this project did not reflect the same. Because of the significance of social media, I expected the most dominant theme of the article sample to have something to do with how radio stations use the various platforms to interact with audiences. Most social media users are millennials who use streaming services and applications offered by stations. Marketers' resources go towards engaging with this generation instead of connecting with them on the actual radio.

References

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