

The Circle of Engagement: A Strategy for Leading Change

Introduction

Developed by NFCB, the **Circle of Engagement** is an organizing model used for leading the kind of change at stations that allows them to meet the challenges they face and take advantage of the opportunities they have. It is focused on helping stations implement strategic engagement, content, and revenue goals while optimizing organizational capacity to sustain their effort over time.



- **Engagement** drives content
- **Content** drives relevance and value
- **Revenue** expands innovation
- **Organizational Capacity** sustains progress in all areas over time

Optimization requires balanced attention to the four critical areas articulated in the model.

About the Model

Within the Circle of Engagement Model, sustainability means that a station is seen as an essential institution in the community and it is valued accordingly by a broad scope of the members of the community. Effectiveness is measured by how readily the station can achieve its engagement, content, revenue, and capacity goals within the resource constraints and conditions that it operates under.

The model asserts that these four areas are **interdependent**. Engagement drives content ; content drives revenue ; revenue fuels innovation. When functioning optimally, the circle begins anew. At the center is organizational capacity which supports the effort, infrastructure and strategy necessary for the other parts to succeed. With engagement that sustains relationships, content that sustains audience, revenue that sustains stability, and, organizational capacity that sustains progress over time – station performance is optimized and public service is enhanced.

Within each area of the Circle of Engagement (Engagement, Content, Revenue, Organizational Capacity) there are progressive stages. Progress in each area may not be linear. Stations may see achievement in one area ahead of other areas. Because of that, highly customized strategic planning can take place based on candid assessment of where a station is and where they aspire to improve or expand.

Engagement: How can we hold our place in the community and matter more to more people?

More than outreach, engagement is about how a station is interacting and being responsive to its community or region. It often incorporates partnerships, collaborations, and new media to create new connection points or programs.

Content: What is important about the experience of listening and interacting with your station?

Intellectually and emotionally stimulating programming which is capable of satisfying an audience with diverse cultural, educational, and musical interests is what community media is charged to provide. This is how it serves the public interest and contributes to society.

Revenue: How can we best provide resources to sustain our station?

To receive financial support, a station has to enrich the lives of the people it serves. This stimulates a revenue stream to allow continued operation and innovation.

Organizational Capacity: What are the most important structures that we need to have in place to be a strong organization?

Every station has a need for a clear and compelling strategic focus, benchmarks to monitor progress, strong leadership, and functioning operational systems. All of these are all key to optimizing success at a station.

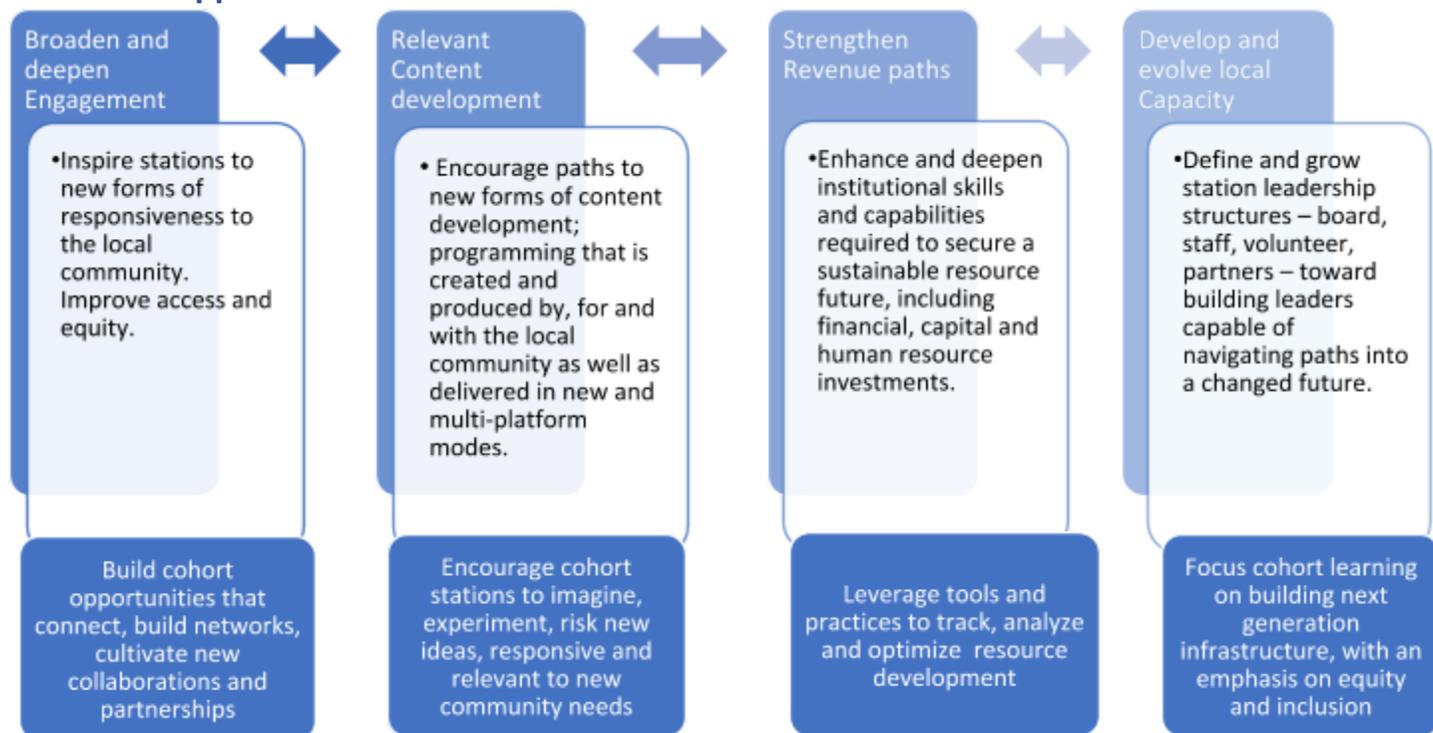
The National Federation of Community Broadcasters (NFCB) provides customized services that optimize organizational capacity and help stations enhance their service to communities. Support is offered online, on site, via national conferences, and through advocacy efforts at policy-making tables. More information at nfc.org.

Community Counts Initiative Theory of Change

Vision for a New Reality

•Community Counts Initiative stations positioned as key contributors to the health and wellbeing of the communities. Through the application of the Circle of Engagement model, build organizational capacity to serve as an essential service to a resilient, democratic and healthy society.

Shifts and Opportunities



Foundation for Change

The Community Counts Initiative (CCI) is an intensive, 18-month program to strengthen community-based radio stations serving rural and under-represented communities, offering tools to thrive in today's challenging environment. This cohort-based initiative brings together 10 stations for a combination of in-depth training by community media experts with peer-based learning. The program is open to stations who are members of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters that meet CCI eligibility criteria and successfully compete in the 2020 application process.

The CCI is predicated on NFCB's deeply held convictions that, as a nation, we need resilient local communities—healthy, socially connected, and equitable—that have a sustained ability to address, manage, and recover from a range of challenges and adverse situations. Today local communities struggle to maintain the local voice: celebrating local stories, offering musical discovery, providing local news and public safety content, and enhancing the health and wellbeing of local communities. Local media is a critical resource for preserving, uplifting, and deepening the "soul of the community." At the same time as the imperative to give voice becomes more urgent, small-market public media is challenged by shrinking resources and outmoded technology. Broadband technology, media consolidation, media convergence, and the disruption of local journalism have challenged local stations. Sustainability and finding new paths to thrive will be the focus of the CCI intensive.