

# The Value of Public Radio Listening

## (listening is an act of love)

- Michelle Owens, Vermont Public Radio
- 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 -3	Pledge -2	Pledge -1	Pledge	Pledge +1	Pledge +2	Pledge +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

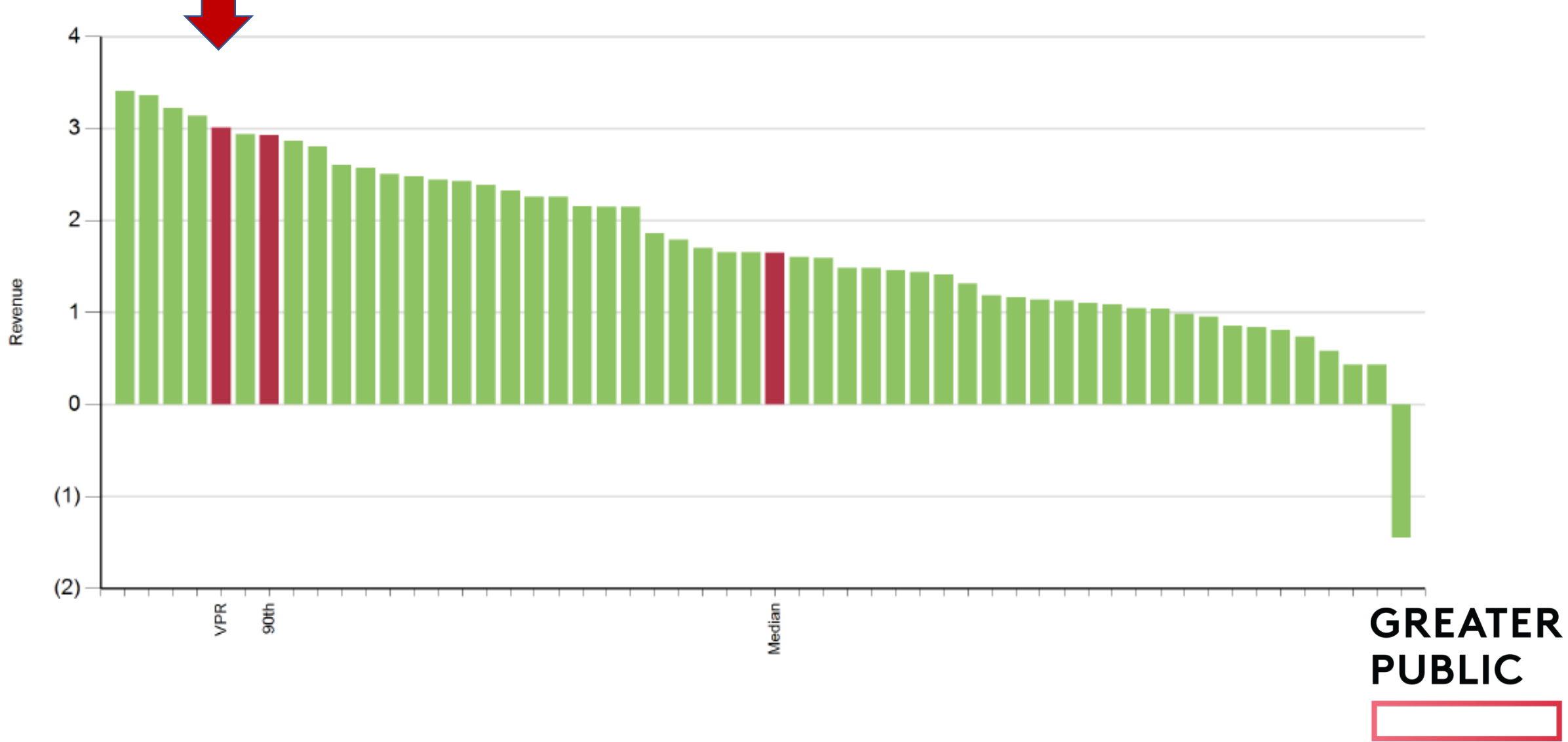
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# Membership

