

THE REJUVENATING STRATEGIES OF APTN (ABORIGINAL PEOPLES TELEVISION NETWORK) IN CANADA

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Abstract

Two major mandates for aboriginal TV stations are to pass on traditional cultures and to heal the disruptions in identities between generations. But first the programs must attract young aboriginal audience. This study employs secondary data analysis and in-depth interviews with seven managing officers of APTN and has found the following strategies for reaching youth audience: making people under 35 as target viewers, broadcasting more than 50% of their programs to the youth, obtaining streaming rights and developing online marketing strategies, interacting with younger audience using social media and games, broadcasting aboriginal festivals and music concerts with social media participation from the youth, building a program website and let the youth interact with the TV station and with other viewers, bringing programs into aboriginal communities and let the youth tell their own stories, and avoiding the use of teacher-like educational voices when presenting cultural heritages.

Key words: *Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, APTN, indigenous television, rejuvenation*

1. Foreword

APTN (the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network) started broadcasting since 1st September 1999. It was the first ethnic TV network in the world. APTN broadcasts for both indigenous and non-indigenous viewers. Therefore, its programs are designed for general viewers from different backgrounds. APTN broadcasts in three languages: English (56%), French (16%) and aboriginal languages (28%), with over 3 million viewers per week. Types of programs consist of children's animation, youngsters' program, culture and traditions' program, documentary, music, drama, dance, film and live report of special happenings. Over 80% of APTN's programs were produced in Canada; the rest indigenous programs were from other parts of the world which include Australia, New Zealand, Latin America and United States of America (APTN 2011).

APTN has been paying attention to the youth market since 2001. In its 2011 development strategies document, it attempts to transform APTN into a multimedia company that targets teenagers and the youth viewers as their primary audience. It can be a model of rejuvenation for aboriginal TV stations worldwide. During APTN's rejuvenation, its innovative production approach has allowed both globalization and localization to negotiate a new cultural space (Baltruschat 2004). For example, "Cool Jobs" was a program about how indigenous youngsters find jobs. The video was shot in MTV

style with funk music as background. The hosts dressed in hip-hop style and interviewed the youth as if it was an entertainment show. It adopted a production style similar to MTV, with frequent camera movement and fast-paced editing to imitate mainstream TV and to increase its media market share. By combining traditional storytelling in indigenous communities with mainstream media genre and production techniques, APTN has created a unique cultural space (Baltruschat 2004).

APTN has been unique in that it combines traditional aboriginal festivals with mainstream media styles. This is hard to find in other places. All these production features were designed to attract young viewers from 13 to 25. Since the majority of Canadian indigenous population is young, APTN has been trying to target these young viewers using strategies similar to mainstream Canadian TV media in order to cultivate a viewer loyalty from them. According to the mission statement of APTN 2011, APTN has become a multimedia company with the youth viewers as their primary audience. Its recent license renewal plan has included a new business plan that continues to target the youth audience. It also plans to run a new channel entirely in aboriginal languages (APTN 2011).

The above are the background information of APTN and its rejuvenation, based on secondary data analysis. However, in order to better understand APTN's rejuvenation strategies and experience, the researchers have formulated the following questions about details for the APTN staffs to answer in the in-depth interviews. For example, in order to target the youth viewers, how does APTN adjust its proportion of youth programs in its broadcast schedule? How does APTN deal with the possible risk of losing senior and elder viewers? What are some of the representative and popular youth programs? Are there some successful examples in terms of production ideas and marketing strategy of APTN that are worth sharing with TITV (Taiwan Indigenous Television) in Taiwan and other indigenous TV stations?

This study employs secondary data analysis and in-depth interviews with seven high-level managing officers of APTN. It is hoped that other aboriginal TV stations can find something useful and worth learning in APTN's successful experience, including strategies on rejuvenation, production, and marketing.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Functions and missions of ethnic media

A loose way of defining of ethnic media is that, unlike the mainstream media, ethnic media are owned by and operated for the following populations: (1) immigrants, (2) ethnic and linguistic minority groups; (3) indigenous people (Matsaganis, Katz & Ball-Rokeach 2010, p. 10). An indigenous TV station operates for the third type of people in the above definition. As for the role of ethnic media, Subervi-Vélez (1986) proposes that ethnic media play two roles in a society: assimilation and maintaining pluralism. The first is to help minority groups to adapt in the mainstream society. The second is to preserve the connection between the ethnic minority groups and their own cultures through representing mother languages and culture heritages in media.

