

WHY PUBLIC TELEVISION'S  
ON-AIR MEMBERSHIP DRIVES SUCCEEDED  
AND  
WHAT FUTURE SUCCESS DEMANDS

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An analysis of existing and largely unpublished research presented as a project in lieu of thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts degree in Journalism, College of Communications, University of Illinois.

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## **Introduction**

Public television has grown to depend on the revenues from on-air membership drives. For a number of known reasons these membership pledge drives have become increasingly successful -- but significant changes are needed if that success is to continue.

By examining a number of research studies, this paper will seek to identify those factors which allowed on-air drives to succeed in the past. Next, it will raise questions about the future success of existing on-air drive strategies. Finally, the paper will address those questions in an attempt to simulate debate within the public television industry about what changes will lead to the greatest improvements in on-air fundraising.

Throughout, this paper will address the above questions by exploring the rich trove of existing attitude research on public television viewers, members, lapsed members, and the general public's feelings toward on-air fundraising. Many of the individual research studies were conducted for PBS under the direction of the author and have never before been summarized and made available to scholars, academic institutions, or interested students. This paper will cite, explain, and interpret the relevant research. A chronological listing of research studies is attached as Appendix A.

## ***Background***

In the early to mid-1970's, having secured Congressional funding at a level far below the recommendation of the Carnegie Commission and confronting the possibility of centrally mandated programming as a result of the new federal funds, public television stations needed to develop new sources of funding to maintain local editorial control of the program

services they provided to their communities. From this need came the Station Independence Project (SIP)<sup>1</sup> provided through public television stations' national association and programming cooperative, the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) in Washington DC.

Funded by a Ford Foundation grant, PBS's SIP assisted five public television stations in piloting nationally coordinated but locally produced on-air pledge drives in 1974. These televised membership drives consisted of station management and staff going live on-camera, addressing the audience between programs with a simple message, "You watch these programs, now we need you to call and pledge your financial support to help us pay for them." Volunteers could be seen live, on-air, answering phone calls from viewers, and taking membership pledges.

The pilot project was successful. By 1980, most public television stations were conducting at least one annual on-air membership drive, and revenue had grown to \$38.7 million.

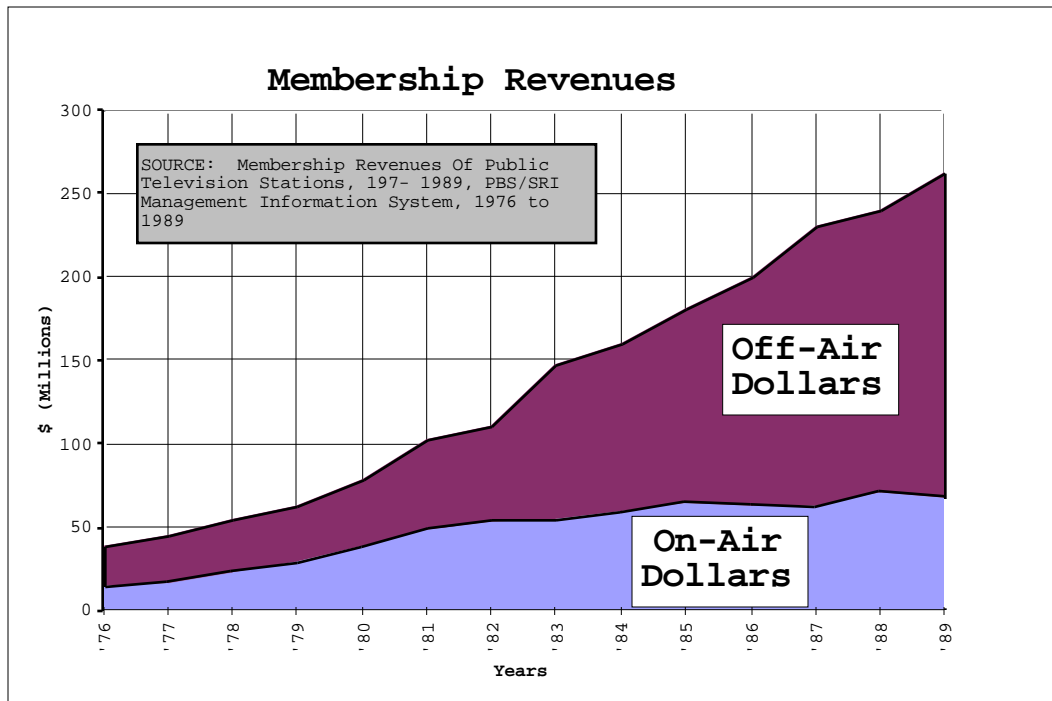
Pledge drives' magnitude varied by market size. Stations in small towns might have had just a few volunteers answering phones; at WNET / New York there were more than 150 volunteers taking membership pledges from viewers who were motivated by the on-air appeals. Overall, the on-air membership drives were a tremendous success across the country.

By the mid-1990's, three nationally coordinated, 10 to 15 day on-air drives, supplemented by special programming in March, August, and December generated roughly \$150 million a year from families who pledged their financial support to their local stations. The drives had launched almost all PBS stations' membership programs, totaling more than 5 million members nationwide by the early 1990's. The financial impact of these

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<sup>1</sup> Station Independence Project (SIP) was created in 1974 by PBS with funding from the Ford Foundation to increase non-governmental funding of public television stations through the cooperative purchase and sharing of best industry fundraising practices. SIP continues today.

members became even greater as stations strengthened their membership renewal and additional gift programs.



Individual support from millions of small annual contributions became public television's single greatest source of funding. Membership was unique in helping to justify and leverage greater funding from government, corporations and foundations and, at the same time, insuring the industry's editorial independence against the loss of a single funder.

## **Factors That Allowed On-Air Membership Drives To Succeed**

Basically, there were sixteen reasons for the success of public television's on-air drives.

### ***[1] Unique Programming In A Competition Free Television Environment***

Public television benefited from the fact that most of its programming was unique -- not to be found on network or most cable television systems.

While the impact of new cable programming services would ultimately impact public television, their impact throughout the 1980's was minimal. At the time services such as CNN and Discovery were being launched and few of the cable systems needed to distribute them to large numbers of homes were using all of their twelve channels.

### ***[2] Attitudes Toward Programming In General***

Public television developed a brand loyalty with respect to several categories of programming.<sup>2</sup> For example, in 1990, representatives of the general public who had access to cable television services said they would tune to public television first for programming in the following categories:

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<sup>2</sup> Public Television National Image Study, PBS/SRI, 1990

Nature & Science Programming	44%
(Discovery was 2nd at 18%)	
Symphony / Opera / Dance	42%
("Other Cable Channels" were 2nd at 13%)	
Programs Good For Children	37%
("Other Cable Channels" were 2nd at 20% with Nickelodeon receiving 10%).	

Public television rated lower on the question of where people would turn first "for an in-depth discussion of today's news and events." Here, 36% mentioned a commercial network, 28% mentioned the Cable News Network, and 21% mentioned public television.

A recent study produced for PBS by Hal Riney Partners, Inc., reveals additional perspectives on public and member attitudes toward PBS, its programming, services, and potential communications strategies.<sup>3</sup> Results of the Riney Study underscore the importance of building a "case for public television" that is consistent with the industry's mission and the general perceptions of those it serves and those to whom it must depend for funding.

In evaluating the relative importance of various missions for PBS in the future, the Riney Study showed PBS members and viewers in general assigned top priority to:

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<sup>3</sup> A Study of Reactions to Strategic Communications Alternatives for PBS Among Target Publics, PBS/Hal Riney & Partners, Inc., February 1994

- Providing viewers with personal enrichment by bringing the worlds of science, culture, history and current events to viewers of all ages.
- Setting the industry standard for quality TV programming for adults and children alike.

In fact, 67% of PBS members assigned a rating of 10 on a 0-to-10 scale to "personal enrichment." Viewers in general rated it highly as well, with 56% rating the statement a 10.

Image profile findings in the study confirm other measurements suggesting that PBS's strongest brand equity can be found in its positioning as an informative / educational resource -- its respect for the intelligence of its viewers, and its freedom from commercial interruptions and influences.

Descriptors that viewers strongly agree on when profiling PBS involve references to: PBS's unique standing as a valuable national resource; wholesome programming for the whole family; uniqueness / difference from other channels or networks, primarily in terms of the absence of commercial interests; its commitment to public service in general, and in the area of education in particular.

Both the findings of the study conducted in 1990 and the recently completed Riney Study reaffirm PBS's and public television's brand loyalty.

### ***[3] Children's Programming***

In homes with children, public television's children's programming played an important role in the decision to renew the contributor's membership. In the 1990 Four Market Membership Survey open-ended question regarding the "Most Important" thing you receive for your contribution, only 3% of overall members mentioned children's programming. However, in rating the importance of various reasons for renewal on a one-to-ten scale, members gave children's programming a 4.9 average. Households with children under 18 years of age provided it an average of 7.6. Households with children under age 12 rated the importance of children's programming an average of 8.3.<sup>4</sup>

### ***[4] The "Educational" Position***

Public television has long been referred to as "quality" and/or "educational" television. While "educational" was often deemed to have a negative connotation by PTV professionals (e.g., sometimes likened to "medicine that is good for you."), research among the general population showed that the more likely people were to describe PTV as "educational" the higher their overall level of satisfaction with public television.<sup>5</sup> When used by the public, "educational television," dating back to the industry's founding mission, was a positive attribute.

However, as noted in the July '93 study of retained members, it is important to recognize the difference between the "language people use to express positive attitudes" and "the language that motivates giving." For example, the public uses "education" as a positive attribute of public television. Yet the word "education" has proven relatively ineffective in

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<sup>4</sup> Four-Market Membership Study, PBS / SRI, 1990

<sup>5</sup> Public Television National Image Study, PBS / SRI, 1990



securing contributions.<sup>6</sup> Here again, we see the importance of taking what is learned from research into fundraising, especially direct mail where key phrases can be tested for what matters most to potential donors and ultimately to public television stations themselves -- response rates, average gifts, etc. For example, references to personal enrichment and life long learning appear to have resonated with donors more favorably than the word, "education."

### **[5] A Positive Identity In Local Communities**

In their relatively short history as organizations, public television stations have established themselves as important community institutions.

