

Community Builder

PBS Television Stations - Membership Driven Media

The Situation:

Working with two high-profile PBS television stations, we were asked to help generate more membership pledges and offer additional services for both members and non-members.

As we normally do when brainstorming a new project, we put ourselves in the role of a typical customer, in this case a PBS viewer, and asked ourselves why we watch PBS in the first place and what, if anything, would make it better. Being members of our local PBS station before they became a client, we already knew why we liked and supported PBS television: unsurpassed quality programming. What we didn't like about PBS was that the, seemingly irregular, programming schedules made it difficult, if not impossible, to remember when NOVA and our other favorites aired.

The Solution:

The answer was obvious...send me a reminder when my favorites are going to be on. And, it seemed just as obvious, that if we make the product better, it'll be easier to ask for money. Fix the first and the second will come right along...

To send program reminders, the system would have to know when all the programs aired and which ones we considered our favorites. The first part was easy, we'd already worked our code into their backend system which managed the actual programming schedules. Having access to the program schedules, the stations have been able to let viewers see what's on right now as well as any other time, past, present or future. We could also search for our favorites' schedules...and try not to forget them.

The trick now was to make sure the station knew who we were and what our favorites were. And, of course, how to remind us when they were scheduled to air.

The answer was a personalized portal system for their members. With this, a member is greeted with a list of upcoming shows that he or she has marked as favorites and any upcoming events they want to be reminded of.

Members can check their membership status to see when they are due for renewal and, if they happen to forget, the system sends them an email reminder and gently reminds them when they sign in to their portal. When they do renew, they can easily select a "Thank you" gift according to their pledge level. It even makes gift suggestions based on the member's program preferences.

Once we got the basics covered - program and event reminders and easy membership renewals - we started icing the cake...

We added features to: send a program listing to a friend; an HTML or plain-text e-newsletter customized to each member's program preferences; the capability for members to add their own events to the calendar with reminders; a friendly way to print a schedule of your favorite programs by the day, week or month; and, finally, a way to actually buy more neat stuff from the station's store after you've become a member, not only when you're pledging.

What about non-members? The system is designed so any and all features can be restricted to members only or opened to the public. This way, the station can offer "sneak previews" of the great features members enjoy and entice new converts.

That was all for the members. And, we were right, make it better and more viewers will become members. With a noticeable increase in membership pledges, what about the beleaguered staff? We took care of them as well.

"KLRU -- the public television station for Central Texas -- has worked closely with nuMedia for over three years and with every project nuMedia has exceeded our expectations. NuMedia staff are thorough and combine ingenuity with a strong work-ethic.

The nuMedia staff are capable of solving technological problems quickly and have helped show us ways to save money as well as provide great services to our television viewers. nuMedia has provided KLRU with all of the tools we need to make our Web sites one of the best in the PBS system. We strongly recommend working with nuMedia."

Kierstan Schwab
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All on-line pledges go straight to the membership database (another legacy system) and all renewal reminders are automatically generated based on membership anniversary dates in the system. The customized e-newsletters are just as easy: add some content, mark it for different tastes and click it sent.

One of the least noticed, but most important results is the members keep their information up-to-date and the stations' membership databases clean and correct with no effort on the staff's part. That alone is worth the price of admission for a member-supported venue.

During the stations' on-air pledge drives, operators use a specially designed screen to capture pledge information while they are on the phone. The on-air pledge system tracks each pledge by operator and the time for automatic correlation with the programs being broadcast when the pledge was made. This is invaluable information when it is time to buy the new season's programming. Further, with the pledge demographic information being captured, a detailed marketing analysis of population, geographic location, age, and the associated program being aired is available and used to effectively tailor corporate sponsorships.

Features:

- On-line Membership Application
- Pledge "Thank You" Premiums
- Integrated On-Air Pledge Drive Membership System
- Personalized Member Portals
- Membership Renewal Reminders
- Searchable Program Schedules
- Printable Favorite Programming Schedules
- Program Reminders
- Event Calendar including Personal Events and Reminders
- Personalized and Customized eNewsletters
- Station "On-line Store" for ordering Special Merchandise
- Member-maintained Personal Profiles

<http://www.klru.org>

<http://www.klrn.org>

"KLRN -- The Public Television station for South and Central Texas introduced KLRU to nuMedia. We're happy to share our successes with others and nuMedia has helped KLRN win web awards and millions of hits on our website. The Internet is a vital link to the Public and nuMedia has helped KLRN develop this important resource."

Charles Vaughn
Senior Vice President, Telecommunication
KLRN

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