In addition, scholars also proposed some purposes and functions of ethnic media. Browne (1996, p. 59) pointed out seven purposes of ethnic media: (1) to “rescue” ethnic languages, (2) to increase a sense of self-esteem, (3) to combat the negative images; (4) to reinforce ethnic community cohesion and political influence, (5) to provide a visible and audible symbol of indigenous society, (6) to showcase creativity and talents from ethnic communities, and (7) to offer jobs for ethnic communities. Goban-Klas (1989, p. 31) proposed that minority media has two main functions. The first is to fight for and to protect ethnic minority rights. The second is to foster minority identity, reinforce social cohesion, and easing homesickness in isolated and unfriendly environments. Thus as we can see from above statement that the mission for “ethnic media” is mostly preserving ethnic languages and cultures, fostering ethnic identity, providing voices for ethnic minority, enhancing ethnic self confidence and protecting the ethnic minority rights.

The aboriginal people are much more unique compared with other ethnic minority groups. So does the features of indigenous media. For example, Browne (1996) thinks that indigenous people have been living in specific areas much longer than other ethnic groups for a few centuries or even few thousand years, yet the society is often ignorant about their ways of living. Their assistance with and resistance against the late comers (which have become the majority in the current society) have become part of the national history. Compared to other ethnic minority, the aboriginal people deserve a much more important place in the society. However, the mainstream media often neglect the aboriginal people, choosing to be ignorant of their contribution to the society, and constantly producing and presenting negative stereotypes of indigenous people. The society owes much to the indigenous people. And yet there is so much for the society to learn from them. Therefore, ethnic media can be an education system, providing indigenous people to rediscover their past history as well as to talk pride of their current achievements. Indigenous media can provide the right to access media for indigenous people. It plays an important role to preserve and revive modern indigenous languages. Furthermore, indigenous people can even enter the public sphere and have their own voices heard through indigenous digital media.

Ginsburg (2002, pp. 211-16) also regarded indigenous media as an emerging genre written by a particular cultural activism. Under this perspective, it is possible to acknowledge that indigenous people have unique ethnic consciousness about their special political, historical, and cultural conditions that are different from other ethnic minorities and that such difference shapes and formulates their unique way of media use. Indigenous media communicate things about social and collective identities. It aims to mediate the disruptions of time, space, knowledge, and prejudice. Aboriginal media use the works created by aboriginal people themselves to heal the disruptions in culture knowledge, historical memories and identities between generations.

Riggins (1992) thinks that the minority ethnic media not only resists assimilation, it is also a force of assimilation itself. Ethnic media resists assimilation by broadcasting contents against hegemonic discourse, using mother languages in its entire programs, increasing community participation, and

broadcasting alternative contents now available in mainstream media. However, ethnic media is also a force of assimilation itself because its programs are still based in mainstream culture, it still relies on mainstream media as its information source, and it still uses mainstream language to speak to the mass audience. It can be seen that if indigenous media wants to play the role of preserving cultural heritage, it has to adopt the position toward the direction of anti-assimilation when making decision of positioning itself on the media spectrum from assimilation to anti-assimilation.

Griffith University in Australia in its 2007 research report “Community Media Matters” pointed out that the indigenous media in Australia serve the following functions: providing indispensable community services and playing a central role of organizing a community; assisting people in community and maintaining a social network; providing education in a community, especially for the youth; being an alternative information source for community news, which can avoid stereotypical representation against indigenous people and topics; helping to end the stereotypical representations against indigenous people in non-indigenous communities and acting as an important mediation role in cross-cultural conversations; showcasing professional music and dance from indigenous communities. Indigenous media from around Australia play an important role of empowerment for the indigenous individuals, social groups, and formation of individual communities. Although indigenous radio and TV stations may provide indigenous people spaces for connection and support, there is not enough evidence in proving that these indigenous media have created a vast public sphere (Meadows 2009; Meadows et al. 2007).

