USING SOCIAL JUDGMENT THEORY TO IDENTIFY PREEXISTING ATTITUDES IN MILLENNIAL AUDIENCES OF PUBLIC RADIO

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty in Communication and Leadership Studies

School of Professional Studies

Gonzaga University

Under the Supervision of Dr. John Caputo

Under the Mentorship of Cher Desautel and Sara Johnston

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Communication and Leadership Studies

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December 2011
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ABSTRACT

As the Millennial generational group (individuals aged 34 or younger at time of publication) ages, it becomes a more important fundraising target for public radio organizations. This study explored ways to get members of the Millennial generational group more actively involved as financial contributors to public radio organizations. The Literature Review examined a brief history of public radio in the United States, including its move to listener funding, and the consolidation and homogenization of programming, which only occurred relatively recently and during the formative years of Millennials. The study used Social Judgment Theory as a theoretical framework to help identify commonly held preexisting attitudes in Millennial public radio listeners. The study sampled the non-contributing audience of a single public radio station through a quantitative survey made available to listeners of all generational groups and Millennial focus groups. The Thurstone Attitude Scale was used to aid in identifying Millennials’ common latitudes of acceptance and rejection and common preexisting attitudes. The findings provide public radio professionals with considerations for creating more effective Millennial fundraising messaging.
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM OR GOAL AND DEFINITIONS USED

THE PROBLEM/GOAL

In the United States today, radio is a very different medium than it was 30 years ago. Since the 1980s—and especially since the passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which opened the door to media conglomerates owning and operating several radio stations within the same market—the overarching strategy of the commercial radio industry has been to broaden the appeal of its programming as widely as possible. As such, the content—generally produced, or at least selected in one of only a few major American cities—must be attractive to listeners in disparate markets, regardless of the individual political, social, cultural, or economic factors that make a particular community unique. By taking this approach, a commercial radio station is able to sell more advertising and at higher rates. As this strategy has systematically become the norm for radio programming, the localism once inherent in the nature of radio has all but disappeared (Folami, 2010). Since the 1990s, many of the remaining public radio stations have been forced to deploy a similar strategy to remain viable instead of focusing on producing local news and information and airing musicians of particular local appeal. Indeed, many became National Public Radio (NPR) affiliates in an attempt to create the widest possible listener appeal (Bailey, 2004b).

As the Millennial generation ages, the make-up of listener audiences is trending younger for many public radio stations that depend on direct-listener financial support. This means that Millennials will play a more significant role in funding public stations,
which is contradictory to their rise to adulthood within a media environment driven by commercial interests.

**Importance of the Study**

Public radio stations frequently earn the majority of their income directly from listener financial support. As members of the Millennial generational group grow older, they continually become a more significant audience and fundraising target for all nonprofits, including public radio organizations. Waters (2008) wrote of their growing importance: “Given the estimated $340 trillion transfer of wealth in the next 20 years, non-profit organizations have been more pouring more resources into their fundraising and development programs in preparation for the intergenerational transfer of wealth” (p. 74). Because of this, it is critical for the long-term viability of public radio that organizations quickly identify any preexisting attitudes that keep their Millennial audiences from financially contributing, and immediately work toward developing strategies and messaging that are more persuasive to this generational group.

**Statement of the Problem**

More so than any previous generation, Millennials have been conditioned to be passive radio audience members. They have limited access to local content (in some markets, no access at all), and are presented instead with content designed to be widely appealing that sounds familiar from one station to the next, and from one city to the next. The study seeks to find if Millennials are desensitized to commercial interests, and are willing to passively trade their listenership for the opportunity to be advertised to frequently and for long periods of time. Indeed, according to one broadcasting expert, the
monetary value of the average American radio listener to a commercial radio station in 2010 was $844 per year (Harker & Shrader Bos, 2011).

Because of this attitude of passivity and having grown up in the environment in which they did, a significant number of Millennials may have preexisting attitudes against financially supporting public media, even if they depend upon its content regularly. If public media professionals better understood the preexisting attitudes Millennials hold against financial contribution, public radio organizations could more effectively educate the audience about the need for financial support, and more effectively persuade those listeners to donate. The main goals of this study are to identify those preexisting attitudes (if any) and examine if Millennials have a clear understanding of the differences between public radio and commercial radio, and specifically the differences in programming and funding models.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

 Strauss and Howe (2000) defined a generational group as “a society-wide peer group, born over a period roughly the same length as the passage from youth to adulthood (in today’s America, around 20 or 21 years), who collectively possess a common persona” (p. 40). That common persona is shaped largely by a generational group’s placement in the historical timeline and the various events and factors that affect them collectively, regardless of demographical differences (Baiocchi, 2007; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Strauss & Howe, 2000). It is commonly accepted that Millennials are those individuals born in or after 1981 or 1982 (“Generation Y,” 2011). However, for the purposes of this study, the definition will be extended to include those 34 years old or
younger to better align with how radio demographics are generally measured (“Public Radio Today 2011,” 2011). In addition, since the creation of NPR, there has been a distinction between “public” and “community” stations (Niekarz, Jr., 2002). For the purposes of this study, the terms “public radio station” and “public radio organization” will be used to represent any non-commercial radio station that receives some amount of listener funding, regardless of type of programming or affiliations.

ORGANIZATION OF REMAINING CHAPTERS

The remaining chapters within the study are organized as follows: In Chapter 2: Review of Literature, pertinent literature is examined. In this section, the author provides an explanation of why and how public radio uses the direct-listener funding model, a review of current Millennial fundraising literature, and an appraisal of Social Judgment Theory, the theoretical framework for the study. In Chapter 3: Scope and Methodology, a detailed explanation of the study’s methodology is provided. In Chapter 4: The Study, the detailed results of the study, as well as a discussion and analysis of those results, is offered. In Chapter 5: Summaries and Conclusions, the limitations of the study are noted and suggestions for further study are offered. Finally, three appendices provide the materials offered to participants during the study.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There is very limited literature available surrounding the public radio consumption habits of Millennials, the role or importance of public radio in the lives of Millennials, or the importance of Millennials as an evolving audience and fiscal supporter to public radio organizations. However, there is fairly abundant literature surrounding three key areas that are of pertinence to this study.

First, a review of Sherif’s and Hovland’s (1961) Social Judgment Theory (SJT) is important. Second, much has been researched and written about public radio’s evolution to direct-listener financial support; a brief review of that literature is included. Finally, as the Millennial generation continues to age (Bhagat, et al., 2010; Feldmann & Grossnickle, 2010; Feldmann & Grossnickle, 2011) and non-profit organizations prepare for a significant intergenerational transfer of wealth (Waters, 2008), non-profit organizations, non-profit industry publications, and third-party analysts are all adding to a growing pool of research about the philanthropy habits of this generation.

Because of the lack of literature regarding Millennials and public radio, the purpose of this literature review then is not to demonstrate the need to build off of existing research. Instead, the purpose is to provide the reader with at least a cursory understanding of the factors that have contributed to the current status of public radio’s dependence on direct-listener financial support, the perception of Millennials as philanthropists, and the components and impact of SJT. By doing so, the goal of this research is to demonstrate that the contributing factors make it reasonable to believe that the Millennial generation may have preexisting attitudes that prevent it from seeing the need for localism within public radio and preempt it from taking an active role in
supporting public radio. Further, another goal of this research is to demonstrate that it is reasonable to believe that these preexisting attitudes are the result of the systemic corporatization of the American media landscape over the last 30 years, including the corporatization of public media. It is important to note that the period of corporatization corresponds with the birth and formative years of the majority of the Millennial generation, suggesting that this generational group simply does not know an alternative.

**PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND THEORETICAL BASIS**

Two theoretical or ethical assumptions must be considered for this literature review. First, there is indeed value in approaching fundraising or persuasion from a generational perspective. Second, there are two very different philosophical interpretations of how public radio can best serve the populous.

**The Importance of a Generational Perspective**

In “Generational Values: Their Impact on Message Persuasiveness in Direct Mail Fundraising,” Baiocchi (2007) argued for the need to consider common generational traits or experiences when crafting persuasive messages. She wrote:

> Just as demographic elements influence an individual’s value system, contemporary research indicates that generations form unique values based on their experiences in the time-line of history… When crafting fundraising campaign messages, nonprofits would be wise to consider an individual’s generational values and their persuasive influence. (Baiocchi, 2007, p. 2)

She continued, “to reach individual generations effectively, each group should receive a message that is uniquely tailored to the values it collectively holds” (Baiocchi,
The author contends that a generational perspective is valuable in creating a persuasive message for public radio and is particularly valuable with the Millennial generational group.

**Defining Public Interest**

It is also important to consider how public radio can best serve the public interest. The literature suggests that since the formation of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) in 1967 (Mitchell, 2004) and the establishment of NPR, which quickly followed (Mitchell, 2004), there are two distinct philosophical approaches to defining the public interest standard (Folami, 2010). For instance, Mitchell (2004) wrote that the intention of NPR was to:

…reflect the diversity of the nation, giving voice to the unheard, establishing dialogue among those who seldom speak with one another, and seeking wisdom in ordinary people as well as those with credentials. In Siemering’s memorable phrase, public radio would ‘celebrate the human experience.’ (p. 1133)

Obviously, Mitchell viewed NPR and the general concept of public radio following 1967 in a flattering light. Others (Fairchild, 1999; Folami, 2010; McChesney, 1999; Nieckarz, Jr., 2002) have called for a more clear definition of how public radio (or in some cases, public media as a whole) can provide the best possible public service or best interpret the public’s interest. In “The Business of Public Radio: The Growing Commercial Presence Within Local National Public Radio,” Nieckarz, Jr. (2002) summarized the two majority interpretations:

Discussions regarding the path that public radio has taken lies in the very definition of public service: What is public service or what should be the mission
of public radio? Clearly, the mission of commercial media is maximizing audience size as a means for creating profit. With respect to public media, the goals are not quite as distinct. There are individuals in the public radio community (NPR or otherwise) who feel that they too need to create programs that reach a multitude. Conversely, there are those who argue that this type of programming philosophy is inherently commercial. After all, public radio was intended to provide programs that are not supported by the market. If stations focus mainly on listenership, then the distinction between public and commercial radio becomes blurred. (Nieckarz, Jr., 2002, p. 210)

Fairchild (1999) further defined the two disparate philosophical approaches in interpreting how the public can best be served by public media—“the corporatist” and “the statist” views. He argued that the “…corporatist perspective is based on the assumption that economic competition inherently provides for the public interest on the grounds that the popular will, expressed through the primal force of consumer choice, will weed out all services that are not compatible” (pp. 550-551). This free market approach supports the trend of opening up one’s programming beyond a minor, specific niche, and instead broadening its appeal as widely as possible. In short, the corporatist perspective states that public interest is best illustrated by those stations that earn the highest listenership. Conversely, Fairchild (1999) described his “statist” perspective to be:

based on a conception of government not only as protector of the public good, but as provider of public good. As such, the government would require specific institutions, like corporations or broadcasters, to serve the interests of the broadly
constituted public by acting to ensure that the broadest number of people have access to the means and ends of communication technologies. (p. 551)

Nieckarz, Jr., (2002) argued that the statist approach produces more diversified programming, promotes a balanced discourse, and gives voice to the programming that would never be commercially successful or widely appealing. Because the programming is not financially sustainable on its own, the statist believes the government should fund public media programming, without censoring or providing editorial direction in any way. The United Kingdom’s British Broadcasting Channel (BBC) is a representation of this model, in which the bulk of its funding comes directly from taxation (“BBC,” 2011).

