

# The Value of Public Radio Listening

## (listening is an act of love)

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- Craig Oliver, Greater Public
- Jody Evans, Public Radio Program Directors
- Izzi Smith, NPR

# The Value of Public Radio Listening

- We're in the love business
- Greater Public's Benchmark – elements of leadership
- How Benchmarks rock stars work
- Anyone can be a great listener

# The Business of Listening

- Average Quarter Hour - the baseline.
- Revenue is listener sensitive. More – More.
- Optimize for more listening – build the habit.
- Think Audience First – Start Listening

# New Data – Impact of Pledge

|                        |                | Pledge<br>-3 | Pledge<br>-2 | Pledge<br>-1 | Pledge | Pledge<br>+1 | Pledge<br>+2 | Pledge<br>+3 |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>STATION AVERAGE</b> | AQH Persons    | 128          | 119          | 110          | 100    | 114          | 124          | 143          |
|                        | Share%         | 131          | 115          | 110          | 100    | 113          | 124          | 147          |
|                        | AVG Daily Cume | 113          | 103          | 103          | 100    | 109          | 110          | 122          |
|                        | AVG WK Cume    | 110          | 100          | 103          | 100    | 107          | 115          | 116          |

Stations included: WAMU, WABE, WRAS, KQED, KALW, KPBS, WKNO, KNPR, WPLN, WOSU, WHRV, and KCUR. A mix of market sizes and single/dual station markets. Mostly these stations had one-week drives but a couple were two weeks.

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Benchmarks for Public  
Radio Fundraising

# Key Questions:

- Does your fundraising cover your core operating costs?
- How dependent are you on institutional subsidies?
- Where's your real headroom for increasing revenue?

# Listener Hours

Station AQH (Average Quarter Hour Persons)

- AQH = average listening
- Listener Hours = total listening
- Annual Listener Hours (AQH\*168)\*52

**Net Fundraising Revenue**

**÷ Annual Listener Hours**

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**Net FR Revenue per LH**

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| Broadcast Service | Annual Listener Hours | Net Revenue \$1,000+ | Number of Donors \$1,000+ | net cents/LH |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| HIGHER            | 34,070,400            | 369,406              | 271                       | 1.08         |
| WAAA              | 26,208,000            | 714,478              | 339                       | 2.70         |
| TARGET            | 24,460,800            | 100,915              | 71                        | 0.41         |
| WBBB              | 24,460,800            | 46,210               | 101                       | 0.19         |
| WCCC              | 21,840,000            | 222,281              | 187                       | 1.02         |
| WDDD              | 21,840,000            | 131,133              | 94                        | 0.60         |
| LOWER             | 16,598,400            | 151,654              | 85                        | 0.91         |