In conclusion, the roles of indigenous media include: promoting integration and celebrating diversity, facilitating assimilation and anti-assimilation, providing community spaces for indigenous people to support, connect, and interact with one another. It also has an important educational function which allows indigenous people to rediscover their past history, to learn about their current achievements, and to promote the use of indigenous languages in modern context. This in turn may mediate the disruption in culture knowledge, historical memories and the identities between generations due to the time-space, knowledge, and prejudice. All these are the missions, roles, and functions of the indigenous media. However, to fulfill the above-mentioned mission and goals, the indigenous media should strive to attract more attention from the youth generation. It also requires a complete redesign and innovation in order to achieve rejuvenation of indigenous TV. This is a possible direction of development for TITV. The topics related to rejuvenation will be explored further in this research.

2.2 Definition of Rejuvenation

Communication research rarely talks about rejuvenation. This term is usually mentioned in research on how corporate brands make themselves young again. This research thinks that, for an aboriginal TV station to attract more young viewers, it is important to discuss the possibilities of rejuvenation in ethnic media

For the field of business management, the term “brand rejuvenation” refers to the construct of new consumer markets or to attract young consumers. It infuses new vitality and a sense of fashion to an old brand. It helps substantial for the corporate branding as well as for the sale figures. To rejuvenate a brand requires new media strategies as well as marketing strategies. A rejuvenation plan usually requires the initiative efforts from the brand redevelopment team, the cooperation from the management staff of new products, and the execution of creative and marketing services in order to achieve the vision of repositioning a brand (Venkatesh 2005). Developing new markets also helps to rejuvenate an enterprise (Cheverton 2004).

Lehu (2006) stated that, for all brands, once they have remained in their corporate images for a long period of time, the brand will become aging. “Brand rejuvenation” points out the problems of an aging enterprise and provides solutions. For example, recognizing the aging process, modifying the brand identity, using celebrity endorsement to rejuvenate the brand, inviting more youth in the consumption, auditing the brand to ensure that there is enough budget for rejuvenation (making sure that rejuvenation is cost-effective), using Internet for rejuvenation, introducing innovation to products and their use, achieving rejuvenation through globalization, and choosing effective strategies in order to achieve the goal. Aaker (1991) proposed that rejuvenation could be achieved by the following means: increasing the consumption of products, looking for new ways of use, entering a new market, repositioning the brand, upgrading the quality of products and service, and eliminating outdated products and affiliated brands. Lehu (2004) pointed out that brand rejuvenation means further globalization of products and services.

However, scholars also warned that while a brand is trying to renew its lifespan and decide to abandon existing older customers in order to catch attentions of the younger and new customers, there is a possible risk of “non-target market effect” (Aaker, Brumbaugh & Grier 2000) after throwing away old customers in a rush.

Past researches on business brand rejuvenation indicated that the implementation of rejuvenation is usually accompanied by globalization. The two approaches seem to work together well. When it comes to applying these two concepts to the rejuvenation attempts of indigenous television, the following questions should be considered carefully: How do TV programs attract young viewers? How should media strategies and marketing strategies be modified to support rejuvenation? What kind of creative team is required for rejuvenation? How should ethnic media reposition themselves? How does celebrity endorsement work in ethnic media? What are the strategies of using new technology and globalization to support rejuvenation? Also, one possible risk during the process of rejuvenation is to lose the elder viewers. These questions are important topics to be explored further.

3. Research Methods

There are two reasons why the APTN is selected as a case for study. First, APTN has been established in 1999, earlier than most of the indigenous TV stations around the world. Its business operation is more mature. Second, APTN has a successful experience of rejuvenation with its programs. Indigenous TV stations in other countries may learn from APTN's experience for the rejuvenation strategies and production ideas of youth programs.

The main research methods of this study are secondary data analysis and in-depth interviews. In August 2013 the researchers interviewed seven high-level managing officers of APTN. Table 1 is the list of the interviewees. In the interview quotations presented in section 4, the interviewees are marked by their first name.

