

VOICES OF SAN DIEGO

location: San Diego, CA

founded: 2005

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

twitter: @voiceofsandiego

PARTICIPANTS AT MONDAY'S MEETING

Andrew Donohue, Editor

Scott Lewis, CEO

Buzz Woolley, Chairman of the Board

PART 1: OVERVIEW QUESTIONS

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

To consistently deliver ground-breaking investigative journalism for the San Diego region. To increase civic participation by giving residents the knowledge and in-depth analysis necessary to become advocates for good government and social progress. We don't do a story unless we think we can do it better than anyone else or no one else is covering it.

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

We do not need to be everything to everybody. We can focus on adding value through investigative reporting. Additionally, we do not feel that we must be the ones to disseminate our content. As a nonprofit, our mission is to get maximum impact for our stories, so we can partner with traditional media to spread stories further.

3. What is your financial sustainability plan?

We are passionate about diversity of revenue. We have a plan for growing each of five different sources of revenue, particularly our syndication, corporate/community partners, and individual memberships.

4. What are your most reliable sources of revenue?

Currently, high-networth donors and foundations. We understand that neither is a complete long-term strategy, which is why we are constantly trying to diversify revenue.

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?

1. Social media tools like Facebook and Twitter to disseminate content, engage readers, and get instant feedback; 2. Registering users and allowing outside blogging on our website to solidify our position as the place to go for intelligent conversation about San Diego issues.

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

We use our website, social media tools, a daily email blast, online advertising, and partnerships in local television and radio to get our content out. All of those sources are increasing our audience rapidly, but we are cognizant of the need to further expand our reach and impact. We are in the process of hiring an Engagement Editor who will be charged with exponentially expanding our readership.

7. How do you measure your success?

By the quality of the stories we produce, the impact that it has on policy-making and discussion in San Diego, the number of loyal readers (those who read 1 time per week or more) who engage with our website, the number of people who register to participate in our discussions and debates, and our ability to attract revenue.

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

Build relationships with others for the purpose of ongoing sharing of ideas and what works and doesn't, and generally learning from the august group assembled about what is working to increase sustainability.

PART 2: DETAILS ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION

1. What is your technology platform?

TownNews.com

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

Not specifically our website, but the company (TownNews.com) does websites for hundreds of newspapers across the country and so the costs to us of upgrading our technology, increasing functionality, and making our site ever more dynamic are minimal.

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

Nine

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

Five on a regular basis

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

8% users/viewer donors, 9% ads, 62% foundations (including grants and gifts from community foundations like San Diego Foundation and the Jewish Community Foundation), 17% high-networth donations, 4% syndication, 0% charging users for content for personal use

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

We would have less content and thus less impact on our region. Specifically, we would have at least two fewer full-time reporters, we would have a smaller budget for free-lancers, and we would be far less sophisticated in our marketing and development efforts as grants have allowed us to build capacity in this area. We would also lack the IT upgrades that have made our website more functional and more searchable.