

Meeting attendees:

In person: Tracy Van Slyke, Erin Polgreen, Jay Harris, Rinku Sen, Julie Bergman-Sender, Linda Jue, Ann Friedman

Via phone: Kathy Spillar, Andrew Golis

Overview

Based on feedback gathered before and during this retreat, it was discussed that TMC needs a more traditional "working" board, in which staff has more decision-making capacity. This will allow staff to have some flexibility and room to sprint when a good opportunity comes along. The Coordinating Committee would continue to exist, but an Executive Committee of 3-4 people could be developed to check in with/back up staff and work through decisions re: strategic direction. The EC would report to the larger CC. Another concern is that the current size of CC makes scheduling meetings and reaching consensus difficult. CC needs to be representative of membership body, however. There could be opportunity in building a body of self-selected leaders who are looking to learn and have time to contribute (not necessarily organizational top brass).

Recommendations for New CC Roles/Structure These recommendations include adjustments to existing committees and development of new committees and roles.

Coordinating Committee, composed of 11 people, 2 co-chairs. (Previously 13 members. 2 slots would be eliminated at next election)

- Approve annual budget, but not project budgets. If times are tough they check in on midyear adjustment. If expense projections are way off, that's a trigger point for the board to step in.
- Creates and approves organizational strategy with the Project Director
- Approves project concepts as presented by TMC staff.
- Manages director evaluation and reviews Human Resources policy.
- Participates in developing annual member meetings and orient meeting goals based on work of TMC staff and sub-committees.
- Hold two in-person meetings per year. One is tied to member meetings.
- Members must be willing to oversee/chair a sub-committee.

Terms

- Members are voted in on two year terms with a mandatory one year break after four years.
- As long as The Media Consortium is a fiscal project of the Foundation for National Progress, an FNP staff person must be on CC
- Individuals can self-nominate, but must be affiliated with an MC member

NEW: Executive Committee, 3-4 CC members and CC co-chairs

- Reviews budget on quarterly basis and coordinates with board for mid-year readjustment if needed.

- Project oversight.
- Members participate in monthly phone call with Project Director.
- EC helps set goals for membership meetings, works with sub-committees.
- Handles CC member recruitment and nominations.

Membership Sub-Committee, 5-6 members that are staff of TMC member organizations, chaired by CC member and TMC staff.

- Makes quarterly reports to EC regarding recruitment strategies, growth.
- Votes on new and potential members based on existing application process.

NEW: Member Meeting Sub-Committee, 3-4 members that are TMC member organization staff, chaired by CC member and Project Director.

- Helps plan annual membership meetings with EC and Project Director.
- Act as TMC ambassadors at member meetings.
- Lead post-meeting evaluation.

NEW: TMC Ombudsmen, 1-2 people. These positions are part of the CC and would help improve transparency and communication among Coordinating Committee, TMC staff, and membership.

- Act as sounding board for potential projects and collaborations.
- Ensures that not all ideas fall on director, and cross-check proposed projects for fit with TMC's overall strategic direction. cost/benefit analysis as well.
- Ensure members know that communication lines are open and CC is representational of membership.
- Ad hoc and meets as needed.
- Communicates directly with director on ideas/feedback.
- Listed in Membership FAQ as a resource for proposing projects

Staff Roles Background: TMC was initially set up as democratic structure with knowledge that structure may or may not work. Staff develops projects and ideas that come from membership with the assistance of CC. Idea was to be a member driven-network with much work done by volunteers. As discussed at the meeting and in Tracy's evaluation, this is a great concept, but staff are struggling to move projects forward. By slightly restructuring TMC's committees, staff roles, and communications strategies, we hope to make it easier for staff to move forward with projects that benefit TMC members.

Current Media Consortium Staff Roles/Responsibilities. These duties are taken from the Recommended changes are in **red**.

- Run day-to-day and long-term planning/organizing, project implementation, relationship building, and fundraising. **Staff will have freedom to pursue projects of strategic value and will report to EC on monthly basis.**
- Coordinate/Organize CC members in the decision-making and shaping of MC and its projects. **Recommend that staff seek regular guidance and feedback from EC, and update CC on a quarterly basis.**

- Recruit MC members to advise project development and implementation. **Recommend that EC assists with this process.**
- Represent MC projects/members at conferences + in media to increase public knowledge and impact of sector.
- Staff are technically contractors for FNP with no benefits beyond health insurance reimbursement. No protections for unemployment. **Recommend that it be explored how staff can move over to become employees of FNP to offer more stability. This move will not effect staff's work with other MC members.**

Recommended Changes to Staff Communications with Membership and Committees:

These changes are based on feedback to increase and prioritize the flow of information between staff, committees and membership.

- Director offers quarterly updates for CC depending on needs and passes monthly EC call notes on to CC.
- To improve communication with members and committees, Director will hold open office hours to get input and check in.
- TMC Staff provides quarterly updates for TMC projects to members. Could possibly take the form of two minute videos.

Recommendations/Timeline for CC Member Elections and Nomination Process

Goal: Have new CC and Executive Committee constituted by October. As noted previously, the group recommended that the CC have only 11 slots.

