Crisis Communication Plan:

In Response to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Loss of Government Funding

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Abstract

This project explores the need for crisis communication planning to be implemented for individual public broadcasting stations. This project will provide insight on what national public broadcasting can do to restore their image during times of crisis. Through literature, research, case studies, it is proven that having an effective crisis communication plan can help provide training, pre-determined best practices, and save time, so an organization can respond as soon as possible. This project will also discuss the publics of public broadcasting, as well as those who are more likely to donate. It will also take into account previous defunding cases of the past and global examples of other public broadcasting systems. One of public broadcasting's main source of funding is from listener support, this paper will also examine those practices conducted.

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Chapter1: Introduction

Since its long history, national public broadcasting has been through its turmoil of continual budget cuts. But public broadcasting has been able to manage consistent quality programming from radio to television. Recent economic instability in the United States has led to another battle over the funding of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. National public broadcasting is threatened each year to lose more and more funding. NPR's image has not improved after the resignation of president and CEO of NPR, Vivian Schiller after the release of the senior fundraiser's remarks about the conservative Tea Party being xenophobes. After these actions occurred, the GOP-controlled House passed legislation that would bar federal funding for National Public Radio(CNN Wire Staff 2011). Efforts must be developed to combat tough economic times and their image amongst policy makers to strengthen public broadcasting.

This project will examine the need to acquire a strong crisis communication plan to be established during times of crisis that will address the needs of fundraising and creating a strong relationship with PBS and NPR's publics. This project will show that having a plan set in place before there is an actual need of defense will be beneficial to the CPB as a whole. This project will outline a step by step review of an actual crisis communication plan that could be used by a public broadcasting station or affiliate. My research from literature and experts will lead this project into an effective crisis communications plan.

My research will evaluate the history of national public broadcasting and their previous funding crises, comparison to other national public broadcasting systems, an examination of the current financial woes, national public broadcasting's publics, crisis communication planning, and non-profit fundraising. It is important to understand the research of these items to critically

form an effective plan for crisis communications for a national public broadcasting as a nonprofit entity. Sisco, Collins & Zoch (2009) illustrate that 75% of nonprofit organizations receive their support from individual contributions, which leads nonprofits to use limited resources in connecting with their publics. A survey of public relations practitioners found that three- quarters of their employer organization have a crisis communication plan. Among 82% of those respondents said their plan was updated in the last six months (Cloudman & Hallahan 2006). Crisis communication plans must be tactically prepared with a well trained crisis team, often neglected is having a prepared response team.

This project will examine a case study of a central coast public radio station. Survey questionnaires will shed light on the current and previous use of public relations at an NPR station, which publics the station reaches out to, their current fundraising strategies and what the station believes is the future of national public broadcasting. Each of the respondents have different various tasks each perform at the radio station, who have different experience in various aspects of radio. Each individual has a responsibility tied into the running and operation of a public radio station. From these surveys, I will be able to compare to the literature to the results, to determine a trend between the data.

The primary purpose of this study is to describe what could effectively work to prevent national public broadcasting from having a negative image towards their publics during times of crisis. A secondary purpose is to better understand the fundraising techniques of national public broadcasting in order to run a public funded station, as well as how they reach out to their publics for support.

Overall, I will be hopeful that my research will demonstrate the value of crisis communication being an essential role is the running of national public broadcasting.

Furthermore, I would anticipate my research will show that having a prepared crisis communication plan for national public broadcasting would lead to their success for the future. By having a credible image to CPB's publics, will further help fundraising to keep the future of public broadcasting active and strong.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined to assist the reader and provide context to this study.

<u>Crisis</u>: a situation or event that is presumed as intolerably difficult that may exceed the typical available resources, personnel, and procedures. (Badzmierowski 2011) A crisis may be a situation that may threaten the reputation of the company.

<u>Crisis Communications</u>: is associated with public relations and the need for an organization to repair damages after a crisis or disaster (Seeger 2006).

<u>Fundraising</u>: the raising of assets or resources from various sources for the support of an organization or specific project (Overley, 2006).

