



# *Earworm*

IDEO + 90.9 wbur  
BOSTON'S NPR NEWS STATION



# **LISTENER TYPES**

# LISTENER NEEDS

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**Find what  
matters most in  
the daily  
headline  
bombardment**

**Share this  
cultural  
experience with  
like-minded  
people**

**Become a better  
citizen of my  
city**

**Find new stories  
that will inspire  
me**

**Rekindle the  
flame in our  
relationship**

**Feel in control  
of the content I  
consume**

**Use my pockets  
of time through-  
out the day  
intelligently**

**Create content  
alongside WBUR**

# DOLPHIN

## *Public Radio is Like Oxygen*



**GUSTAVO, 30**



**TAYLOR, 32**



**COURTNEY, 31**



**TODD, 38**

### ME & MY ATTITUDES

I'm socially aware, and very politically minded, making me a bit of a news addict. Perhaps I've worked in politics or the public sector. Feeling informed is a source of pride.

### WAYS I LISTEN & ENGAGE

*"I listen first thing in the morning to equip myself for the day, then I check back in multiple times. It's like I'm always filling and re-filling a bucket with facts and opinion."*

*"I set aside time for select podcasts, which stimulate my mind and feed my interests outside of local news."*

### WBUR & ME

It's a brand that I'm proud to stand by. I have total faith that WBUR is serving me the stories I should be hearing. I tune in for hours each day; what I hear on the radio becomes my conversation fodder throughout the day.

### HELP ME

**BECOME A BETTER  
CITIZEN OF MY CITY**

**FIND WHAT  
MATTERS MOST IN  
THE DAILY HEADLINE  
BOMBARDMENT**

**SHARE THIS  
CULTURAL  
EXPERIENCE WITH  
LIKE-MINDED  
PEOPLE**



# DOLPHIN

## *Public Radio is Like Oxygen*

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**GUSTAVO, 30**

"I can set my watch by WBUR's Morning Edition. I know if I hear the news twice, I'm late for work."

"In my house, the news was everyone's responsibility."



**TAYLOR, 32**

"Radio feels like home for me."

"I give an annual membership to my husband every year on our anniversary. It's a tradition now, and it feels good."



**COURTNEY, 31**

"I was in my mid-20s when became hooked. The people exposing me to public radio were doctors, and older colleagues I admired."



# LION

## *Loyal, Proud and Loud*



**ANJALI, 37**



**EVAN, 34**



**XIAOTONG, 31**



**MIKE, 50**

### ME & MY ATTITUDES

I have a shareholder mentality - I'm fiercely loyal to WBUR, but I want to give feedback and feel heard too. I'm a vocal member of my social group and can be the first to share something if it will stoke a conversation.

### WBUR & ME

I'm looking for a more tactile way to connect. I've tried in the past, but I'd like for WBUR to invite me to share my thoughts more.

### WAYS I LISTEN & ENGAGE

*"Listening to the news in the morning helps me feel like I'm ahead of the curve, and gives me conversation fodder throughout the day."*

*"I've called or written in when I feel like I have something to contribute to the conversation."*

### HELP ME

**CREATE CONTENT  
ALONGSIDE WBUR**

**SHARE THIS  
EXPERIENCE WITH  
LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE**

**BECOME A BETTER  
CITIZEN OF MY CITY**

# LION

## *Loyal, Proud and Loud*

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**ANJALI, 37**

"I went to an event with a WBUR journalist who had interviewed me for a story, and I met all these other people I've admired. It was the best night of my life in Boston so far."



**EVAN, 34**

"I think I've been on-air three or four times. There's room to grow audience participation for sure."

"Comments sections on articles are a cesspool."



**XIAOTONG, 24**

"When I was finishing college, I had to re-discover who my friend group would be. I'd love to meet all the other people like me who are listeners. We have so much to talk about."



**MIKE, 50**

"It sounds like every single journalist [working for NPR] was taught to tell their stories the same way. I'd like for the younger reporters to try new formats and keep it exciting."

# FLAMINGO

## *Hunt & Peck*



**NIDA, 30**



**SUSAN, 40**



**JEAN, 62**

### ME & MY ATTITUDES

Public radio is just one of the multiple news sources I follow; it provides a more nuanced take on all the noise out there. I hate wasting time reading or listening to things that don't matter to me. I get in to get what I need and then get out.

### WBUR & ME

I'm good at finding what I like and want to listen to, but WBUR could probably help me discover more. The digital (not the radio) experience helps me get what I want best.