Name	Job
Sky Bridges	Chief Operating Officer
Monika Ille	Director of Programming
Danielle Audette	Manager of Programming, Central Region
Lisa Squire	Director of Marketing
Karyn Pugliese	Director of News and Current Affairs
Wayne McKenzie	Director of Operations
Darcy J Smith	Chief Financial Officer

Table 1: List of the interviewees of APTN

Here are the main research questions:

RQ1: What are APTN's strategies to attract the indigenous youth viewers?

RQ2: In order to target the youth viewers, how does APTN adjust its proportion of programs in its broadcast schedule? What are the effective marketing strategies so far (such as celebrity endorsement or the Internet and new technology)?

RQ3: How does APTN deal with the possible risk of losing senior and elder viewers?

RQ4: What are some of the representative and popular youth programs? Are there some successful examples in terms of production ideas and marketing strategy of APTN for the youth viewers?

4. Findings

After interviewing with key officers of APTN, this study found that APTN has been strategically set its primary audience to people under 35. Why under 35? Danielle noted that because 48% of the aboriginal of population in Canada is under 25, APTN need to appeal to them. However, isn't there a risk of losing the elderly viewers? Danielle said that APTN does not worry that this strategy will ignore the senior audience group.

As long as the program scheduling is properly designed according to the viewing habits of each age group, APTN is confident that its programming is family friendly and that it can still cater to its senior audience. (Danielle)

So far, only one complaint has been filed by viewers because of offensive program content. For example, "Arbor Live" is a series of live music show. It is a showcase of amazing music talent. It is not necessarily gear for teenagers, but it is geared for an 18-plus audience. The sketch comedy humor in the show is very teenager, very slapstick, and extremely silly. For some people, it may be very offensive, including some of obscene language that they use. The elders may not respond favorably for it.

For sure there are some shows that won't please a specific target group, but for most programs, it really depends how you place them on your broadcast schedule, and how you promote those shows. (Monika)

Since APTN has been arranging its schedule properly to accommodate the daily schedule of each age group, and most of the programs are family friendly and are for general audience, they do not worry about the risk of losing the elderly audience.

The actual strategies, methods, and cases of how APTN attracts young viewers can be summarized as follows:

4.1 Obtaining the streaming rights and making the programs accessible through every new communication technologies and platforms so the younger generations will be able to watch the programs.

APTN's target viewers are under 35. They don't necessarily watch traditional television. Therefore APTN have to work really hard to develop digital media content and make sure to have a multi-platform format for those shows. It's good to have games and interactive websites for each show.

We have to get the streaming rights for all our original programming. So we can stream them online. Because we know that the youth will watch a show when they want to watch it. And they don't really mind the platform, so it can be on their iPhone, on their iPad, or their desktop computer screen. We have to give them all the possibilities. (Monika)

4.2 Using new technologies such as social media, games, and apps to attract young viewers

Because young audiences don't watch TV, when APTN fulfilled the strategy to attract young people, they encountered big challenge in this process. Therefore, APTN need to look at all aspects of how to engage the youth audience. APTN make the content that's normally on conventional television available through multi-platforms. Another way is developing digital media component via games or applications that young audience can download that are associated with the program. APTN have also noticed that social media is a big trend and young people are used to get more games and look at more applications in a very short period of time. The constantly and rapidly changing evolution of technology makes it a very challenging task to stay cutting edge.

We have to be far more creative on how to connect with that young audience. But it can take a year or sometimes two years for us to do a show from start to finish. By the time, maybe the technology trend has passed to something else. So that's a big challenge. (Danielle)

APTN has two successful programs that are popular among the younger generation. And these programs integrate new communication technologies to engage with viewers. One is "Qanurli", the other is "Planet Echo". "Qanurli" (targeting viewers from 8 to 17) is in a magazine format and it's got sketches which lead up to interviews of positive role model in the northern communities. This program goes to facebook to communicate with characters of that show and it's done in Inuktitut. The two young hosts of the show have now become a little bit of celebrity. When they go to the stores, people stop them for autographs in that community of 7000 people.