The "1990 Image Study," based on a random telephone sample of U.S. television households, confirmed public television's strong identity within the communities they serve. Described as a mix of education and entertainment, public television was cited as the first place viewers turn for science, nature, arts, and cultural performance programs, as well as programming that is good for children.

The 1990 Image Survey asked respondents to rate, on a scale of one-to-ten (with ten being "the most") four different types of local organizations with respect to their contributions to the quality of life in the local community.<sup>7</sup> As would be expected, public television rated even higher in a survey of its members.<sup>8</sup>

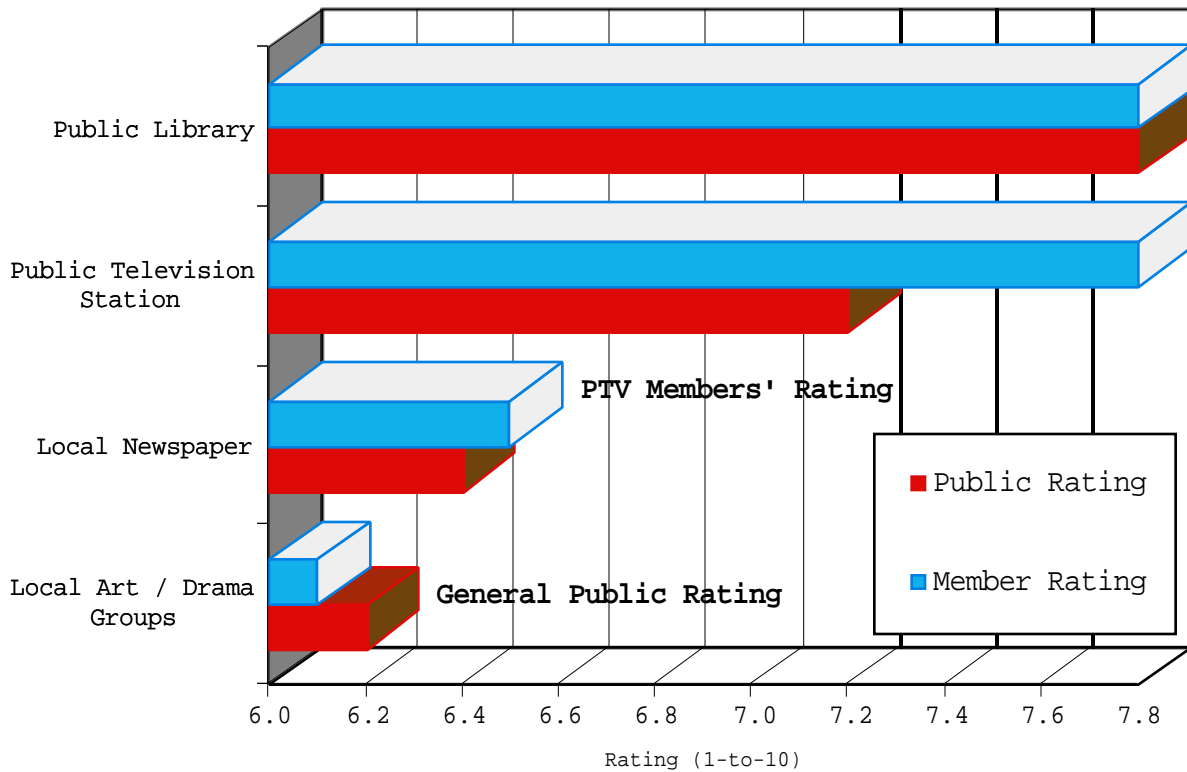
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<sup>6</sup> Survey of Retained Members of Public Television, PBS / Lauer Lalley & Associates in cooperation with Dodd Smith Dann, July 1993

<sup>7</sup> PTV National Image Study, PBS/SRI, 1990

<sup>8</sup> Four Market Membership Survey, PBS/SRI, 1990

### Contributing To The "Quality of Life" Comparisons



### **6] An Organization Worthy Of Financial Support**

The more worthy that lapsed members perceived public television to be among all the organizations to which they contribute, the more likely they were to believe or to say they were still a member.

In examining differences among demographics or involvement with PTV in the ratings of the 13 renewal factors listed below, every ranking correlated positively with respondents' feelings about public television as an organization worthy of support.

**Factors Associated with Lapsed Member Renewal**

- The channel deserves the community's support.
- The channel needs financial support.
- I want to express my support of the channel's programming in general.
- This is an important educational institution in my community.
- I watch public television and I feel an obligation to support it.
- There is a certain program or programs that I want to support.
- I received a renewal notice in the mail and thought I should respond to it.
- The children in the household benefit from the children's programming.
- I saw a program that motivated me to contribute again.
- By contributing, I feel I have an influence on the kinds of programs the channel broadcasts.
- I feel guilty if I watch channel \_\_\_ without contributing.
- There was an on-air appeal for funds that moved me to contribute again.
- Channel \_\_\_ offered an attractive premium, such as a tote bag.

Respondents who placed public television "near the top" of their list of worthy organizations assigned higher ratings, on average, to all 13 factors than respondents who placed PTV "in the middle" or "near the bottom" of their list.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> PBS Nonrenewal Study, PBS/SRI, Spring 1991

While some techniques must be found to trigger reinstatement and/or more frequent giving from lapsed members, the data in this study underscores the importance of defining public television as an institution worthy and deserving of their support.

### ***[7] Ability To Reach PTV Consumers ... Without Waste***

Unlike most nonprofit organizations, public television had no doorways, turnstiles, or ticket windows from which to generate revenue. Viewers could watch its programming in the privacy of their living room for free.

On-Air membership drives represented the first and most effective means of reaching those who were watching its programming with the message that it was deserving of voluntary financial support.

No other approach, including direct mail or telemarketing, would prove as effective in securing new members. Even after a decade of on-air drives in the mid-1980's, it was not uncommon for 70% of those who gave to be new members of public television.<sup>10</sup>

Today, with millions of members having originally become members as a result of on-air membership drives, an increasing percentage of on-air drive income comes from renewal and additional gifts made by current members.

### ***[8] Easy Availability Of Time For On-Air Drives***

Much of the growth of public television's pledge drives was fueled by the easy availability of on-air time. Unlike commercial stations with commitments to run advertisers' commercials, public television on-

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<sup>10</sup> PBS SIP Pledge Drive Management Information System, PBS / SRI, 1975 to 1992.

air membership drives began as live on-camera appeals during the breaks between prime time programs.

Later, as the pressure grew to increase the dollars pledged during drives, air-time for additional appeals was found in three areas:

- 1) The length of the average break was increased to provide more minutes of on-air appeals;
- 2) Interruptions in special programming produced by PBS's SIP permitted almost 20 minutes per hour of on-air appeals, and;
- 3) On-air appeals were added during the weekends, late afternoon fringe times, and morning broadcasts of children's programming. Ultimately, even more on-air time was dedicated by simply adding more days to each on-air pledge drive.

### ***[9] Viewers Watch Breaks***

Especially before wide acceptance of the television remote control, pledge programs -- and especially pledge breaks -- were seen by the public. For example, during its December '93 drive, 76% of all households in the market viewed at least one KAET/Phoenix pledge break. Similar studies yielded 72% at WHYY/Philadelphia; 66% at KERA/Dallas; 50% at WETA/Washington, DC; and 55% at WGBH/Boston.<sup>11</sup>

The percentage of public television's weekly viewership who have seen a given on-air membership drive increases quickly during the first few days. By the seventh day of a drive, each new day's cume contained approximately 80% repeat viewers. If one-time viewing was the critical variable in pledging, it seems plausible that dollars pledged would closely

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<sup>11</sup> Pledge Cume Build Up Study, PMN-Trac, May 1994

track the build-up come over time rather than continuing to increase after the come was built.<sup>12</sup> However, viewers watched many appeals (an average of five) before deciding to pledge. Frequency of viewing, it appears, is a significant factor in the decision to pledge.

### ***[10] Viewers Understood The Need***

Just as viewers are willing to accept commercial spots as the price they pay for watching commercial programming, public television viewers are generally likely to accept the trade-off between access to their favorite programs and on-air appeals.

The percentage of the public believing the on-air membership appeals are a "fair price to pay for the programming they receive" has varied only 5% between 1976 and 1990. The 1990 figure showed an 88% acceptance of the tradeoff on the part of those who had viewed public television in the past week.<sup>13</sup>

In response to a similar question in other studies,<sup>14</sup> roughly 78% of those who watch commercial television feel that advertising spots are a fair price to pay for the programs they receive on commercial television. Judged by this criterion, people are more accepting of on-air membership drives in return for public television programming than they are of commercials in return for commercial programming. The likely source of greater discontent with commercials is that by their very nature, they are designed to interrupt every program every day.

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<sup>12</sup> March 1993 Pledge Build Up, PMN-Trac, April 1993

<sup>13</sup> PTV National Image Study, PBS/SRI, 1990

<sup>14</sup> PTV Viewer Attitude Studies, PBS/SRI, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1980, and 1983

## ***[11] Fundraising Techniques Were Quickly Improved***

The speed with which public television built its membership base is a tribute to the cooperation of PBS stations, their willingness to share successful techniques, and the dedication of PBS's SIP (now more fully developed as the "Station Independence Program") in identifying the most successful practices and sharing them with all stations through conferences, workshops, videoconferences, and on-site consultation. It's been said that PBS's SIP speeds the idea transfer through the system at three to four times the traditional rate.

Examples of the SIP's work to identify successful techniques were two studies conducted during Festival'79 and again during the early-1980's. Two "Minute-By-Minute" studies analyzed the relationship between audience size, the content of on-air membership appeals, and the number and size (dollar amount) of pledges being received.<sup>15</sup> Audience data was obtained from Nielsen Media Research and the pledge related information was secured during one evening of pledging with WNET/THIRTEEN, New York.

The minute-by-minute analysis confirmed some conventional wisdom about on-air fundraising:

- "Make it interesting, but make THE CASE." Interviews and lengthy video clips reduced pledge activity. Dozens of creative ways were found to deliver simple, effective, straight-to-camera pledge appeals that explained the need, reported on the use of funds, and continued to make "the case for support."
- "Catch viewers quickly after a program." Audiences declined by 30% or more during the closing credits of some programs. Shortening production credits and

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<sup>15</sup> PBS "Minute By Minute" Festival '79 Study, PBS/WNET, New York, March 1979

using voice over credits helped to get to the viewers faster.