Exploring the point of the public interest standard and its potential interpretations was important to this literature review. The literature suggests that market demands and reductions in federal funding over the years have forced public radio to respond by putting corporatist initiatives in place. It may be reasonable to assume that the wide acceptance of the corporatist perspective and the implementation of corporatist initiatives conditioned Millennials to expect a more commercialized style of radio programming and not view public radio entities any differently than commercial ones.

The author personally relates most to the statist philosophical view of public radio and believes that public radio must provide an alternative to the sound and programming on commercial stations, while serving the community from which it broadcasts. His personal philosophy of communication suggests that communication is critical to the building of community and therefore, public radio has great potential and responsibility to create community—arguably more so when the public interest standard is viewed through the lens of the statist, not the corporatist.
Theoretical Basis: Social Judgment Theory

Social Judgment Theory (SJT), as developed and defined in Sherif’s and Hovland’s 1961 book, *Social Judgment*, serves as the theoretical framework for this study. Sherif and Hovland (1961) were interested in researching attitudes and determining a means for shifting those attitudes. Attitudes are critical because “…a person’s attitude on an issue may well influence the way he appraises relevant behavior and events” (Sherif & Hovland, 1961, p. 4). Here, by “relevant,” the writers are referring to the decision to act in any situation when met with a persuasive message, and specifically, *how* to act, based on the attitude of the individual.

On the most basic level, SJT suggests that when an individual meets a persuasive message or stimulus (what Sherif and Hovland refer to as “an object”), she immediately judges that message against an internal reference scale. Does she agree with the object? Or does she disagree with the object? And to what extent does she agree or disagree with the object? If she is comparing multiple stimuli, she may compare them to one another. Alternatively, she may demonstrate “ego-involvement” (p. 112), in which a preexisting attitude serves as her reference point. In that case, does the object directly challenge her preexisting attitude? Or does it complement that attitude (Sherif & Hovland, 1961, p. 5)? Sherif and Hovland noted that by definition, a judgment requires the comparison of at least two objects (p. 17); SJT simply suggests that one of those objects may be a preexisting attitude. Sherif and Hovland wrote, “A judgment is rendered in terms of the psychological reference scale which the individual has formed on the basis of his previous encounters with similar stimuli” (p. 11).
Placement within one’s “psychological reference scale” is critical, argued Sherif and Hovland (1961):

The individual’s stand on a social issue is conceived as a range or a *latitude of acceptance*. A latitude of acceptance for certain stands on an issue implies a rather definite range of rejection as well. It is defined operationally as the range of the positions on an issues that an individual considers acceptable to him (including the one ‘most acceptable’ to him). The *latitude of rejection* consists of the positions he finds objectionable (including the one ‘most objectionable’ to him). (p. 129)

Further, a message that is severely contrasting with the anchor judgment will not only be ineffective in persuading the receiver, it will reinforce the receiver’s previous stance. They argued:

The individual does not regard the communication neutrally. The effects of communication presenting a widely divergent position are unlikely to be those intended. The individual is likely to judge the communication unfavorably and to be uninfluenced by it… Another possibility… is that the highly involved individual may move still further away from a divergent communication. He retrenches, so to speak, by taking a stand more opposed to the communication than the one he originally upheld. (Sherif & Hovland, 1961, p. 174)

Sherif and Hovland found it is possible to shift an anchor, although in small discrepancies (p. 46). Specifically, they argued a communicator would be most effective by first identifying the individual’s anchor and then deploying several successive
persuasive messages, each building upon the last, and each bringing the audience slightly further from its anchor, and slightly closer to the communicator’s intended goal.

Public radio does not take the “small discrepancies” approach to listener fundraising. The bulk of public radio fundraising is done through on-air fund drives, typically two to three times per year. Put in context, this means that for roughly 50 weeks per year, there is no on-air education about the need for listener financial support or calls to action to encourage listeners to donate. Then, for two weeks per year, the listener is heavily inundated with calls to action every hour of the day.

THE LITERATURE

How Public Radio Came to Depend Upon Direct-listener Support

For the purposes of this study, there is value in providing a cursory understanding of the history of public radio in the United States, the market pressures that have forced it to turn to more homogenized content, and the shift from taxpayer funding to listener support. The literature suggests that in the 1950s and earlier—prior to the formation of the CPB or the development of the concept of public radio—commercial radio stations had a more significant focus on local programming (Folami, 2010). However, after the 1950s, a marked change began to take place in American radio, in which commercial radio started becoming more corporatized, less local, and its sound and musical selections more homogenized (Folami, 2010; Mitchell, 2004; Nieckarz, Jr., 2002). A significant trend in this shift was the move to corporate playlisting, in which music preferences were removed from the local level. Instead, large broadcasters, traditionally based in only a few major cities, compiled national surveys to find the music and broadcasting
preferences of the American majority (Folami, 2010). The result of corporate playlisting has been mass homogenization. As early as the 1960s, the literature suggests that commercial broadcasters have sought the widest possible appeal for their stations in an effort to gain listenership and increase the sale of advertising (Giovannoni, 1988; Mitchell, 2004; Nieckarz, Jr., 2002).

As media programming (on both radio and television) became more homogenized, the federal government passed the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. Nieckarz, Jr. (2002) summarized it as such:

Studies initiated by the Federal Government concluded that commercial programming was growing too homogenous. The resulting passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 established the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a federal source of funding for public broadcasting. In the wake of the founding of the CPB, a loosely connected group of noncommercial stations (then known as “Educational Radio”) became NPR National Public Radio. CPB funding was to allow stations to offer programming that was significantly different from what was heard on commercial stations. Public broadcasting in the U.S. was to be a safe haven for creative, educational, and in-depth programming that appealed to a small or very specific audience. (Nieckarz, Jr., 2002, p. 210)

In “Deliberative Democracy on the Air: Reinvigorate Localism—Resuscitate Radio’s Subversive Past,” Folami (2010) fervently (and sometimes emotionally) argued for the need for localism in radio in both news and music programming. In doing so, Folami also offered a fairly comprehensive history of what moved the American media landscape from localism to corporatization and conglomerate ownership. She wrote:
Scholars and activists have argued that deregulation of the media industry, which began in the early 1980s and was solidified by the Telecommunications Act of 1996, facilitated unprecedented consolidation in radio station ownership. As a result, radio has become a commoditized and commercialized wasteland—a corporatized plaything—littered with fragmented, yet overlapping, music formats that play the same homogenized corporate-produced music playlists and are devoid of meaningful local public- and cultural affairs programming. (Folami, 2010, p. 143)

Because those commercial stations were focused on quickly amassing the largest possible audience to sell the most possible advertising (Folami, 2010), it is presumable that community stations moved to more focused, single-format programming in an effort to compete for listeners, too. This trend was solidified in 1983 when the Reagan administration cut CPB budgets by 25% (Mitchell, 2004) and shifted the leadership and overall direction of the Federal Communications Commission, which governs American radio (Folami, 2010). CPB budget cuts, naturally, were passed along to the public radio stations that depended primarily on federal funding. These moves were significant and highly politically motivated. Not only did they signal a change in the American media landscape (across both public television and radio), they also clearly communicated that any programming that was critical of the conservative political movement—as most public stations were—would not be funded at its previous levels with federal taxpayer monies (Hoynes, 2007; Mitchell, 2004).

Over the years, federal funding has continued to decrease for public radio. Bailey (2004a) argued, “According to audited financial data compiled by the Corporation for
Public Broadcasting, tax-based support for public radio dropped from 72% of income in 1980 to 33% in 2001” (p. 607). In an effort to combat the trends of decreasing federal funding and staffing cuts, the public radio industry banded together in the 1980s. Mitchell (2004) wrote:

Public radio’s future rested not with government support, but with the ability of public radio to raise private funds from corporations, foundations, and, above all, directly from listeners. Reagan’s 25 percent [sic] cut in federal support, and the anti-government, free-market philosophy it represented, suggested to these stations that government funding was less certain than private money. (p. 1135)

Many broadcasting scholars (Bailey, 2004b; Hoynes, 2007; Mitchell, 2004; Nieckarz, Jr., 2002) shared a very similar story of public radio’s need find more stable, less political funding, leading it ultimately to the listener as the funding source. However, in order to turn to listener funding, public radio needed to widen its appeal and create a reliance on its programming. Mitchell (2004) wrote:

The ability of public radio to raise money through memberships and underwriting depended directly on its ability to attract, hold, and satisfy listeners. Even those committed to the more traditional mission of public radio recognized that they fulfilled their mission best when their programs reached the most people. (p. 1135)

Prior to this, it was common for public stations to offer a “crazy quilt” (Bailey, 2004b) or “checkerboard” (Nieckarz, Jr., 2002) block programming schedule with several disparate niche programs instead of a singular format—arguably in representation of Fairchild’s (1999) statist definition of public interest mentioned previously. However,
following federal funding cuts throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the majority of public stations moved to a more consistent programming format in an effort to increase listenership, often focusing heavily on syndicated content, such as NPR (Bailey, 2003; Nieckarz, Jr., 2002).

The result of more syndicated content on public radio, and more homogenous content from station to station and market to market on commercial radio, is what Folami (2010) termed “consolidated radio” (p. 186) and is representative of the environment from which Millennials emerged. In “The Business of Public Radio: The Growing Commercial Presence Within Local National Public Radio,” Nieckarz, Jr. (2002) agreed. He wrote, “The research reveals that programming has grown more standardized and homogenous, and less community oriented” (p. 209). In other words, public radio programming has grown to resemble commercial radio programming. It is of value to restate that simultaneously—while public radio was moving to a direct-listener funding model, widening its appeal to garner the largest possible audience, and syndicating non-localized content to save limited resources—the bulk of Millennial generation was born and began consuming American media (“Generation Y,” 2011).

**The Importance of Understanding Millennial Audience Segmentation and Their Preexisting Attitudes**

The literature suggests that creating a personal reliance upon public radio programming for an individual drives that individual to donate. The concept was first demonstrated in “Audience 88” (Giovannoni, 1988), the landmark state-of-the-industry research report commissioned by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. It has since been repeated and demonstrated many times (‘Audience 2010,” 2006; Bailey, 2003;
Giovannoni, et al., 1999). Bailey (2004a) argued, “Giving is driven by reliance upon public radio as measured by listening behavior, along with the realization that public radio has become personally important to the listener” (p. 607). Further, he wrote, “Voluntary giving to public radio is explained by patterns of consumption, along with a perception of value—the realization of personal importance” (p. 616).