<u>Publics:</u> a group of people having common interests or characteristics; specifically: the group at which a particular activity or enterprise aims (Merriam-Webster's online dictionary, n.d.).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Having a well developed crisis communication plan, United States national public broadcasting will be able to survive through hard economic times. A crisis communications plan

with a strong foundation dealing with fundraising and nonprofits, focusing on national public broadcasting's intended public and or latent publics and relying on what other public systems have done will public broadcasting running smoothly as a public entity. In order to develop the necessary plan of action to be taken on by entities such as NPR and PBS, I will rely heavily on the research I have obtained from literature, historical examples, and experts in the public broadcasting field.

History of National Public Broadcasting

President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Public Broadcasting Act into law in 1967. In effect, this created the Corporation of Public Broadcasting. According to the Congressional Digest (2011), Johnson is quoted saying that the new law would bring a network of knowledge and can be used by every individual as an educational tool. Many other remarks of Johnson include that America has given so much investment in forms of communication, such as in 1844 when Congress approved 30,000 dollars to build the first telegraph line between Washington and Baltimore. Lyndon expressed that public broadcasting shall be a catalyst for all Americans to strive for excellence. Corporation of Public Broadcasting (CPB) receive funding from the federal government and issues out grants to the individual stations. According to a CNN poll, American adults believe that 5% of the federal budget funds national public broadcasting, but the reality is that the federal budget only funds one-hundredth of one percent (CNN Political Unit 2011).

The CPB was not intended to force political or favoritism influence over the stations.

(Congressional Digest 2011) Many of the stations are run by universities, nonprofit community associations, and state governments and reach 99% of the nation by television and 91% by radio. It serves to be an umbrella institution for individual stations.

Global Examples

Not only has the United States been going through funding issues for the past several decades, but other countries have also experienced the same issues. Specifically looking at the BBC, Garnham (2011) fully delves into the economics behind broadcasting. No matter if a show gets one viewer or 20 million viewers, it will still cost the same amount to produce. This has lead to a push to form an oligopoly of the media market, leading to large corporate media infrastructures. He also states that media networks must compete globally now to reap the benefits of producing.

The BBC over the years has been losing publics. According to Ofcom, an independent regulator of UK communications industries, young people have been watching less of the BBC the numbers dropped 74% to 58% from 2001 to 2005. Poorer households are also turning away from BBC services. According to The Economist, BBC executives have admitted that the BBC over serves the white middle aged, middle income class (Economist, 2007).

The Economist (1999) reported on the BBC the following:

Established broadcasters everywhere have a similar problem: once they owned the airwaves, but now channels are multiplying, costs are rising because of competition for talent, and the broadcasters' revenues are not rising as fast. Since many of them are state-owned, governments all over the world face a dilemma: whether to spend more on them, starve them, or turn them over to the private sector.

The Economist (1999) also noted that the BBC has been able to market themselves all over the globe and create well received programming, which have been a positive traits for keeping public broadcasting around.

The BBC is funded through licensing fees that every household must pay. *The Economist* (1999) suggest that,

Would be to turn the license fee into a voluntary subscription, and float the corporation. The BBC could probably make more money that way than it does today, and would then have the cash and the freedom to sell its wares abroad more effectively. It would probably produce less, rather than more, rubbish: instead of competing head-on with commercial television, as it does now, business sense would argue that it should edge upmarket to differentiate itself.

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) has had its own criticism brought to attention by the Canadian Radio-Television Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and many private corporations. According to their competitors, the CBC was not fully living up to their mission. Because of their previous budget cuts, funding was not being sent to smaller regional services (Mulawka, 1999).

Funding in Crisis

The CATO Institute has strongly supported the defunding of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Boaz (2005) argues:

Much of the recent debate about tax-funded broadcasting has centered on whether there is a bias, specifically a liberal bias, at NPR and PBS. I would argue that bias is inevitable. Any reporter or editor has to choose what's important. It's impossible to make such decisions without a framework, a perspective, a view of how the world works.

However, public broadcasting journalist report differently. Steve Inskeep (2011), host of *Morning Edition* told Newsweek that the accusations that NPR leans to left should not be important, what should be important is what the journalist do. Ira Glass, host of *This American Life*, says NPR's management is not standing up for the brand and defending NPR from liberal biased claims (Kurtz 2011).

