

WPBS PBS STRATEGIC PLAN

2021 - 2024



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WPBS Strategic Planning

The WPBS Board and Managers began a full-scale strategic planning process in September 2020. The formal process began with an assessment of WPBS's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (S-W-O-Ts). The following people and groups were included in the assessment process:

- **Board members from the WPBS Board**
- **President of the WPBS Board**
- **The President and General Manager**
- **Managers**
- **All staff**

The Board President, Board members, the President and General Manager, and department managers from WPBS-TV participated in a Strategic Planning (2) half day events held in October 2020. This event was facilitated by Melanie Rafferty, President of Cortel Improvement LLC. Cortel accelerated the process by crafting draft Visions, Missions for WPBS-TV, and Strategic Goals.

The collective group updated the WPBS Mission and Vision as well as Strategic (long-term) Goals, Objectives (sub-goals), shorter-term Actions, Champions, and Measures.

The Board and Staff established six Strategic Goals and Objectives with the intention that the Goals will remain viable as the driving force for many years (5) to come.

Broad initiatives, pride in WPBS-TV, community partnerships, and support became principles for this Strategic Planning endeavor. The Board and Staff now have a solid Strategic Plan to guide their daily and long-term focus. The Vision, Goals, Measures and Actions provide an expansion of services to customers in the two-nation region which continue to set an aggressive vision that will keep WPBS-TV's reputation and viewership at the highest level possible.



Melanie Rafferty
President
Cortel Improvement, LLC

Mission Statement

WPBS Mission

**To educate, inform and engage our two-nation region
with exceptional and trusted content
across multiple platforms.**

Vision Statement

WPBS Vision

**The premier provider of extraordinary public media that
instills wonder and curiosity across generations and borders.**

WPBS-TV Values

Public Service

WPBS creates greater awareness and understanding of local and regional international issues and assets. We strive to provide unbiased quality media content of the highest integrity.

Two-Nation Station

WPBS is uniquely able to promote communication, cooperation, diversity, and cultural understanding among viewers of our two-nation station. We respond to the needs and welcome the input of our members from both sides of the border, and strive to treat all stakeholders with honesty and fairness.

Education

We encourage the use of educational media technologies as an interactive, creative, and effective teaching tool in today's physical and virtual classroom.

Economic Development

We are the most trusted source for the development of multi-media content and partnerships that will promote business growth, worker training, and tourism on both sides of the border.



2021 WPBS Strategic Goals

Goal 1 – Provide the finest educational media content to viewers across our two-nation region (Northern NY & Eastern Ontario).

- a. Distribute and promote the best programs from various sources to meet organizational mandate and grow audience ratings (PBS National Program Service, syndication services, broadcasters/PBS stations, independent producers, in-house productions).
- b. Produce local content for broadcast and digital platforms for our region that is aligned with WPBS mandate and is relevant, informative, interesting, and financially viable.
- c. Regularly collaborate with regional partners to source more interesting productions.

Goal 2 – Be the destination for education, life-long learning and cultural enrichment.

- a. Partner with educators to create educational content and materials for K-12 students.
- b. Further advance strategies to engage people 18-50+ in lifelong learning through partnerships with regional post-secondary institutions.
- c. Leverage PBS's leadership and excellent content/ resources of history, STEM and the arts to be the destination for enrichment and cultural (arts) engagement.

Goal 3 – Expand viewership and civic engagement on multiple platforms for our two-nation audience.

- a. Raise WPBS' profile and expand audience viewership through comprehensive engagement both in the North Country and in Canada.
- b. Leverage social media/digital content to market what WPBS has to offer to engage communities and audiences.
- c. Promote and market WPBS' strong association with the PBS brand, a highly trusted and prestigious international brand.