### WAYS I LISTEN & ENGAGE

*"I've curated my consumption via who I follow (on Twitter and Facebook, for example) so that I'm only reading the important stuff."*

*To be efficient, I queue up content on my app so that I can listen to stories one after the other.*

### HELP ME

**FEEL IN CONTROL  
OF THE CONTENT  
I CONSUME**

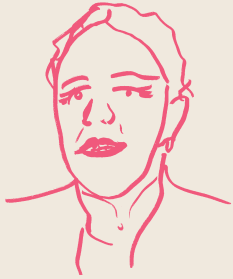
**USE MY POCKETS OF  
TIME THROUGHOUT  
THE DAY  
INTELLIGENTLY**

**FIND WHAT MATTERS  
MOST IN THE DAILY  
HEADLINE  
BOMBARDMENT**

# FLAMINGO

## *Hunt & Peck*

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**NIDA, 30**

“My two biggest sources of news are my Facebook feed and my NPR News app. I curate each one meticulously.”

“There are issues and topics that are of highest order importance to me: food, women’s rights, celebrities news, and my religion (Islam). I don’t have time for everything else.”



**SUSAN, 40**

“The only time I really listen live is when there’s a crisis happening. Otherwise I get my news online. I can read faster than I can listen.”



**JEAN, 62**

“There’s so much [content] thrown at us. You get better and better about what you’re willing to take time with and become more selective.”

“If it doesn’t load in 10 seconds, I move on.”



# COLLIE

## *Program Loyal*



**LISA, 47**



**KATE, 30**



**NANCY, 71**

### ME & MY ATTITUDES

I believe in great storytelling; human stories draw me in more than the news. I get a lot of recommendations from friends and people I trust, and when I find something I love, I make it my own.

### WBUR & ME

I like what I've heard, and I'm loyal to my show, but I feel like I'm just scratching the surface in terms of what else is out there.

### WAYS I LISTEN & ENGAGE

*I've dug deep into the program I love most ("every episode of 'This American Life'") but have not explored podcast or news content broadly.*

*"Radio feels like a personal experience to me, so while I'm connected, I'm not much of a sharer of public radio content."*

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### HELP ME

**FIND NEW  
STORIES THAT WILL  
INSPIRE ME**

**BECOME A BETTER  
CITIZEN OF MY CITY**

**SHARE THIS CULTURAL  
EXPERIENCE WITH  
LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE**

# COLLIE

## *Program Loyal*

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**LISA, 47**

“The ‘Dear Sugar’ podcast has me hooked lately. I’m so happy I discovered it. There are podcasts about everything!”



**KATE, 30**

“It makes you feel awesome to introduce someone else to this cool, smart thing [This American Life]. You package it up with this cool, indie band, and it’s like the perfect cultural gift pack”



**NANCY, 71**

“If it’s important to my friends, it’s important to me.”

“We felt the loss of the Car Talk guy, too. I felt like I knew him.”

“Going to a live [Ira Glass] event was an incredible experience. I looked around and saw all these people, and I couldn’t believe what I had been missing.”

# TURTLE

## Long-Term Relationship



**JACK, 63**



**NINON, 32**



**ELIZABETH, 40**

### ME & MY ATTITUDES

I completely align myself with public radio and have been a listener for as long as I can remember. It's a permanent part of my routine.

### WBUR & ME

It's like we're in a comfortable, long-term relationship. It hasn't felt very new or inspiring to me in a while.

### WAYS I LISTEN & ENGAGE

*"I've dug deep into the program I love most ('every episode of 'This American Life') but have not explored podcast or news content broadly."*

*"I have gotten so much out of public radio for years, and I feel like I've dropped the ball when it comes to giving."*

*"My experiences at live events have been stellar. I want more of those."*

### HELP ME

**REKINDLE THE FLAME  
IN OUR RELATIONSHIP**

**FIND NEW STORIES  
THAT WILL  
INSPIRE ME**

**SHARE THIS CULTURAL  
EXPERIENCE WITH  
LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE**



# TURTLE

## *Long-Term Relationship*

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**JACK, 63**

"[WBUR] is such a valuable part of my life, and I know we way undergive. I subscribe to things way less important to me than this."

"It's actually inspiring me to learn that WBUR is doing this – trying to learn what its listeners like and think."



**NINON, 32**

"I cherish the 20 minutes to myself in the car that I get to have with WBUR."

"I haven't quite figured out downloading podcasts on my phone yet, but once I do, I'm sure I'll fall in love."



**ELIZABETH, 40**

"Sometimes, it's the same voices all the time [on WBUR], so I'll check Twitter to see if my friends have posted any good stuff I may not have known about."





# **OPPORTUNITIES FOR WBUR**

# BE THE BRAND OF A SMARTER BOSTON

## *Opportunity Area 1*

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We heard loud and clear that WBUR is THE trusted news source in this town. If the core, functional offering of WBUR is that it's Boston's NPR News Station, then the emotional offering you give people is your credible, unbiased, intelligent lens.