Boaz (2005) points out that liberal organizations, such as Moveon.org, made defunding of the Corporations of Public Broadcasting one of their top issues. This leads to another argument that NPR and PBS's publics are mainly upper middle class citizens and why should all citizens fund CPB if they are not using it for information. He also suggests since CPB's federal funding only accounts for 15 percent of their budget that the public broadcasting system can survive on its own entity without support from the United State's budget (Boaz 2005).

U.S. Public Broadcasting's Publics

Loviglio quotes research conducted of the NPR listener in the 1990sthat nearly half live in a households with an income below 40,000 a year, one third have a college education, and one third of their listeners classified themselves as being conservatives (Loviglio 2007). According to the Wall Street Journal, that NPR drives a large listener base of 33.7 million weekly (Inskeep 2011). NPR's program, *All Things Considered* is the second most listened news talk radio show (Freedman 2005).

According to surveys conducted by NPR, the amount a listener listens relates to the amount a listener is willing to give to public radio. "Voluntary giving to public radio is explained by patterns of consumption, along with a perception of value—the realization of personal importance." (Bailey 2004) In another NPR study found that characteristics of listeners are that 80% have a college degree, two-thirds are using Facebook or Twitter, third of listeners own a

smartphone, 60% have downloaded a podcast, and 40% text on a weekly basis. According to Scott Vanderbuilt the reasoning behind these numbers is that NPR listeners are tech savy and as tech prices lower each year so more listeners are using these devices.

In Good Gray Npr, Sherman (2005) states

It was Siemering who wrote NPR's original mission statement in 1970, which called for "some hard news, but the primary emphasis would be on interpretation, investigative reporting on public affairs, the world of ideas and the arts." NPR's mission statement was not a radical document but a liberal and populist one. And the founders had every desire to serve an alternative audience: "urban areas with sizeable nonwhite audiences," "student groups studying ecology," "groups with distinct lifestyles and interests not now served by electronic media." Siemering's document was something of a blueprint for NPR in its first decade, but as the years went by, management lost interest in it. Not long ago, outside archivists requested the document from NPR headquarters, but no copy could be found. (Sherman 2005)

The PBS brand to many represents informative, educational, enlightening, responsible, and unique, which separates its programming from other networks. In the same survey given to members and nonmembers of PBS stations, 60% of respondents had at least a college degree and an income of \$35,000 or higher, and 19% of respondents had at least one child. The respondents on average watched 5.5 hours of public television per week (Chan-Olmsted 2002).

Crisis Communications

Best practices for crisis communications are grounded in the fact that the plan must be practice driven and based upon systematical and theoretical research and approach. (Seeger

2006) No one crisis is alike. The best practices for an individual plan can be characterized through review of literature for that particular subject. Seeger lays out some of the top ten best practices for crisis communication being process approaches, pre-event planning, partnership with publics, understand the audience and listen to public concern, honesty, collaborate and coordinate credible sources, meet the needs of the media, communicate with compassion, accept levels of uncertainty, and messages of action (Seeger 2006). Ones to note for that would be beneficial for the CPB are understanding the audience, communicating honesty and compassion, building alliances with publics, as well as preparing for a crisis to occur.

Murphy explains in *Crisis Communication and Your Corporate Reputation* that there are seven steps necessary to manage "your calm during the storm." Step one is to access strength and weakness by developing a SWOT Analysis. Step two is to keep talking. Once talking stops, rumors fly. Step three is make sure company's leadership is visible; this move instills trust amongst employees and publics. Step four is to focus on staff. Internal communications is just as important as communicating with your audience. Two-way communication is essential of building up flow of ideas amongst staff and upper management. Step five is to be consistent with your communication to various publics. Step six is to adopt techniques that allow communication to flow rapidly (Murphy 2009).

According to Sisco, Collins & Zoch (2009), nonprofit organizations (NPO) rely heavily on their publics to survive; making public relations a critical role in nonprofit management. Public relations is critical tool in raising money, attracting members and or donors, energizing support for nonprofits. Sisco, Collins & Zoch also notes that, "Taking control and reassuring the public during a crisis is crucial to any organization's public relations, but is especially vital to an NPO. If an NPO betrays its public trust and loses public confidence, the NPO risks its reputation

and financial support." If a nonprofit has a more favorable image to their public it is more likely to be successful with fundraising during times of crisis.

