Diversifying the audience for PUBLIC RADIO
Insights from NPR’s Black & Latinx Online Community
April 8, 2021
What we needed to learn:

NPR commissioned this research to help gain an in-depth understanding on perceptions, barriers, and opportunities around NPR programming and content among Black and Latinx audiences.

The learnings translate well for local public radio (and TV) stations.
What we did:

ONLINE INSIGHTS COMMUNITY
Sept. 21 TO Nov. 22, 2020

176 Black & Latinx news consumers who are not regular users of NPR
95 Black, 73 bicultural/acculturated Latinx, 8 Afro-Latinx

Ages 25-45
NPR non-rejectors
40% hardly ever use; 60% never use
WHAT WE LEARNED

- Refinements
  - Overall Feedback
- Partnerships
- Social & Marketing
- New Products/Content

- Talent
- Content
- Programming
- Platform
It’s not only about diversifying. It’s about being authentic and inclusive.

Talent should...
» Use approachable, accessible language
» Pay attention to tone
» Be themselves

You should...
» Normalize Black/Latinx inflection
» Put multicultural talent in the public eye
» Hire more young and also multicultural talent

Become a more diverse workforce at all levels of the organization
By me.

POC POV ON ALL STORIES

- Intersectional coverage
- POC journalists/experts

For me.

UNDERSTAND THE INTENDED AUDIENCE

- Assumptions about audience knowledge
- Ex: Latinx voting, police brutality

About me.

TELL THE RIGHT STORIES

- Celebrate, educate, empower
- Balance negative and positive
- Triggering themes
The work of covering racial and social justice issues has only just begun.

Continuous coverage
All communities

Needs to be everywhere
Highlight intersectionality

“I think race-related topics should be told in the media to educate people on racism. Not talking about it would be wrong. Don’t tip toe around the race-related issues or pretend racism doesn’t exist. Talk about it.” – Black Respondent

“I think they should tell the truth. I know this was a big year for social justice, particularly for Black people and I’m glad that White people are feeling the responsibility to also speak out against these injustices. I hope they support Latinos with the same intensity in the future.” – Latinx Respondent
The fragmentation of the media ecosystem is a major roadblock to discovery.
Public radio cannot rely on buzz.

A REAL MARKETING STRATEGY IS NEEDED
The marketing strategy for public radio needs to reinforce the core value it delivers to an audience who is largely unfamiliar.

Radio by, for, and about all of us

*Truly* “fair and balanced”

Public, not government
It’s by and for the community.

Brand-building of talent and programs representing and reflecting the diversity of the communities you serve.
MARKETING

Leverage local influencers for...

- Promotion of content
- Shifting brand perception
- Generating buzz
- Generating support

50 BLACK INSTAGRAM
Influencers to follow right now!

HOROWITZ
Become synergistic with the local diverse community

PUBLIC MEDIA
Length, platform, and format all need to be considered.

- Snackable yet thorough
- Keep longer content concise
- Understand platform usage

Video content is critical

It is the preferred format for news—especially for young people.
“[NPR One App] I did not like that I am unable to filter because I have to read through all the names to see if there’s something that interests me.” – Latinx Respondent

“[NPR Website] I thought the structure of the website was effective, though it doesn't have much pizzazz to it. It seems a bit bare bones, which works but isn't anything special. It’s enough to get you through the site, but there isn’t much flair.” – Black Respondent
...Where public radio can be its best self.

- Each platform has its own “raison d’etre”
- It’s a synergistic relationship with linear/digital content
- Hyper-local opportunities to engage
- The more snackable, the better
New products/content:

LEAN INTO VIDEO

HYPER-LOCAL

SOCIAL + DIGITAL CONTENT
Last thoughts: To diversify the public radio audience, we must actively engage with diverse audiences where they are.

Your talent (journalists, reporters, experts, etc.) needs to authentically reflect (look like and sound like) the local audience it serves.

Offer intersectional content that celebrates, educates, and empowers its audience.

Must transition to being platform and format agnostic; while recognizing the power and importance of digital.

A transition towards video is critical.

Can’t bet on organic marketing. Formal partnership, marketing, PR and distribution on strategies are what will move the needle.
Thank you.