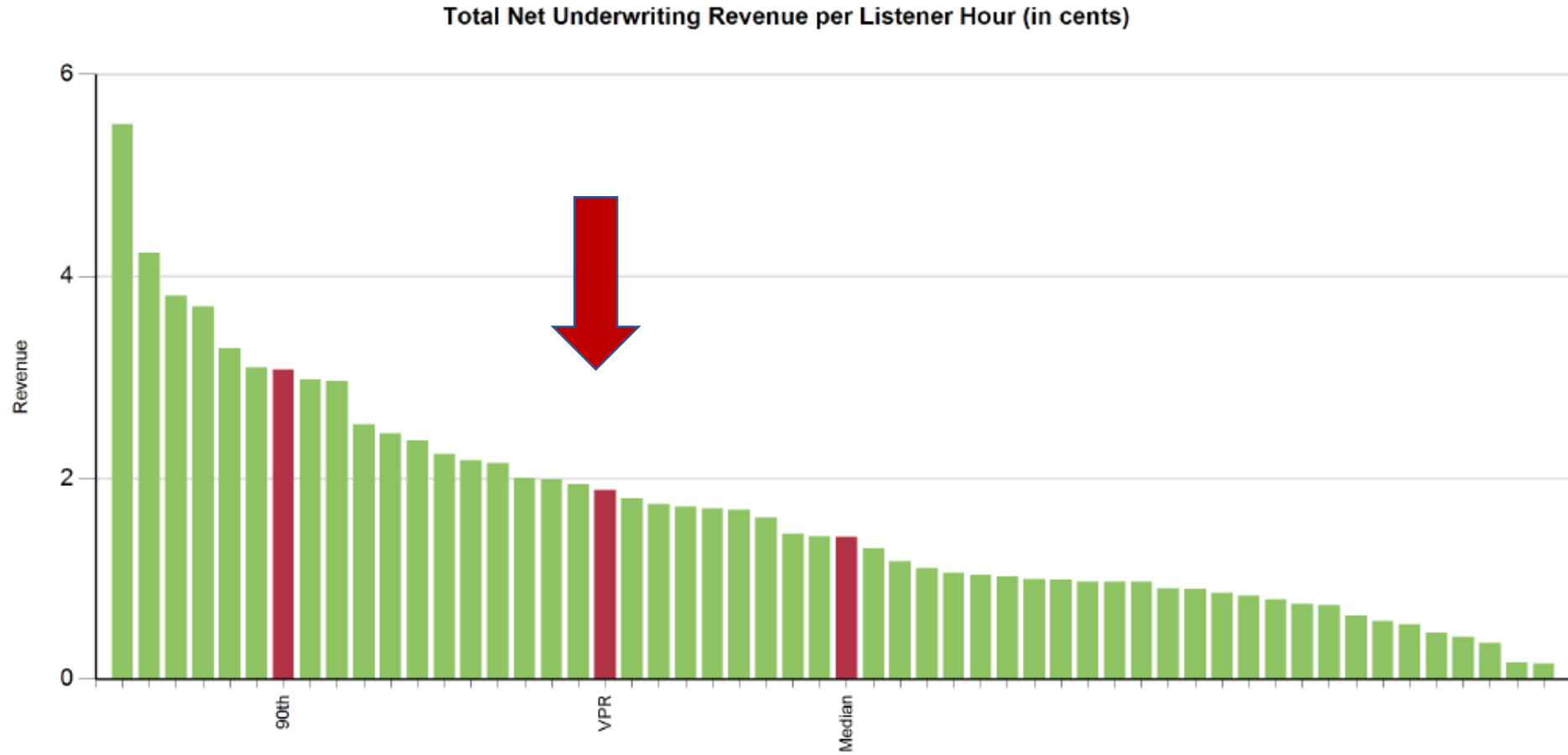
Net Revenue per Listener Hour for Member / Mid Level Giving (in cents)