Past protocol for recruiting/developing CC included a sub-group of CC nominating new CC members and a "vote" takes place by membership. **Recommend that membership vote is no longer part of the process, though nominations are opened up to membership.**

Suggested new nomination process:

- Members can self-nominate
- EC handles recruitment and nominations, makes sure we stay diverse re: outlet representation, age, gender, ethnicity.
- EC should be able to ask someone to step down if they violate CC "job description."
- Coordinating Committee votes/brings new CC members on board.
- Some ideal CC members to have on board include:
 - A money person/business practices who understands new funding models
 - A web-only person
 - Someone with innovation/new business model experience.

Timeline: need to announce results of this meeting to list by labor day, open up for recruits. **TVS/EC must craft email and send it out to MC list by Sep. 2.** We are working with CC/EC members to determine nominees and who will be stepping down. Keep your eyes on the list for a future announcement, and email Tracy with any recommendations for nominees.

Next Steps: The EC and TVS will meet to discuss process for getting word out about nominations, talking to candidates and solidifying timeline. TVS recommends that we id. several great candidates in case CC members shuffle in 2010, (i.e. they get other jobs outside of MC membership).

Recommendations for Strategic Principles and Future Projects

Attendees reviewed possible future scenarios from 2008 CC meeting and asked where TMC could benefit most regarding strategic focus and project development. The group also reviewed key highlights and recommendations from the game changer report.

The Media sector is clearly at point of death/rebirth, but missing money, knowledge, capacity to make it work. How does TMC help the sector take advantage of the moment? Journalism and business models are even more closely tied, but no one model is going to be the right answer. However, collaboration could be key here. We also need to consider media policy and the international stage for this work. The overall consensus is: We're ready to go big, but how do we get there?

Attendees made a few key points about the future landscape:

Rinku: The crisis creates opportunity for us, but is also a threat because mainstream outlets are coming after our systems. We can influence this picture and choose projects that drive us towards a "New Media Renaissance."

Linda: HUGE threat from the outside re: poaching projects. We need better marketing of our work.

Jay: Fundamental critique of media environment/system is that we aren't going to fix is by playing at the edges. We came together as progressive media, but what does that mean beyond the narrative values?

Strategic Principles: Based on the landscape conversation, attendees made the following recommendations for the Strategic Principles. The recommended updates are:

- * Foster Collaboration and Coordination
- * **Build and Diversify Media Leadership** (formerly "Build and Diversify Media Leadership Pipeline)
- * Focus on Audience Development
- * **Bring Money and Attention into the Sector** (formerly "Bring Money into Sector")
- * **Support Innovation in Journalism and Business Models** (Proposed addition to Strategic Principles)

Potential Future Projects: Once attendees reviewed the landscape and principles, we applied them as a criteria for project selection using the list of potential projects that have been percolating for 12 months (include potentials from Game Changer Report, Musgrove, 2008 CC meeting etc.). The group narrowed down the dozens of new projects to a smaller number based on looking at: cross-membership benefit, internal opportunities/barriers for organizational implementation, and adhering to the strategic principles. Organizational capacity to develop/implement, cost/benefit, and fundability, are also key considerations.

- **Economic Investigative/Impact Fund.** Collaboration oriented, then promotes/ups impact of produced content. Partnering w/Ethnic media should be a component of the economic investigation fund. TMC could facilitate meetups and move on from there.
- **Smart Mergers.** Write up the stories of some mergers that have happened. Not high priority, but could demystify. May require top-brass participation only.
- **Cooperative buying/Shared business services.** Collective insuring, health insurance, pension.
- **New Metrics Project/Research Impact.** Look into how to make more impact. (Bringing \$\$ into sector)
- **Media Darlings:** Needs to focus on more than cable news. Needs help with online personality building. Would need multi-year commitment re: funding. "it's a big one" and may be better implemented by getting impact fund up first.
- **List-Building.** TMC staff facilitate email list exchanges, use info to build new media business models. credo is working on "co-registration."
- **Translation Services.** Scale back to focus on US outlets and using existing networks to make it happen. Best to incubate as part of Economic/Investigative Fund.
- **Innovation/Incubation Labs.** Market as something only we can test, but we should survey members re: the subjects for lab (business, audience development, and journalism models). TMC could bring together best practices for OWNING a story or create simple entry points into projects.

Project Ideas Generated at Meeting:

- Create a venue for TMC members to comment on what Mainstream media plans to do to survive and set some standards for the work that we do. Can also have frank conversations with foundations re: what they're going to be encountering. Educate funders on WHAT IMPACT IS.
- Build an online showcase of impact. TMC could help member outlets figure out their impact stories. Strategy of narrating our impact is diluted. Need to show that we are producing legitimate journalism. Lot of interplay between mainstream and indy media. Showcase could also:
 - Help members track impact
 - Develop sector-wide narrative on our impact in this moment
 - Dovetail with New Metrics Project/Research Impact project

The above list is not a to do list for 2010. TMC staff will work with the CC, the EC and the members (membership survey) to continue to refine and narrow this list and build into the overall strategy for 2010.

