

Chicago Public Media – Sounding Board Meeting

May 4, 2017

6:00 – 8:00pm

Chicago Public Media, Lifton-Rosofsky Family Community Room

1. Welcome and Introductions, led by Haley Carlson (Senior Director of Community Engagement and Marketing Communications)

- a. Carlson welcomed all members of the Sounding Board, the CPM staff, and the public, and reviewed the meeting agenda.

2. CPM Strategy Discussion 1: Vocalo, led by Silvia Rivera (Managing Director of Vocalo)

- a. Rivera discussed the results of a six-month research project that was funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The research included focus groups, market analysis, and more, and has led to a number of recommendations for programming changes.
 - i. Core listeners are very pleased with current programming, but target listeners said Vocalo is too “eclectic.”
 - ii. Vocalo is now being positioned as an “urban alternative format.”
 - a. All imaging has been outsourced, providing a more polished sound and look.
 - b. The new tagline is “Chicago’s Urban Alternative.”
 - c. Hip hop and R&B are the drivers of music programming.
 - d. There is a focus on building a brand of being community-based and socially-conscious.
 - iii. There is an effort to expand Vocalo’s audience.
 - a. The target audience is age 18 – 44, with an equal split between African America, Latino, and Caucasian listeners.
 - b. WBEZ’s audience will be leveraged, with spots on WBEZ that promote Vocalo.
 - c. Vocalo currently has 26,000 – 28,000 listeners and 40,000 listeners are needed in order to be measured by Nielsen.
 - d. Approximately 14% of current listeners are African American, which is likely due to the weak signal coverage that previously existed in predominantly African-America neighborhoods.
- b. Rivera shared the strategy for increasing engagement.
 - i. Outreach strategy includes engaging brand ambassadors, launching a social media campaign, hosting pop-up events, and more.
 - a. Rivera will send Sounding Board members a list of areas that are being targeted and events that Vocalo will be attending.
 - ii. A crowdfunding campaign will take place May 8 – June 2.
 - a. The goal is to raise \$19,990.
 - b. On June 7, there will be a Prince-themed house party for all contributors.
- c. Rivera collected feedback on *This Is What Chicago Sounds Like*, which Sounding Board members were asked to listen to in advance of the meeting.

- i. *This is What Chicago Sounds Like* is a new series on Vocalo.
- ii. Sounding Board members really enjoyed the series and offered positive feedback.
- iii. There is a new theme each month, and many Sounding Board members suggested ideas for future themes.
- iv. Any Sounding Board members who have further suggestions for themes and/or individuals to profile should reach out to Rivera.

3. CPM Strategy Discussion 2: Audience Development and Community Engagement, led by Kassie Stephenson (VP of Marketing and Membership)

- a. Stephenson discussed the new initiative to build awareness of WBEZ and grow the audience.
 - i. This initiative is an outcome of the strategic plan that was completed last year.
 - ii. Next steps include:
 - a. Identify and understand target audience.
 - b. Create a brief that will be given to a creative agency.
 - c. Determine metrics to evaluate campaign's success.
 - d. Launch campaign in two parts: October 2017 and March 2018.
 - iii. Hosting events and developing community partnerships are a major focus.
 - a. Carlson will send the Sounding Board a list of community partners.

4. General Discussion

- a. Members of the Sounding Board shared that they can better fulfill the Sounding Board's mission if they have more advanced notice of content to be released so that they can provide feedback and promote as needed.
 - i. Carlson will begin sending press releases to the Sounding Board so that members are informed of updates.
- b. Sounding Board members provided very positive feedback on the "The View From Room 205" event.

5. Public Comments

- a. A member of the public encouraged WBEZ to conduct more outreach to African American communities.

The next meeting of the Sounding Board will be held on August 3, 2017 from 6:00 – 8:00pm.