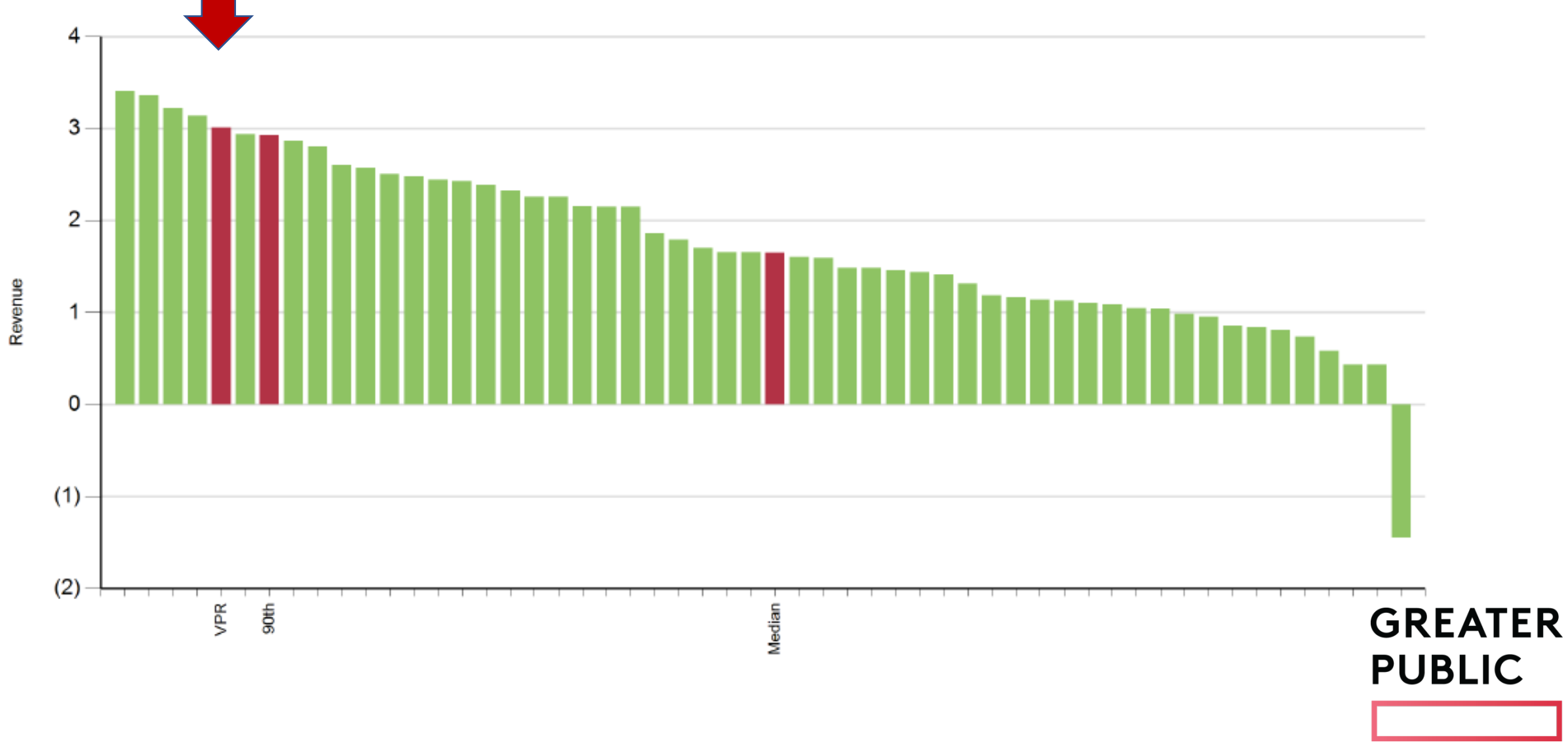
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# Membership

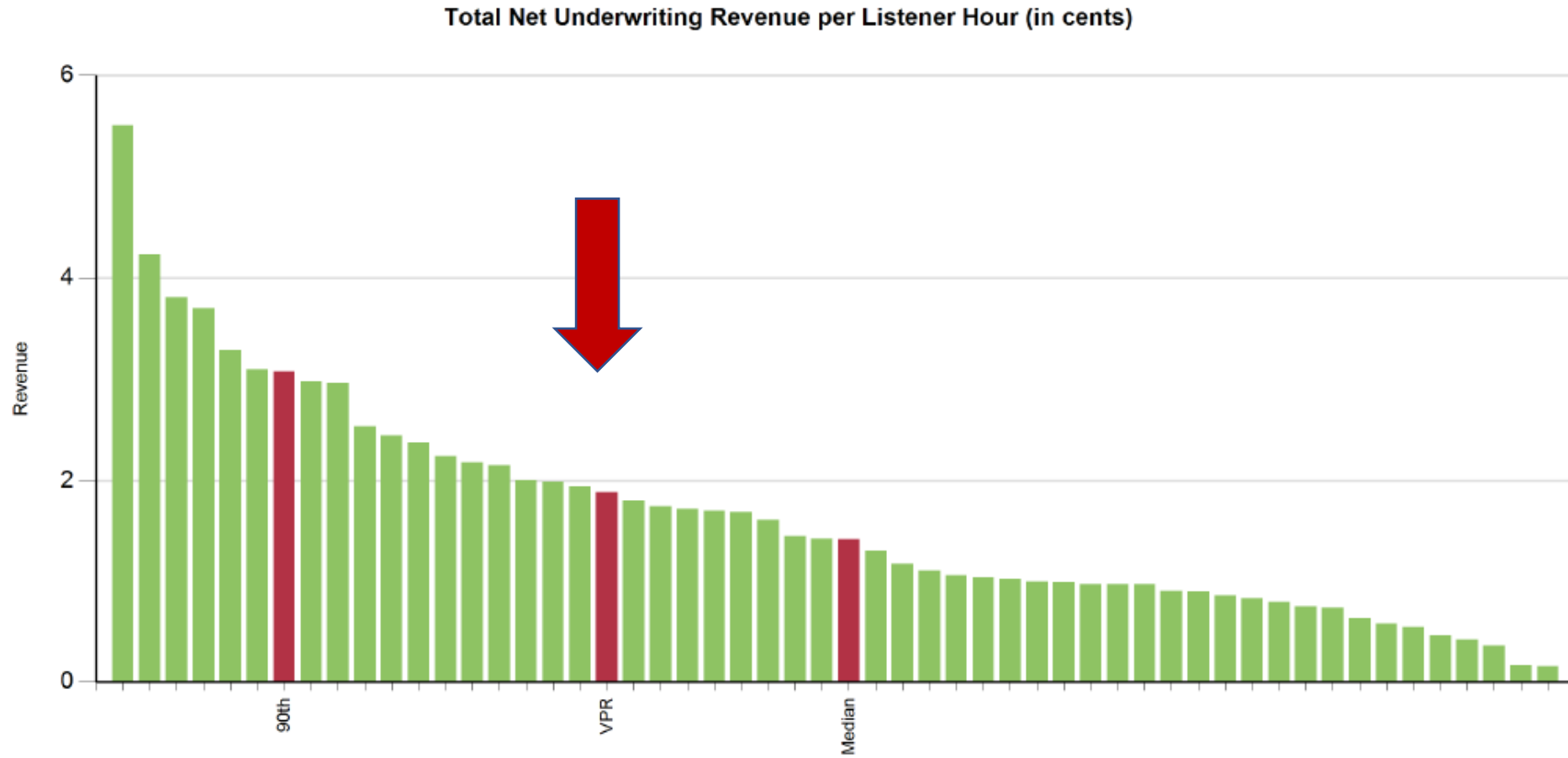
Net Revenue per Listener Hour for Member / Mid Level Giving (in cents)