- "You must ask to receive." Roughly 90 seconds following a specific call to action, including both a dollar amount and the phone number, pledges were received at that level. The more time that passed without a call to action, resulted in a decline in pledge activity on the phones.
- "You get what you ask for." Requests for higher dollar contributions were followed by pledges at that level. Appeals to "give what you can," produced many pledges below the minimum membership level.<sup>16</sup>

### **[12] Viewers Were Motivated To Pledge**

The most comprehensive studies of why viewers pledge to public television and their motivations and likelihood for renewing were conducted in 1980, 1981, and 1982 as the "Longitudinal Study of Public Television Contributors."<sup>17</sup> These studies also represent the last in-depth look at the motivations of viewers who pledge.

It's worth noting that these studies are old. During the past ten years, funds available for research were focused on answering questions about why some viewers had not given and how best to retain those members who had been

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., PBS "Minute By Minute" Festival '79 Study, PBS/WNET, New York, March 1979

<sup>17</sup> "Longitudinal Study of Public Television Contributors" (A Study of Contributors to PTV Stations During Festival '80; A 1981 Resurvey of Contributors to PTV Stations During Festival '80, and; A 1982 Follow-Up Survey of Contributors to PTV During Festival '80), PBS/SRI, 1980, 1981 and 1982



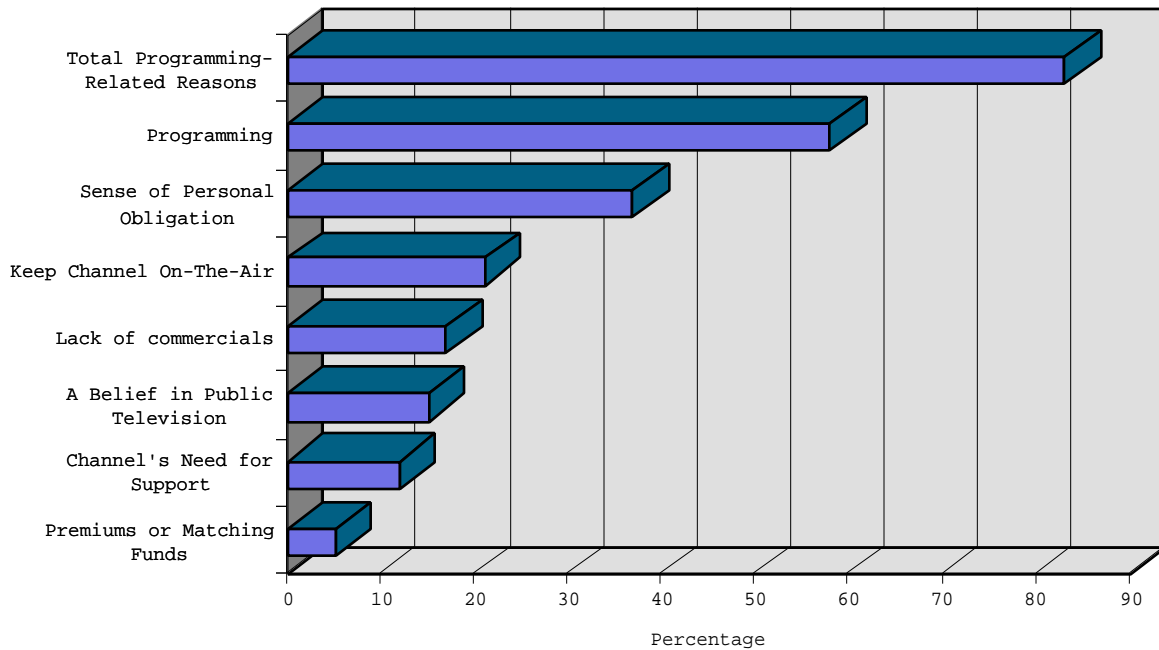
acquired through on-air or direct mail efforts. Still, the 1980-1982 studies are important because they captured motivations and continued to track the new members' attitudes over time.

In response to a list of six different factors likely to influence a decision to contribute, pledgers ranked the following as "very important":

- A desire to support the channel in general (78%)
- A desire to support good quality children's programs (51%)
- The program just viewed (48%)
- A desire to support news and public affairs programs (38%)
- The televised appeal itself (36%)
- The premium that was offered for pledging (10%).

The graph on the next page depicts how viewers who pledged during Festival '80 described their reasons for giving.

## Motivations for Pledging During Festival '80



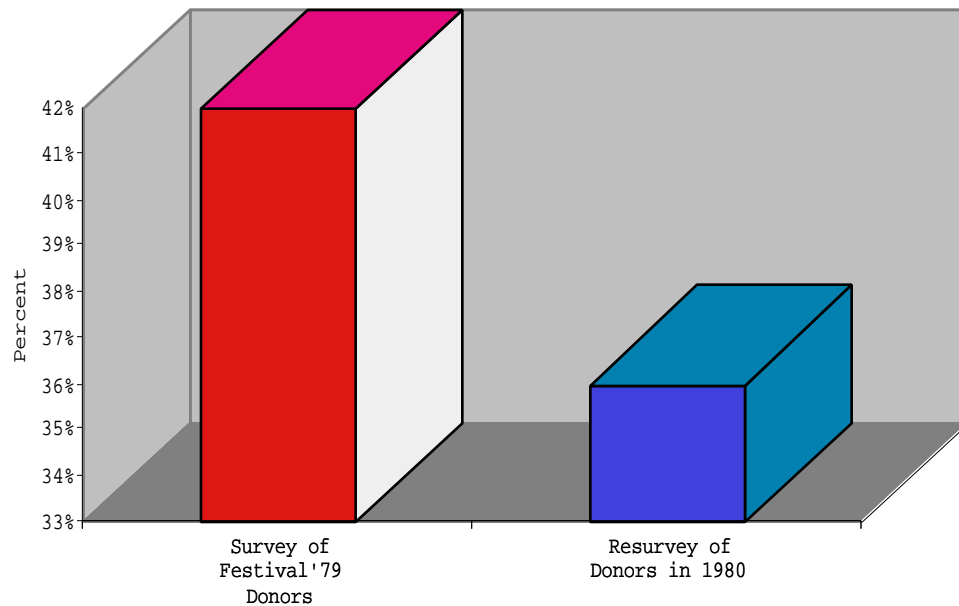
Comparing the ranking of these motivations with those described in a study of viewers who pledged to Festival'79 showed two changes worthy of note.<sup>18</sup>

- First, the only factor that did not decline in the percentage of pledgers who described it as "very important" were premiums.
- Second, the importance of "the televised appeal" declined from 42% to 36% in a year's time as shown in the graph on the following page.

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<sup>18</sup> A Study of Persons Who Pledged To PTV Stations During Festival '79, PBS/SRI, April 1979

### Decline In Importance of Televised Appeal



### **[13] The Role of Guilt In Motivating Pledges**

The 1990 and 1984 findings with respect to "obligation" underscore the importance members place on fairness and honesty -- in paying for what they watch. As the high rating of "the obligation factor" reveals, the role of guilt in securing contributions cannot be ignored. Members feel the easiest way to overcome this guilt is by contributing to the channel.<sup>19</sup>

In almost every case, interviews with public television pledgers and members are conducted six or more weeks after they have contributed. Even though "guilt" may be a powerful motivator, respondents seem unlikely to recall its role. They may also believe that indicating they were "persuaded by guilt" will reflect poorly on themselves.

In many early research studies, "guilt" never rated highly among those factors that motivated a pledge from viewers or a renewal from

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<sup>19</sup> Studies of Public Television Members, PBS/SRI, 1984 and 1990

members. Was guilt not a factor? Or, because research was often conducted weeks after a pledge had been made, had those who pledged or renewed justified their decision based on less emotional and more factual elements in "the case?"

To examine the role of "guilt" in motivating decisions to give, special mini-surveys were conducted with individuals immediately following (within 60-minutes) their gift in the mid-1980s.<sup>20</sup> A random sample of pledgers' names and phone numbers were FAXed to Statistical Research Inc., who then telephoned the pledgers to explore their motivations for making a gift "right then."

Guilt was the only factor to leap upward from more traditional ratings of potential motivators. Basically, respondents said they felt guilty about watching while others were paying their share.

While members' awareness of the role "guilt" played in their decision to contribute may be understated, note that the list of factors motivating a member to renew includes "the channel deserves it (8.5)," "I watch and feel an obligation to support it (7.6)," and the most blatant, "I feel guilty if I watch without contributing (5.0)." In seeking support for something viewers' receive for free, the desire to escape the feeling of guilt is certainly a motivator.

### ***[14] Inflation Helped Boost The Average Gift***

When adjusted for inflation, the average gift made in response to on-air appeals has remained relatively stable.<sup>21</sup> This situation has maintained purchasing power, but failed to achieve substantial increases in pledge yields (i.e., gross pledge revenues reduced by non-fulfillment minus fundraising expenses).

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<sup>20</sup> "SPACEFLIGHT" Pledge Follow-Up Study, PBS/SRI, May 1985

<sup>21</sup> Pledge Drive Management Information Systems (MIS), PBS/SIP/SRI, 1975 - 1989

The increasing average pledge appears to reflect the overall relationship between philanthropic giving and growth in the U.S. economy.

### ***[15] Members Had Good Reasons To Give Again***

Solid renewal programs -- especially those designed to secure the second annual gift from a first-time donor -- are critical to the success of public television's membership efforts. Without a clear understanding of why members renew, the acquisition of new members become akin to trying to fill a bucket that has many holes; they simply won't renew.

