

# High on good radio, one local program at a time

By Jim Russell, *The Program Doctor*

## It is an incredible high to visit public radio stations.

The living and breathing mission of public radio is rich oxygen. Mix it with the talent of the radio staff and strategic thinking about audience – and you have an incredibly powerful solution. There's no mystery why public radio has become the huge success it is.

But, the challenges are large, too, and the audience has upped the ante. Listeners made it clear in the [Sense of Place](#) research: Local programming must be as good as national programming to attract and hold its audience. As one of the inventors of Core Values, I know that there's no room for "second rate" quality.

When managers or producers ask me to work with them to develop or re-invent a local program with national production values and quality, we start with a **Program Intensive** – a one and a half day workshop designed to zero in on exactly what that program will be and why.

*"We produce a daily one-hour news magazine program and see it as the flagship of our local production. We were pleased that with Jim Russell's help, we were able to look at the program in new ways and provide a structure that has already made a huge improvement in the way the program sounds."*

Dave Edwards  
WUWM Milwaukee

We tackle the big picture and nitty-gritty questions. Managers & staff learn how to:



- Think "outside the box" to provide a service their audience wants.
- Create programming strategies and standards based on the proven track record of national shows.
- Create a program sound as great as successful national programs.

- Meet the audience's quality expectations.
- Use tight budgets and resources.



You've got to ask the right questions to achieve the right answer in your quest for better local programming.

We give stations the same tools national programs use in the drive to make excellent radio. These first steps are critical to making a quality radio program:

- **Decide in detail you want to accomplish and why.**
- **Define success.**
- **Embrace change.**
- **Create a consensus.**

The best thing an outsider can offer you is the "big picture" – the ability to see yourself from miles out. And thereby, help you hold yourself accountable to deliver the vision you and your staff articulated.

*Jim Russell has been a local news director, an NPR reporter and producer, a war correspondent in Vietnam. He was a member of the team that invented All Things Considered, and he conceived PBS's Newton's Apple and the national public radio hits Marketplace, Weekend America and The World. Jim has worked for all three public radio networks and for public television and has won every major award in broadcasting.*

### Program Intensive Deliverables

- **Clear Goals**
- **Program Development Work Plan**
- **Imaginative Tools For Production Staff**
- **Consensus**
- **Success Measurements;**
- **Accountability Model**

Jim works with stations large and small.  
Find out more:

**Jim Russell**

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