Bailey’s (2004a) study also illustrated an interesting distribution in giving. He established three segments of giving levels per year: “Light Givers,” who donated $49 or less; “Moderate Givers,” who donated $50 to $100; and “Heavy Givers,” who donated more than $100. What is particularly interesting is that Bailey found that Heavy Givers make up only 16% of financial contributors, but account for nearly half (48%) of monies donated. Moderate Givers account for 44% of givers and provide 40% of the capital, while Light Givers represent 40% of givers, but only donate 12% of the money. This is important, as presumably, those Millennial givers who are giving are likely in the Light or Moderate categories. Feldmann and Grossnickle (2010) predicted that Millennial audiences are not yet giving in high amounts to their favorite charities (industry-agnostic), but that giving will increase as Millennials’ incomes increase with age. Of course, those Millennials with a preexisting attitude against the need to support public radio are likely not giving at all.

Interestingly, Brunner (1998) found that as listenership for a public radio station increases, the proportion of listeners who contribute decreases. This means, then, that to ensure long-term success, a public radio station must widen its appeal and ensure that the content it produces is relevant, personal, and emotionally significant to its audience. Because of this fact, there is value for public stations in identifying audience
segmentations and the preferences and preexisting attitudes that may exist within those segments. Bailey (2004a) reported that NPR’s internal research team is very concerned with more deeply understanding its audience and preexisting attitudes, thereby better serving the audience’s needs, and ideally, growing the audience and its level of financial support. Bailey referenced Nixon (2001), who identified three goals for NPR’s segmentation research:

- “Understand audiences based on radio listening needs
- Determine underlying beliefs and behaviors that drive growth
- Create a comprehensive marketing tool applicable to the national and local level” (Bailey, 2004a, p 187).

This list suggests that public radio is willing to be flexible in its response to not only market changes, but also shifts in listener preferences. Thomas (2003) of the industry group, Station Resource Group, echoed Nixon’s argument when he wrote, “We need a sharp understanding of the unique appeal, core values, and importance to listeners of each of our major content choices” (as cited in Bailey, 2004b, p. 184). The author argues that this is as important, if not more important, with the Millennial generational group. As previously contended, Millennials have grown up amidst the shifts in the public radio industry that made the distinction between commercial and public radio opaque, and have rarely been provided with a clear understanding of the need for public radio.

Further, Millennials have access to more media resources than any previous generational group. Radio, even for members of other generational groups, has long been a medium that its audience listened to while also doing another activity; put another way, its audience does not give radio full attention, as it might to television or film
 (“Community Radio Programming,” 2010, p. 40). With Millennials, this is exasperated by pure choice. In “The Bedroom Project: Fascinating New Research That Lets You Hear the Thoughts and Opinions of 18-28-Year-Olds,” an ethnographic media usage research report commissioned by Arbitron, Cohen and Jacobs (2007) found a heavy reliance by young people on various media technologies and gadgets, including iPods and other MP3 players, mobile phones (which increasingly include built-in MP3 players), in-car MP3 connectivity (a particular threat to radio), cable television and DVRs, video games, music download and streaming Web sites, and social networking Web sites. Amidst all this technology, Cohen and Jacobs (2007) reported that Millennials view radio as “being ‘old school’” (p. 4), and that many simply do not own a radio in their home. Unfortunately, Cohen and Jacobs did not specifically state how many Millennials from the small ethnographic sample (31 individuals across two markets) reported that they did not own a radio in-home. However, it is presumable that for many Millennials, public radio listening is relegated to car commutes, and possibly via online streaming, where there is exponentially more competition for a listener than within a single terrestrial (FM) broadcast market.

Folami (2010) further made the distinction that unlike other media resources today, including, but not limited to, cable and satellite television, the Internet, or satellite radio, FM radio remains finite and limited—there is only so much spectrum available with which to broadcast. And, unlike the newer, less limited media resources mentioned, radio is free—once a listener has a radio (or increasingly, an Internet connection), she is not required to pay additional service or subscription fees to access content (Folami, 2010). In other words, if a viewer does not pay for services from a cable provider, like a
utility provider, that vendor simply disconnects service. A radio listener will never fear the disconnection of services. The broadcast continues whether she provides the station—commercial or public—with financial support. Should a public station go bankrupt and off the air, several other choices will be available to that listener, again without the need for her to pay to listen.

As such, the bulk of Millennials are what Bailey (2004a) referred to as “free riders.” He wrote:

Each year public radio strives to become more self-sufficient based on its own audience. Yet no individual listener has to send money to public radio. The programming is freely distributed on broadcast channels. Anyone may listen, whether or not they send money. In fact, most public radio listeners are ‘free riders,’ to use the economist’s term. A ‘free rider’ is an individual who uses the service but does not contribute to its support. (p. 608)

During on-air fundraising, the case is often made to listeners to do their part, or carry the load; in other words, to pay for the service they are enjoying, as they would with satellite radio or cable television. It is a form of impure altruism: “A different [emotional] benefit results from giving to a charity that is used by the donor, like public radio. Impure altruism could be motivated by a sense of responsibility to pay for personal use of the service” (Bailey, 2004a, p. 609). The author contends that this approach—the call for impure altruism—is least effective with the Millennial audience because the commercialization of radio has always made radio seem “free” in the eyes of the Millennial. The research will prove or disprove this.

**Existing Literature Around Millennial Fundraising**
As previously mentioned, no literature exists discussing Millennials’ financial participation with public radio. However, in the last decade there has been a relative explosion of literature about Millennials and their charitable-giving habits across all types of non-profit organizations. The two most prominent third-party, non-profit industry reports within Millennial Fundraising appear to be “The Next Generation of American Giving,” by Bhagat, et al. (2010), and the updated “Millennial Donor Report 2011” by Feldmann and Grossnickle (2011). Feldmann and Grossnickle also published a previous version of their research, “Millennial Donors: A Study of Millennial Giving and Engagement Habits” in 2010.

In “The Next Generation of American Giving,” Bhagat, et al. (2010) explored the fundraising contact channel and messaging preferences of multiple generational groups, detailing the preferences of “Generations Y [Millennials], Generation X, Baby Boomers and Matures” (p. 2). It is valuable to this study to review this industry-agnostic research to have a foundational understanding of what causes Millennials to give, and how their giving preferences and habits vary from members of previous generational groups. Certainly, the work of Bhagat et al. (2010) and several other authors (Baiocchi, 2007; Clark, 2008; Feldmann & Grossnickle, 2010; Feldmann & Grossnickle, 2011; Waters, 2008) illustrate significant generational and technological changes that are affecting nonprofits’ fundraising strategies. Bhagat et al. (2010) wrote, “The art and science of fundraising, as we know it, is undergoing rapid and permanent change driven by technology, the imperative to attract new donors, and the evolving traits of different generations of supporters” (Bhagat et al., 2010, p. 2). Further, “Change is necessary as the vast majority of fundraising efforts today are optimized for mature donors born prior
to 1945 [“Matures”], and while most charities have determined how to yield strong results from this segment, year by year, this segment is shrinking” (p. 2). In particular, Bhagat, et al. referenced direct mailers as the Mature’s preferred channel for both being introduced to a charity, and for providing payment to in the form of a check. However, Bhagat, et al. (2010) stated that between 2005 and 2010, direct mail’s ability to acquire new donors dropped 20%.

Perhaps what makes the Millennial audience most appealing—besides the inevitable trend toward younger radio listening audiences (“Public Radio Today 2011,” 2011)—is what Waters (2008) called “the intergenerational transfer of wealth.” He wrote, “Given the estimated $340 trillion transfer of wealth in the next 20 years, non-profit organizations have been pouring more resources into their fundraising and development programs in preparation for the intergenerational transfer of wealth” (p. 74). Waters (2008) also noted that nonprofits in general have seen a reduction in major gifts and for the greatest opportunity to remain sustainable, non-profit organizations should both seek new donors and cultivate existing relationships. Similarly, in 1994, Braus wrote of previous generations:

Appealing to different types of people will also help nonprofits capitalize on one of the biggest cash transfers in history: the impending passage of wealth from the older generation to their children and grandchildren… Successful organizations appeal to current donors while cultivating future ones. Targeting new donor groups will help Americans develop their generous spirit while strengthening our culture. (Braus, 1994, p. 52)
A common misconception is that Millennials are not generous with their money or time (Feldmann & Grossnickle, 2011). Certainly, as much of the generational group has yet to enter the workforce, it is reasonable to believe that Millennials give less in total than other generational groups to the non-profit industry. However, Bhagat, et al. (2010) estimated that more than half of the Millennials surveyed (56%), 18 years or older, donate $1 or more to charities annually. Put in context, Bhagat, et al. estimated that 58%—or just 2% more—members of Generation X donated $1 or more annually to nonprofits (p. 2). (Note: Bhagat, et al. defined Generation X as those members born between 1965 and 1980).

Contradictory to Bhagat, et al., in “Millennial Donors Report 2011,” Feldmann and Grossnickle (2011) published that a much more significant number of Millennials gave to charity. They argued that in 2010, 93% of Millennials gave to non-profit organizations. However, Feldmann and Grossnickle’s definition of “giving” includes those Millennials who volunteered, or donated time to nonprofits. Regardless, these significant discrepancies suggest that both groups of researchers would benefit from larger sample sizes. Bhagat, et al. surveyed roughly 1,500 participants, but that sample included representatives from all four living generational groups. They did not explicitly state the number of Millennials within that sample. Feldmann and Grossnickle’s research was specific to Millennials. They surveyed about 2,200 Millennials in 2009 and about 3,000 Millennials again in 2010 (for the 2010 and 2011 editions of their publication, respectively). Additionally, these discrepancies suggest that the research area of Millennial fundraising is both new and challenging to measure.
Feldmann and Grossnickle (2011) argued that Millennials are also quite generous with their time, and interestingly, found that the more money an individual Millennial gave, the more time he or she gave, as well. One of the other very intriguing findings from Feldmann and Grossnickle is that Millennials are more likely to give if there is a specific reason or project to fund. They wrote:

Another key factor in urging these donors to give is the nature of the request. More than half of the respondents said they are likely to respond to a specific request for a particular project, an emergency situation or an appeal that explains exactly what the money will be used for. Very few (7.7%) said they are likely or very likely to respond to a general, non-specific request, and 56.3% said they would not respond to an annual donation call. (Feldmann & Grossnickle, 2010, p. 5).

This is of interest because public radio stations continue to use on-air membership drives as their primary call for listener support. However, they generally do this on a seasonal schedule, meaning that the call for support is not for a specific project, as Feldmann and Grossnickle recommended, but instead to fund the day-to-day costs of operation.