Fundraising and the Non-profit

According to Waters (2008), dedicating more time to the donor relations will result in increased loyalty. Studies show as the relationship between donor and nonprofit grows, the donor is more likely to give more to the organization overtime.

Water discusses donor relationship nurturing as the following:

Non-profit organizations should make sure donors receive copies of newsletters and annual reports. Major gift donors and prospects should be invited to special events and open houses. As the relationship strengthens, fundraisers may also send handwritten cards for special occasions, such as birthdays, anniversaries or upon learning of serious illnesses. The extra effort required to cultivate relationships with any public will benefit organizations in the future because this demonstrated concern will reduce the impact of potential crises.

According to Bettelheim (1999), in 1994 when Newt Gingrich controlled the house and public broadcasting face another similar situation of losing all funding from the government, individual stations aggressively fundraised to show the stations were able to fight for survival.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Data Sources

The sources of data for this research were three national public radio broadcasting professionals at one central coast public radio station in California. These three industry professionals included the general manager and president, development director, and music director for the station.

The following questions served as data sources for this study. Each respondent answered the following questions and probes to the best of their abilities.

- 1) Who are your station's publics? Which ones do you reach out to the most? Who would you like to reach out to that you are currently not?
- 2) Does your station have a crisis communication plan? If so, is it individualized to your station or is it a generalized plan that is given by NPR? Does this crisis communication plan address funding crisis to CPB? Can you explain or give an example of a crisis communication plan being enacted?
- 3) How has your station been able to combat funding losses in the past or currently? What additionally would you like to do in the future?
- 4) Do you think current political issues affect funding the CPB? Is there programming you feel that has bias?
- 5) Given the state of affairs with government dollars to support CPB, is there a shift into more advancement in fundraising and or private donors than ever before? If so, is it a possibility to shift away from government support?
- 6) What do you think the future of CPB will be? In 5 to 10 years? In 20 years?

Data Collection

The primary method of data collection was formal interviews of three radio professionals. These data were collected to explore methods the individual station uses to plan in times of crisis in regards to loss of funding, and fundraising practices, as well as reach to their publics. The interviews with three industry radio professionals were conducted in the spring of the 2010-2011 academic year in approximately thirty minutes to one hour in length. These interviews included a series of structured questions that Yin (2003) describes as, "along the lines of a formal survey"

(p.91). This process insured the most effective use of time and consistency of questions directed to each of the three radio professionals.

Data Presentations and Analysis

The data were collected by a series of email interviews sent to each respondent that they answered and sent back. Upon receipt of the online interviews, the researcher produces a verbatim transcription for analysis. The data collected from the respondents was summarized and a long with the body of literature review data similarities and contrast for each were documented in chapter 4.

Delimitations

This study focused on three radio professionals selected from the central coast of California. The results of this study cannot be generalized to all radio markets within the nation. Another potential limitation to this study is the position of each respondent and his/ her ability to be forthright and open given current industry concerns with maintaining their employment within the organization.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

This chapter begins with a description of the participants of this survey, as well as the public radio station itself. The responses of each respondent have been transcribed via email interviews. The respondent's views will then be linked back to the literature.

Description of the Participating Radio Station and Respondents

The radio station where this survey was conducted was a Central Coast of California public radio station affiliated with NPR programming and Public Radio International. KCBX

has been in operations since 1975. It is a 24 hours a day, seven days a week. KCBX serves the Central Coast from Santa Barbara to South Monterey County. There are approximately 40 on-air operations volunteers at KCBX, as well as several hundred who assist in fundraising activities. The three radio professionals that participated in this survey were varied in their positions at KCBX.

Frank Lanzone has been President and General Manager of KCBX since 1980. General Managers are responsible for overseeing all aspects of radio operation that being programming, sales, marketing, human resources, engineering, and administration. Another huge responsibility of the general manager is planning and participating in fundraising efforts. Frank also organizes one of KCBX largest fundraising event, The Live Oak Music Festival, which 100% of its proceeds goes to KCBX.

Paul Severtson has been Development Director at KCBX since 1992. He is responsible for all fundraising activities at KCBX including mail solicitations, on-air fund drives, special events, major gifts, and planned giving, as well as website maintenance. Paul graduated from Yale University with a Bachelor of Arts in music and a Masters of Music.