The other good example is "Planet Echo" whose target audience is from 9 to 12. The young audience can watch the show on APTN, and then visit the micro site that APTN has on their website. They can go to the producer's website and find applications that are associated with the show. During the show, it tells them to Google on the computer, on their iPad, and pull off the website, so young people can connect with what the show is talking about. This further enriched the youth's experience of watching the show.

Lisa Squire, Director of marketing, also said that the most cost-effective way to reach young audience is through social media and through marketing within the social media platforms. APTN can speak to all the different demographics about all the key messages of their programs through social media. Now APTN promote all of the programs through their facebook pages and highlight them through different interactive components. Social media has put APTN a lot closer to their audience.

Since the adolescents usually don't like to watch news programs, the news programs have to be changed in terms of delivery formats. Using social media or app news are good ways to reach the young viewers with news and involve them in community affairs.

4.3 Adjusting the proportion of programs in order to attract more young viewers

In order to appeal the young viewers, APTN adjust the proportion of the programs. Monika Ille, Director of programming, mentioned that at least 50% of the programming APTN commissioned targets this primary audience (the youth). Sometimes it's even more. The last calculation was that

about more than 80% of the shows APTN commissioned targets their primary audience.

Besides, young people love music program. Therefore, producing more music programs in a variety of music style or broadcasting live aboriginal music concerts are good ways to attract young audience. For example, the annual Manito Ahbee Festival in Manitoba province is a good opportunity for APTN to attract young people to the live music events and watch APTN channel.

This week we have the Manito Ahbee Festival, which just happening across the street. Tons of youth are out there, so we got a lot of that information on APTN out there for them. We also look for events in different types of things that we can be face-to-face with that audience group, such as music events. (Lisa)

4.4 Finding different production strategies for different age groups: Animation and puppetry are good for the 2 to 5 years old. Learning things in the fun way attracts viewers from 6 to 9. And the 12 to 15 year-old viewers are expecting mostly entertainment in TV.

Usually, for the preschoolers, because children don't read, there is no word in the program for 2 to 5 years old. There are just songs and stories. There are two popular shows for preschool children. One is the children puppet series called "Tipi Tales". In this program, there are young little kids who live in a bush with their grandparents. And they learn life lessons through their spirit animal that will come in. This series won the Parents Choice Awards. The other successful show is "Bizou". "Bizou" is animation and available in three languages (French, English, and Cree). There is a little aboriginal princess and every show there was a theme with an animal.

For example, we have the rabbit. There will always be a song on the rabbit. There'll be a story with the rabbit. There'll be how to draw a rabbit. So the rabbit is always there, but it was built in a way that the children from 2 to 5 would expect. Children of that age need something stable so they will know what's going to happen. "Bizou" also has an interactively-rich website for the preschooler. The children viewers could go to the site. It was really simple. There are colors, stories, and songs. (Monika)

For 6 to 12 years old, the content can get a bit more complex and introduce more learning stuff. Moreover, the program can have a bit of drama. "Two Mighty Brothers" is a very popular program for 9 to 12 year-old audiences. This program is a live action. It takes the viewers into an adventure while learning environmental themes. For example, there is a place called "Mad Lab" in which Dr. Greenie and Guinea Pig are testing some of the themes that they are exploring. This program can teach young people about recycling and why we need to recycle, or why eating vegetables are good.

For the youth aged 12 to 15, they don't want to learn anymore. They watch TV in order to be entertained. APTN designed the program to let the youth to be face to face with their idols and celebrities. They also produced the program in different languages to attract young people all over Canada. The French show "C'est Parti Mon Tipi" has successfully attracted young audience, because it was a no-brainer. Each show invites a celebrity who was not necessarily an aboriginal celebrity,

because this show is in French and it's out of Quebec. This celebrity could be in the sports, in the music, or he/she could be an actor. These celebrities will go to an aboriginal community and spend two days with the youth doing different funny activities together.