Bhagat, et al. (2010) found that on average, Millennials gave $341 per year, with $161 of that going to their individual favorite charities (p. 4). On average, Millennials are donating to 3.6 charities per year (p. 4). The multigenerational view of the Bhagat, et al. research does suggest that the amount given increases with age, as does the amount given to an individual’s favorite charity. As such, Bhagat, et al. recommended trying to make an individual connection with a young donor early and cultivating a long relationship of
Millennial Attitudes in Public Radio

giving. “If your organization has a ‘cradle-to-grave’ fundraising strategy, meaning you acquire donors at a young age and steward them through their lifetime, it’s time to be talking to Gen Y now” (Bhagat, et al., 2010, p. 13). In addition, Bhagat, et al. indicated that more so than any other generational group (Generation X, Baby Boomers, or Matures), Millennials would be more likely to increase their contributions to their favorite non-profit the following year. Thirty-one percent responded that they would increase their donations (p. 5). Feldmann and Grossnickle’s findings were similar: 40% of those surveyed for “Millennial Donor Report 2011” expected to give more in 2011 than in 2010 (p. 8).

Bhagat, et al. (2010) noted that Millennials are comfortable donating through digital channels, and that specifically, Millennials preferred donating via a Web site to direct mail. Feldmann and Grossnickle (2010) found that 93% of Millennials prefer fundraising requests and organizational information to come via email (p. 6).

Not surprisingly, Bhagat, et al. (2010) found that donating via emerging channels, such as social networks and mobile/SMS are found most favorable by Millennials. However, response to these channels remains far from reaching the tipping point (p. 7).

Bhagat, et al. (2010) argued that a multichannel approach to asking for funds—integrated asks across email, direct mail, SMS, and messages on social networks, for instance—is the most effective approach when trying to appeal to all four living generational groups. As such, they recommended collecting a diverse set of contact information, including contact data for givers in emerging channels, such as social networking pages. Public radio tends to collect traditional contact information, including mailing address, phone number, and email address. Public radio stations may be better
served by adding new, emerging channels to their databases, and specifically asking
contributors through which channel or channels they prefer contact (pp. 11-13).

Of particular importance to the ask for Millennials is word-of-mouth as a contact
channel. Bhagat, et al. (2010) wrote:

Specifically, younger donors are more likely to support a charity when
friends/family ask versus the charity asking them. They consider much of their
giving relatively random based upon their emotional reaction to something in the
media, or based upon who asks” (p. 10).

Most public radio fundraising is not aligned with this insight. Specifically, the
most critical fundraising channel and activity for most stations is the on-air membership
drive, in which deejays directly solicit listeners to donate via the FM broadcast. Public
radio uses other channels, too, such as direct mail or email and events, but these channels
also do not place an emphasis on “peer-to-peer” fundraising. Bhagat, et al. (2010) wrote:

Younger donors represent relatively open targets. The best way to reach
them is either through inspirational stories in the media, or better still, via
their friends. Given that a vast majority of charitable marketing efforts
today are directed towards direct donor engagement and solicitation versus
stimulating peer-to-peer engagement and general media exposure, it would
suggest that those marketing efforts are poorly aligned with what younger
donors say motivates them to give. (p. 10)

To encourage more Millennial donations, putting a peer-to-peer strategy in place
may make sense for public radio stations. Among other approaches, public stations could
identify core Millennial listeners and members and provide them with simple, easy and
quick to use tools, such as pre-written email or social network status update copy to share with friends.

Feldmann and Grossnickle (2011) agreed that Millennials giving habits were largely dependent on the recommendations of friends and families (p. 6), that those giving habits often lacked focus or were spread across several charities (p. 6), and that the generational group demonstrated a preference for giving online (p. 9). In fact, the survey results of Feldmann and Grossnickle (2011) indicated that the best means to win the trust of a potential Millennial donor is through an endorsement by a friend or family, and that word-of-mouth on social networks may be of particular value with 33% of Millennials surveyed specifically used Facebook for information gathering about non-profit organizations (p. 13).

**RATIONALE**

Research will demonstrate that within the Millennial audience segment that preexisting attitudes may exist that prevent it from actively participating in public radio, including supporting it financially, and that the Millennial audience may have developed a preference for commercial-style programming that public radio would need to slowly shift. It is important that any required changes in programming or fundraising approaches be identified now, as the public radio industry is experiencing a significant decline. In its key findings summary, “Audience 2010” (2006) reported, “Public radio is no longer a growth industry. Public radio’s national loss of audience momentum is real” (p. 1).

Further, it reported, “Public radio is losing its grip on its own listeners. It’s not that they
are listening less to radio; they are listening less to public radio and listening more to commercial radio (p.1).”

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research will address the following research questions:

- **RQ1**: Have Millennial public radio listeners been conditioned to believe that radio is “free?”
- **RQ2**: Have Millennial public radio listeners been conditioned to passively accept homogenized programming that sounds similar to commercial radio?
- **RQ3**: Are there specific, common preexisting attitudes that keep Millennials from actively participating or financially supporting public radio?
CHAPTER 3: SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study sampled the Millennial audience of a single public radio station, but may prove to be useful and relevant to the public radio industry as a whole. Listener’s Community Radio of Utah, KRCL 90.9FM is a Salt Lake City, Utah-based community radio station. It was identified as an exemplary public radio station for the purposes of this study. It is a non-commercial, listener-funded, non-profit station that primarily broadcasts music with some public affairs programming. Nearly all of its programming is produced locally. Like many public stations, direct-listener support comprises the vast majority of its income (Morrissey, 2010). In May 2008, KRCL earned a Corporation for Public Broadcasting grant to fund programmatic changes designed to reverse the trend of a decreasing audience size. At the time, the audience was primarily made up of members of the Baby Boomer and Generation X generational groups (Morrissey, 2010). Among other changes, the goal was to shift to a more consistent, standardized, and in some ways, more youthful sound. After a few years, KRCL’s audience has increased and the makeup of that audience has shifted to include a sizable number of Millennials (Morrissey, 2010).

The scope is only inclusive of Millennial responses. The methodology was designed to meet this restriction, and therefore there is limited comparison between the responses of Millennials and members of other generational groups. As such, the breadth of the study is relatively narrow. Like similar exploratory research projects, the goal of the research was to clarify a specific problem and set the foundation for incremental study. The research was also “people- or behavior-oriented research” (Rubin, Rubin, & Piele, 2005, p. 226), versus “message- or artifact-oriented research” (Rubin, et al., 2005,
p. 220). Rubin, et al. wrote of such research, “People- or behavior-oriented research focuses on actions and reactions of people” (p. 226).

**METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

The methodology included the use of a quantitative survey and focus groups. The focus groups included qualitative questions intended to spur group conversation, as well as use of the Thurstone Attitude Scale (Sherif & Hovland, 1961) to identify any common preexisting attitudes held by KRCL’s Millennial listeners. Both the survey and the following focus groups were issued within one month of the close of KRCL’s fall 2011 on-air fund drive, Radiothon.

Social Judgment Theory (Sherif & Hovland, 1961) suggests that KRCL 90.9FM and other publicly funded media channels would benefit from identifying if there is a common judgment scale among its Millennial audience members. And, if there is, adjusting the organization’s approach to fundraising messages to more gradually shift Millennials away from passivity to financial contribution. It would be of particular interest to public radio to identify specific anchors, if any, commonly held by Millennials restricting their active participation.

To identify such a common judgment scale, the study began with a basic quantitative survey to help segment KRCL’s *Millennial listeners who are also non-contributors* away from similar audience members of other generation groups. (Please see Appendix A.) Rubin, et al. (2005) explained the basic goals of survey research as such: “Survey researchers seek to describe or to explain people’s current attitudes, opinions, thoughts, and, perhaps, reports of behavior… surrounding an issue or event” (p. 226).
Specifically, this study used a “self-administered survey” (Rubin, et al., 2005, p. 227), hosted online. Invitations to complete the survey posted publicly on the organization’s Web site and via its Facebook and Twitter social media channels. The survey was available to public response for one week. The survey collected basic information and identified common reasons for avoiding financial contribution. Ultimately, the survey served as a means to invite Millennial listeners and non-contributors to participate in focus group discussions.

Following the survey and the opportunity to remove respondents from other generational groups, the study proceeded with three focus group sessions. Each session lasted one hour and included quantitative and qualitative components. In total, 12 Millennials participated. Participants were incentivized to join a focus group with the offer of a free KRCL t-shirt, typically only available to KRCL members who make a financial contribution of $60 or more.

A discussion guide was developed to help shape the conversation within each focus group, allowing participants to respond to questions about KRCL, their listening habits, the importance of the organization to the community and in their daily lives, similarities to commercial stations that do not request listener funding, cases for donating, and cases for not donating. (Please see Appendix B.) The Thurstone Attitude Scale was also used in the focus groups, as both a quantitative and qualitative tool. Sherif and Hovland (1961) used the Thurstone Attitude Scale frequently in developing and testing SJT. They described it as such:

the subject is required to place each stimulus into a prescribed number of categories which are defined by the experimenter. All of the items are given to
him at once, and the number is usually quite large… Because of the large number of items, the subject cannot compare each one with every other item and then place them into categories. He actually places them one at a time, perhaps checking back on prior placement; therefore the background of preceding stimuli can easily influence his rating of a particular item. (Sherif & Hovland, 1961, p. 26).

Statements on a Thurstone Attitude Scale are intended to fall within a participant’s latitude of acceptance or latitude of rejection. As such, respondents were asked to identify the statements with which they agreed and disagreed. Respondents were also asked which single statement they most accepted and which single statement they most rejected, potentially indicating their individual anchors (Sherif & Hovland, 1961, p. 132-134).

For this study, the Thurstone Attitude Scale included a hard copy of a list of differentiated and contradictory statements. (Please see Appendix C.) Use of a combination of what Hoyle, Harris, and Judd (2002, p. 125) referred to as “Questions about facts,” “Questions aimed at beliefs or attitudes” (p. 126), and “Questions aimed at behavior” (p. 128) offered a more complete understanding than asking about a single area. Specifically, the statements included messages about the perceived value (or lack of value) of public radio programming, the importance (or lack of importance) of localism in radio, reasons why listeners should support public radio, and reasons why listeners should not support public radio. The list also included factual statements about KRCL and its funding model, and inaccurate statements designed to look like facts. In total, there were 60 statements—30 statements that reflected KRCL or public radio positively
and 30 statements that reflected KRCL or public radio negatively. Statements that were falsehoods or contradicted current approaches to listener funding—for instance, the fact that most public radio stations depend on several consecutive days of on-air fundraising, versus several shorter on-air drives—are marked as negative. Appendix C includes a key for identifying which statements were positive toward KRCL or public radio and which were negative. Several of the statements were very similar with one another, but reworded slightly differently. The goal of this series of statements was to identify if there are common misperceptions among the Millennial audience, enabling public radio professionals to adjust their messaging to correct those misconceptions.