Neal Losey began as an on-air volunteer at KCBX in 1993 and began a full time position in 1997. He has radio experience spanning over 22 years. Neal began his start in radio at KCPR, Cal Poly's radio station. He attended California Polytechnic State University and was a history major. Neal is Music Director at KCBX. Music Directors must listen to the music that is sent to them and decide whether or whether not to add them to their station's music library. Music Directors are also responsible for interacting with record company officials.

National Public Broadcasting's Publics

1) Who are your station's publics?

Question #1 asks a general standard at what they believe could be the audience who tunes into KCBX. All respondents believed that their station had a varied array of audience members. The respondents elaborated on who they believed they reached out to the most, as well an audience they would like to reach out more too (see Table 1 and 2).

Table 1
Which ones do you reach out to the most?

Respondents	Who?
Frank	serve all along the Central Coast, mainly adults
Paul	35-70 in age, educated, and affluent
Neal	varies between programming

Table 2		
Who would you like to reach o	out to that you are currently not?	
Respondents	Who?	
Frank	younger	

Paul younger

Neal N/A

Summary of Question #1 and probes:

Frank and Paul, both described their publics by age group of being an older generation.

Neal concluded that the listenership may be varied during different programming on KCBX.

Neal said, "When the music programs are running the listenership tends to be older. During this time, I think there is a higher percentage of conservative listeners that perhaps don't listen to some of the talk programs." Frank and Paul both believed they would like to be able to reach out to a younger audience, and Neal did not have a response to this question. (See Appendix A, B & C)

Crisis Communications

2) Does your station have a crisis communication plan?

Question #2 ask respondents about their crisis communication plan. The respondents at the radio station had no response, not entirely sure, or explained that there was no crisis communication for the station, but there is one for the Corporation of Public Broadcasting.

Hallahan and Cloudman (2006) state, "Only about 40–50% of U.S. companies have written crisis plans, while communication has received little attention in efforts to develop measures of organization-wide crisis preparedness. (See Appendix A, B &C)

Table 3

If so, is it individualized to your station or is it a generalized plan that is given by NPR?

Respondents	Yes/No
Frank	No, not individualized
Paul	N/A
Neal	N/A

Table 4

Does this crisis communication plan address funding crisis to CPB? Can you explain or give an example of a crisis communication plan being enacted?

Respondents	
Frank	CPB and NPR provide constant updates There are all kinds of entities working to stop this threat on local, regional and the national level.
Paul	"170 Million Americans" program
Neal	N/A
Summary of Question #2 and probes:	

From the surveys, not all are one the same page about crisis communications. Frank described that if there was a crisis in image portrayed or funding issue to occur; that the general manager, developmental director and program director would meet to decide the best action to take, if there be any at all. Paul described that currently the CPB has launched the campaign "170 Million Americans for Public Broadcasting." This action was to get people involved via to take

action by writing to Congress. Neal did not have much input since his position does not require him to be informed by this area in the organization. (See appendix A, B & C)

Combating Funding Loss

3) How has your station been able to combat funding losses in the past or currently?

Question # 3 dives into the issue that public broadcasting stations have had to overcome this fear of funding loss multiple times. Since there have been times in the past where the CPB has lost funding or was threatened of losing funding, PBS and NPR station should be prepared in some sense to combat this issue or face the possibility of going under. The respondents took several different approaches to this question. Frank described that the last time the station itself had a severe funding lost was not from loss of federal funding, but from discontinuing a major fundraising event. Paul explained past practices for combating such a loss would be by applying for fee waivers and by fundraising on a local level.

Table 5
What additionally would you like to do in the future?

Respondents	Future Plan
Frank	Taking similar steps as the last funding issue
Paul	Build up an endowment fund
Neal	N/A

Summary of Question # 3 and probes:

For comparing the respondents' answers, Paul would like to build up the endowment fund, so there is a protected stream of income that could flow through the station in times of

need. Frank advised to take similar steps when they decided to not do one of their major funding events. His measures included putting more energy in future fundraising events, requesting fee waivers, requesting reduction in rent, hiring freeze, and others. (See Appendix A, B & C)

Biased Programming

4) Do you think current political issues affect funding the CPB?

Question # 4 asks the respondents what they feel is the reason there is political issues pushing the funding crisis. All the respondents agreed that current political issues are pushing the attack on the CPB.

