

KBOO 2008 Membership Meetings Summary

On January 26, 2008 KBOO held a community meeting to answer the eight questions the KBOO staff thought were the most important to gain feedback on the future of KBOO. The meeting was attended by nearly 100 people. Participants responded in writing to questions posted on the wall and chose one of eight tables for an in-depth discussion. The meeting was facilitated by Carri Munn. Individual table discussions were facilitated by volunteers and staff. The following is a summary of that meeting and incorporates comments from an earlier programmers meeting.

The summary begins with overall strengths and challenges as themes from the meetings. These are followed by shorter summaries of the discussion questions. *Italics indicates a direct quote or close paraphrasing.*

KBOO STRENGTHS

The community sees KBOO as a place where freedom of speech is celebrated and ideas about culture, politics and community can be heard. People value the honest and grassroots effort that has made KBOO an institution for the past 40 years.

“KBOO is my news source, my DJ, and my ever present community.”

“I love knowing I can turn it on and I’m not going to know what I’m going to get. I’m hearing a real person – which touches my soul.”

“KBOO helps me connect to community and I receive the opportunity to contribute to ideas and participate in solution –oriented action”

- KBOO members agree that the station’s local news coverage and its connection to community are important building blocks to the station’s reputation and history. People listen who want to stay informed and people feel informed when they listen.
- There is an overwhelming consensus that the station feels “real”. Real people reporting, hosting, listening generates a consistently positive feeling among the members. Members seek truth and they seek each other.

KBOO staff shares similarly hopeful views on what the potential of the station can be; what it has been, what it is and where it’s going.

“KBOO is a vehicle for community, social and cultural, and could be a catalyst for these issues.”

“It makes a huge difference going to the different communities and hearing the communities.”

- The staff values the diversity and community that KBOO has celebrated for the past 40 years and wants to build on the strong foundation of existing listeners. Uniqueness and diversity are key strengths that the staff recognizes it can build from.

KBOO CHALLENGES

There are distinct challenges facing the station. Concerns reverberate through KBOO and into the community. While members appreciate the community effort that KBOO makes, many believe that KBOO could be doing more. Members feel that more can be done to reach out to other communities, organizations, and new cultures and groups moving to Portland. Many feel like there is a lack of debate around the issues that KBOO speaks to. They would like to see more debate on programming that celebrates a diversity of opinion.

"[KBOO needs] genuine outreach to new communities."

"[KBOO needs] shows that reflect the community, not the host's opinions."

"Focus on local community efforts to fight large global issues."

"KBOO's voice reflects too narrow a community. I turn it off when it seems like liberal voices talking to one another without the presence of other perspectives."

- The members appreciate much of the programming on the air and across the board wanted to see KBOO more active in the community through benefits, live remotes, a stronger web presence, and production and news training.
- In addition to expanding outreach efforts, members want to see community partnerships that focus on specific underserved communities, different language groups who aren't currently represented, and other nonprofit collaborations.

KBOO will need to begin addressing the question of programming. While certain shows have a strong fan base, there are many concerns about quality, scheduling, and the process of programming decisions.

"I'm concerned about listen-ability and quality control."

"I am not certain how decisions are made."

"I turn it off when the host is droning, unprepared, or just phoning it in."

"Dead air, miscued record, bad levels, DJ apologies; people give up listening for technical reasons."

- Some members felt that there is great inconsistency with the programming and the levels of professionalism with hosts/DJs. Most also spoke of wanting a more global point of view on the issues raised by hosts. Feeling that some hosts stood on a soap box and/or seemed preachy was prevalent.
- Broadcast quality is another area where members felt KBOO needed to spend some time and resources: members want to listen to programming with quality hosts backed by quality production.

Technology is another area where KBOO faces some challenges. The staff seems to be aware of the need for improving the online presence of the station, and the members mention problems with accessibility and quality.

“Website should provide programming connected content – community links and interaction.”

“How can we get music programs on the web quickly?”

- The members agree that KBOO needs to have a larger web presence, podcasts, and general usability on the web. The community events calendar is important to membership and an important means of connection.
- Establishing KBOO as an up-to-date news source and pursuing younger listenership through outreach and web access are priority next steps.

Programming

In December 2007 KBOO held a separate community meeting focused on the work of the programmers and programming. The programmers focused on publicizing programming, as well as their technical concerns. The group articulated journalistic integrity, quality, skill, and enhancing community and democracy as core values. The programming committee has the opportunity to cultivate a more comprehensive programming strategy that includes standards for program excellence, clarifies KBOO’s desired audiences, utilizes the website, and consciously builds connections to the community. People seek to promote changes both internally and externally.

“More co-sponsorships, cross-promotion, and guerilla marketing”

“Promote that we are by the people for the people”

“Promote very new, local music”

“I tune out the shows that sound repetitive and amateurish.”

- Programmers voice concerns about reaching out to the community. They are looking for ways to build listenership within the community by offering what the community needs, like multi-lingual broadcasting, and creating some consistent expectations for hosts. They see partnerships with other groups in town as an important strategy for building a stronger community base and community knowledge.
- The programmers feel that the website needs to function as an extension of radio programming. Podcasts, streaming audio content, and a user friendly web platform could build listenership and translate to membership and funding for the station.

Why do people listen to KBOO?

“To hear something authentically progressive you can’t hear anywhere else.”

“I usually learn something when I listen to KBOO.”

“To hear about positive change, to thrill to amazing music.”

