

Addendum B : Mindsets

Walrus Research applied a common research methodology called Factor Analysis to distill the many opinions gathered from the Acquirers and Producers respondents into central “modes of thinking⁵.” The goal is to help us understand how opinions sometimes converge into a central belief systems. The 16 opinion questions presented in the survey were reduced down to three basic Mindsets, as follows:

Conventional.

- Comfortable with way public radio has evolved and the role of audience research; it has had a positive impact on public radio.
- It is important that public radio programming appeal to potential “givers.”
- Rates for Independent Producers have been improving.
- It’s best if producers have journalism training.
- Growing the audience has not led to a loss of mission-driven integrity
- Not nostalgic for the ‘old days.” Public radio programming was not more innovative or creative years ago than it is today

Grievance

- Public radio is an exclusive club that sets a high bar for newcomers to enter.
- Stations have become more risk averse in their programming
- Independent Producers are more innovative than the stations or the networks.
- Acquirers are not very receptive to new ideas from Independent Producers
- Opportunities for Producers to place their work are diminishing

Potential

- The system needs more programming that appeals to minority, disadvantaged, and underserved listeners.
- There is a lot of high quality work from Independent Producers out there – “enough to fill an entire channel” – that is rarely if ever broadcast.
- There is little merit to the idea that Acquirers believe Independent Producers are difficult to work with
- It would make a difference to the audience if Independent work disappeared from public radio.

These Mindsets are not distinguished by a respondent’s role as an Acquirer and/or a Producer. Both categories of individuals can ascribe to a particular set of beliefs and, in this analysis, one who holds one of the beliefs is likelier to hold the other opinions in that category. Further, while this exercise can be useful in revealing underlying views that are at the heart of some of the thinking throughout the industry, it’s important not to assume that all people necessarily fall neatly into one of these categories. This is just one, reliable way to look through the multi-faceted and ever-changing prism of the public radio industry in order to understand some core belief-systems that drive opinions and, ultimately, decisions about programming and strategy.

Please send us your ideas or comments. [\[click here\]](#)

⁵ The Walrus Report describes the Mindsets in a section entitled “Modes of Thinking” (*Acquirers and Independent Producers*” pg 17). The labels given each mode by Walrus Research are “Optimism, Grievance, Upside Potential” respectively.