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**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Friday, April 27, 2018 6:53:29 PM  
**Last Modified:** Friday, April 27, 2018 6:59:54 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:06:24  
**IP Address:** 65.119.85.195

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Page 2: Tell us who you are!

**Q1** Contact Information

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Page 5: Membership

**Q9** Project Title

Pledge Breaks become Sustainer Breaks

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**Q10** What was the overall goal of project, problem it sought to solve or opportunity it sought to leverage? (suggested word count 100-250)

KSPS is applying for this award, but we recognize that our success in this endeavor is shared with the extraordinary PBS staff, consultants, and other stations who participated in the Sustainer Growth Initiative (SGI) of 2017.

KSPS has had a Sustainer program since 1994. It languished at about 10% of membership until 2013/14 when PBS started including sustainer messaging in all of its pre-produced pledge event breaks. Like many stations, about 65% of our pledge breaks in a typical drive are pledge-event breaks. While we were hitting sustainers hard during local breaks, most viewers were not getting that message from those pre-produced breaks. Thanks to the new breaks from PBS, by the end of 2016, 20% of our members were sustainers... but growth had stalled.

When PBS offered the SGI program, we jumped to apply. We wanted new ideas for recruiting via email and social media and help with retention. We thought we had our act together with our pledge breaks, but in fact the greatest impact of SGI on KSPS has centered on pledge.

The goal of this project was to re-fashion all of our pledge drive messaging, including pledge-event breaks, to emphasize sustainer pledges, especially from new members.

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## 2018 Development Awards - Application Form

**Q11** Describe the activity, what it achieved, and why it was successful. (suggested word count 200-400)

With advice on messaging from SGI, we implemented the following for the March 2017 drive:

- Added text to our phone number bar such as “Become a Sustainer – Give Monthly”.
- Incorporated scripts provided by SGI into our local breaks, increasing the overall consistency of our messaging.
- Changed the thank you gift graphics in our local breaks for clearer focus on sustainers first.

These changes helped us achieve 26% sustainer pledges in the March 17 drive, up from 23% in 2016.

The June 17 drive presented a new challenge. As with most summer drives, over 80% of our pledge breaks were already produced. We had few new programs, and some scheduled shows had old pledge events that didn’t focus enough on sustainers. Plus, we had a lack of availability of pledge hosts for live production. How could we apply the sustainer-specific messaging into the June breaks?

We found a way to incorporate local sustainer pitches by KSPS hosts into national pledge-event breaks:

Instead of the usual two-minute opt-out at the end of each break, we divided the time and scheduled a tightly-scripted show-specific sustainer spot leading into and out of national pledge breaks. The 30-second spot going into the program featured a locally-recognizable on-camera host. At the end of that pledge event break, we followed up with another local sustainer message and then went back to the show. We chose 6 pledge event programs upon which to test this approach.

In addition to adding our local messaging to nationally-produced breaks, this system allowed us to increase sustainer messaging in older pledge-event programs where the breaks were produced before PBS made its big sustainer push.

At the heart of all of these changes was an attitude-change by our team: we started thinking of all pledge breaks as “sustainer breaks.” That led us to find new ways to tailor our breaks to maximize sustainers.

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**Q12** Tell us any metrics or benchmarks that show the success of project. Please consider quantitative and qualitative data. (suggested word count 100-250)

June 17 drive results: Though June drive pledges were down overall, Sustainers provided a bright spot. Of the 16 shows that pledged above-average for sustainer percentage, 5 had live local breaks. And all 6 of the pledge events that included local sustainer messages performed above average. While the overall sustainer average during June pledge was 24%, it jumped to 45% on shows featuring the local messaging. Overall, 31% of new members joined as Sustainers during the campaign.

Additional testing in the December 17 and March 18 drives have provided some insights, though more testing is needed. The last two drives have shown unprecedented volatility in Canadian viewership and that is messing with our results.

In December 17, we did not add local sustainer pitches to pledge event breaks. Local breaks averaged 27% Sustainers. Overall, sustainers ran 24%, 46% of whom were new members.

In March, we added local sustainer pitches to most pledge event breaks. Programs with local breaks averaged 31% sustainers. Programs with pledge-event breaks led by local sustainer messages averaged 26% sustainers. Overall sustainer percentage was 27%, and of those, 38% were new members.

We hypothesized that pledge breaks in music shows might be less effective with local sustainer messaging leading the break because it interrupts audience flow. Our test was inconclusive; more testing is necessary.

Conclusions:

Live and airchecked local breaks with tightly focused sustainer pitches reign supreme.

Adding local sustainer messaging to pledge event breaks generally elevates sustainers, but more testing is needed.

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**Q13** Tell us how the project leveraged national or local content (primetime, KIDS, pop-out, etc). (suggested word count 100-250)

This project

1. Allowed us to add sustainer messaging to already-produced national breaks that did not include sustainer pitches,
2. Put a local spin, with our own hosts and local messages, on the national breaks,
3. Showed us that well-written local breaks are generally the most effective when it comes to acquiring sustainers, and
4. Showed us the value of testing pledge break content for sustainer effectiveness, in addition to our typical tracking of program minutes, program titles and time slots.

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**Q14** Do you have any supporting materials or items to upload? (optional) **Yes**

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