Historically, members have most frequently cited some aspect of programming as the major motivational factor in their decision to contribute to public television. That tradition remained intact in the 1991 survey conducted among lapsed members (those inactive members who have not contributed in the past 12 to 14 months).<sup>22</sup>

When asked, "What are your reasons for renewing your membership in your public television channel?", more than one-half (53%) of lapsed members who plan to renew their memberships cited some aspect of programming. Other reasons that motivated renewal included: 44% - support for public television; 17% - the public television station itself; 16% - satisfaction; 6% - alternative to commercial television, and 4% - no commercials.<sup>23</sup>

Lapsed members who reported that they plan to renew their membership were asked to rate (on a scale of one-to-ten) each of 13 factors for its influence on their decision to renew. The reasons provided appear below in order of their averaging rating.<sup>24</sup>

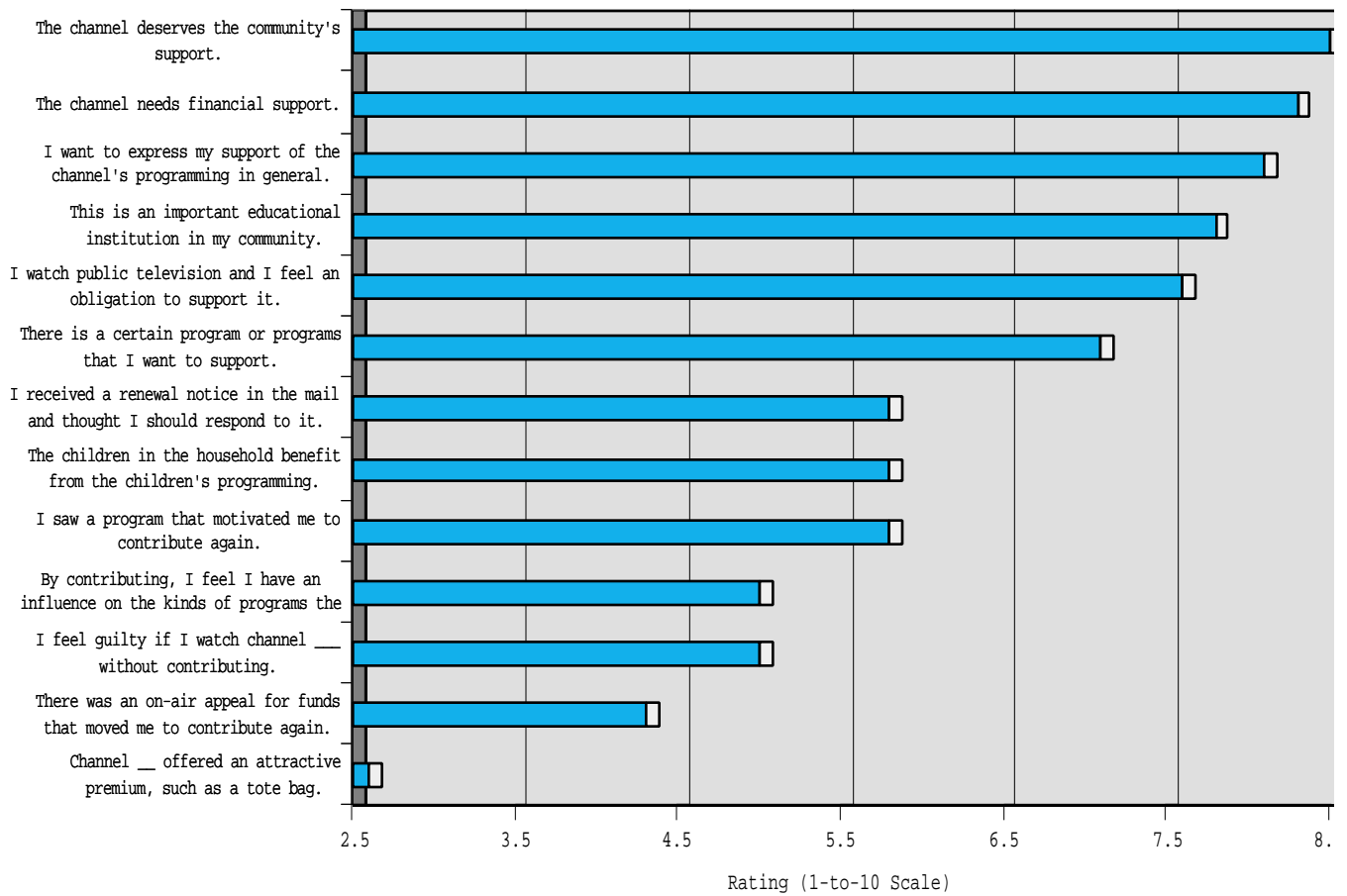
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<sup>22</sup> PBS Nonrenewal Study, PBS/SRI, Spring 1991

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., PBS Nonrenewal Study, PBS/SRI, Spring 1991

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., PBS Nonrenewal Study, PBS/SRI, Spring 1991

## Lapsed Member Motivations To Renew (1991)



It is worth noting that the 1984 Member / Nonrenewer Survey obtained similar answers with regard to how these types of statements would characterize their own motivation for renewal.<sup>25</sup> The only difference was that the top ranked statement in 1984 was "Desire to support the channel's programming (78%)" as opposed to "The channel deserves the community's support," which was top rated in the 1990 list above.

<sup>25</sup> Member / Nonrenewer Survey, PBS/SRI, 1984

Two statements not included in the 1984 study ranked high in the 1990 Image Survey: "The channel deserves the community's support (8.5 on a 10-point scale)," and "This is an important educational institution in my community (7.8)."<sup>26</sup>

In the 1991 study, five factors appear to have substantial influence on lapsed members' decision to renew:

- Deserves community support (8.5)
- Needs financial support (8.3)
- Support for programming (8.1)
- Educational Institution in the community (7.8)
- Obligation (7.6)

The 1984 study found that members indicated the following three phrases described their renewal motivation "well" or "somewhat":

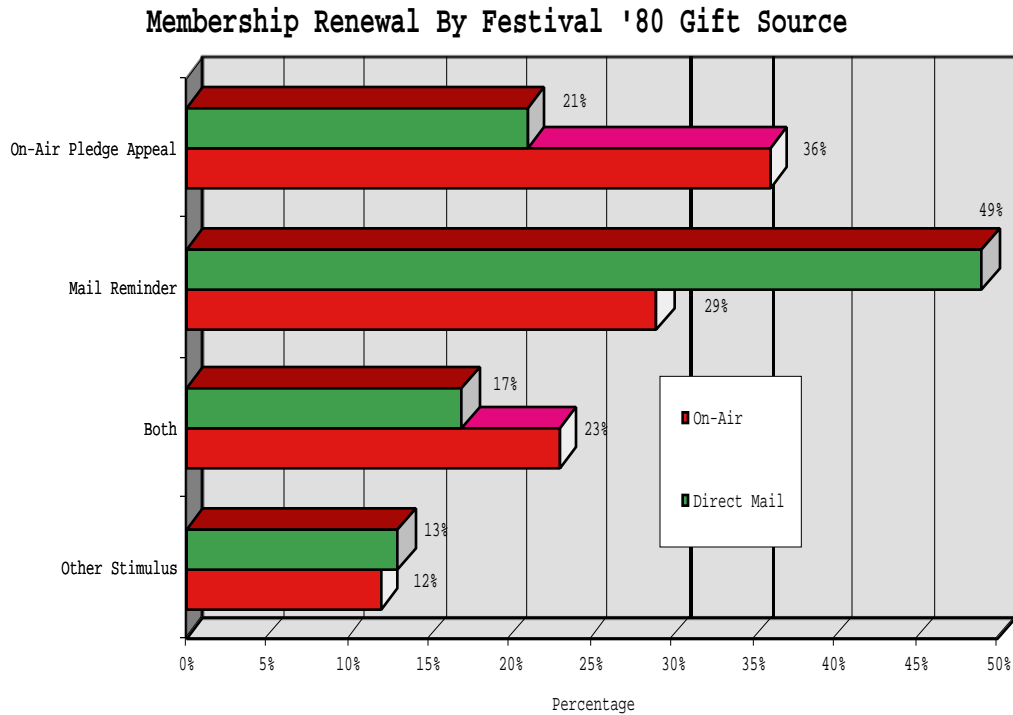
- I want to express my support of the channel's programming (98%)
- The channel needs financial support (95%)
- I watch public television and feel an obligation to support it (93%)

The longitudinal survey of on-air pledgers and direct mail contributors to Festival '80 confirmed the differences in members' motivation to renew based on the source of their original gift as shown below.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> 1984 Member / Nonrenewer Survey and 1990 Four-Market Membership Survey, PBS/SRI

<sup>27</sup> Longitudinal Study to Pledgers to Festival '80, PBS/SRI, 1980, 1981 and 1982



Several other findings of the 1980-1982 longitudinal study are notable:

- Renewal rates were substantially higher among persons who were already members at the time of their 1980 gift.
- Members who contributed via direct mail renewed at higher rates than those who joined in response to on-air appeals. Renewal rates of direct mail donors varied depending on the list from which a member was acquired with charge account and mail order lists producing higher rates. On average, first year renewal of direct mail acquired members is double the rate of those acquired from on-air drives.



- Renewals were higher among members who made lump-sum gifts as opposed to those fulfilling their gifts through installments.
- Renewals varied based on the program to which the viewer originally pledged. (e.g., 56% around science programs versus 38% around children's programs and 39% around the Grand Ole Opry).
- Renewal rates were lower in cable television households, especially in homes with pay services in addition to basic cable.

### ***[16] Members Received Benefits Beyond Programming***

The 1985 national telephone study revealed that donors (self-claimed as ever having made a financial donation to PTV) and past week viewers rated the same top three benefits of membership -- the program guide (8.4 on a 10-point scale), discounts on tickets to museums or other cultural organizations in the community (8.0), and announcements of upcoming special programs (5.9). So while members, and probably the public, generally want discounts, the single most important premium for public television remains a guide to its programs.<sup>28</sup>

Premiums or “thank you gifts” have long been associated with public television on-air membership drives. Their purpose is to motivate potential donors to give more -- to increase the amount of their contribution -- in order to receive a special premium of their choice.

When asked to rate the relative importance of premiums in making their decision to contribute, members invariably rate premiums low. However, when members are asked “if premiums influence others to

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<sup>28</sup> 1985 Public Television Survey, PBS/SRI, 1985

give," premiums climb in relative importance to about mid-scale. These findings may reflect the fact that individuals believe it is socially unacceptable to "give" in order to "get" and the relative difficulty members have in remembering or understanding exactly what motivated them to pledge at a precise moment in the past.