Table 6Is there programming you feel that has bias?

Respondents	
Frank	There is bias to some programs.
Paul	NPR and KCBX take great care to present a balanced perspective on local, state, national and international issues.
Neal	I think it is less biased than it is portrayed. Most of the programs from NPR are pretty straight down the middle.

Summary of Question # 4:

The respondents agreed that any programming on any news network has a possibility of being biased. Being objective is what journalists strive to do. Overall, Paul and Neal agreed that NPR's programming is not politically biased, but mainly middle of the road. Frank disagreed and felt that NPR's programming is biased. KCBX tries to fight this by adding in their own additional programming, such as their music shows, as well as their local talk shows. Frank said, "Unfortunately, NPR mishandled several issues in short order, and made it easy for those who wish to silence this important programming." NPR's image was tarnished after the CEO resigned as well as the fundraiser's comments about the Tea Part being exposed (CNN 2011). After these few bad image incidents, the conservative dominated house voted to defund public broadcasting. (See Appendix A, B & C)

5) Given the state of affairs with government dollars to support CPB, is there a shift into more advancement in fundraising and or private donors than ever before?

Question # 5 asks the respondents if the station is taking action against defunding of public broadcasting by shifting towards private donors and other fundraising measures more than ever. Frank and Paul both agree that they are relying more and more on private funding. Again, there hope is to build a reserve in case that day does come.

Table 7

If so, is it a possibility to shift away from government support?

Funding Shift

Respondents	
Frank	We would lose stations that couldn't
	survive.
Paul	It is a possibility, but an immediate de-
	funding of the CPB would be catastrophic.

Neal N/A

Summary of Question # 5:

Frank and Paul both agree that there would be devastating affects to many stations if the CPB was defunded. Frank said, "There are costs that CPB pays indirectly, beyond the \$120,000 that KCBX receives directly. They subsidize our distribution system that benefits all public radio and TV entities, and the pay all copyright fees for public TV and radio stations." Paul believes that may stations in rural areas would fail if the CPB was defunded. Many critics believe that the CPB could survive on their own without government funding. Kent Lassman was quoted saying that public broadcasting can succeed with funding and that several programs are produced daily without federal subsidies. The critics feel if public broadcasting was defunded, CPB would probably be better off because more listeners would feel obligated to donate to the programming they like (Bettelheim 1999). Although critics feel this way, most public radio listeners are "free riders" (Bailey 2004). (See Appendix A, B & C)

Future of Public Broadcasting

6) What do you think the future of CPB will be? In 5 to 10 years? In 20 years?

Question #6 asks the respondents in their opinion what could be the possible future of the Corporation of Public Broadcasting. All the respondents felt that they could not necessarily determine the answer to that question or give an accurate prediction of what could come of the CPB. Paul believes that the CPB can survive the current threats off funding cut offs, but as media changes and technology changes the future will be hard to determine. (See Appendix A, B & C)

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This chapter includes a summary of the study, discussions and conclusions, and implication for practice.

Summary

From the literature and professional's opinions, there is a need for a crisis communications for individual NPR stations and PBS stations. The literature states that national public broadcasting has been under attack from funding cuts multiple times. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting has demonstrated great effort in the past to combat these losses. But because this a reoccurring theme, the CPB must act quickly to save their funding and keep many stations from going under.

The purpose of this study was to describe what could effectively work to prevent national public broadcasting from having a negative image towards their publics during times of crisis. A secondary purpose is to better understand the fundraising techniques of national public broadcasting in order to run a public funded station, as well as how they reach out to their publics for support.

This study examined the literature for the following topics concerning public broadcasting, which were public broadcasting's previous threats of funding loss, comparison to other national public broadcasting systems, an examination of the current financial woes, national public broadcasting's publics, crisis communication planning, and non-profit fundraising. From the literature, I was able to accumulate CPB's history, as well as effective crisis communication methods to help develop an organized list for individual public broadcasting stations.

This study also examined a public radio station along California's central coast. The respondents' replies shed light on how effectively public relations and crisis communications is used in their organization. The respondents were asked questions about their individual station's publics, if they have a crisis communication plan, their methods of combating funding loss, what the current political issues are, and the survival and future of the CPB.