Goal 4 – Modernize technology and infrastructure to be a digital-first organization

- a. Embrace new digital distribution platforms and opportunities as they become available.
- b. Improve broadcast and signal distribution infrastructure to better serve audiences and distribution partners.
- c. Upgrade and add to production and post-production equipment so WPBS can increase output of original content for broadcast and digital platforms.

Goal 5 – Ensure future financial stability and adaptability of WPBS by generating positive margins and growing reserves in support of stakeholders.

- a. Effectively manage and expand revenue streams that support core operations.
- b. Secure funding that supports expanded activities including new productions and educational Initiatives.
- c. Maximize opportunities to build reserves and contingency funds.

Goal 6 – Create conditions and opportunities for staff to contribute to the success of the organization, align with the vision and goals and realize growth/development.

- a. Engage, inspire and support staff with challenging responsibilities and management practices, policies and expectations that foster a collegial environment and make WPBS a Great Place to Work.
- b. Maintain an inviting workplace that is appealing, safe, and encourages productivity.

GOAL #1: Provide the finest educational media content to viewers across our two nation region (Northern NY & Eastern Ontario).

Objective 1a: Distribute and promote the best programs from various sources to meet organizational mandate and grow audience ratings (*PBS National Program Service, syndication services, broadcasters/PBS stations, independent producers, in-house productions*).

Actions (Initiatives)

- 1) Continually research our audience and competition and other PBS stations with emphasis on knowledge, insights, ideas, needs, and desires in order to optimize content selection.
- 2) Produce and solicit short video content for digital first use and on air as interstitials/fillers.
- 3) Enhance the broadcast and distribution of PBS national productions with local context, reflection, and engagement opportunities (e.g. content, events, etc.).
- 4) Increase understanding and acceptance among people on both sides of the border by broadcasting programming from a wide variety of perspectives from both US and Canada.
- 5) Promote and market all programs using all available platforms, tools and resources.

Objective 1b: Produce local content for broadcast and digital platforms for our region that is aligned by WPBS mandate and is relevant, informative, interesting, & financially viable.

Actions (Initiatives)

- 1) Produce a weekly public affairs program to include stories on art, culture, history, science, community/ regional issues, conservation, destinations, business, education, & more all across the service region.
- 2) Prioritize the production of local programming and projects, with the public affairs program being the 1st priority (as one of the three PBS pillars). For secondary priorities, determine schedule fit, costs/funding, reach, and community goodwill determining those to start/stop/keep.
- 3) Co-produce and commission more Canadian content to maintain our connection with Canadian audiences and distributors (e.g. Rogers Cable, Cogeco and Bell).
- 4) Incorporate production of related digital content when first creating local broadcast content.

Objective 1c: Regularly collaborate with regional partners including independent producers to source more interesting productions.

Actions (Initiatives)

- 1) Develop working relationships with independent producers to ensure a healthy pipeline of new ideas and opportunities.
- 2) Obtain the rights to include independent productions in classroom learning content, such as PBS Learning Media.
- 3) Prioritize obtaining independent Canadian productions, enabling WPBS to expand content to include more Canadian perspectives and reflection and build to include some higher-budget/ primetime independent productions where WPBS is the sponsoring station.

GOAL #2: Be the destination for education, life-long learning and cultural enrichment.

Objective 2a: Partner with educators to create educational content & materials for K-12 students.

Actions (Initiatives)

- 1) Create/distribute relevant curriculum aligned educational content to meet the needs of educators, families & learners on both sides of border. Seek national distribution of this content on PBS Learning Media.
- 2) Meet/work with local school educators/agencies (in person/virtual) to offer & increase visibility of educational resources/programs/PBS Learning Media. Develop/sustain programs and events that can engage/excite local educators & students (e.g. Whiz Quiz).
- 3) Build up the Community Education Council to ensure the needs of educators across the WPBS service region are met along with additional focus on post-secondary Ed.
- 4) Expand GPS for Success by developing and producing new modules/educator resources. Continue to market it to counselors, teachers, parents, and students.
- 5) Develop/promote opportunities for educators to create distance learning instructional content for at-home/remote learning. Work to make content widely available.
- 6) Provide supplemental artistic and cultural opportunities (e.g. virtual field trips to enhance opportunities and broaden horizons).
- 7) Gather, develop, and distribute resources for SEL (Social Emotional Learning).