While everyone acknowledges that the premium rating (2.6 on a 10-point scale) understates the importance of premiums in securing and increasing on-air contributions, it is worth noting that on a relative basis, premiums were rated more important by lapsed members who had completed less education (high school or less) and were younger (18-34 years of age).<sup>29</sup>

There is some evidence that the transactional nature of these contributions tends to make renewal of the gift more difficult. And, with costs for these premiums and the associated costs of annual renewal climbing as a percentage of the initial contribution, special efforts are required to insure that the net present value of these gifts is as large as possible.

Recent on-air pledge experience tends to support the role of premiums in stimulating gifts -- or increasing the amount of individuals' gifts. In particular, the increase in program-related premiums (i.e., video-cassettes, books, audio cassettes, CD's, etc.) appears to have been effective. Today, many stations use program-related premiums and have long since abandoned the tote bags and mugs of long ago.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 1985 Public Television Survey, PBS/SRI, 1985

## **Limitations & Problems for On-Air Drives in the Future**

### ***Three Critical Factors***

Despite its tremendous initial success, public television's on-air membership drives' *ultimate* success will be limited by three factors: there are limits to the amount of on-air time that can be devoted to fundraising; the declining percentage of viewers who indicate a willingness to give -- but have never given, and; the failure to shift from "dollars pledged" to a "life-time value of acquired members" as the "success measure" of on-air drives.

The above factors do not imply the elimination of on-air membership drives on public television, because the drives are still an important part of stations' fundraising mix. The factors do highlight a need to re-think the "why" and the "how" of public television in an increasingly competitive television environment.

### ***[1] Limitations of Time Spent Fundraising***

On-air fundraising has reached a plateau. Viewed in total, new revenue has increased in many cases only as has the time spent to raise it.<sup>30</sup>

We've known for fifteen years that much of the increase in stations' on-air pledge dollars have come from two sources: a) more days and

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<sup>30</sup> Pledge Drive Management Information Systems (MIS), PBS/SRI, 1975 - 1989

minutes on the air soliciting contributions, and; b) inflation. And while inflation may be unlimited, time is a finite resource.

*Time available has been consumed ... both for more on-air drives and between programs.*

## **[2] Viewing Never-Donors Getting Scarce**

The number of potential NEW members is ultimately limited. We have already acquired many of our "most likely" donors. We are increasingly "preaching to the converted," and members' negative comments about pledge drives are up.<sup>31</sup>

A mass marketing medium like television was perfect in the early days, but today more targeted identification, cultivation, and solicitation techniques will be more effective in encouraging larger and more frequent contributions from past contributors. Where on-air drives depend on viewers to call, direct mail and telemarketing efforts can be designed to reach donors who are most likely to give the most and give most often.

## **[3] Lapsed Members Believe They Are Still Active**

When asked, "if you currently support an organization," there is always a tendency to say "yes," especially if you have ever done so in the past. More revealing than the overall responses given by lapsed members are the differences between them. For example, those who originally gave through direct mail are the most likely to claim that they are still current members.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Membership Research Studies, PBS / SRI, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1980, 1983 and 1990

<sup>32</sup> PBS Nonrenewal Study, PBS/SRI, Spring 1991

## ***Viewing By Non-Members Continued To Decline***

When on-air fundraising began, it was the natural way to reach viewers who were watching public television. As a result of its own success in acquiring new members with on-air membership drives, the number of viewers who had never been members of public television continued to decline.

But today, on-air fundraising is reaching an audience which, in many cases, is composed in significant numbers of viewers who are, were, or will never be members. While still the industry's most cost-effective medium for securing support, the number of past week viewers who might join but have yet to contribute is a relatively small portion of the total audience.<sup>33</sup>

The 1985 Study, a random-digit dialed national survey of attitudes toward public television, found that 38% of past week viewers claimed to have made a financial contribution to public television at some time. Because there is a "natural social pressure" to claim philanthropy, this figure may be taken to be a "cume" of individuals who have "ever given" to public television (not necessarily at the level of basic membership), rather than an actual measurement of current giving.<sup>34</sup>

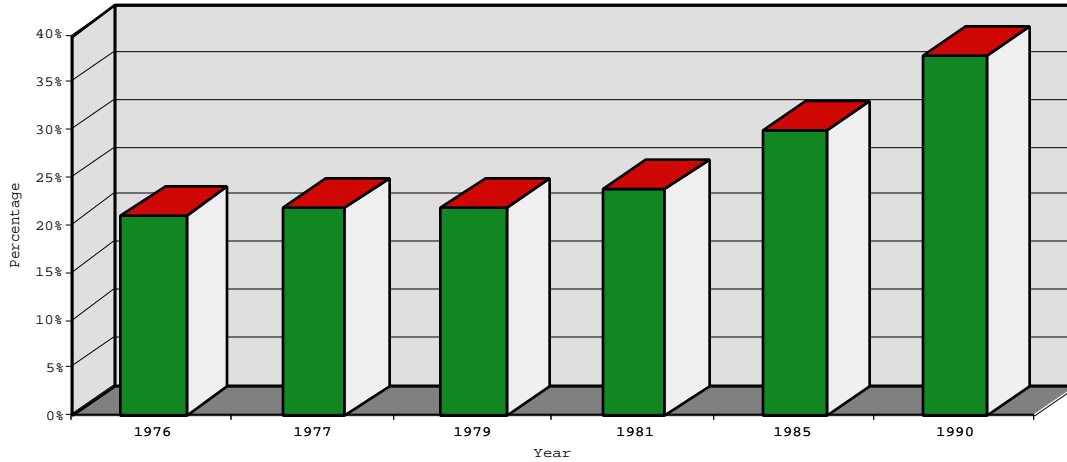
Perhaps even more importantly, the fact that the percentage of "ever" donors among the general population has increased reflects the industry's failure to renew the vast majority of its members on a short-term or long-term basis. Self-claimed "ever" donors have increased since 1976 as shown in the graph below.

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<sup>33</sup> PTV National Image Study, PBS/SRI, 1990

<sup>34</sup> Public Television Survey, PBS/SRI, 1985

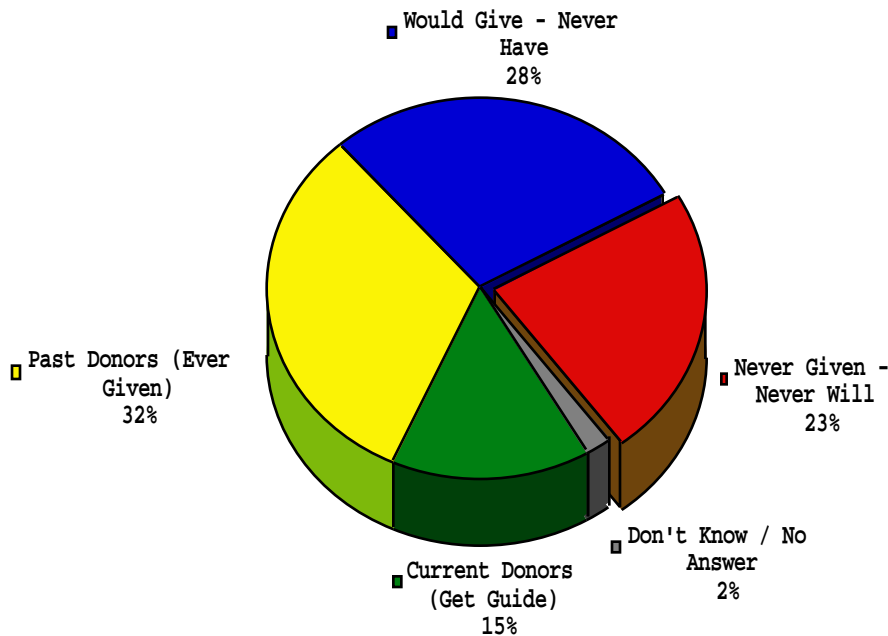
Self-Claimed "Ever Donors" To Public Television



To determine current donors, the self-claimed donors were asked if they were currently receiving a program guide. Some 30% indicated they were. This would equate to roughly 12% of past week viewers -- a figure that was plausible given stations' current member-to-viewer ratios. A chart illustrating the membership status of past week viewers is provided on the next page.

Perhaps more importantly, the percentage of "ever" donors among the general population has increased, reflecting the industry's failure to renew the vast majority of its members on a short-term or long-term basis. Here is how the self-claimed "ever" donors have increased since 1976.

## Membership Penetration of Past Week Public Television Viewers



While the percentage of "ever" donors and current members has increased over time, it is clear that 100% of the population will never support public television. This conclusion is supported by the 23% of past week viewers who indicated that they had "never given and never will" to public television. It is also reflected in responses to the 1990 national population study.<sup>35</sup> In that study, 23% of respondents indicated it would make almost no difference if there were no PTV.

### ***Increasing Concerns About On-Air Appeals***

It is worth noting that as the total number of members has increased, so has the time devoted to on-air fundraising.

During the period from 1976 to 1990 there has been a significant increase in the number of members who can cite something negative about on-air fundraising. Some portion of this increase can be attributed to the fact that today's members have seen many more on-air appeals and know them more intimately.

