

Request for Proposals: Detroit Public Television Brand Exploration Study

PURPOSE

Detroit Public Television (DPTV) is accepting proposals for a brand marketing agency to perform a brand exploration study using quantitative and qualitative research to inform the station's future brand strategy. This RFP encompasses multiple brand strategy projects informed by exploration and research. It aims to provide a fair evaluation for all candidates and to provide the criteria for which they will be judged.

The purpose of the brand strategy work is to support the future of DPTV as it faces several key opportunities. As the media industry has undergone significant shifts from appointment viewing via broadcast to viewing on-demand, DPTV is adapting to these changes but needs to bring brand alignment to its local programming initiatives to promote easier discoverability, navigation and time spent across content. Additionally, as a not-for-profit, non-commercial media company reliant on financial support from the community, DPTV needs to evolve its brand marketing strategy to reach new and diverse audiences. And lastly, DPTV is heavily involved in direct community engagement and looking to pull this work directly into our brand approach.

BACKGROUND

DPTV is the viewer-supported PBS member station serving Southeast Michigan. Our vision is for a community where people trust public television to help them discover new ideas, make informed decisions, and enjoy enriched lives.

DPTV's mission is to educate, engage, entertain, and inspire through the power of public media. DPTV's vision is to serve as the media anchor of a diverse and connected community. The station's core values are:

- Diversity
- Engagement
- Trust
- Innovation
- Excellence
- Financial Sustainability

DPTV began broadcasting in 1955 as WTVS Channel 56, an educational TV station licensed to the Detroit Educational Television Foundation. Today, DPTV operates five digital broadcast television channels – 56.1 [Main Channel](#), 56.2 [Detroit PBS Kids 24/7 Channel](#), 56.3 [The Create Channel](#), 56.4 [World Channel](#) and 56.5 [The Michigan Learning Channel](#). DPTV also manages [90.9 WRCJ](#), Detroit's only classical and jazz radio station.

Strategic Goals

The long-term goals for the next 10-15 years will create a station poised to be a media leader in Southeast Michigan and a recognized national benchmark. The four strategic initiatives supporting these long-term goals focus on continuing to build impact for kids; scaling the journalism and community engagement initiatives; building the brand; and creating increasingly diverse and more robust revenue streams.

Planned in the future (timeline tbd) the station intends to move from our Wixom headquarters back into the city of Detroit. Currently, 90.9 WRCJ broadcasts from the Detroit School of Arts and the journalism team is based out of a space at the Marygrove Conservancy. Establishing a visible presence in Detroit with the potential for a community gathering space is another strategic component for increasing brand awareness and brand trust.

The Strategic Plan: The Next Five Years (2021-2025) is available upon request.

Platforms

Beyond broadcast, DPTV takes a multiplatform approach to reach audiences through live streaming and on-demand viewing via robust websites, video apps, social media accounts, and email marketing. A significant area of focus is driving station membership via [DPTV Passport](#). Passport offers enhanced viewing with full seasons, sneak peeks, and a robust library of both national and local programming. DPTV Passport is available to members for a gift of \$60.00 or more a year.

Programming

As a PBS member station, DPTV brings viewers the public media experience of high-quality drama, news, documentaries, science, kids programming, and important local stories. The station has four local programming pillars – kids and education, arts and culture, journalism, and energy and environment. DPTV creates programming that is distributed locally, regionally, and nationally.

- DPTV produced local programs: [One Detroit](#), [American Black Journal](#), and [Detroit Performs](#)
- DPTV produced programs that air locally and regionally on other PBS stations: [Great Lakes Now](#)
- DPTV produced national programs for digital and social platforms: [PBS Books](#)

Additionally, DPTV airs national PBS programs such as: [PBS NewsHour](#), [NOVA](#), [Nature](#), [FRONTLINE](#), [Masterpiece](#), [Finding Your Roots](#), [Antiques Roadshow](#), [This Old House](#), and [America's Test Kitchen](#)

And, these national PBS Kid's programs: [Sesame Street](#), [Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood](#), [Molly of Denali](#), [Elinor Wonders Why](#), [Wild Kratts](#), and [Alma's Way](#)

DPTV also broadcasts and manages the [Michigan Learning Channel](#), a statewide network that airs curriculum-based programming that is distributed by these PBS stations WGUV, WCMU, WNMU, WDCQ, WKAR and WNIT (South Bend, IN).

Community

Community engagement is part of everything we do and is a differentiator from other media organizations. We are out in the community, meeting people where they live, involving them in crucial conversations, and hosting events that touch their lives; we give voice to their concerns, hopes, and aspirations. Stand out examples include the station's work in [early childhood education](#) and community workshops, bi-weekly [COVID 313 Virtual Town Halls](#) with community partners, the recently launched [Future of Work](#) series of virtual town halls and segments that will air on broadcast, as well as our [Black Church in Detroit](#) and [AAPI initiatives](#).

Please review [DPTV's Annual Reports](#) and a winning [Station Excellence essay](#) submitted to the Michigan Association of Broadcasters to learn more about our work and its impact on the community.

GOALS

This brand study aims to evaluate DPTV's current brand marketing strategy, perform audience and industry research, and make a long-lasting strategy recommendation for the future. This brand exploration needs to be forward-looking; 15 years from now and beyond, we must have confidence that we made the right branding decisions today.

Specific metrics we may employ long term includes responses to regular waves of brand health metric questions, viewership, and digital visits/views. We are looking for an agency recommendation on what metrics to track and how to collect the data.