Identifying the participant’s individual judgments of all other statements might further define the boundaries of his or her latitudes of acceptance, rejection, and non-commitment (Sherif & Hovland, 1961). It is important to identify both of the anchors within a participant’s latitudes of acceptance and rejection in order to craft the most persuasive message possible—one that is within the participant’s latitude of acceptance, but as far from possible as the internal anchor or preexisting attitude (Sherif & Hovland, 1961). After responding to the written statements individually, discussion was guided around participants’ individual judgments about the statements, as well as discussion to further probe why these preexisting attitudes exist, and what—in the participants’ opinions—might be the most persuasive approach to bring Millennials to contribute financially.
CHAPTER 4: THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Four: the Study, the data will be reviewed and analyzed in search of common internal anchors and common boundaries to the Millennial participants’ latitudes of acceptance and rejection. Based on that analysis, the author will provide recommendations about what types of messages to use, avoid, and test further to most effectively convert Millennial listeners and non-contributors to members within Chapter Five: Summaries and Conclusions.

The methodology consisted of three distinct items: a basic quantitative survey open to all KRCL listeners who did not donate, three qualitative focus groups, and use of the Thurstone Attitude Scale, an additional quantitative tool effective in using Social Judgment Theory, with the focus group participants. The combined results respond to the study’s three research questions and help to define the potential common latitudes of acceptance and rejection among Millennial public radio listeners.

DATA ANALYSIS

Survey

In one week, the online survey garnered 388 responses across all generational groups. With 42.5% of responses (or 164 Millennial respondents), Millennials were the largest sample within the total response group—presumably because the survey was hosted online from KRCL’s homepage and promoted via its social media channels. Generation X respondents were the next largest group with 22.3% or 86 responses. The
data from the 164 Millennial respondents were filtered from the rest of the responses and then analyzed.

**Focus Groups and Thurstone Attitude Scale**

After removing respondents who were members of other generational groups from the survey results, several Millennial non-contributor respondents were invited to participate in one of three focus group sessions. In total, the focus groups included 12 participants. Participants represented a variety of listener types—many listened to public radio heavily and indicated that KRCL was their favorite radio station. Others listened occasionally. Some had contributed financially to KRCL in the past. Some had not. None donated in the most recent on-air fund drive.

The sessions began with issuance of the Thurstone Attitude Scale (Please see Appendix C), a common tool used in attitude measurement within Social Judgment Theory. It included 60 statements for the participants to respond. As previously mentioned, from the perspective of KRCL, 30 of those statements were positive—that is to say, they reinforced a positive view of KRCL, public radio, or current programming and fundraising practices. The remaining 30 statements were considered negative from KRCL’s perspective. Participants indicated the statements with which they agreed or disagreed, and chose the single statements with which they most agreed and most disagreed. If a participant’s choice was in contradiction with KRCL’s perspective on the statement, it was coded as a contradiction. The number of contradictions for individual participants ranged greatly, from as few as five contradictions per participant (presumably a very heavy KRCL and public radio listener) to as many as 21 contradictions per participant (presumably an infrequent KRCL and public radio listener).
9.75 average contradictions / 60 statements = 83.75% agreement with KRCL

The mean of the 12 participants was 9.75 choices that contradicted KRCL’s perspective. That average number of contradictions divided by the total number of statements (60) equals 83.75%. In other words, 83.75% of the time, the average participant was in agreement with KRCL’s perspective on the statements listed on the Thurstone Attitude Scale. As a reminder, in their Social Judgment Theory, Sherif and Hovland (1961) argued that a judgment is a comparison between at least two objects—one of which might be a preexisting attitude. Further, they argued that when met with an object or message intended to persuade an individual, that individual weighs it against an internal reference scale defined by preexisting attitudes to decide what her response should be to the object or message. In this study, there was no persuasive messaging expressed by the moderator, nor was there any group discussion before the participants started weighing the statements on the Thurstone Attitude Scale. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that the participants were weighing each statement against preexisting attitudes gained from previous interactions with KRCL and other public radio organizations. This suggests that KRCL has been 83.75% effective in communicating key messages to Millennials, and slowly bringing those Millennials to accept and establish these key messages as attitudes.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Survey
The survey’s sample suggested that KRCL’s Millennial audience, has long listened to the station and actively participated with it in the past. 86.6% stated that they have listened for several years. Similarly, less than 15% of Millennial respondents said that they had never donated to KRCL. This does not correlate well with the station’s growing listenership based on Arbitron reporting. Presumably, those Millennials that are engaged with KRCL’s Web site or social media channels where they found the survey may have a more significant connection (including heavier listening habits and donation history) to KRCL than a listener who recently discovered the station or public radio in general.

Based on the survey, the data suggested that KRCL is doing an effective job of educating its listeners on the general need for direct-listener support. Based on multiple-choice values, respondents were asked what, in their estimation, was the percentage of federal funding KRCL received. The correct answer was “10 to 20%.” The majority of respondents actually chose that KRCL operates on less federal funding, with 52.8% selecting “0 to 9%.” Twenty-seven percent of respondents selected correctly, and the remainder (20.2%) overestimated the amount of federal funding KRCL receives, as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:**

Participant responses to estimation of federal funding.
Likewise, the respondents were asked what percentage of KRCL’s operating budget, in their estimation, was paid for by direct-listener support. The correct answer was “More than 50%” and the vast majority (77.9% of respondents) selected this correctly, suggesting that KRCL is effective in expressing the need for listener funding.

**Table 2:**

Participant estimation of listener funding.
Despite that effectiveness, some common reasons for not giving emerged from the survey, suggesting that KRCL might be more efficient in its Millennial fundraising if those points were addressed specifically in its messaging. First, Radiothon, the ten-day-long on-air fund drive (the most common approach to public radio fundraising), alienated many Millennial listeners. When asked specifically if they tuned out during Radiothon, 11.7% said they did. Contradicting that, when asked to choose the single statement that best described why they did not donate this Radiothon, 25.6% of respondents chose, “I tune out during Radiothon.” This response was tied with one other for the most common reason Millennials did not donate. Regardless of this discrepancy between the two survey questions, Radiothon definitely minimizes Millennial listening. Nearly half of all respondents (47.8%) said that they listen less to KRCL during Radiothon than they normally do.

**Table 3:**

Reduction in listening behavior during on-air fundraising.

According to the survey, the other most common reason Millennials did not donate to KRCL during Radiothon (tied at 25.6%) was “My contribution would have
been too small to make an impact.” This suggests a great opportunity for public radio to address this point specifically in future fundraising messaging. There is also great opportunity in addressing the third most common choice: 13.4% of participants selected, “I like KRCL, but don’t depend upon it enough to warrant a contribution.”

Finally, the other single statements frequently selected by Millennials explaining why they did not donate to KRCL’s Radiothon were “I donate to another public radio station instead” (14.6%) and “I don’t understand where my money goes” (7.3%). These statements garnered enough responses that they may be worth exploring in future fundraising messaging or programming decisions. For instance, the same survey found that 71.3% of Millennial KRCL listeners are also listening at some level to other public radio stations in Utah. Of those 71.3%, the vast majority (87.3%) are tuning into KUER, Utah’s largest NPR affiliate. Future fundraising messaging may be aimed at creating differentiation between KRCL and KUER.

As far as the statement, “I don’t understand where my money goes,” which earned a response rate of 7.3%, this attitude may be worth addressing in future fundraising, too. It came up with greater frequency in the focus group sessions and corresponds to a Feldmann and Grossnickle (2011) finding that suggests that Millennials are more likely to donate if they have a clear, broken-out explanation of how their money will be used. Public radio stations could easily add an infographic to their Web sites detailing this data.

Four other statements garnered responses of 5% or less each, suggesting that they are not commonly held attitudes for Millennials. Interestingly, half of the total Millennial respondents to the survey (82 of the 164) skipped this question. Presumably, these Millennial respondents did not find a single statement that best explained why they did
not contribute. Future research should provide the opportunity to write in a response to this question.

**Table 4:**

Most common Millennial reasons for not donating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don’t need to donate because so many other</td>
<td>16.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio is meant to be free, I shouldn’t have to pay to</td>
<td>16.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The deppays’ arguments are not compelling or clear</td>
<td>16.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like KRCL, but I don’t depend on it enough to</td>
<td>16.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I donate to another public radio station instead</td>
<td>16.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t understand where my money goes</td>
<td>16.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My contribution would have been too small to</td>
<td>16.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KRCL exaggerates the need for listener funding</td>
<td>16.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have not done during Radiothon</td>
<td>16.66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Focus Groups and Thurstone Attitude Scale**

Regarding the results of the Thurstone Attitude Scale, special attention was given to those statements that were frequently selected and contradicted the interests of KRCL. Specific statements that garnered substantial contradictory responses included:

- “I have a clear understanding of how KRCL uses the money it earns during Radiothon.” Eight of 12 participants, or 66.66% disagreed with this statement. This was a substantially bigger issue in the focus groups than the online survey, indicating that Millennials want a specific, detailed understanding as to how public radio stations will use their donations.

- “I enjoy listening to Radiothon.” Eight of 12 participants, or 66.66%, also disagreed with this statement, indicating that public radio may need to explore
other fundraising channels as its Millennial listeners become a larger part of its audience. Similarly, five of 12, or 41.6% of participants agreed with the statement, “If you tune in frequently during Radiothon, the arguments feel repetitive or annoying.”

- “I have a good understanding of how KRCL makes its revenue.” Seven of 12, or 58.3% disagreed with this statement. Paradoxically, most participants could concisely explain the model of listener support in the focus group conversations.

- “Radiothon would be more effective if it happened more than twice per year, but in shorter bursts.” Seven of 12, or 58.3% of participants agreed with this statement. Similarly, four of 12, or 33.3% of participants agreed with the statement, “Radiothon shouldn’t last ten days.” These statements are considered negative from the viewpoint of KRCL because they contradict the established best practices for public radio fundraising. Interestingly, when the point of shorter, more frequent fund drives was discussed in the focus groups, participants were passionately divided. Those that agreed with it argued that they would have less need to tune out for extended periods of time. Those who rejected the statement argued that the duration of the two fund drives felt “like an event” and made them more likely to donate.

- “Media conglomerates should not be allowed to own more than one radio station in Salt Lake.” Response to this statement was evenly split, suggesting that while most participants preferred public radio to commercial radio, many accepted commercial radio’s business model.
• “Commercial radio stations receive federal funding, too.” Five of 12, or 41.6% of participants accepted this false statement to be true, suggesting that while they might accept commercial radio’s business model, they do not truly understand it. This potentially presents public radio with further points to differentiate from commercial radio.

• “I feel like I have a personal connection with at least one KRCL deejay or programmer.” Five of 12, or 41.6% of participants disagreed with this. This is significant because radio presents a rare opportunity in media to speak in the second person and create the intimate feeling that a deejay is communicating directly to one listener. Public radio relies on this tactic more heavily than commercial programming. In addition, this intimacy drives the reliance on public radio programming that brings a listener to contribute financially (Giovannoni, 1988).

• “Most KRCL listeners become members.” Four of 12, or 33.3% of participants accepted this false statement. In actuality, KRCL estimated that 5% of its listeners become members (Morrissey, 2010). This point was made on-air frequently during the recent fund drive. Public radio stations as a whole typically receive listener funding from a very small percentage of their listeners. Significant misunderstanding suggests that this point should be clarified in fundraising messages.