Objective 2b: Further advance strategies to engage people 18-50+ in life-long learning through partnerships with regional post-secondary institutions.

Actions (Initiatives)	
1)	Increase involvement with colleges, universities, and lifelong learning/community programs. Establish partnerships to identify and define new collaborations.
2)	Conduct survey and focus groups to identify needs and desires.
3)	For special events, utilize individual nostalgia opportunities to attract cross generational emphasis and interest (ex: Sesame Street).
4)	Develop collaborative partnerships with post-secondary institutions (regional colleges & universities) for programming, even series with specific themes that highlight talent/skills.
5)	Expand and deepen internal expertise regarding application of new technologies for education (e.g. immersive learning/XR, Next Gen TV).
6)	Design and seek funding for educational content that is meaningful to NNY and Canada (local impactful history, stories, and important events). Consider virtual field trips.

Objective 2c: Leverage PBS's excellent leadership and content/resources of history, STEM and arts to be the destination for enrichment and cultural (arts) engagement.

Actions (Initiatives)	Champion	Timeframe
1) Identify engagement opportunities in the Arts for all ages including concerts, screenings, presence of PBS Kids characters at kid's family events, and virtual events.	Ed Services, Dev.	Jun 2021/ Annual
2) Create short form/digital local content for educational use on topic areas (history, arts, science/conservation) and create accompanying educational resources.	GM, Ed Services & Production	Dec 2021/ Ongoing
3) Expand offering from local organizations such as NCPR, Crane School of Music, and local artists from both US and Canada (utilize and celebrate artistic assets of our region).	GM, Ed Services & Production	Dec 2021/ Annual



GOAL #3: Expand viewership/civic engagement on multiple platforms of our two-nation audience.**Objective 3a:** Raise WPBS profile and expand audience viewership through comprehensive engagement in both the North Country and Canada.**Actions (Initiatives)**

- 1) Maintain and strengthen market share and competitive position through effective promotion and marketing in order to not lose ground to competitors.
- 2) Convene special events for member stewardship and cultivation (e.g. screenings, speakers) through in-person and online (virtual) events.
- 3) Develop/expand interest contact lists to engage people according to topical interests (e.g. arts, history, music, etc.).
- 4) Continue to promote and participate in community/family events on both sides of the border. Develop plans for priority events and means of participation.
- 5) Effectively deploy WPBS advertising budget to maximize impact. Negotiate sponsorships and trade deals with other media and major events, sports teams, festivals across region.
- 6) Generate earned media through press releases, media relations and positive relationships.

Objective 3b: Leverage social media/digital content to market what WPBS has to offer to engage communities and audiences.**Actions (Initiatives)**

- 1) Attract new members and supporters through promotion of privileges such as Passport streaming, mobile app, digital workshops and virtual screenings, member-only events, etc.
- 2) Consistently promote the Passport service to entice more viewers to sign up as members in order to access Passport.
- 3) Use social media outreach (posting, dedicated pages) to stoke interest and potential likes to a fundraising drive and sponsorship opportunities, etc.
- 4) Expand distribution of e-newsletters and other publications, using Facebook and other social media where applicable.

Objective 3c: Promote and market WPBS' strong association with the PBS brand, a highly-trusted and prestigious international media brand.**Actions (Initiatives)**

- 1) Develop marketing campaign to raise awareness of our broad reach of services, educational initiatives, local productions/personalities, events, and general offerings—broadcasting, etc.
- 2) Spread the good news story; overcome any misperceptions of who WPBS is and what we offer and represent. Cross promote on air and at events to generate interest & viewership.
- 3) Develop and implement extensive marketing campaigns for PBS “tentpole” properties and key areas of promotion.

