Strategic Action Items

April 2025

5MBS BOARD

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Strategic Action Itms

Overview

The following strategic action items and considerations, arose from a 5mbs Board Strategic Planning Session run by David Olney and Steve Davis on April 5, 2025. This summary is provided for the Board for its further refinement and development into a prioritised list of actions.
The planning session highlighted a valuable insight about how people engage with 5mbs on a journey - starting as listeners, potentially becoming members, and some eventually volunteering or joining the board. This "engagement pathway" appeared repeatedly in our discussions and represents a practical framework for growing the station's support base.
Several other key themes emerged: the need to balance our musical tradition with digital opportunities; the importance of structured volunteer training and recognition; and the potential for strategic partnerships that could strengthen both our programming and financial position.
Throughout the day, board members showed they're ready for thoughtful change while honoring what makes 5mbs special.

Asset-Based Thinking / Skills Audit

An initial exercise involved board members individually writing down previous successes from their lives, then reflecting on those successes to develop a list of skills they had used or developed in achieving them.
It was noted that this exercise would be invaluable for all new volunteers, to aid them in realising the skills they bring to the station that might not have been top of mind, as well as enabling the station to develop a skills register to map against station needs.
There is further work to be done to incorporate this as a structured part of the on-boading process, and there is scope for employing this thinking more broadly in terms of volunteer engagement and development.

To Maximise, or to Satisfise? Herbert Simon.

The meeting also discussed the framework of plotting people on a continuum between Maximisers (who want and need every activity to be undertaken as perfectly as possible) Satisfisers (who aim to get activities done as pragmatically as possible, akin to “minimum viable product” thinking).
It was noted that simply understanding this dynamic will enable personnel to discuss where to place the “quality bar” for activities, on a case-by-case basis. Sometimes there will be time and resources enabling the bar to be set high, while at other times, contingencies will mean that we need to accept lower standards that are “good enough” to ensure we meet important goals.

Stakeholder Relationship Management: SPICE Analysis. R. Edward Freeman.

The board discussed the core set of four questions at the heart of SPICE Analysis, namely:

- What does X need from us?
- What do we need from X?
- What does X want from us?
- What do we want from X?

The first two dwell within the realm of satisfising, the latter two are ideal wants closer to maximising thinking.

After an individual exercise, the group then approached this set of questions in terms of Board members and 5mbs.

What does 5mbs NEED from a board member?

- Attendance
- Integrity
- Contributions to meetings
- Need to be aware and informed
- To be able to discuss issues impartially and seek balance and take many points into account, to disagree without becoming disagreeable
- Openness
- Willingness to ask questions
- To listen to the answers
- Willingness to participate in discussing and setting policy and direction for the station
- To set the culture
- Communicate clearly with the organisation
- Adhere to fiduciary duty

What does a board member NEED from 5mbs?

- As treasurer, there is need for a bookkeeper and coordinator to do some preparation of documentation
- Better communication from the station
- Respect
- An opportunity to contribute, which provides a sense of satisfaction
- Timely and accurate information
- Need to understand how the audience is accessing our programming, and how their habits are changing
- Need to understand the nature/profile of our listeners (and the link of this to our ability to raise revenue)
- Need to know status of resources of listeners, finance
- Need to hear about volunteer issues and problems

What does 5mbs WANT from a board member?

- Ability to tap into and activate their professional and personal networks
- The station wants members who are still in their professional life or only recently retired from same
- A degree of personal stability, leading to regular attendance and stay focussed without distractions
- Proactively applying creativity in thinking about how they can maximise their input into the board; before being asked
- Appetite for dealing with risk that might accompany new approaches to "how things are done", an openness to change
- Willingness to listen to the station community

What do board members WANT from 5mbs?

- A successful radio station that is appreciated with a growing audience
- Community
- We want to hear directly from our listeners
- More flexible meeting times, potentially after 5 or on weekends (excluding Port Adelaide games)
- More flexible communication methods beyond email, eg, Whats App. This might be useful for short, timely messages.
- Meet socially as board members, and with other volunteers

The group then started the processing of capturing stakeholders within the SPICE Framework. This list will grow and will be dynamic, developing over time.