## 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 Net/LH (¢)	FTE	Clients	Clients/ FTE	Gross \$/Client	Gross \$/FTE
WAAA 3.70	5	636	127.2	3,986	477,098
WBBB 3.28	2	79	40	4,764	181,777
WCCC 2.53	5	429	86	3,804	326,413
WDDD 2.24	4	481	120	4,865	573,370
<b>VPR</b> <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
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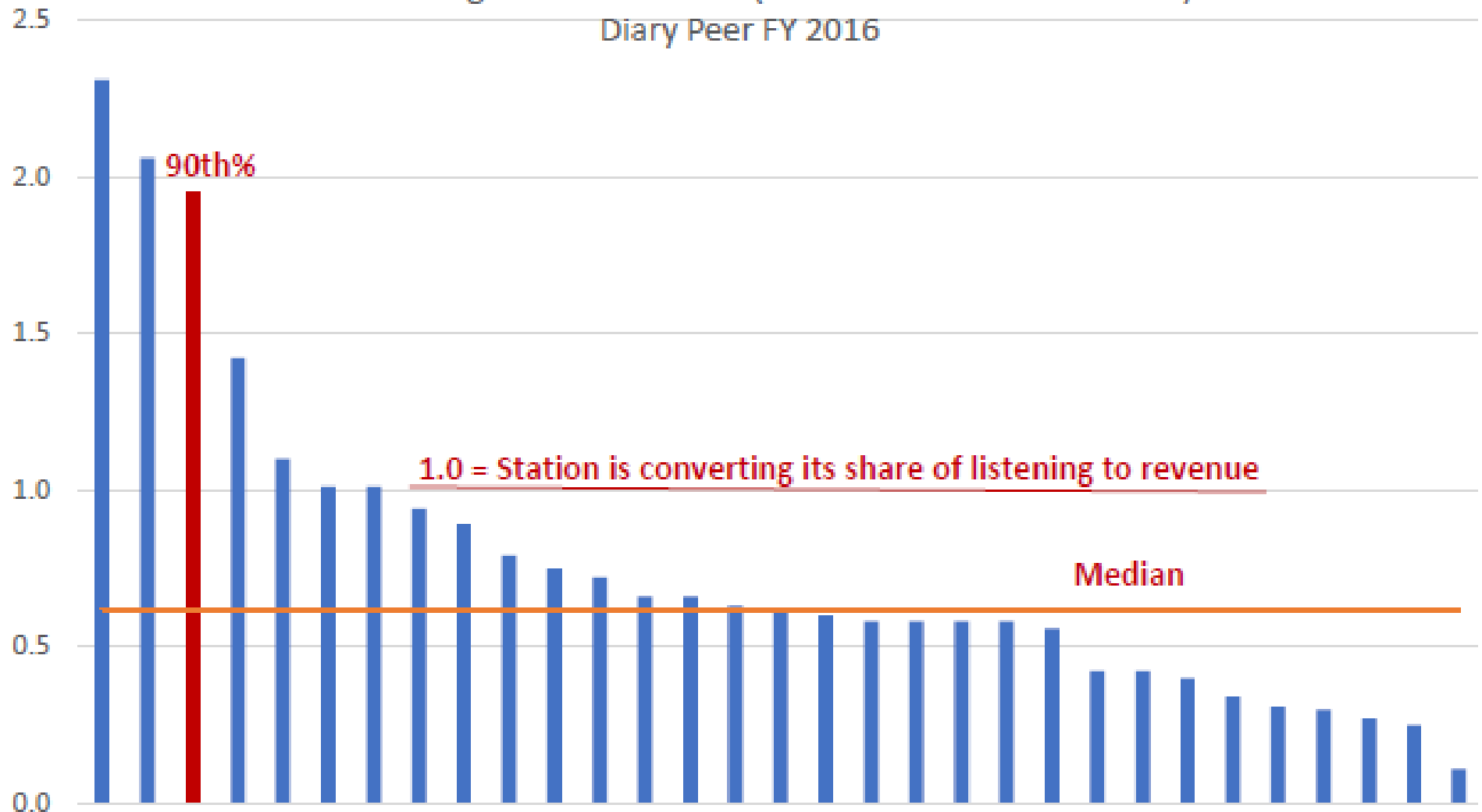
My station is converting the following share of listening to revenue:	0.66
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# Benchmarks for Public Radio Fundraising

## 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.DElworksite.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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