How does the public balance its favorable attitude toward this institution that provides programming it enjoys, with its concerns about frequent fundraising appeals? While the public's reaction to the trade-off is important, current and lapsed members' attitudes are critical to long-term success.<sup>36</sup>

### ***On-Air Drives Are Increasingly Offensive To Existing Members***

In addition to members who indicate the amount of on-air appeals are a reason for nonrenewal, the growth in concern about on-air appeals can be seen in the number of members who cite positive and negative aspects about on-air fundraising. Because those questions were first asked in 1976, there is a good timeline over which to observe trends.<sup>37</sup>

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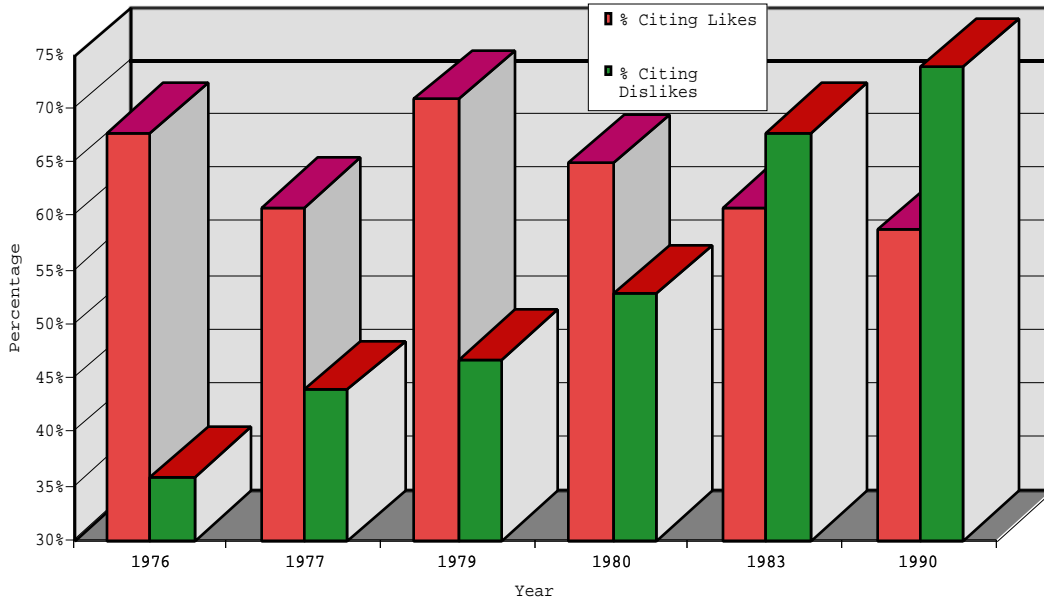
<sup>35</sup> PTV Image Study, PBS/SRI, 1990

<sup>36</sup> Four-Market Membership Survey, PBS/SRI, 1990

<sup>37</sup> Membership Research Studies, PBS / SRI, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1980, 1983 and 1990



### Increasingly Viewers Find Something to Dislike About On-Air Membership Drives



### ***What Do Members Watch?***

It is not surprising that members watch more public television than those who have never contributed. This finding has been confirmed in practically every study of members' viewing patterns since research began in 1975. As these studies were all based on respondents' recall of programs they had watched, no Nielsen viewing information on public television members was available until November 1987.<sup>38</sup>

Findings of the Nielsen 1987 Member Viewing Report included:

- In general, members watched television an average of 33 hours a week ... about 6 hours less than those in the general population sample.

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<sup>38</sup> A Study of Member Viewing Habits In Four Markets, PBS/Nielsen Media Research, November '87

- Roughly three-fourths of members tuned-in to public television during an average week as opposed to one-half of the general sample.
- Members were twice as likely to try public stations' prime time programming as the general sample (61% vs. 30%).
- Among households viewing public television, members spent one and one-half hours more watching PTV than did the general sample.
- Members spent less time with commercial stations, especially independents, than the general sample.
- Members particularly favored news and public affairs programs, whether PTV or commercial programs.

The Nielsen 1987 Viewing Study was the first of its kind and serves today as an important reminder that public television members watch much more than public television -- a trend that likely has increased as cable, satellite, and videocassettes have increased viewing options.

Even though PBS programs generally earned higher ratings among members, 22 of the 25 most popular shows among members -- those with the highest quarter hour ratings -- were commercial.

Members ranked Wall Street Week and Washington Week In Review as the most popular PBS programs. Among all sources of television programming, these two programs tied as the 18th most watched by public television members.

## ***On-Air Drives Are Also Less Popular With Viewers***

The largest increase in things pledgers and members cited they liked about membership drives was "premiums," although the numbers are small, increasing from 2% and 1% in 1976 and 1977 to 5% in 1990.

It is worth noting that "liked nothing" has increased from 22% in 1976 to 32% today. Another significant change was the decrease in number of respondents who cited they liked the "presentation," dropping from 24% in 1976 to 17% in 1990 and the "explanation of the need" which dropped from 32% in 1976 to 14% in 1990.

Since the late 1970s and early 1980s, the proportions of members citing "length" and "program interruptions" as something they "particularly dislike" about on-air appeals have increased substantially. Noting that the markets and populations surveyed varied over time, "particular dislikes" about the length of on-air appeals did not even appear until 1979.<sup>39</sup>

Across the years, studies have been conducted of both pledgers and members. In the 1979 survey "too long" was cited by 11% of pledgers. By 1990, 30% of public television members considered on-air breaks too long. Similarly, "program interruptions" were cited by 10% of pledgers as something they disliked about on-air fundraising in 1979. In 1990, 23% of members would make the same claim.

The proportion of lapsed members that named a recognizable public television program viewed in the past week (46%) in 1991 was lower than the proportions of lapsed and current members who did the same in previous studies.<sup>40</sup> In 1984, 55% of lapsed members named a

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., Membership Research Studies, PBS / SRI, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1980, 1983 and 1990

<sup>40</sup> PBS Nonrenewal Study, PBS/SRI, Spring 1991

program that they had viewed in the past week.<sup>41</sup> And, throughout the 1980s and in 1990, at least 56% of current members did the same.

The proportion of lapsed members that consider public television to be more appealing than one year ago has decreased since 1984. When asked if PBS programming was as/more/less appealing than one year ago, the 1991 study found fewer lapsed members citing the programming was "more appealing." Only 16% of lapsed members said the programming was "more appealing" in 1991 as opposed to 25% in 1984. The 1991 study found that 8% of lapsed members found it less appealing and 10% had no opinion concerning the appeal of public television programming.

### ***“Total Dollars Pledged” Is An Outdated Success Measure***

There is an old adage -- “What Gets Measured, Gets Done.” The implication is that having told people how their success will be measured, they will do whatever possible to incrementally improve their performance.

This has certainly been the case with public television’s on-air membership drives. When they began, the easiest handle of comparison between this pledge drive and previous drives or the drives of other stations’ was “Total Dollars Pledged.”

Yet, aside from its early success in strengthening on-air drives, the use of “total dollars pledged” has become increasingly dated and dysfunctional.

For example, the measure does not take into account the number or dollar amount of pledges that are actually fulfilled. It does not reflect the impact of installment pledges that may, in fact, never be totally collected. “Total dollars pledged” is devoid of both the costs associated with

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<sup>41</sup> Member / Nonrenewer Survey, PBS/SRI, 1984

acquiring a pledge and the long-term value of on-air acquired pledges to the station.

### ***Once Used To Upgrade Giving, Premiums Are Now the Basis Of Less Financially Attractive On-Air Transactions***

As program related premiums (including books, audiocassettes and videotapes) have become stations' most popular on-air premiums, "total dollars pledged" has increased dramatically -- but so have the costs of premiums overall and as a percentage of average pledge.

*Once low repeat giving was a function of a lack of sophisticated renewal techniques. Today the problem is renewing less-loyal, transactional donors who "buy" premiums.*

With the most sophisticated stations, the overall membership strategy is now driven by the average "life time value" of a membership. Using "total dollars pledged" or even "net revenue" as a success measure of on-air drives results in a different strategy.

There is little doubt that goals based on "total dollars pledged" are resulting in narrower margins between fulfilled pledges and their associated costs. This will ultimately place limits on the success of on-air membership drives.

### ***Lack Of "True Accounting" Of On-Air Drives***

When you consider that cost accounting rarely captures the full expense of on-air fundraising, it is easy to understand why public television has failed to allocate resources to other, more targeted donor cultivation and solicitation techniques. When resources are finally shifted, the seriousness of the industry's intentions to change the expectations of on-air

drives — to reflect on-air's actual role in the identification, cultivation, and solicitation of public television members who give for their lifetime ... and beyond.

### ***Acquired Members Are Harder And Harder To Keep***

Increasing the overall number of public television members requires both the acquisition of new members and the renewal of current contributors. Current acquisition efforts appear stretched simply to replace those who fail to renew.

If the "bad news" is that new members are difficult to retain, the "good news" is that once renewed they become ever more loyal. The 1993 study of retained members to eight public television stations found just 13% of retained members had joined during the previous two years -- 55% of retained members had contributed for a minimum of five or six years. This was reflected in retained members' strong expression of their intent to renew (78% definite, 10% probable).<sup>42</sup>

First year renewal of members, especially those acquired on-air, is low, in some cases half the rate of direct mail acquired members. As almost all renewal efforts are conducted through the mail and telephone, it is a challenge to match the emotional power of television that secured the original gift. A variety of techniques may be used to seek a member's renewal, but they may ultimately only be persuaded by a medium that is at least as powerful as that which secured their original commitment.

One of the most important strategies for public television is to find ways to increase both contact with and institutional loyalty among newly acquired members. From the moment they pledge until their first renewal notice nine or ten months later, new donors must be convinced that public television is worthy of their continued support.

Another difficulty in securing renewals is a "problem of success." As membership penetration has increased, most of those "most likely" to donate have already contributed and many are current members. In contrast, those "newcomers" are relatively uncommitted to public television as an institution.

Of lapsed members who said they were not planning to renew in the 1991 study, 57% said the decision was based on personal financial circumstances. When they were asked for other reasons beyond financial ("finances are a problem for many people") 81% reaffirmed that personal finances were the only reason they intended not to renew.<sup>43</sup>

Financial concerns, especially among older, loyal donors needs to reopen a debate within the public TV industry about basic membership levels. We must balance our desire to secure the maximum possible annual support from the best donors with the ability to acquire and upgrade those who no longer give on an annual basis and those few who will join who have never given before.

### ***Reasons for Nonrenewal***

The 1991 PBS Nonrenewal Study reaffirmed the major reasons why members fail to renew that were identified in the 1982 and 1984 studies.<sup>44</sup> The four most highly rated reasons that members offered for failure to renew were:

- Lessened viewing of public television;
- Competing causes;

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<sup>42</sup> Survey of Retained Members of Public Television, PBS/Lauer Lalley & Associates in cooperation with Dodd Smith Dann, July 1993

<sup>43</sup> PBS Nonrenewal Study, PBS/SRI, Spring 1991

<sup>44</sup> PBS Nonrenewal Study, PBS/SRI, Spring 1991

- The fact that a member has not been moved by an appeal for support, and;
- An objection to on-air fundraising appeals.

Other notable reasons, although less highly rated than those above, included the fact that viewers are not sure PTV needs the funds and have difficulty seeing a connection between their individual contributions and their station's programming and other services.

Roughly 10% of nonrenewing members cease support of their PTV station because of death or relocation outside the station's viewing area. Roughly one-third of members who plan not to renew in 1991 could not identify a reason for their decision.