• “This past Radiothon, one or more of the arguments had me close to donating.” Four of 12, or 33.3% of the participants agreed with this statement. Given that none of the participants in the focus groups contributed financially, and only one-
third stated that they were relatively persuaded, KRCL and public radio may need to re-evaluate their fundraising messages.

- “Donating to KRCL gives you a vote in the programming it plays.” Four of 12, or 33.3% of the participants disagreed with this statement. This is significant because it directly contradicts an argument that is made frequently on-air by KRCL deejays during the fund drive. This suggests that KRCL needs to more clearly articulate how members are being handed a “vote,” or replace it with a more effective message.

No other statement gained more than three (25%) common responses that contradicted KRCL’s perspective. Given the small sample size of the focus groups, these responses were considered less significant. In addition to several commonly rejected statements, many of the statements (18 of the 60 statements) were unanimously accepted by all participants, representing possible common preexisting attitudes among the Millennial listening audience. These statements included ideas that are important for public radio in differentiating itself from commercial radio, providing unique value to its listeners, and explaining the need for direct-listener support, such as:

- “It is not fair of KRCL to interrupt the regular programming to ask for listener funding”—unanimously rejected
- “In the future, I will likely contribute to KRCL.”—unanimously accepted
- “I don’t really notice the commercials on commercial radio.”—unanimously rejected
- “Because of the listener financial support, KRCL is able to offer unique, distinctive programming.”—unanimously accepted
Millennial Attitudes in Public Radio

- “Without listener funding, KRCL wouldn’t exist.”—unanimously accepted
- “KRCL is a very important part of the Salt Lake community.”—unanimously accepted
- “KRCL doesn’t need my money when so many other people are contributing to it.”—unanimously rejected
- “KRCL introduced me to an artist who I now love.”—unanimously accepted
- “With the amount of federal funding KRCL receives, it doesn’t need my money.”—unanimously accepted
- “There is value in news programming being produced locally—not just on the national level.”—unanimously accepted
- “A radio station has very little impact in building community.”—unanimously rejected
- “The programming on KRCL sounds like programming on other radio stations.”—unanimously rejected
- “There is value in music programming being produced locally—not just on the national-level.”—unanimously accepted
- “I will likely never contribute financially to KRCL.”—unanimously rejected
- “KRCL values its listeners and their input more than commercial radio stations do.”—unanimously accepted
- “Commercial radio feels too repetitive for me.”—unanimously accepted
- “KRCL is a non-profit organization.”—unanimously accepted
- “I’d prefer it if KRCL accepted advertising and stopped conducting fundraising efforts.”—unanimously rejected
Unanimous agreement on these statements indicated potential commonly held preexisting attitudes among KRCL’s Millennial listeners. This knowledge, combined with the understanding of which contradictions were common among the participants, and which anchor statements were commonly agreed upon, should help public radio professionals to craft more effective messaging for Millennials.

Sherif’s and Hovland’s (1961) Social Judgment Theory (SJT) stated that when an individual weighs a message against her internal reference scale that the scale is actually made up of ranges. Sherif and Hovland called these ranges the latitudes of acceptance, rejection, and indifference (p. 129). Within both the latitude of acceptance and latitude of rejection are anchor attitudes—the most strongly held preexisting attitude the individual accepts and rejects, respectively. Sherif and Hovland argued that in order to be most persuasive, a persuader must first identify the anchor attitudes of her message recipients. In developing SJT, Sherif and Hovland regularly used the Thurstone Attitude Scale in their research to find anchor attitudes on a variety of topics.

In this study, anchor attitudes were identified by asking each focus group participant to select the single statement with which she most agreed and the single statement with which she most disagreed on the Thurstone Attitude Scale. Again, there were several common responses. Between the “most agree” and “most disagree” anchors, 17 separate statements were selected by the participants. However, many of the statements included in the Thurstone Attitude Scale were duplicated in the sense that they communicated a similar meaning, although they might have been re-worded to be expressed in the positive and the negative. As such, anchor statements with extremely similar meanings were grouped together. The common anchors included:
• “KRCL is a very important part of the Salt Lake community” in the affirmative (most agreed) and “A radio station has very little impact on building community” in the negative (most disagreed). Combining the affirmative and negative responses, 25% of participants selected this anchor in one of the two forms, suggesting that the concepts of localism and community are of particular importance to Millennial public radio listeners.

• “Because of the listener support, KRCL is able to offer unique, distinctive programming” in the affirmative (most agreed) and “The programming on KRCL sounds like programming on other radio stations” in the negative (most disagreed). Combining the affirmative and negative responses, 25% of participants selected this anchor, suggesting that Millennials recognize both the need for direct-listener support and the link between listener support and unique programming.

• “KRCL introduced me to an artist I now love.” 25% of participants selected this as their most agree anchor, indicating a potential point of further differentiation for public radio from commercial radio.

• “The public affairs programming on KRCL presents voices and ideas I wouldn’t hear on the radio otherwise” in the affirmative (most agreed) and “The public affairs programming on KRCL isn’t very distinctive” in the negative (most disagreed). Combining the affirmative and negative responses, 25% of participants selected this anchor, again identifying a potential point of differentiation for public radio from other news sources.
DISCUSSION

The goal of the study was to respond to the following research questions:

- RQ1: Have Millennial public radio listeners been conditioned to believe that radio is “free?”
- RQ2: Have Millennial public radio listeners been conditioned to passively accept homogenized programming that sounds similar to commercial radio?
- RQ3: Are there specific, common preexisting attitudes that keep Millennials from actively participating or financially supporting public radio?

In the review of the literature, the author expressed two personal ethical or philosophical assumptions. These ethical assumptions helped shape the study and its methods. These ethical assumptions are especially evident in the development of the above research questions and the discussion of the data that follows. Specifically, the author expressed a belief in the value of generational-specific research and fundraising messaging. It has long been accepted by marketers that demographics such as age, geographic location, family size, income, and other factors contribute to influencing an individual’s value system. Likewise, the author believes that members of the same generational group may also share common values, which were developed and rooted based upon common “experiences in the time-line of history” (Baiocchi, 2007, p. 2). Acceptance of this philosophical assumption would make it reasonable to believe that Millennials interact with public radio and may respond to well-established fundraising messages and approaches differently than members of other generational groups do.

The author’s second philosophical assumption was expressed in the review of the literature when examining how public radio can best serve its audience. The debate,
generally called the public interest standard, includes two distinct philosophical approaches, defined by Fairchild (1999) as the statist view and the corporatist view. Stated briefly, the corporatist view argues for a free market. Just as in commercial radio, the public radio programming that brings in the most listeners (and ultimately the most fundraising) is deemed to be best. Following this interpretation, programming is created to be the most widely appealing possible. Conversely, the statist view suggests that the most widely appealing programming is actually quite limiting in its breadth, and that widely appealing does not mean that the widest possible audience is represented. In other words, the statist view suggests that instead of amassing the largest possible single and uniform audience, that the public interest is better served by amassing many smaller and distinctive audiences (Fairchild, 1999; Folami, 2010; McChesney, 1999; Mitchell, 2004; Nieckarz, Jr., 2002). The statist recognizes that this programming strategy is not lucrative, and believes that the government should be (at least partially) financially responsible, suggesting that the government should not just protect the public good, but also be a “provider of public good” (Fairchild, 1999, p. 551). The author’s ethical assumption prefers the statist view, but recognizes that public radio’s slow evolution to listener funding and away from a dependence on government funding means that the industry must embrace the corporatist view. As such, it has developed programming designed to make the widest possible audience dependent upon it. The literature suggested that this has created a homogenization of radio programming, making public radio programming strategies and tactics similar to those of commercial radio. Therefore, the research questions were developed to explore whether Millennial audiences—whose common experiences on the time-line of history aligned with this move toward radio
homogenization—shared a common inactivity or lack of participation as radio listeners (RQ1), could identify the limited distinctions between commercial and public radio strategies and programming tactics (RQ2), and shared specific preexisting attitudes that keep them from contributing financially (RQ3).

**RQ1**

In response to the RQ1, the data suggested that the majority of Millennial public radio listeners do not believe radio to be free. Responses to both the survey and especially the focus groups (which offered more opportunity to elaborate on responses than the survey) indicated that Millennials typically had a strong understanding of the difference in business model between a commercial and public radio station, and an understanding that in either model, the listener incurred the costs in one way or another. Interestingly, one listener selected “Radio is meant to be free; I shouldn’t have to pay for it” as the single statement he most disagreed with on the Thurstone Attitude Scale. However, in discussion he stated that he believed that the majority of his peers would not be in agreement with him. “I think there’s a misunderstanding as to where money comes from, whether through commercial stations or through, you know, tax payer/listener-funded stations.”

Millennials in the study also had a good grasp of how the direct-listener support funding model works for public radio stations, including an understanding of its most common form—the on-air fund drive. In the focus groups, one participant said:

I think there’s also a difference… I feel like I’m actively participating in the fund drive when I do, rather than passively accepting this commercial interest that’s being, kind of, shoved down everyone’s throats all of the time. So, I’m choosing
to participate in a part of the community rather than sitting passively and accepting whatever’s chosen for me.

RQ2

Despite that understanding of the listener-funding model, the response to RQ2 is less clear. Most Millennials were unable to state specific differences in the programming styles of commercial stations and public radio stations. Many, of course, noted the difference in sound that results from playing many commercials, and a few participants exhibited a cursory knowledge of corporate music playlisting (one focus group participant said, “You’re hearing the top songs from a national standpoint over and over and over again.”), but generally, the Millennial understanding of programming distinctions ended there. Indeed, 41.6% of the focus group participants incorrectly indicated that commercial stations receive similar government funding as public radio stations.

Based on the research, it is unclear if Millennial public radio listeners have been conditioned to passively accept homogenized programming that sounds similar to commercial radio. However, it is clear that the effect that radio commercials have on Millennial listeners who primarily listen to public radio is jarring. Many described in detail a visceral need to immediately switch stations when hearing a commercial on-air. One participant said, “The minute any commercial comes on any radio station, I always change to another radio station.” Further, despite not being able to clearly articulate the individual programming distinctions, many communicated an obvious overall difference. One participant said, “It’s pretty obvious if you listen to KRCL for just one day how vastly different it is from a commercial radio station.”
RQ3

In response to RQ3, the data suggested that there might indeed be common preexisting attitudes that keep Millennial listeners from donating to public radio, or at least affect their consideration to do so. While Sherif and Hovland (1961) never used their Social Judgment Theory (SJT) to evaluate generational commonalities, the results of this study indicated that a common Millennial judgment scale is indeed a reasonable assumption. SJT states that an internal reference scale within individuals is made up of a latitude of acceptance—that is, the range of statements an individual is willing to accept with little additional persuasion—and a latitude of rejection—that is, the range of statements an individual is likely unwilling to accept with little additional persuasion. Both the latitude of acceptance and the latitude of rejection house an anchor judgment, the attitude most firmly rooted within each range. As Sherif and Hovland (1961) indicated, it is possible to shift an anchor, although in small successions (p. 46). Specifically, they recommended deploying several successive persuasive messages, each building upon the last, and each bringing the audience slightly further from its anchor, and slightly closer to the communicator’s intended goal.