SOCIETY

- Charles Sturt Council
- Paid government messages (non-political)
- Younger local musicians (young virtuoso awards, uni music students)
- Retirees/older South Australians

PARTNERS (plus sum game)

- Sponsors (eg Universal Music, Winston Music)
- Royal Society of the Arts magazine
- Gallery One (user of arts diary – they pay for arts diary, then they put our logo on their materials)
- Musical associations
- Teaching institutions (music high schools)
- Event producers
- Concert venues
- Festivals
- Music retailers
- Local businesses (provision of vouchers, tickets, etc)
- Community Radio Network (produced concerts of live recordings, particularly aimed at regional audiences)

INVESTORS

- Donors
- Members
- Fundraisers like movie nights (we used to get donated goods from Vilis, Shaw and Smith, etc)

CONSUMERS

- Traditional listeners (classical)
- Traditional listeners (jazz)
- Traditional listeners (world)
- Traditional listeners (blues)
- Digital listeners (classical)
- Digital listeners (jazz)
- Digital listeners (world)
- Digital listeners (blues)

EMPLOYEES/VOLUNTEERS

- Work experience kids, uni internships
- Board members
- Volunteers
- Committee members

To extract full value from this exercise, it is recommended the board answer the full set of questions about wants and needs for each stakeholder. Doing so will enable the board and the station to measure how effectively it is engaging with each stakeholder, thus uncovering any areas of lack in the relationship so that efforts to improve the "win-win" situation can be focussed.

A Brief General Brainstorm To Sow Seeds For Future Discussion

What do our stakeholders want from us?

- Access to our listeners
- Some volunteers would like to have endorsement for their time with us

What do we want from our stakeholders?

- Money
- In kind support
- Amplification of our existence to grow awareness of 5mbs
- There is an ideal journey for our stakeholders: get involved as a listener to start with, then gradually increase engagement and partnering over time.

What do our stakeholders need from us?

- Listeners who find the stakeholders' involvement and messaging relevant

What do we need from our stakeholders

- Event stakeholder example: Adelaide Cabaret Festival can partner with us to highlight artists, while advertising events
- Young musician stakeholder example: Give them access to our audience as we tap into SALA programming.
- Venue stakeholder example: Gov Hindmarsh, we get to talk to visiting blues/jazz artists, they can use station to promote events
- For example, the Baroque And Be Forth program is a program we create, the Adelaide Baroque Society pay for advertising in our programs and through advertising. This is an example of a plus sum relationship.
- NOTE: We can explore tailored sponsoring formats and packages for programs. We can communicate access to defined audiences through specialist programming. For examples, sponsor by program, by timeslot, etc.

HYPOTHETICAL: IMAGINE IT IS 2030

It is 2030. Enthusiasts at 5mbs are broadcasting music to an audience who look forward to listening. While keeping the needs and wants of 5mbs and its stakeholders in mind, the group was asked to contribute to a list of actions, equipment, or situations that would be in place to enable this ideal vision of the future to be realised.
The group then voted on how vital each of the items would be to station success, in their opinion. Later, the group then sorted these vital items into Urgent AND Important, or just Important. The following is the consolidated list. Numbers after each item show how many of the eight people present voted for the item to be "vital", and then how many voted for the item to be Urgent AND Important.