Conclusions

By analyzing the data from the case study to investigate the practices and challenges that national public broadcasting stations takes to overcome funding loss, I was able to conclude the following regarding the six survey questions:

- 1. Question #1: National Public Broadcasting's Publics: All the respondents agreed that their programming reaches out to older adults. One of the three respondents concluded that there are listeners who may not listen to the news programming due to personal thoughts of political bias from NPR, but tune into the music or local programming. The respondents agreed they would all like to reach out to a younger demographic.
- 2. Question #2: Crisis Communications: Two out of the three respondents were unsure if their station had a crisis communication plan intact. One respondent concluded that in case there was a crisis, there would be a meeting between the general manager, programming director, and development director on what action to take.
- 3. Question # 3: Combating Funding Loss: The respondents agreed there were several steps of action that could be taken to rebuttal a loss in income to the station. Some of

- these actions were to increase fundraising, request fee waivers, request reduction in rent, place hiring and salary freezes, and other actions.
- 4. Question #4: Biased Programming: The respondents agreed that the reason NPR is currently under attack is due to the Republican Party wanting to cut their funding. Two of the respondents agreed that NPR's programming is middle of the road in terms of political bias.
- 5. Question #5: Funding Shift: The respondents agreed that they focus on fundraising more and more with the current climate. The respondents examined the possibility of complete loss of funding from the government and what would happen. They agreed that some could survive, but many would not be able to pay the fees to broadcast.
- 6. Question #6: Future of Public Broadcasting: None of the respondents felt comfortable enough to make predictions on what could happen to the CPB.

The survey results helped conclude that not all staff is squared on the plan of how to react to a major loss of funding or any crisis that could occur at the radio station. Cloudman and Hallahan (2006) explain preparing staff to have the ability to respond or communicate during times of crisis is crucial. Higher level staff should be aware of public relation and crisis communication planning or preparedness in their organization. Crisis communication preparedness includes having a written plan, but also a team to anticipate contingencies and then take charge during a crisis (Cloudman & Hallahan 2006).

In summary, regarding fundraising at KCBX, all understand the importance of building up an endowment to save the station from hard times. According to Waters (2008), dedicating more time to the donor relations will result in increased loyalty. Studies show as the relationship

between donor and nonprofit grows, the donor is more likely to give more to the organization overtime.

Recommendations

The recommendations listed for this project could be used for any public broadcast station to combat the issues a station may be facing.

First, stations should become comfortable with incorporating public relations to their inner workings of their organization. According to Sisco, Collins & Zoch (2009), nonprofit organizations (NPO) rely heavily on their publics to survive; making public relations a critical role in nonprofit management. Public relations is critical tool in raising money, attracting members and or donors, energizing support for nonprofits. Building a relationship between the station and its publics is essential. Stations already have a way with creating human connection though the host of their publics, but additional effort should be made. According to Waters (2008), a donor should receive newsletters of the organization and if the donor gives a major amount, the organization should invite the donor to special events. By continuing these gestures, the station is building a relationship to its faithful listeners. These listeners in return will continue to provide support to their station.

Second, stations should be prepared to handle any form of crisis. From the case study, I learned there was not a written plan in case of a crisis to occur. Crises are often considered to be unexpected events that have potentially negative consequences for organization, but from a public relations stand point can be considered to be state of uncertainty resulting from a triggering event that disrupts an organization's routine activities (Cloudman & Hallahan 2006). Having a written plan provides a blueprint to determine what best practices can be used during times of crisis. Not just having a blueprint, but also updating the document to prepare for new

regulations or updated information. Along with having a plan, a team should be appointed. Each member should have a full understanding of the crisis communication plan. A spokesperson should be chosen to speak in front of the media (Cloudman & Hallahan 2006). Seeger lays out some of the top ten best practices for crisis communication being process approaches, pre-event planning, partnership with publics, understand the audience and listen to public concern, honesty, collaborate and coordinate credible sources, meet the needs of the media, communicate with compassion, accept levels of uncertainty, and messages of action (Seeger 2006).

By improving public relations practices especially in terms of fundraising and developing a well thought out crisis communication plan with a prepared team can improve the status of national public broadcasting. These efforts can combat negative images of the perceived notions about national public broadcasting.

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