## **What Changes Will Lead To The Greatest Improvements In On-Air Fundraising?**

### **Lessons To Be Learned From The Research:**

Public television is unique among practically all nonprofits in its access to the persuasive power of the television medium. We now know what factors helped on-air membership drives to succeed and the limitations they now face in a changing television environment. Given what we know, how can public television use its own medium to increase the funds available for stations to provide important and valued services to their respective communities?

There are three major recommendations for the future that can be drawn from this paper, the research it contains, and the experiences of the author in helping PBS stations to strengthen their on-air membership campaigns. The recommendations deal with the Motive, the Measure, and the Message of on-air drives.

#### ***[1] The Best Motive Is Active Membership***

When they began, the motive behind public television on-air membership drives was to acquire new members and to secure from them the highest possible average gift. The latter was encouraged by offering viewers a “thank you gift” for increasing their contribution beyond what they otherwise might have given. Members rated program guides as the most important benefit, putting the role of premiums in perspective behind the programming and program information supplied by the station. As membership penetration increased, the use of program-related premiums increased dramatically as a way of securing pledges.

We know that program-related books and videotapes are popular. There are many occasions when almost half of the New York Times Top Ten best selling non-fiction books are associated with a public television program. Program-related books and videotapes are also now sold at the conclusion of most programs. So there could be little doubt that emotional appeals combined with increased air time provided during an on-air drive would increase the number of viewers who would call to receive one of these premiums.

The shift in motive, from acquiring members to selling merchandise in support of public television, occurred so slowly over the decade of the 1990's that some have not yet admitted the change. The change has made a significant impact on the costs associated with on-air drives (e.g., the upfront cost of the premium) and the long-term return to the station as will be seen in the next section.

We know television can be used to sell -- there is an entire industry based on it. We know public television can be used effectively to sell program-related materials, including books and videotapes; it's done after almost every program. This being the case, we must determine if the goal of on-air pledge drives is simply to sell more program-related product at margins that justify the increased air time, staff, and other resources the drives consume. Or, if the goal of on-air drives is to encourage those who have not made a gift within the past twelve months to join and once again become an active member?

Perhaps more difficult to document, the heavy use of program-related premiums, especially at lower donation levels, had two other significant impacts:

First, the success from premium-driven transactional pledges failed to limit the amount of time dedicated to on-air pledge drives -- a source of increasingly negative comments from existing members.

Second, the broadcast nature of television had the impact of showing traditional members, those who had always renewed through direct mail, that pledging was a better way to renew -- as you received something in return for your donation. It is quite possible that the heavy use of premiums has had a negative impact on renewal and additional giving with both transactional (those giving to receive a premium) and traditional donors.

The very best motive for on-air drives is members -- to reacquaint lapsed members in such a manner that they will renew and make additional gifts to direct mail appeals. If public television can recapture the two of three people who were once members but are now not active, membership would triple.

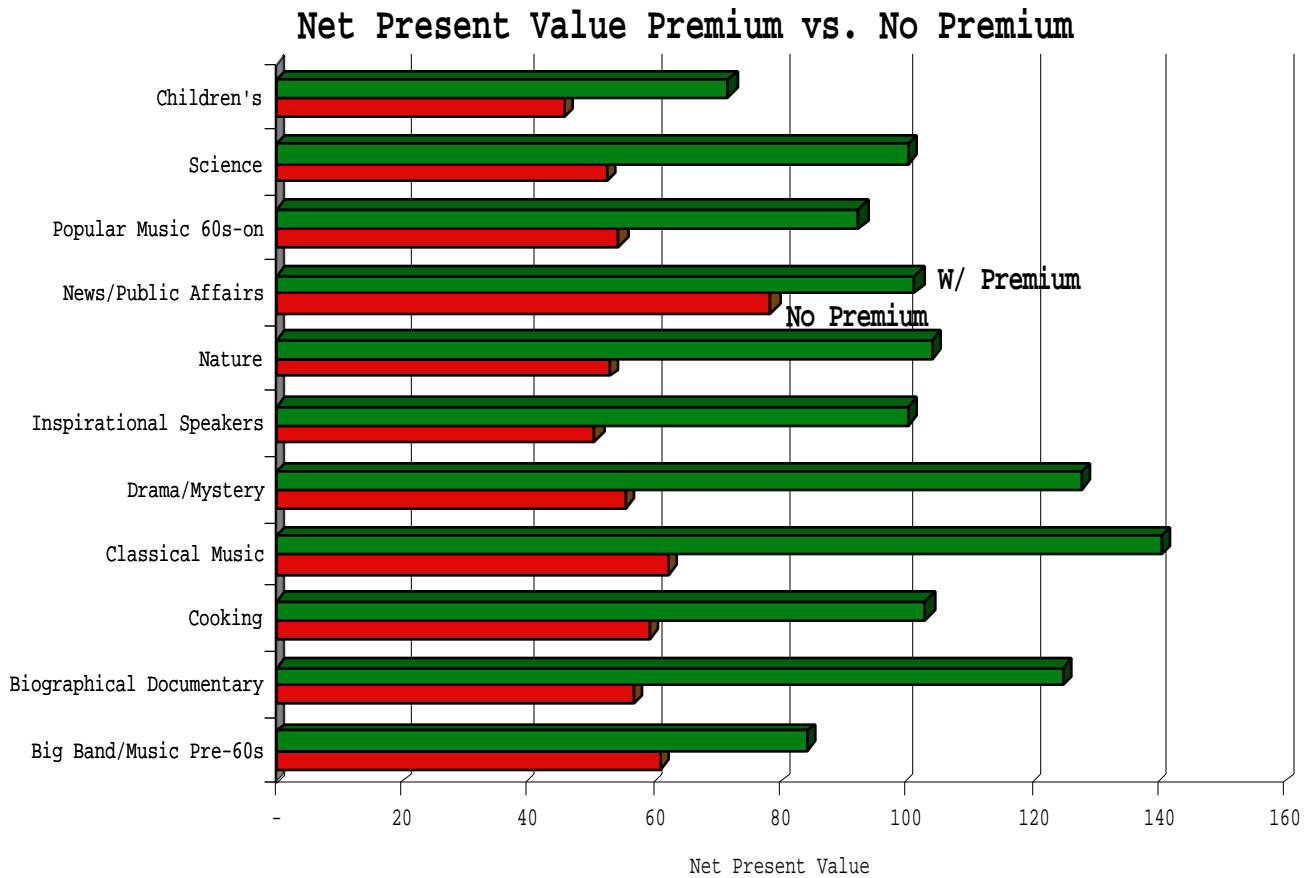
### ***[2] The Best Measure is "Average Lifetime Value"***

Admitted or not, most on-air pledge drives' success continues to be measured by "Total dollars Pledged." This "success measure" was effective when membership penetration of viewers and competition for their viewing time was limited. Today, on-air drives must support a station's overall membership activities ... especially retention, renewal, and additional gifts. And today's best "success measure" for evaluating an on-air drive is the "Net Present Value" of the acquired "new" members' contributions over the lifetime of their membership.

This discounted cash flow method of evaluating on-air drives reveals several important factors.<sup>45</sup> For example, those individuals who give to receive a premium will provide substantial upfront cash flow -- however, their support in subsequent years is minimal.

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<sup>45</sup> Lifetime Value of A Member Report, PBS, 1993



While some would interpret the above graph as justification for a strategy that stimulates as many premium-related contributions as possible, the fact remains that this approach is not equally effective with all program types.<sup>46</sup> Perhaps as important, it has the unquantified but negative impact of raising traditional members' expectations that they should receive something tangible in return for their support of public television.

Program-related premiums should be used to support on-air membership acquisition efforts to the extent they dramatically increase the average gift well beyond the incremental cost of fulfilling the premium.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., Lifetime Value of A Member Report, PBS, July 1993

Renewal of on-air acquired members demands special treatment to reinforce any philanthropic motivations that existed when they pledged. For example, if a station's basic membership is \$40, then a \$60 membership should be associated only with those program-related premiums whose cost is low enough to justify the \$20 increased pledge. In this case, a \$5 fulfilled premium represents 25% of the increased gift.

Unfortunately we can not measure the "Net Present Value" of an unknown future cash flow. But, based on an evaluation of existing members, we can predict the value of members acquired or reacquired during on-air drives.

"Net Present Value" or "Lifetime Value of a Member" as a measure of an on-air drive's success will focus everyone involved in an on-air drives':

- Need to produce substantial average gifts
- Secure gifts at the lowest possible cost
- Obtain gifts from members who will give the most and over the longest time period.

### ***[3] The Best Message Is "Active Members Matter"***

Over time, reflecting the migration of the motive for doing on-air drives and consistent with its measure of success being "total dollars pledged," the overriding message has shifted from "become a member" to "call now and get this program-related premium." This is not to say that most stations do not include some "mission related" material in their on-air appeals -- they do. But while this was once the primary focus and therefore the motivation for individuals to join and continuing to support public television, today's message has become almost universally transactional.

Who are the most likely to become members of the station? Those who have given in the past. Those viewers who have never given are unlikely to pledge ... and even if they can be convinced to buy a program-related product they are so difficult to renew that they negatively impact the entire membership program.

While not designed as a theme line, "Active Members Matter" is a reflection of the fact that members and membership are essential to public television. Active members are the motive for having on-air drives. The message must reinforce current members' beliefs that there is an important reason to give other than to get a gift.

In addition, the message is supportive of how we measure on-air membership drives' success, the "Net Present Value" of members' contributions; dollars pledged by members minus the cost of fulfilled premiums and benefits plus the predicted discounted present value of net revenue from members' renewal and additional gifts.

## **Conclusion**

Public television, which succeeded in generating substantial revenues through on-air pledge drives in the period between 1975 and 1990, has now come to a point at which change is essential for future success; this paper has suggested several changes and examined the research which points toward the possibilities of on-air membership pledge drives in the future.

