Where Everyone Knows Your Name: Cheers to Extension Television

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Introduction

Extension specialists connect research with local needs (Woeste & Stephens, 1996). Increasingly, mass communication efforts are a part of that responsibility. Limited research explores the effectiveness of video in promoting Extension (Rockwell & Randall, 1987; Wagenet et al., 2005), yet little is known about the career impacts on participating Extension specialists. Potential long-term effects of online video may be gleaned from examining long-term involvement of Extension specialists in broadcast programming.

Findings

Specialist 1 said being a known presence from television proved beneficial when he would first meet an Extension client. "It gives you name recognition," he said, ". . .and because you're on the radio or you're on TV or you're in the press, you've got to be credible or you wouldn't be there. It gives you notoriety and it gives you credibility." However, *Specialist 3* suggested the audience reaction went beyond recognition, "People would call you by your first name rather than just being Dr. [*Specialist 3*]."

Conclusions

Subjects demonstrated improved career effectiveness through increased credibility and augmented producer engagement. Interviewees reported audience perceptions of each credibility component: relatability, trustworthiness, and expertise due to regular television appearances. These appearances were perceived as part of an on-going reciprocal conversation.The combination of mass communication and in-person events is shown to produce powerful results.

Theoretical Framework

Cultivation theory + Source credibility

Pfau, Mullen, Deidrich, and Garrow (1995) found cultivation theory and source credibility work in concert to craft public perceptions of those representing industries with limited public exposure. Agriculture is one such industry (Beam, 2017). Cultivated perceptions of specialist's credibility are expected to affect interactions with clientele and enhance specialist's effectiveness .

Recommendations for Practice

- Partner with media in order to maintain a channel of communication with clientele.
- Emphasize professional development in communication and camera presentation skills.

Recommendtions for Research

- Develop a quantitative instrument examining effects from multiple states, alternative producers, and with varied frequency.
- Examine clientele perceptions of specialists at in-person events between those who watch broadcast programming and those who do not.

Purpose & Objectives

Examine the relationship between Extension audiences and the Extension specialists participating in broadcast efforts over many years.

Methods

Case study interviews:

- The SUNUP television program produced by the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service .
- Broadcast statewide from 1986-present.
- Three specialists interviewed: contributed on a weekly/bi-weekly basis over thirty years.

Specialist 2 said involvement with SUNUP improved the quality of conversations he has with in-person audience members. "[SUNUP] allows me to maintain a stream of conversation with the producers that I see regularly," he said, "It's not a sterile environment once you get this ongoing relationship," he said, "I think there's more of a familiar approach when you're talking to friends. You're talking to almost to family in some cases, and it allows you to have that communication with them."

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