URGENT AND IMPORTANT

- 30 ongoing sponsors over three tiers (Secure sources of revenue) 8 / 8
- License renewal from ACMA 8 / 7
- Creating of listener profiles 7 / 6
- Vibrant functional board 8 / 6
- More active volunteers 8 / 8
- Full time manager with passion for the station 7 / 5
- An appropriate range of personnel and skills across organisation 8 / 5

IMPORTANT

- An open attitude of genuine enquiry as to what listening audience is looking for then and there, as well as into the future 7 / 3
- Decent profiles of 5mbs on all relevant digital channels 8 / 0
- Advertising vision and division 7 /3
- High number of listeners 8 / 3
- Council sponsored premises at peppercorn rent 8 / 2
- 5mbs is involved in community events 8 / 1
- Updated equipment with trained presenters 8 / 0
- Soundproof studio 5 / 0

- Several community engagements officers who talk to business owners and community groups 8 / 4
- Joint sponsoring of concerts and events in way that 4mbs does in Brisbane (could be with government or private promoters) 7 / 0
- Creating stakeholders of people and organisations who have music interests 8 / 1.5
- Vibrant training and mentoring 7 / 6

PREMORTEM

The final exercise of the morning was to continue imagining it is 2030 but to imagine that the station has failed to reach its goals. In doing so, the group was asked to posit reasons why its important goals were not reached.
The purpose of this exercise is to identify risks to 5mbs' success up front, enabling the station to prioritise activity early to mitigate such dire outcomes.
The group when through as many of its important items as possible, within the time that was available.
NOTE: To interpret the following list, the headline item has NOT been achieved and the dot points are possible reasons why not.

30 ongoing sponsors over three tiers (secure sources of revenue)

- We don't have a listener profile and don't have anybody to sell the ads

License renewal from ACMA

- Someone didn't fill in the paperwork
- Lacking skills within station to answer the questionnaire, eg why have we not gone back to our audience because they have changed, can we justify our current programming

Creating of listener profiles

- We didn't buy the survey results
- Lacked finance to get results regularly
- We didn't discern which was the best surveying company for us

Vibrant functional board

- Because many current members have retired
- No succession planning
- No capturing of insights to show next generation
- Not enough sufficient achievements

Failure to attract members to the board

- Members are not actively involved in the station
- We have failed to nurture a continuum of involvement with the station

More active volunteers

- We haven't nurtured a continuum of involvement
- We have not asked them for a skills audit
- We don't listen to our volunteers and audience (two sets of heroes)

Full time manager with passion for the station

- We don't have finances to pay enough
- We have not developed a package of salary plus commission that is attractive enough to the right person
- We have failed to hear good things about being involved in station as manager

An appropriate range of personnel and skills across organisation

- We have not developed a reputation as a great place to be
- We are little known

An open attitude of genuine enquiry as to what listening audience is looking for (then and there), as well as into the future

- More important things to worry about
- The "urgent" has crowded out the important
- Presenters are not encouraged to pause and reflect over time
- We do not regularly ask our audience for feedback in a structured way
- We failed to use existing communications to seek feedback (like links to short surveys in the monthly member newsletter)
- We fail to leverage the audience data we already have
- Announcers don't know how to find and review listener data

Decent profiles of 5mbs on all relevant digital channels

- Lack someone who knows how to set them up (we already have Instagram, Facebook)
- To join a new social media platform, could take a week, and we have lacked personnel with capacity
- We have not maintained continuity in attracting and managing interns to support this
- We haven't reached out to universities so academics know they can send their students (in return for credit towards coursework)

Have engaging reliable content on social media and the internet

- We have not resourced and supported our people involved in this
- We have not tapped potential fully

Advertising vision and division

- We do not have a person to lead the sponsorship activity
- Lack of a commission element in roles like general manager, advertising person, etc

High number of listeners

- We didn't listen to our listeners
- We lost them because of too much advertising
- We have lost confidence in our product

Several community engagements officers who talk to business owners and community groups

- Had not managed to get funding
- Lacked proficiency in submitting grant applications

Vibrant training and mentoring

- We lost our volunteers who undertake these tasks
- Remaining volunteers who carry this out are exhausted

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS THAT AROSE

- Do we remain voluntary organisation or do we need paid roles for finance, management
- Why are no volunteer run events, as were previously held (we note some volunteers feel burnt out or otherwise unavailable)
- Why are no volunteers coming forward to run events (Mary noted that people might feel they do not have the depth of skills, knowledge, or experience to undertake such roles)
- How do we maximise our website and social media for connecting to and growing our audiences