In that program they would dressed up like zombies and they'll play games together and throw balloons full of water. It's just being together and having fun. So as the viewers get older, the show could get complex as well. And it becomes less educational and a little lighter. Because the show was so good, and because we really enjoy that show in French, the producers are developing an English version to it. Because you couldn't dub the show in English, it has to be reshoot in English. (Monika)

4.5 Integrating aboriginal festival activities into TV programs for the youth and combining social media to attract more youth viewers to create a sense of participation

"Aboriginal Day Live" is an event that APTN hosted at The Forks in Winnipeg to celebrate the National Aboriginal Solidarity Day, which is on June 21. It is an annual concert, and the APTN has been doing this for at least 5 years. It is a showcase for performers from across all Canada. It broadcasts live across Canada on all APTN's feed and the HD channel. And later the show is taken from the live feed and packaged into a series called the Solstice Concerts. That consists of additional performances not included in live broadcasting. They also tend to have another city to host a live show at the same time.

For example, this year we did it in Iqaluit. They had northern performers from the north. The show would go between the Iqaluit and Winnipeg locations to showcase the performances live across Canada.... In the series there are actually interviews with the performers to talk about their background, to talk about their pride and their heritage, be it First Nations, Inuit, or Metis, and what brought them to perform that day for the audience. We cut from those interviews to the show. It's really well done. And they are really stunning. I think it's also a great way to inspire the youth. (Danielle)

"Aboriginal Day Live" is a very good package. It's live on television and has live tweeting. It has the streaming online. The show is really geared towards the viewers under 35.

There were a lot of live tweetings, and people read the tweets live. Because we have cuts on the show, and you have a little back stage glance, and the host would read some tweets, so people felt like we are all involved. (Monika)

4.6 Recognizing that "telling good stories in interesting ways" is still an important element for TV programs to attract youth viewers

APTN has a program, "Our Dene elders", geared for elders. However, the program has become very popular among the youth audience as well.

"Our Dene Elders" features elders that are sharing stories they were told or that they want to

share stories of their youth growing up in the north. I remember there was a story about a man who's being chased by a bear by the bush, and when you try to escape from the bear, you have to walk in a circle, because they chase you in circles. And for black bear following you, you have to walk in circle, and eventually you'll get behind them. That's what the elders say. ((Laugh)) That's something I consider as geared for the elder audience. But it can be an interesting program for the youth as well. When I meet young people on the street, they ask me, "What do you do?" "I work at APTN." "Oh you work at APTN! Do you know the show "Our DENE Elder?" And I say "Yeah." They are young, but they love watching that show because those stories are so great. (Danielle)

4.7 Speaking aboriginal languages in sports commentary during the big international sports broadcasting events so that the community youth can be empowered and take pride in the viewing

APTN has broadcasted the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. They broadcasted it in French, in English, and in eight different aboriginal languages. All audience could have a Hockey game with commentary in Inuktitut, or downhill skiing in Mohawk.

It's NEVER been done before. So if you are an Inuit kid up north in Iqaluit. And you are watching hockey in Olympics. You would go "Oh my god, hey, they are commenting in my language." We were really proud of that. And that was a big success for us. (Monika)

4.8 To use Focus Group interviews with young and adolescent viewers to understand their viewing preference for mainstream TV program types. Then produce programs with the same quality and characteristics to attract the youth.

Lisa noted that APTN would be among the top five programs that the youth seventeen in Canada will be watching. There isn't a lot of difference between what an aboriginal youth from 12 to 17 years old will watch and what a non-aboriginal youth from 12 to 17 years old would like to watch. They are going to watch TV programs in very similar styles. So it's APTN's job to take that information and to build a program that has an aboriginal focus but would have the same quality and characteristics in order to speak to an aboriginal youth.

4.9 Building the Digital Drum website for APTN in order to develop internet marketing and to encourage young viewers to create their own online contents that will in turn engage people to actively participate in conversations and interactions with one another

Lisa said that APTN's marketing strategy towards the youth viewers is focused on the 13 to 35 age group. It is a hard-to-reach group. APTN is really marketing right now to the youth demographic is their new Digital Drum website. Digital Drum is a youth-oriented website that APTN has created.

