

# ST. LOUIS BEACON

location: St. Louis, MO

web: <http://www.stlbeacon.org>

twitter: @stlbeacon

## **PARTICIPANTS AT MONDAY'S MEETING**

Margaret Wolf Freivogel, Editor

Nicole Hollway, General Manager

## **PART 1: OVERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### **1. What is the purpose and focus of your organization?**

The St. Louis Beacon provides news that matters to people in the St. Louis region as well as a place to thoughtfully discuss it. We are building a sustainable engine of regional information and engagement that informs citizens to action through journalism, technology, live events and partnerships.

### **2. How are you different from "traditional" media online?**

We are not just online media. We aim to meet people where they are with our content - online, in person, via partnerships, using advanced technology.

### **3. What is your financial sustainability plan?**

We are currently seeking a capital investment of \$5 million over 4 years which will enable us in year 5 to be self sustaining with projected income breakdown as follows: 58% ad/sponsorship; 28% membership (small donors); 10% foundation support; 3% events; 1% other products

### **4. What are your most reliable sources of revenue?**

Currently, large donors.

### **5. What are two technological innovations - or services made possible by recent technological innovation - that you've introduced in the delivery of news and information to your readers?**

Because of our resource limitations, we've been unable to implement any of the innovations we see as opportunities. However, technology as it supports delivery, targeting, info-gathering and iterative processes (editorial, donor-related, sponsorship/ad related) is at the center of our overall strategy. Ad-network/behavioral tracking technology has exciting implications for the delivery of reported content, the editorial process and building donor/sponsor relationships. Geo-location also offers opportunities to integrate quality reported content into daily activities.

### **6. How effective are you in getting your content to people?**

Given our current structure, we consider ourselves successful. In the past year our content has been delivered online, in print, as the audio tour to localize a traveling museum exhibit, as the base for an ongoing informal community discussion series, as the local component for a commercial TV station's Black History Month tributes, and more.

### **7. How do you measure your success?**

Currently we use basic web stats to measure comparative growth. Attendance at events and fundraisers. Word of mouth from community stake-holders. Recognition by local and national organizations.

### **8. What do you hope to learn or get out of the Austin meeting?**

Further understand and demonstrate the Beacon's place on the spectrum of regional news initiatives

## **PART 2: DETAILS ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION**

### **1. What is your technology platform?**

A very poorly constructed Joomla site initially implemented by a volunteer. We also use Salesforce, VerticalResponse and the Public Insight Network. We invested in a needs analysis for a next gen site and planned for a Drupal core with majority custom overlay. We're only using Salesforce at about 5%. It would remain and be integrated and leveraged. We foresee a number of cloud or service-based (ominture) technologies integrated into our ultimate site.

### **2. Do you share technology platforms and costs with other organizations?**

No

### **3. How many full-time journalists (journalists or editors) do you have?**

Twelve

### **4. How many part-time journalists or freelancers do you retain?**

2 part-time and a pool of 100 freelancers

### **5. What is the percentage breakdown of revenue by sources?**

small donors 6% (<1500)

large donors 69%

Ads & Sponsorships 1%

Foundations 15%

Events 10%

### **6. Without foundation support, what would your organization look like?**

Today, we would supplement with large donors. Over time, see answer to #3 above, likely shifting the 10% to events, sponsorships and other products.