Among the potential common Millennial latitude of acceptance are statements suggesting that public radio offers distinctive programming from commercial radio stations (even if Millennials could not articulate how exactly), that public radio stations are important to the communities they serve, and the understanding and agreement that public radio stations are non-profit organizations. Among the common Millennial latitude of rejection is the concept of changing public radio’s direct-listener funding model significantly, as it would alter the quality of programming offered.
In addition to identifying any common latitudes of acceptance and rejection, the study also sought out commonly held anchors by Millennials. These anchors represent preexisting attitudes and messaging areas that public radio stations should consider developing points around to slowly and systematically beginning to shift the Millennial mindset. Among those preexisting attitudes worth developing messaging against in small successions are:

- Illustrating that even small contributions make a difference. As noted above, 25.6% of all Millennial survey respondents stated that they did not donate to KRCL’s Radiothon because they felt the contribution they could afford to make was too small to make a difference. Needless to say, if a greater number of listeners donated to public radio, even in small amounts, the industry would be in better financial standing.

- Providing Millennial listeners with a clear understanding how all funding (listener, federal, private grants, underwriting) comes in and is used. One participant said, “I’m persuaded by statistics and data. I use the KRCL Web site frequently… I’d like to see, like, a [graph that shows] ‘this is how much our federal funding is, and this is how much our listener funding is.’ …When I see that information, it means something to me.” Another participant suggested demonstrating what the average donation for someone under 30 was, and how that donation was used.

- Combatting the notion that the programming during fundraising is inferior to typical public radio programming. The need for this is evidenced by the various
data from the survey and focus groups that suggest a high tune out, or at least decrease in Millennial listening habits during on-air fundraising.

- Demonstrating that the vast majority of public radio listeners do not become members, making the choice of an individual listener to become a member even more significant. On the Thurstone Attitude Scale, a large percentage (41.6%) of participants incorrectly indicated that most KRCL listeners become supporters.

- Further explaining how the relationship between financial contribution and programming choices. One-third of focus group participants did not see a correlation.

- Demonstrating an individual listener’s reliance upon a public radio station. As demonstrated in Chapter Two: Review of the Literature, this is a classic fundraising strategy across all generational groups for public radio.

In the Conclusions section of the following chapter, Chapter 5: Summaries and Conclusions, these potential messaging points are reflected upon along with key points regarding the study’s theoretical framework, Social Judgment Theory, as well as existing public radio and Millennial fundraising strategies to provide additional considerations for further research and development of Millennial fundraising messaging.
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSIONS

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although the study was successful in responding to the research questions, it certainly possessed some restrictions. Most notably, the scope of the study was limited. While the study may prove to be valuable to any public radio organization, it specifically sampled the audience of a single public radio station. The scope was further limited by focusing primarily on Millennials; a less narrow scope might sample each generational group to provide further opportunities for comparison and analysis.

In addition, there appeared to be a particular limitation to the survey tool used in this study. The question that specifically asked Millennials which one statement best describes the reason they did not donate during KRCL’s recent fund drive included nine possible responses. Evidently, this was not comprehensive as 50% of the Millennials who participated in the survey opted not to respond to this question. Because this piece of data could be so critical in identifying potential anchor statements within a common Millennial judgment scale, this should be addressed in future study.

FURTHER STUDY

Further study should also include a larger Millennial sample that is more geographically diverse and includes listeners of several different types of public radio stations, and, ideally, commercial radio listeners, too. Inclusion of commercial radio Millennial listeners may provide researchers with additional avenues to explore, including the opportunity to experiment and introduce those Millennial commercial radio listeners who have never listened to public radio to programming during an on-air fund
drive. Additionally, as mentioned above, further research could provide more detailed distinctions between the listening and contribution habits of all generational groups to illustrate if other generational groups commonly hold preexisting attitudes toward public radio, and if those preexisting attitudes are distinct from those of Millennials. Also as mentioned above in Limitations of the Study, if future research directly asks what the single reason why Millennial participants do not donate to public radio fund drives, it should allow for write-in responses.

CONCLUSIONS

In the Discussion section of the previous chapter, Chapter 4: The Study, it was demonstrated how the research effectively responded to the three research questions. Also in the same section, potential commonly held preexisting attitudes were identified, thus providing public radio professionals with specific messaging points to better implement in a Millennial fundraising strategy. These points complement the ethical assumptions addressed in Chapter 2: Literature Review. There were two ethical assumptions considered in this study. First, that it is important to consider common generational values when creating persuasive messaging, as argued by Baiocchi (2007). Second, that there are two distinct philosophical interpretations as to how public radio would best serve the public interest. The author and many public radio scholars and professionals prefer the statist view. Additionally, the author’s personal philosophy of communication suggests that communication is critical to the building of community and that, therefore, public radio has great potential and responsibility to create community—arguably more so when the public interest standard is viewed through the lens of the
statist, not the corporatist. Despite this, the corporatist view, which suggests that economic competition brings about the largest possible audience and therefore the best possible programming has become nearly uniformly accepted by public radio stations in an effort to continue to exist. Instead of appealing to the varied interests of a broad audience, they have moved to programming that attracts the largest possible audience, thereby expanding the universe of potential donors. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Chapter 4: The Study, the result for many Millennials is an understanding of a general distinction between public and commercial radio, but an inability to express specific programming distinctions.

As the Literature Review demonstrated, significant literature exists suggesting that public radio is most effective in moving a listener of any generation only when that listener realizes that she has become reliant upon public radio programming. This is becoming increasingly difficult with the Millennial audience. Interestingly, the data suggested that the competition for Millennials’ media attention is indeed fierce, correlating with the findings of Cohen and Jacobs (2007) in “The Bedroom Project: Fascinating New Research That Lets You Hear the Thoughts and Opinions of 18-28-Year-Olds.” At home, where the Millennial presumably has access to the most media channels (cable/satellite television, Internet and music Web sites, iPods and other MP3 devices, CDs and other hard copy media, radio), the survey component of the methodology found that Millennials’ KRCL listening is very limited. Only 17.1% of respondents said that they listen to KRCL at home. By comparison, 37.5% of survey respondents across all other generational groups (Generation X, Baby Boomers, and Matures) listen at home.
Table 5:
Where Millennials most frequently listen to public radio.

Table 6:
Where members of all other generational groups (Generation X, Baby Boomers, Matures) most frequently listen to public radio.

Future research should specifically ask if Millennials own a radio in their homes. Anecdotally, many Millennial focus group participants did not. One participant succinctly stated the issue: “I listen in the car usually, because I don’t even have a radio in my
house.” Even those focus group participants with radios at home suggested that they do not use them frequently, instead choosing one of the media that provides the Millennial with more control and freedom. One participant said:

I wonder if this is something generational. We’re just always looking for that thing that we really want. And we’ve found out ways that we can eliminate the stuff that we don’t want. Specifically with Internet and downloading lots of music.

Instead of in-home, the study found that Millennials do the bulk of their KRCL listening in the car. While this is true of most radio listeners, it is especially true of Millennials: 72.6% responded they listen most frequently in the car. By comparison, 49% of survey respondents from the Generation X, Baby Boomer, and Mature generational groups said they listen most frequently in the car. (See Tables 5 and 6 above.) As more Millennials purchase newer cars featuring infotainment systems, satellite radio, or simply an auxiliary input allowing basic connection to a MP3 player, public radio will struggle for the Millennial’s attention as much as it does in the home. To this point, it may benefit the public radio industry to consider new strategies for getting inside the Millennials’ homes. These strategies may include investing more in higher-quality, more reliable Internet streaming options, or determining new ways to get a physical radio in their homes, such as providing them as a thank-you gift with donation. Additionally, public radio may benefit from more uniformly exploring programming over via new technology channels outside of the standard Web stream.

In addition, in examining the results of the study and the research in the Literature Review, other considerations also come to light. Feldmann and Grossnickle (2010)
argued that the Millennial generation is more likely to give if there is a specific goal associated with the request. Indeed, Feldmann and Grossnickle (2010) found that the majority of Millennials (56.3%) prefer not to give to a general annual fundraising call (p. 5). In the Millennials’ view then, on-air pledge drives might be seen as too generic of a request, suggesting that public radio stations might benefit from setting up smaller drives or fundraising strategies with more specific goals. For instance, requests associated with funding a particular program, or event, or upgrading the Web streaming capabilities, etc. might be more effective.

Further, Bhagat, et al. (2010) found that Millennials giving habits are greatly influenced by word-of-mouth requests from friends and family—regardless of what channel those requests come through. Public radio may benefit from exploring this avenue. For example, public radio organizations may add functionality to donation Web pages that easily allows the Millennial to update social network statuses indicating that he or she just contributed and others should, too. Similarly, during on-air fundraising, the deejays can explicitly ask those who have already donated to do this, or a station could write it into the telephone script for when receiving donation calls.

Finally, in reviewing the recommendations pulled from the Literature Review as well as the results of this study—and in particular, the definition of commonly held preexisting attitudes or anchors—it is important to consider the idea of “small discrepancies” (Sherif & Hovland, 1961, p. 46). As Sherif and Hovland (1961) indicated, it is indeed possible to shift an anchor within an individual’s judgment scale, although only in small discrepancies (p. 46). Specifically, they recommended deploying several successive persuasive messages, each building upon the last, and each bringing the
audience slightly further from its anchor, and slightly closer to the communicator’s intended goal. They warned that releasing a persuasive message that was too large of a discrepancy from an individual’s anchor will likely have the opposite of the intended effect: instead of moving the individual’s anchor toward the persuader’s message, her previously held anchor will actually become better rooted. So, as public radio professionals begin to create fundraising messaging based on the commonly held preexisting attitudes identified in this study, they must work toward the goal of increasing the number of Millennial contributors deliberately and potentially slowly, by heeding the advice of Sherif and Hovland (1961) through a series of messages that create minor shifts.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A: INITIAL SURVEY

Instructions

Thank you for your interest in this survey. Listener’s Community Radio of Utah, KRCL 90.9FM wants to hear from you. As you may know, KRCL recently concluded its Fall 2011 on-air pledge drive, Radiothon. In an effort to make future fundraising efforts as efficient and unobtrusive as possible, KRCL seeks your input. Additionally, KRCL will select roughly 20 respondents to this survey and invite them to participate in a brief, one-hour focus group. Those who are invited to and attend a focus group session will be offered a free KRCL t-shirt in exchange for participation. To be considered for the focus groups and a t-shirt, please include your name and contact information. Your contact information will not be used for any purposes other than this research.

Name: __________________________________

Phone number: _________________________

E-mail address: _________________________

Which age group do you fall within?

- 34 and under
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 and older
How long have you listened to KRCL?

- Less than three months
- Three months to a year
- Several years

Where do you most frequently listen to KRCL?

- Home
- Work
- Car
- Other

Have you ever contributed financially to KRCL?