## What Top Performers Do

- Similar average annual gift as everyone else in membership (\$1--\$249)
- Slightly higher average mid-level (\$250--\$999) Raise money effectively all year, not just during drives.
- Almost always hold three pledge drives per year.
- Raise six of every 10 dollars outside of drives
- Compared to the median, they are more efficient at converting listening to givers
  - 40% better \$1--\$249
  - 250% better \$250--\$999
- Sustainers!

# Underwriting



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# VPR's Underwriting Performance Comparison

| Station<br>Net/LH (¢)     | FTE      | Clients    | Clients/<br>FTE | Gross<br>\$/Client | Gross<br>\$/FTE |
|---------------------------|----------|------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| WAAA<br>3.70              | 5        | 636        | 127.2           | 3,986              | 477,098         |
| WBBB<br>3.28              | 2        | 79         | 40              | 4,764              | 181,777         |
| WCCC<br>2.53              | 5        | 429        | 86              | 3,804              | 326,413         |
| WDDD<br>2.24              | 4        | 481        | 120             | 4,865              | 573,370         |
| <b>VPR</b><br><b>1.84</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>385</b> | <b>96</b>       | <b>5,429</b>       | <b>512,053</b>  |

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## Benchmarks for Public Radio Fundraising

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Conversion Ratio FY 2016

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| My station's FY 2016 broadcast underwriting revenue is: | \$2,293,481  |
| My market's revenue is:                                 | \$40,630,000 |
| Therefore, my SHARE of revenue is:                      | 5.64         |



|  |     |
|--|-----|
| My station's Metro AQH Share (Persons 6+, MS 6a-12m, Spring and Fall Avg): | 8.5 |
|--|-----|



