



WOSU Columbus

Rob Walker: Director of Membership

## PBS Development Award Submission

### **Title: Passport's influence on the membership file.**

Objective: Increase Passport activation.

Capture of email addresses from existing members who have not provided an email address in the past.

Retention by getting otherwise hard to reach donors hooked on Passport

Since its inception, Passport has been one of the top sustainer tools at WOSU. Since 2016, sustainer acquisition has increased 29%, revenue 20% and individual transactions (an indication of sustainer acquisition and retention) by 49%.

This helped WOSU Public Media, for the first time ever, exceed \$4,000,000 in membership revenue in 2018.

The data is clear, donors who activate Passport renew at a higher rate than those who do not. And, more than that, those who activate and regularly stream renew at the highest rate of all.

Beginning in 2019, we started to see two trends.

1. A dip in sustainer acquisition and retention.
2. A noticeable flattening of Passport activation.

A three-pronged approach was implemented to increase both activations and the number of members who have streamed Passport.

### **Step 1. Increase the number of deliverable email addresses on our file.**

Since WOSU began Passport in 2016, we've observed that 1200 to 1400 accounts each month were Passport eligible but we did not have email addresses on file to notify them of eligibility.

We assumed correctly that this was a result of a mature membership file. Over 50% of accounts without an email address were acquired on-air, however 82% were retrained through other methods like sustainer and direct mail. With an average annual gift of \$117 and average time on file of nine years, we knew this would be a great universe of people to use Passport if we could just get them to give us their email address.

The answer was simple and effective. Send them a postcard promoting Passport.

Response rate for the postcard was 9%. This is significantly higher than most direct mail pieces. Of the people who responded, 65% activated and used Passport within 30 days.

## **Step 2: Communicate with Active and Lapsed members about upcoming Passport Programs.**

Weekly emails have been sent to three group active donors who have already activated passport, active eligible donors who hadn't yet activated, and lapsed donors. Each group received a tailored ask encouraging them to tune in, activate their passport account, or rejoin the station

Since launch of the weekly email program, more than 400,000 emails have been sent to active and lapsed members with an average open rate of 25% and CTR of 18% - programming highlights on Passport reached thousands of members this year and encouraged hundreds to activate their benefit.

Since the email series, we've seen both an increase in Passport usage and activations. While usage can get attributed to many reasons, a 30% increase in activation can be attributed not only to email but our overall strategy of encouraging Passport use and not just giving to receive Passport.

## **Step 3: Get the word out!**

Passport Activation messaging is included in all communications including TV, Radio, newsletters, program guide, and direct mail. We informed members, with great detail, how to activate Passport as soon as possible, how to retrieve their token and have an activation email resent if they haven't activated, reminding that lapsed memberships lose access to Passport. For lapsed annual members, we take advantage of the three month grace period on Passport to inform members we are giving them an extra three months, as a courtesy, so they don't lose access to the benefit. We have seen a slight increase on lapsed renewals based on this strategy.

As a result of this approach, we've seen a 47% increase in activation of from 38% in 2016 to 56% in 2018.



ACTIVATE TODAY!

Right now, you could be...

enjoying creme puffs with Mary Berry, or swooning over Captain Ross Poldark, or exploring the incredible landscapes of distant lands. But, there's one thing missing: **your email address.**

**DON'T WAIT!** Enjoy this exclusive member benefit today.

 **WOSU** | Passport

# Activate **WOSU Passport** today!

You're eligible to enjoy WOSU Passport, the online video library with thousands of your favorite PBS and WOSU shows, on-demand. **But, we don't have your email address.** Contact us and we'll send instructions on how to access this exclusive member benefit.

## CONTACT US TODAY

 **CALL** 855.868.9678

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 **EMAIL** [members@wosu.org](mailto:members@wosu.org)

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