GOAL #4: Modernize technology and infrastructure to be a digital-first organization.**Objective 4a: Embrace new digital distribution platforms and opportunities as they become available.****Actions (Initiatives)**

- 1) Work with PBS Digital team and develop and sustain expertise and resources, including appropriate technology investments, to grow WPBS presence on new platforms.
- 2) Explore the use of technologies such as XR (virtual reality/augmented reality) and NextGen TV in the production and distribution of educational content.
- 3) Enhance the integration of on-air content with PBS apps, WPBS website, live streaming, Facebook, Google Analytics, etc.
- 4) Ensure staff has access to information & training relating to new technologies along with conceiving how to effectively apply it to projects in their area of responsibility.

Objective 4b: Improve broadcast and signal distribution infrastructure to better serve audiences and distribution partners.**Actions (Initiatives)**

- 1) Research and prioritize investments to improve signal quality and reliability. Seek out funding/possible capital campaign for necessary transmitter upgrades for ATSC 3.0.
- 2) Work to develop understanding of NextGen TV (ATSC 3.0) and its potential for WPBS to better serve audiences and create new revenue streams.
- 3) Develop long-term replacement plans for broadcast equipment and/or replacement with cloud-based/outourced solutions.
- 4) Maintain strong relationships with technical/engineering personnel at cable, satellite and internet distributors both sides of the border to keep contact information up to date.
- 5) Plan/implement new signal transmission plan to include redundancy of transmission paths and signal monitoring to ensure reliable delivery of WPBS to distributors and viewers.

Objective 4c: Upgrade and add to production and post-production equipment so WPBS can increase output of original content and digital platforms.**Actions (Initiatives)**

- 1) Develop a medium-term plan for upgrade/addition of field and studio production equipment, including eventual 4K capability.
- 2) Seek foundation/grant funding and possible capital campaign to support equipment acquisition.
- 3) Strengthen WPBS post-production capabilities to enable handling, editing and packaging of larger volumes of user generated content and non-professional video (e.g. teacher lessons on iPhone video) and segments/stock footage from other broadcasters and producers.

GOAL #5: Ensure future financial stability and adaptability of WPBS by generating positive margins and growing reserves in support of stakeholders.

Objective 5a: Effectively manage and expand revenue streams that support core operations.

Actions (Initiatives)

- 1) Fully implement job costing of major WPBS functions, production activities, events, etc.
- 2) Using job costing and non-profit sector standards, develop baseline costs (rate card) and use consistent rates in all proposals. Make strategic decisions about which productions and events are financially beneficial and best meet the core mandate of PBS (education/civic).
- 3) Increase WPBS donation revenues by retaining current donors and acquiring new ones. Test/implement approaches to reach new donors (e.g. Crowd sourcing, giving via text, etc.).
- 4) Continually upgrade and improve the on-air and online experiences of membership drives and auctions to increase engagement and revenues.
- 5) Raise major gifts revenue that is at least two times the total expenses related to the gifts, inclusive of development staff costs, production event costs and corporate overhead costs.
- 6) Increase revenues from schedule ("local") underwriting by retaining existing clients/adding new ones in our region. Also pursue opportunities for sponsorships on digital subchannels, website, apps and monetizable platforms.
- 7) Continue to apply for foundation grants that can be used in support of operational costs.
- 8) Where feasible, pursue opportunities to monetize WPBS assets to generate revenues (e.g. rental of transmission tower capacity, production facilities, etc.).

Objective 5b: Secure funding that supports expanded activities including new productions and educational initiatives.

Actions (Initiatives)

- 1) Develop broader opportunities for production underwriters, research potential corporate, public sector and foundation funders. Increase underwriting for original production.
- 2) Obtain underwriting to support community and educational events.
- 3) Establish a grant prospect list and set priorities of which grants to seek, especially those which support large technological/hardware upgrades requiring large capital funds.
- 4) Apply for grants which expand our capability beyond core operations. For those requiring matching grant money, develop a plan through underwriting and/or foundation assistance.