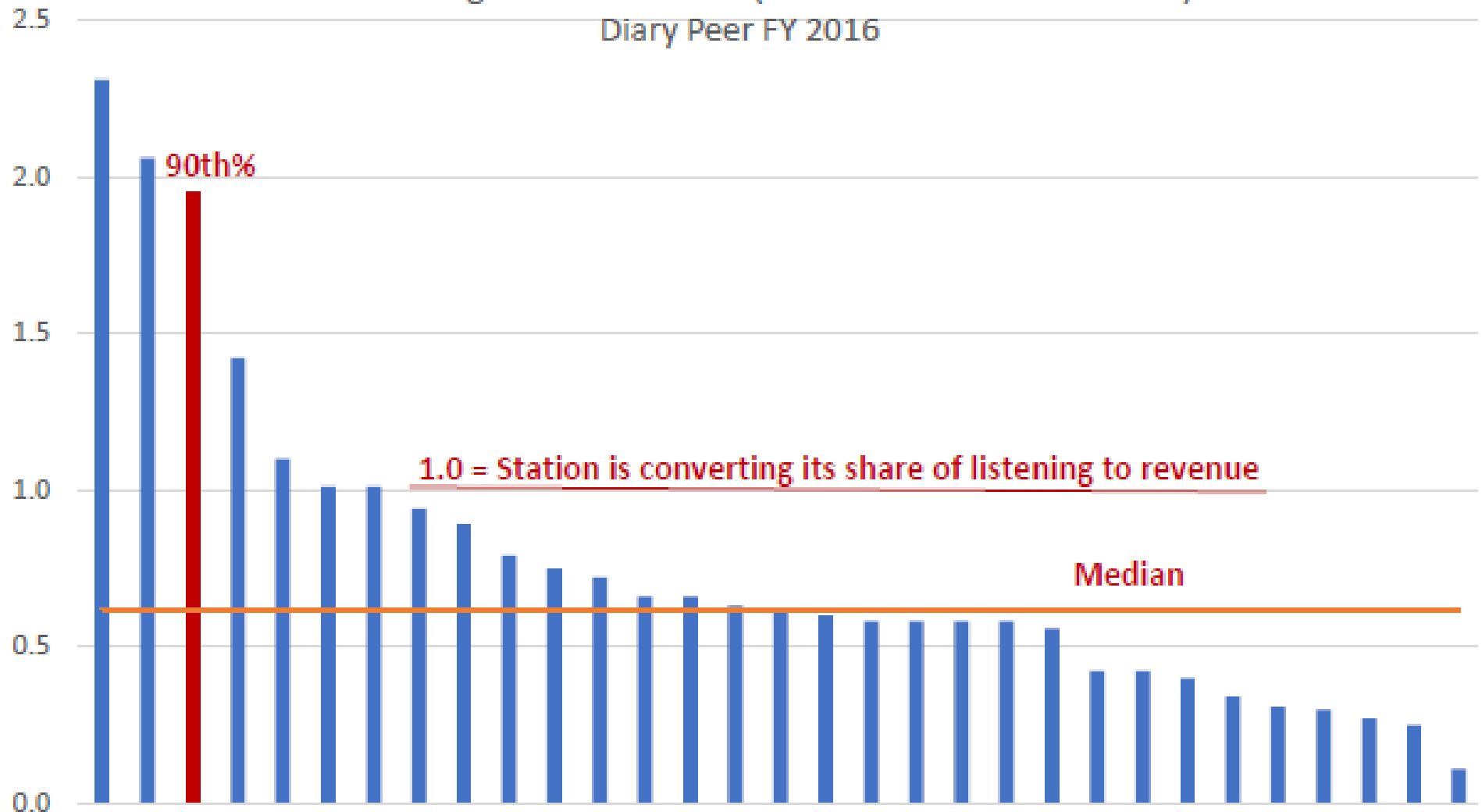
|   |      |
|---|------|
| My station is converting the following share of listening to revenue: | 0.66 |
|---|------|

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# Benchmarks for Public Radio Fundraising

## Underwriting Conversion Ratio (Revenue vs. Audience Share)

Diary Peer FY 2016



Conversion Ratio Median

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- greaterpublic.org – search for “Benchmarks”
- [coliver@greaterpublic.org](mailto:coliver@greaterpublic.org)
- [jclayton@greaterpublic.org](mailto:jclayton@greaterpublic.org)
- Ask us for a user name and password to enter data at
  - Benchmarks.DEIworksites.org

# Invest In Your Development Shop



- Cost per dollar raised – important, but not everything.
- Add staff strategically



# Yes, Another Slide About The Importance Of Sustainer Programs

- Aggressively recruit Sustainers
- Don't just "set it and forget it"
- Sustainers = Royalty
- Invest in efficiency



# It's All About Relationships

- Don't underestimate the power of audience/member services
- “Corporate Support” vs. “Sales”
- Programming & development collaboration
- Major giving: Play a long game



# “The Last Five Pounds”

- Make pledge drives more about acquisition and requisition, less about revenue (gasp!)
- More focused digital fundraising/off-air campaigns
- Use email to engage/retain members, or bring new members in
- Make giving easier
- Provide frequent, soft ask opportunities
- Use member comments as fodder for messaging

# Ways you can actively engage and support best practices for content

- Get to know your Content/Program Director
- Ask Questions
- Understand Core Values
- Learn about your listeners

# How People Listen (even during the pledge drive)

- Listening is a habit
- Habits can be influenced and reinforced
- Habits can evolve overtime
- Listening to local stations is a habit that requires active and consistent reinforcement

# We're in this Together

- Content and Development need to work together all year
- Be Active, not Reactive
- Think Audience!

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