## **Questions Regarding The Future of On-Air Fundraising**

- Can the efficiency of on-air fundraising be improved through special programs that produce higher than average dollar per minute (and dollar per broadcast minute) pledging activity? Can these specials be produced on a predictable basis?
- Recognizing that time is a limited resource, will future strategies to increase income involve the use of more or less on-air fundraising time or different uses of that time to secure members?
- Is it more productive to target those who have never given but indicate they are willing, or to target those who were once members but have lapsed?
- If our "best membership prospects" now believe they are members, how do we best reinstate them as members and/or otherwise increase the frequency of their giving?
- Does the nature of the television medium establish a "relative limit" on the average gift received; will typical prospective members only give so much in a phone call motivated by a televised on-air appeal for support?
- What is an appropriate balance between a high average gift and a larger number of contributors being brought onto stations' membership rolls?
- What are the implications of our increased membership penetration and the emotional power of television on the objectives, target, and message of public television's on-air appeals?
- How are "guilt" and/or "obligation" best communicated in on-air appeals?
- How might changes in the PBS program schedule affect viewer attitudes and member satisfaction?
- How might changes in the loyalty of viewers and members be reflected in the results of on-air fundraising? In membership?

**Attitude, Opinion, and Behavior  
Research Relating  
to  
Public Broadcasting Membership**

<u>Title</u>	<u>Description</u>
<u>Survey of Retained Members</u>	A PBS survey, conducted by Lauer, Lalley & Associates in cooperation with Dodd-Smith-Dann, in July 1993. A randomly drawn sample was selected from the files of eight markets (Boston, New York, Georgia, Dallas, Cleveland, St. Paul, Los Angeles, and Seattle). A total of 803 interviews were completed with retained members (members who had renewed at least once).
<u>PBS Nonrenewal Study, Spring 1991</u>	A PBS survey, conducted by Statistical Research Incorporated (SRI), Westfield, NJ, of lapsed members' perceptions of public television, viewing, reasons for nonrenewal, motivations for renewal, and current issues related to cable television. The study was conducted in four markets (Boston, Dallas, Dayton, and San Diego) with approximately 1,000 lapsed members of the participating stations.
<u>1990 PTV National Image Survey</u>	A PBS national survey, conducted by SRI on usage of and attitudes toward public television, awareness of promotional efforts, reactions to on-air fundraising, and perceptions of public television, particularly in relation to selected cable channels and the commercial networks. Included approximately 1,000 random-digit dial interviews with adults, age 18 and over, randomly selected from among adults within the household.
<u>1990 PTV Member Survey</u>	A PBS survey, conducted by SRI, of members' perceptions of public television, viewing, reactions to on-air fundraising, factors associated with renewal and nonrenewal of membership, and current issues raised by loss of funding and the growth of cable television. The study was conducted in four markets (Boston, Tampa, Phoenix, and Dallas) with approximately 1,000 current members of the participating stations.



### A Study of Member Viewing Habits In Four Markets

A PBS study, conducted by Nielsen Media Research, to determine the viewing habits of public television members in four markets (Pittsburgh, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Phoenix, and Portland). The sample consisted of 1,811 diaries returned by current public television members in the four markets (450 per market) and 3,486 diaries returned by the "public" sample (870 per market).

### 1987 PTV Image Survey

A PBS survey, conducted by SRI, to determine the public's perception of public television, particularly in relation to selected cable channels. Approximately 800 interviews were completed, equally divided among three market areas. Respondents were randomly selected from adults, age 18 or over, in cable households.

### 1985 Public Television Survey

A PBS national survey, conducted by SRI, on usage of and attitudes toward public television, awareness of promotional efforts, reactions to on-air fundraising, and interrelationships between PTV and cable television and VCR's. Included approximately 1,000 random-digit dial interviews with adults, age 18 or over, randomly selected among adults within the household.

### 1985 Member Match Follow-Up

A PBS survey, conducted by SRI, of persons who, in May 1985, participated in WETA's "Make A Match" campaign, to gain insight into the motivation to participate in this matching gift program.

### "SPACEFLIGHT" Pledge Follow-Up

A PBS survey, conducted by SRI, of persons who, in May 1985, pledged during, or following, "SPACEFLIGHT."

### "NOVA" Nature/Science Preview

A PBS study, conducted by SRI, consisting of in-depth interviews with persons who pledged during a Festival 1985 PBS/SIP experiment of "seamless pledging" which followed a PBS "NOVA SPECIAL." The purpose was to determine pledge motivation and, specifically, to pinpoint precisely what triggered each pledge.

### 1984 Member/Nonrenewer Survey

A PBS survey, conducted by SRI, designed to study various aspects of the membership renewal process, with a goal of learning more about reasons for renewal, reactions to possible benefits of PTV membership, and the impact of cable television. The study was conducted in four markets with approximately 1,000 current and lapsed members of the participating stations.

### A 1982 Follow-Up Survey of Contributors to PTV Stations During Festival '80

A PBS survey, conducted by SRI, on perceptions of public television, viewing, reactions to on-air pledging, factors associated with renewal and nonrenewal of membership, and current issues raised by loss of funding and by the growth of cable television. Included interviews with 2,800 on-air and direct mail donors to nine

stations, some of whom were previously interviewed in 1980 and 1981. Merged data from three surveys and information from stations. The final survey of three surveys which constitute the Longitudinal Study of Public Television Contributors.

### A 1981 Resurvey of Contributors to PTV Stations During Festival '80

A PBS survey, conducted by SRI, on perceptions of public television viewing, reactions, and factors associated with renewal and nonrenewal of membership. Included interviews with approximately 1550 fulfilled on-air pledgers to nine stations and 775 direct mail donors, all of whom had been interviewed in 1980. Merged data from both surveys as well as information from the stations. The second survey of three that would constitute the Longitudinal Study of Public Television Contributors.

### A Study of Contributors to PTV Stations During Festival '80

A PBS survey, conducted by SRI, on involvement with public television, viewing patterns, motivations for contributing, and reactions to on-air or direct mail appeals during Festival '80, within nine stations. Included interviews with approximately 3,050 on-air pledgers and 2,000 direct mail donors. Merged interview data with information from the stations on membership history, the break during which the pledged was received or the source of the direct mail list. The first of a series of three surveys that would constitute the Longitudinal Study of Public Television Contributors.

### A Study of Persons Who Pledged to PTV Stations During Festival '79

A PBS survey, conducted by SRI, on involvement with public television, viewing patterns, motivations for pledging, and reactions to on-air pledging among persons who pledged to 15 stations during Festival '79. The markets surveyed were Boston and 14 additional markets throughout the United States, treated in combination. Included approximately 350 interviews in Boston and 500 in the combined markets, with pledgers sampled from among all persons who called in a pledge to the stations.

### PBS "Minute By Minute" Festival '79 Study

A PBS study, conducted in cooperation with WNET / Thirteen, to explore the relationship between audience size, the content of the pledge message, and the volume and size of contributions received on a minute-by-minute basis. Study included each of WNET's breaks during one evening of the station's Festival '79 on-air membership drive.

**Public Television/Radio Survey,  
January 1979: Report #3**

A CPB national survey, conducted by SRI, of public television and radio awareness and viewing/listening and reactions to on-air fundraising. Included approximately 1,000 random-digit dial interviews with adults, age 18 or over, randomly selected among adults within the household.

**A Post Festival '78 Survey of  
Members of Four PTV Stations**

A PBS survey, conducted by SRI, on members' perception and recall of content of on-air membership breaks, reaction to on-air fundraising and the PBS marathon, and sources of program information. Included approximately 250 interviews with members of each of four PTV stations: KCET/Los Angeles, KERA/Dallas, WNET/New York, and WTTW/Chicago.

**Public Television/Radio Survey,  
January 1978: Report #3**

A CPB national survey, conducted by SRI, of public radio awareness and listening and reactions to on-air fundraising on public radio and television. Included approximately 1,000 random-digit dial interviews with adults, age 18 or over, randomly selected among adults within the household.

**A Study of Members and of Persons  
Who Pledged to PTV Stations  
During Festival '77**

A PBS survey, conducted by SRI, on involvement with public television, viewing patterns, motivations for pledging and membership, and reactions to on-air pledging among members of 14 PTV stations and persons who pledged to 15 stations during Festival '77. The markets surveyed were Boston (pledgers only) and 14 additional markets throughout the United States, treated in combination. Included approximately 400 pledgers in Boston, 500 pledgers and 700 members in the combined markets, sampled, respectively, from among all pledges who called in a pledge to the channel or all current members of the station.

**A Resurvey of Persons Who Pledged  
to PTV Stations During Festival '76**

A 1977 PBS survey, conducted by SRI, on perceptions of public television, viewing, reactions to on-air pledging, and factors associated with renewal and nonrenewal of membership. Included approximately 225 interviews in Boston and 350 in 15 combined markets with Festival '76 pledgers who had been interviewed in 1976. Merged interview data from both surveys as well as pledge fulfillment and renewal information from stations.

**Public Television/Radio Survey,  
January 1977: Report #2**

A CPB national survey, conducted by SRI, of public radio awareness and listening and reactions to on-air fundraising on public radio and television. Included approximately 1,000 random-digit dial interviews with adults, age 18 or over, randomly selected among adults within the household.

**A 1977 Resurvey of Persons Who Pledged to PTV Stations During Festival '75**

A PBS survey, conducted by SRI, on perceptions of public television, viewing, reactions to on-air pledging, and factors associated with renewal and nonrenewal of membership. Included approximately 1,050 interviews with Festival '75 pledgers who had been interviewed in 1975 in Boston, Nashville, and Seattle. Merged interview data from both surveys, as well as pledge fulfillment and renewal information from the stations.

**A Study of Persons Who Pledged to PTV Stations During Festival '76**

A CPB survey, conducted in 1976 by SRI, on involvement with public television, viewing patterns, motivation for pledging, and reaction to on-air pledging among people who pledged to 16 PTV stations during Festival '76. The markets surveyed were Boston and 15 additional markets, throughout the United States, treated in combination. Included approximately 325 interviews in Boston and 500 in the combined markets, with pledgers sampled from among all persons who called in a pledge to the channel.

**Public Television/Radio Survey, January 1976: Report #2**

A CPB national survey, conducted in 1976 by SRI, of public radio awareness and listening and reactions to on-air fundraising on public radio and television. Included approximately 1,000 random-digit dial interviews with adults, age 18 or over, randomly selected among adults within the household.

**A Survey of Persons Who Pledged to PTV Stations During Festival '75**

A CPB survey, conducted in 1975 by SRI, on involvement with public television, viewing patterns, motivation for pledging, and reaction to on-air pledging among people who pledged to three PTV stations during Festival '75. The markets surveyed were Boston, Nashville, and Seattle. Included, in each market, approximately 500 interviews with pledgers sampled from among all persons who called in a pledge to the station.