Objective 5c: Maximize opportunities to build reserves and contingency funds.

Actions (Initiatives)

- 1) Promote planned giving and major gifts that will support building reserve/contingency funds and WPBS endowment.
- 2) Conduct on-air drives, outreach to donors and events to generate funds to build reserves and endowment.



GOAL #6: Create conditions and opportunities for staff to contribute to the success of the organization, align with the vision and goals and realize growth/development.

Objective 6a: Engage, inspire and support staff with challenging responsibilities and management practices, policies and expectations that foster a collegial environment and make WPBS a Great Place to Work.

Actions (Initiatives)	
1)	Develop/ implement a strategy for continuous improvement including skills upgrading and cross training to support workforce flexibility and growth (e.g. succession planning).
2)	Managers engage employees and establish regular and routine communications methods such as: meetings to ensure teamwork and transparencies (staff meetings, newsletters, Sharepoint, online platform, project reviews, etc.).
3)	Attract and retain the best talent and maintain employee satisfaction, through opportunities for professional development and skills upgrading, competitive compensation and benefits.
4)	Ensure a great place to work: Leadership focused on examples such as: clear guidance and empathy, transparent communication within/between departments, etc.
5)	Periodically review and update policies to reflect best practices in media and not-for-profit organizations and ensure staff productivity, safety, and wellness (e.g. time off, working hybrid schedules, remotely, etc.).
6)	Managers provide clear guidance by both coaching and holding employees accountable in order to realize their full potential and development.

Objective 6b: Maintain an inviting workplace that is appealing, safe, and encourages productivity.

Actions (Initiatives)	
1)	Develop an improvement plan with priorities (short & long range) for both interior and exterior physical improvements.
2)	Secure capital funds toward internal/external upgrades.
3)	Implement a vehicle replacement and maintenance plan.
4)	Create/implement a Safety Plan and provide safety training as applicable.

Objective 6c: Enable the development/upgrading of skills relating to the leadership vision and goals of this media, not-for-profit organization.

Actions (Initiatives)	
1)	Offer training/development of management and staff focused on being a learning organization that is diverse, flexible, tech-savvy, and teamwork open to new ideas and solutions.
2)	Foster a transparent environment where staff is encouraged to share ideas and/or concerns.
3)	Properly engage, support and recognize volunteers/interns who supplement WPBS team.

Trends and Themes Listed below are general trends and themes taken from the data collected.

- PBS is a strong brand that has integrity and is widely respected.
- WPBS staff is professional, loyal, and very talented.
- There is wide coverage for educational programs – Northern NY and Canada
- Skilled employees create highest quality and interesting content for viewers
- New staff mixed with seasoned staff creates a new leadership focus
- There are myriad of opportunities to expand and update digital reach
- Expansion needed of digital platforms and dissemination of short form content for shows/projects
- Additional focus and opportunities with Canadian viewership is a positive.
- Educational focus using GPS for Success is a plus but needs on-demand video training
- Competition is fierce with viewership, resources, and revenues
- Keeping up with technology in this fast-paced environment is an enormous challenge
- Gaining viewership of a PBS younger audience is necessary but challenging
- Need to expand multi-platform formats, digital media, GPS for Success, etc.
- COVID has slowed events, funding opportunities, and US/Canadian in-person relationship building
- Financial shortfalls are a concern caused by COVID and other factors
- The WPBS Auction needs to be modernized and streamlined
- Emphasis on acquiring grants will help with financial health
- Internal communication from management and between departments could improve
- COVID could deter good staff communications and teamwork
- Aging infrastructure and update of technology is a reality and also a large expense
- Divergent of thought – More creativity with membership and grant writing