KBOO is valued in the community for its presentation of real people and real community. KBOO members have always expected a unique variety of progressive and liberal programming. KBOO has built a 40 year reputation for being a community representative, and people listen because they want to be informed at a local level. Specific programs like Democracy Now!, Amy Goodman, and more of the talk radio were highlighted by members as reliable positives. Members look for KBOO to be a connector, and a voice for the various communities locally, and look for the variety of language, issues, and programming that this diversity demands.

Alternatively KBOO faces the challenge of outreach on several different levels. Members feel like the listenership isn’t tapping into the younger demographic, and gets stuck presenting the same kinds of opinion around a specific progressive issue?. The members tune out when hosts are unprepared, they feel like someone is preaching at them, telling them what to think, or “droning on”.

How does KBOO serve you?

“You can walk in the door, feel welcomed, and get involved.”

“KBOO keeps me sane, validated and hopeful.”

“KBOO lets me know what’s going on in other communities.”

The KBOO membership appreciates the community building that comes from having access to diverse views around public affairs and music. Members understand the uniqueness of the station and feel like it's serving a need in the community for information and political discourse.

The members present, however, seem to be a self-proclaimed participatory group who give and volunteer for the station. They acknowledge that actively sharing is a core reason for their sense of connection and that other listeners may not feel as connected. They also sense a gap between the dedicated long-time listeners and the newer and younger members of the community who might feel there isn't programming for them. Bridging that gap and remaining inclusive to all listeners is a challenge the listeners feel KBOO needs to address.

How do you want to engage with KBOO?

"By listening, volunteering, and getting to know my fellow volunteers."

"I want to participate in bringing voices from community activists and organizations to the air."

"I want to provide more production training to raise the standards of our on air sound."

Members view their volunteer efforts as a method of engagement and value the satisfaction and community connection they get from it. It is clear that people need a variety of ways to plug in from sporadic, easy opportunities to long-term and highly skilled options. Frequent offers to help centered around doing outreach, fundraising, and working to improve policies.

Most prefer in-person events to engage, though some noted there were opportunities for engagement over the web. Driving from Corvallis or the Gorge is a barrier for some. KBOO could consider allowing interested people to participate in meetings by phone or through video conference. Members want to see more community engagement events, news blogs, trainings, and concerts.

How can KBOO do more to connect with the community?

"Pay attention to what we have in common as human beings."

"Continue to ask folks what is important to them."

"Have more events in the community! Make a presence off the air."

Most people agree that KBOO needs to get itself out to new places by moving beyond geographic boundaries and thinking outside of itself. Several people feel that KBOO is not well known in communities represented on KBOO, and that many people don't know there's an alternative to commercial radio.

Above all people want to get the work out about the mission and programming. KBOO is a great place to learn and realize your potential. Improving KBOO's visual identity and presence in the community with posters, bumper stickers, and advertising seems critical. Once people hear about KBOO, supporting involvement is very important so newcomers don't feel lost at the station.

To achieve these goals, the effort needs to be systematic, sustained over time, and supported by working phones and computers. Several people suggested building relationships with other stations for resource sharing and partnering with local businesses for promotions.

What's missing from KBOO?

"Consistent reflection and action on what is and is not working about KBOO process and outreach."

"It's difficult to find good music you don't already know about."

Above all, promotion, outreach, and evaluation of programming. Members responded with some of the same ideas about consistent quality programming, technical quality control, youth outreach, and technological advancement (like podcasting). They also mention the desire for integration. Integrate hosts who promote KBOO and community events with a community calendar. Pair other nonprofits who are working towards similar goals with each other. Create a forum for interactive informational sharing that is informed by and dictated by the content of the programming. (some of these ideas for integration go beyond technical. Maybe just say integration? Networking? Or Linking?)

What do you want from KBOO online?

"I want a webcast I don't need to install special software for."

"I'd like it to be an easy access digital archive for all things related to KBOO."

Missing programs because of inconvenient scheduling is an issue among the membership. People want a way to link up to a show they like but can't always catch. Programming connected content and community links were posed as an important way KBOO could reinforce the message (goal? Intention to, commitment?) of community building. Making what already exists on the web more user-friendly is key. Several

people mentioned getting the schedule on the web and improving the community calendar. Members want streaming, podcasting, playlists, and more local public affairs content. They see opportunities for more merchandizing on the web and would like KBOO to be listed on the iTunes radio station directory. To be the a model radio station on the web, like KEXP (Seattle), KBOO will need technical engineering, training for programmers, and volunteer capacity.

Where do KBOO listeners get their news?

"I have trouble listening to KBOO news because they can't read and I end up turning it off because I can't focus on the stories."

"KBOO needs stronger voices and better sound."

"I turn off KBOO news when I feel like it's telling me what to think."

The listening community who attended this meeting is dedicated to alternative news sources and KBOO in general. Many people listed many sources, only a few were solely dedicated to KBOO. They trust the coverage and nonbiased reporting that KBOO offers and when looking to other places will look to NPR, OPB, the Oregonian and various online journals and news sites. Members cited scheduling, accuracy, and professionalism as a few reasons they would turn to another news source. However, a clear strength of KBOO is a dedicated foundational listenership and reputation for producing programs that are not easy to find in other places.

What does KBOO mean to you?

"KBOO is a great connector of folks."

KBOO is an essential step toward a sustainable, ecologically sound community driven by life."

A resource, a way to be engaged in shaping the world."

In conclusion, it's important to emphasize how much the current community of listeners values KBOO. The station has real roots and history in the community. This can be a blessing and a hindrance in the face of change. The ultimate challenge is for this community to maintain the thread that weaves together an expanding fellowship with values of democracy, truth, and empowerment for change. With the leadership and passion of so many giving volunteers, KBOO can continue to be a strong resource in the community, a place to transform ideas for positive change into reality.