Digital Drum is a marketing strategy in a lot of ways. We recognized that we can no longer limit ourselves in being just a broadcast media to the youth. We need to give them a place to engage them in conversations in order to express their identities. That's why we really expect

the Digital Drum website to be a User-generated content site that those youth can contribute to the content and have interactive conversations with one another. (Lisa)

APTN also have two useful strategies. First, APTN is going to license web series content that speaks specifically to that demographic group. Second, they are looking at creating partnerships with the youth media organizations, which are out there teaching young people how to shoot with the camera, edit a video, create content, and have them build content that are specific to APTN's site. APTN is also looking at having a contest to attract more youth to visit its site.

One interesting incentive for the contributors within that site, no matter they're paid or just someone off the street who wants to put something up, is that their contents have the opportunity to be seen on the national broadcast as well. So the website would become almost like an editorial content piece in a week. By showcasing contents created on this one platform, we have actually sending out an invitation to our youth to be engaged with APTN. They are not just watching the show. Now they can be contributing to the content that they will see on APTN. (Lisa)

4.10 Community Outreach programs with the youth to promote APTN

APTN has invited young audiences to have a tour in APTN all the time. When they decide to sponsor an outside event, it has to be about youth or has some youth component to it.

Every year we sponsor the Soaring Conference. It's through an organization called INDSPiRE. There are two conferences per year. They go all over Canada and they hold big educational meetings with aboriginal young people. So we are always involved in that. We are going to seven schools in October this year, where we speak to youth and talk to them about making good choices. And we are promoting Digital Drum a little bit as well. We hope to carry it out across Canada and make it a national outreach program as well. That's our way of being face to face with the youth. (Lisa)

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

The above-mentioned ten strategies of APTN to make their programs attractive to the youth are worth learning. Still, certain details of production need a little extra care.

First, APTN has not been promoting its programs directly through the school systems to reach the youth. It is an effective way of marketing the TV station in educational systems through the release of DVDs. APTN commissions its programs to outside independent producers and allows them to release their own DVDs. If TITV or other TV stations want to explore this venue of school marketing, they should plan ahead and include future DVD release and DVD rights in the production plan.

Second, the culture issue is important when it comes to introducing a successful program from one language to another. As Monica, Director of programming, pointed out, APTN knows that the English

audience and the French audience love different things. So instead of dubbing a successful French language program in English, they have to redo the show "C'est Parti Mon Tipi" completely, including finding a new host and shooting in new places in English speaking areas. This way the newly produced program would be culturally specific and more meaningful to the English-speaking public.

Third, APTN commissions a large proportion of its programs to outside independent producers. Only the news programs are completely produced by APTN itself. This allows the TV station to lower the production budget. It also increases the variety of programs. In doing so, there will be an increase in tasks related to communication, coordination, and evaluation. The contents that are directly controlled under the TV station managers will become less.

Fourth, APTN suggests that the youth TV programs should use interesting ways to tell stories in order to attract young viewers. Using a teacher-like educational voice to present cultural heritages should be avoided. Monika stressed that the youth program should be "by youth, for youth, about youth". The point is to "have their stories told." It is not "telling the story for them." The youth should be actively involved in programs and have their own voice. They should be able to talk in the program instead of being silent in the background. It's also important to have young hosts and active hosts. Doing focus groups is also helpful.

In addition, the challenge with the youth viewers and their rapid changing habits of using new communication technology is that it takes at least one year or longer to produce a program. The production team may have an initial planning of how to use mobile devices or the Internet to connect the young viewers. By the time the production finishes, the technology trend and the user habits may have changed already. Therefore, APTN is also attempting to have web series that are only available on the web. It is a good way to attract youth viewers. The web series are small stories about three to four minutes. They are low cost. APTN is planning to do more of it in the near future.

Starting from 2011, APTN has been setting the youth (aged under 35) as their target viewers. However, even the APTN itself is still not sure that they have successfully opened a new market for the young viewers. One reason is that the mainstream rating information from BBM cannot reflect the detailed demographic information such as whether the teenage viewers have increased. The second reason is that the youth viewers can access TV programs through a lot of different platforms and mobile devices. The constant evolving technology environment will remain a challenge for TV stations. The key to success still depends on how to understand the viewing habits and preferences of the teenage viewers.

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