BUDGET

We are budgeting up to \$100,000 for this brand exploration study and identified agency activities (listed below) and future strategy recommendation.

REQUIREMENTS AND DELIVERABLES

In preparation for this significant project, DPTV leadership and stakeholders are aligned to address the following areas as part of the brand study – audience research, brand positioning and architecture strategy, station name recommendation, station visual identity, and platform strategy

Audience Research: DPTV's audience is as diverse as its programming and partnerships. Through audience research, the agency will recruit, interview/survey, and synthesize data into actionable recommendations across five main categories.

1. Viewers – Occasional, frequent, heavy viewers (agency to recommended statistically significant sample size)
 - a. National – Drama, News, Science, Arts & Culture, Children's programming (parents)
 - b. Local
 - c. Listeners
 - d. Station members
2. Non-Viewers - Infrequent, never watched (agency to recommended statistically significant sample size)
 - a. National – Drama, News, Science, Arts & Culture, Children's programming (parents)
 - b. Local
 - c. Listeners
 - d. Station members
3. Community partners (minimum number to interview is 10)
4. Current funders (minimum number to interview is 5)

5. Potential funders (minimum number to interview is 5)

Note, for every category except non-viewers, DPTV will work with the selected agency to leverage existing relationships and/or tools (i.e. surveys, email lists) to lead on identification and initial recruitment outreach.

DPTV will work with the selected agency to develop and refine the list of questions included in the research.

Expected output: Understanding the strategic challenge and opportunity, DPTV is requesting that an agency make a recommendation on format (online survey, brand tracker quarterly waves, focus group, one on one interview, etc) and frequency of audience research.

This audience research will be the foundation to inform the agency activities below:

1. Brand Strategy: Positioning and Brand Architecture:

Collaborate with DPTV marketing team to develop a brand positioning statement, versioned for various parties (general audience, viewers, members, funders, community partners)

Existing positioning includes several ways we refer to ourselves and explain our mission and role in the community. We need a stronger set of guidelines and language to apply more consistently.

Brand Architecture will inform the Brand Positioning statement. Across national, regional, statewide, and local programming and events, we need a clearer system to organize these entities to help an audience access and relate to our brand. Any approach should also be built for future net new programming efforts and/or programs which expand reach to a larger footprint (i.e., national).

Your recommendation on the approach, components and deliverables of brand positioning and brand architecture work is requested.

2. Name Recommendation:

There is confusion around the station name among viewers and partners. We refer to ourselves as Detroit Public Television or DPTV, but viewers also refer to us as WTVS, Channel 56, Detroit Public Media or Detroit PBS. Recognizing the brand equity of these existing names, any recommendation should include a strong analysis of the value of selecting one of these names or net new name and the advantages of either direction.

A key strategic choice is whether to and how to adopt national PBS branding. PBS rolled out a [brand refresh in 2019](#) which included a new logo and visual identity. Each PBS station has the discretion to adopt all or some elements of this refresh.

3. Visual Identity:

Components will include strategic and design work:

- New logo development incorporating the future name (or current station name as case may be), optimized for:
 - Multiplatform usage including print, broadcast, digital, mobile, OTT devices, physical signage

- Lockups with other logos (for example, the station logo may be placed with the PBS logo and/or program logo and/or funder and/or partner in graphics)
- Visual System
 - Color and Typography
 - Imagery
 - Illustration
- Brand and Style guideline development aligned with the new visual identity

4. Platforms:

DPTV is a multiplatform content distributor on broadcast and streaming on digital platforms. Additionally, the station and its initiatives maintain bespoke websites to engage audiences with multimedia content (text, video, and images); those efforts may not always be clearly associated with the DPTV brand. The agency must perform a digital brand architecture analysis and recommend a strategy to align DPTV properties better.

MATERIALS AND ACCESS

The selected agency will have access to:

- Summary of DPTV internal stakeholder interviews across all departments including executive leadership
- PBS Brand refresh
- Media Audit report – Demos and Profiles of Viewers

METHOD OF EVALUATING PROPOSALS

DPTV will evaluate proposals with a strict emphasis on quality. Furthermore, the public expects quality stewardship of financial resources. Our process will focus on the areas of the proposal, as noted above. Once all bids are evaluated, the firm that is most qualified and reasonable in terms of cost will be selected. In your response, please include the following:

- Qualifications, experience, and references of the personnel who will be responsible for the project
- Examples of prior work in these areas
- Your company's ability to meet the timeline and target dates established
- DPTV's commitment to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion includes working with vendors who embrace similar values; please share your company's DEI commitment
- DPTV reserves the right to assign work covered in this RFP to multiple agencies at its discretion
- If proposing partnering with another agency and/or individual, please detail out nature of the engagement across agency partners, each agency's role/responsibility and previous joint projects/efforts or working history
- Itemized pricing of RFP elements
- Initial staff scope including names/titles and committed hours/projects

Additionally, finalists may be asked to present their proposals before making a final selection.

TARGET DATES

Key dates for the project include.

- RFP issuance date: Thursday, April 21, 2022
- RFP period closes: Friday, May 13, 2022
- Agency Selection: Wednesday, June 15, 2022
- Kick-off: Monday, July 11, 2022
- Initial Report/Recommendations: Monday, October 3, 2022
- Internal DPTV presentations and revisions: Month of October 2022
- Final Report/Recommendation: Tuesday, November 1, 2022

Please submit proposals no later than Friday, May 13, 2022.

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