- Yes
- No

Do you have an individual favorite program or deejay on KRCL? If so, please write it in.

When do you most frequently listen to KRCL?

- Morning
- Midday
- Afternoon
- Evenings
- Overnights

Do you prefer KRCL programming during midweek or weekends?

- Midweek
- Weekends
- No preference
In your estimation, what percentage of KRCL’s budget is paid for by federal funding?

- 0 to 10%
- 11 to 20%
- 21 to 30%
- 31 to 40%
- 41 to 50%
- More than 50%

In your estimation, what percentage of KRCL’s budget is paid for by listeners who donate?

- 0 to 10%
- 11 to 20%
- 21 to 30%
- 31 to 40%
- 41 to 50%
- More than 50%

Did you listen to KRCL during its recent fall fundraiser, Radiothon, held October 1-10?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how many times would you estimate that you tuned into KRCL during the fund drive?

- 1 to 5 times
- 6 to 10 times
- 11 to 15 times
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- More than 15 times

During Radiothon, our fall fundraising drive October 1-10, did you listen to KRCL more or less than you usually do?
- More
- Less
- About the same amount

Which single statement best summarizes why you chose not to donate during KRCL’s Radiothon?
- I tune out during Radiothon
- KRCL exaggerates the need for listener funding
- My contribution would have been too small to make an impact
- I don’t understand where my money goes
- I donate to another public radio station instead
- I like KRCL, but I don’t depend on it enough to warrant a contribution
- The deejays’ arguments are not compelling or clear
- Radio is meant to be free; I shouldn’t have to pay to listen to it
- I don’t need to donate because so many other listeners do

Do you think KRCL would be more effective in fundraising if it did on-air fund drives more frequently, but for shorter durations?
- Yes
- No

Do you listen to other public radio stations in Utah?
- Yes
• No

If yes, which stations do you listen to (please mark all that apply)?

• KUER 90.1FM Salt Lake City
• KCPW 88.3FM Salt Lake City
• KPCW 91.9FM Park City
• UtahFM.org
• KBYU Classical 89FM Provo
• Utah Public Radio Logan

Have you ever contributed to any of these stations? If so, which?

What Salt Lake City commercial radio stations do you most frequently listen to?
APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUPS DISCUSSION GUIDE

Introduction

Spend no more than five minutes welcoming participants. Remind them of the incentive—a KRCL t-shirt normally only available to donors who give $60 or more. Explain that everyone present responded to the online survey and listens to KRCL with varying frequency, but that none donated. State that we will explore effective reasons for donating and also discuss why each participant chose not to give during the recent on air fund drive.

Thurstone Attitude Scale and Discussion

Begin with the Thurstone Attitude Scale model. Explain that sitting in front of each participant, facedown, is a list of statements. Disclose that some of those statements are factual, some are false, and others are not true or false statements, but rather represent beliefs or potential behaviors. Instruct the participants, “Quickly scan each statement and decide if you agree with it, disagree with it, or are indifferent toward it. Mark those with which you agree with an ‘A.’ Mark those with which you disagree with a ‘D.’ Note that there are very many statements on the page, and you will only have five minutes to judge each.”

Following the five minutes, instruct the participants to stop. Then, ask the participants to go back through their lists and, within two minutes, select the statement that they most strongly agree with by circling it. Instruct the participants to do the same for the single statement that they most strongly disagree with.
The moderator will collect these forms to later code and analyze to see if any commonalities occur. However, before collecting the forms and to help transition to group discussion, the moderator will begin to randomly ask participants which statement they most strongly agreed or disagreed with, and to explain why those particular statements evoked the most visceral responses.

**Discussion Questions**

Finally, the moderator will spend the bulk of the hour facilitating discussion amongst the participants using the following discussion questions as a framework:

- **Frequency:** How many times do you think you tune into KRCL on an average week, keeping in mind the short trip in the car to the grocery store… the alarm clock radio by your bed… the shower radio, whatever it may be?

- **As a music fan,** what do you see as KRCL’s biggest competition for your attention? Is it another Salt Lake radio station? Is it Sirius/XM? Is it a specific music Web site or streaming service? Is it your own iPod?

- **As a news junkie,** what do you see as KRCL’s biggest competition for your attention? Is it KUER or KCPW (the two Salt Lake NPR affiliates)? KSL FM news radio (a commercial news radio station)? A specific Web site? TV news?

- **Can you articulate how is KRCL operates differently than some of the other music stations in town?** Specifically, let’s think about X96 and 101.9 The End—the two alternative commercial music stations. Do we sound like those stations?
• Is KRCL an affiliate of National Public Radio, or NPR? Can you articulate how KRCL operates differently from an NPR affiliate? Do we sound like NPR?

• *If the group is made up of enthusiastic KRCL listeners and/or if they appear to have a good understanding of the listener-funding model, inquire about their peers.* Do you feel like your peers would be able to articulate the differences between commercial radio and KRCL? Would they be able to articulate the differences between KRCL and NPR? Why, do you think, so many of your peers don’t listen to KRCL?

• Let’s talk about Radiothon, KRCL’s recent on-air fundraising drive. It ran October 1 through 10. And in your online survey responses, all of you stated that you tuned in at least once during that time. So, what is your overall reaction to Radiothon? What do you think about it?

• Why, in your opinion, does KRCL conduct Radiothon?

• In your opinion, were the arguments and cases made asking for your financial support clearly articulated and strong?

• Are there any specific cases/pitches that you recall? Can you paraphrase them?

• Does anyone remember the phone number KRCL asked you to call to donate?

• Do you remember hearing about “Challenge Grants” during Radiothon? Who can tell me what those are and how they work?

• Do you remember any of the thank you gifts were mentioned during Radiothon?

• Is it important for KRCL to offer thank you gifts to donors who pledge? Why?
• Are there any thank you gifts that you can think of that you’d like to see offered in the future?

• Why, in your opinion, do other radio stations not use a similar pledge drive format?

• What would you like to see done differently for KRCL’s Radiothon?

• In your mind, are there alternatives to an on-air fund drive? What would those be? How would KRCL put those strategies in place?

• Specifically, what might make you contribute in the future?
APPENDIX C: THURSTONE ATTITUDE SCALE

1. It is not fair of KRCL to interrupt the regular programming to ask for listener funding. (Negative)

2. In the future, I will likely contribute to KRCL. (Positive)

3. I don’t really notice the commercials on commercial radio. (Negative)

4. Because of the listener financial support, KRCL is able to offer unique, distinctive programming. (Positive)

5. Without listener funding, KRCL wouldn’t exist. (Positive)

6. KRCL is a very important part of the Salt Lake City community. (Positive)

7. Radio is meant to be free. I shouldn’t have to pay for it. (Negative)

8. In my mind, there is no difference between playing commercials and asking listeners to pay for the programming. (Negative)

9. Radiothon shouldn’t last ten days. (Negative)

10. If KRCL went off the air, it would have little impact on my life. (Negative)

11. I have a clear understanding of how KRCL uses the money it earns during Radiothon. (Positive)

12. Not donating during Radiothon made me feel guilty. (Positive)

13. KRCL doesn’t need my money when so many other people are contributing to it. (Negative)

14. On a commercial music station, the advertisers are influencing programming choices, including which songs to play. (Positive)

15. KRCL introduced me to an artist who I now love. (Positive)
16. By supporting KRCL, I’m helping its other listeners and my neighbors in the community. *(Positive)*

17. With the amount of federal funding KRCL receives, it doesn’t need my money. *(Negative)*

18. The radio industry, as a whole, isn’t worth supporting. *(Negative)*

19. I feel like I have a personal connection with at least one KRCL deejay or programmer. *(Positive)*

20. There is value in news programming being produced locally—not just on the national-level. *(Positive)*

21. A radio station has very little impact in building community. *(Negative)*

22. Listening to KRCL is an important part of my day. *(Positive)*

23. The programming on KRCL sounds like programming on other radio stations. *(Negative)*

24. Other stations in Salt Lake offer the opportunity to learn to broadcast; KRCL is not alone in providing educational opportunities. *(Negative)*

25. My favorite radio deejay does not broadcast on KRCL. *(Negative)*

26. If the programming is good, it’s not important to me where it’s broadcast from, whether it’s Salt Lake or New York. *(Negative)*

27. I listen to several radio stations, including KRCL. I wouldn’t say KRCL is my favorite. *(Negative)*

28. There is value in music programming being produced locally—not just on the national-level. *(Positive)*

29. I will likely *never* contribute financially to KRCL. *(Negative)*

30. Commercial stations make more money per listener than KRCL does per listener. *(Positive)*
31. The public affairs programming on KRCL presents voices and ideas I wouldn’t hear on the radio otherwise. *(Positive)*

32. The contribution I could afford to make is so small that it would have little impact on KRCL. *(Negative)*

33. Most of the voices you hear on KRCL are volunteers from within the community. *(Positive)*

34. On a commercial music station, the deejay is choosing the songs to play. *(Negative)*

35. KRCL values its listeners and their input more than commercial radio stations do. *(Positive)*

36. During the fund drive, the deejays pander too much. *(Negative)*

37. This past Radiothon, one or more of the arguments had me close to donating. *(Positive)*

38. If you tune in frequently during Radiothon, the arguments feel repetitive or annoying. *(Negative)*

39. Commercial radio feels too repetitive for me. *(Positive)*

40. KRCL operates thanks to a large staff. *(Negative)*

41. KRCL is a non-profit organization. *(Positive)*

42. Radiothon would be more effective if it happened more than twice per year, but in shorter bursts. *(Negative)*

43. By tuning into a commercial station, I’ve agreed to let that station sell me to its advertisers. *(Positive)*

44. KRCL is asking too much participation of its listeners. *(Negative)*

45. Donating to KRCL gives you a vote in the programming it plays. *(Positive)*

46. Most KRCL listeners become members. *(Negative)*
47. Commercial radio stations receive federal funding, too. *(Negative)*

48. KRCL exaggerates the costs of programming. It can’t be that expensive. *(Negative)*

49. The public affairs programming on KRCL isn’t very distinctive. *(Negative)*

50. I believe KRCL’s business model is sustainable over the long-term. *(Positive)*

51. KRCL helps to bring some of my favorite artists to town. *(Positive)*

52. Partly, I don’t donate to KRCL because I don’t understand where the money goes. *(Negative)*

53. I’d prefer it if KRCL accepted advertising and stopped conducting fundraising efforts. *(Negative)*

54. I have a good understanding of how KRCL makes its revenue. *(Positive)*

55. KRCL should educate listeners about the need for listener funding more frequently throughout the year. *(Positive)*

56. Media conglomerates should not be allowed to own more than one radio station in Salt Lake. *(Positive)*

57. Listening to a commercial on a commercial station is no different than listening to Radiothon on KRCL. *(Negative)*

58. I enjoy listening to Radiothon. *(Positive)*

59. I understand the need to have news programming developed within Utah, but I don’t think it matters with music. *(Negative)*

60. KRCL is my absolute favorite radio station. *(Positive)*