### WE HEARD

*"I'd trust TripAdvisor more if I knew they were working with you."*

*"Listening in the morning gives me my conversation fodder throughout the day."*

*"NPR isn't supposed to feel cool. It's supposed to be the most credible thing out there. It makes you feel smarter."*

*"WBUR is information with integrity."*

*"WBUR is like sorbet... when I need to clear my mind."*

*"I'm arming myself to be an informed intellegent citizen of the world."*

### WE KNOW

Take pride in how others benefit from your halo and build upon this equity. This is a moment to raise WBUR's reputation for being smart and fair (in addition to being progressive), and to give them a distinct reason to align with your side – the smarter side.

# BE THE BRAND OF A SMARTER BOSTON

## *Opportunity Area 1*

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### *MORE IDEAS*

- + CURATE AND CREATE STORIES FOR KIDS AND YOUNGER AUDIENCES
- + TRIBE LISTENING, CREATE A SYSTEM SO THAT LISTENERS CAN SHARE AND COMMENT TO SMALL GROUPS.
- + YOUR WBUR YEAR IN STORIES, OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW YOUR ALIGNMENT WITH WBUR AS A LIFESTYLE BRAND.
- + USE RESEARCH CAPABILITY TO CREATE A NEW VERIFICATION/ CERTIFICATION ENTITY (WILDFLOWER PLANT EXAMPLE)

# HOST YOUR COMMUNITY & FACILITATE LIVE CONNECTION

## *Opportunity Area 2*

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We knew at the outset that “our relationship with listeners exists in their heads,” and there was an appetite to explore what a “3D” relationship might be made of. We learned that in-person connection moments are a cherished, if rare experience. With the love people have for the hosts and brand, there’s an opportunity to humanize yourselves and be the catalyst for stronger bonds between listeners in Boston.

### WE HEARD

*Events are sacred. “It’s like seeing your favorite band live.”*

*“If they recorded OnPoint Live every week, I’m pretty sure I would go.”*

*“The party I attended [where I met WBUR journalists] was pretty much the best night of my life in Boston so far.”*

*“What if there were a coffee shop [attached to the WBUR Outpost concept] so you could stay and socialize with other listeners?”*

*“Whoever came up with the ‘Tiny Desk’ Series is a genius.”*

### WE KNOW

That a “mobile” or secondary mini WBUR station is highly desirable from the Whine & Dine responses and also possible with the resourcefulness we witnessed at WBUR.

It’s possible to scale events beyond the big theatre draws that comprise the bulk of ticket sales today, and have smaller hosts or more frequent in-person gatherings to meet your audience.

# HOST YOUR COMMUNITY & FACILITATE LIVE CONNECTION

## *Opportunity Area 2*

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### *MORE IDEAS*

- + PERISCOPE INSIDE THE STUDIO
- + MONTHLY BRAINS & BREWS TRIVIA NIGHT EVENTS AT PUBS AND PARKS (MEMBERSHIP)
- + A CALENDAR OF EVENTS DIRECTED SPECIFICALLY AT YOUNGER LISTENERS

# GIVE LISTENERS THE MICROPHONE

## *Opportunity 3*

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Considering the amount of affinity and loyalty that already exists among WBUR's long-time listeners, there's an untapped opportunity to ask your community to participate in what you're doing. Give your audience defined ways of joining in, like making it easy to collect some of the rich storytelling that has yet to be captured. People who call in should be told when the show is being rebroadcast so they can listen and call in next time.

### **WE HEARD**

*"Since I live in Massachusetts, I'd like to hear callers [on the national programs] from places other than Massachusetts, to hear their perspective, too."*

*"I think I've been on-air three or four times. There's room to grow audience participation for sure."*

*Listeners who call in during a rebroadcast could be given information on the recording that tells them how they still might be able to contribute.*

### **WE KNOW**

WBUR is under-resourced in certain departments, like data analytics and social media management, for starters. What if WBUR were one of the first to open-source where it needs help, and ask its audience members for their input on ways to grow? There is a huge talent pool in Boston just waiting for its invitation..

# GIVE LISTENERS THE MICROPHONE

## *Opportunity Area 3*

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### *MORE IDEAS*

- + STORYTELLING WORKSHOPS FOR LISTENERS LED BY PRODUCERS
- + TIME SKIPPING APP FOR PODCASTS, HMW INVITE LISTENERS TO JOIN THE CONVERSATION EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE LISTENING AFTER THE LIVE SHOW? (ON POINT)
- + OUR VOICES APP: LETS INDIVIDUALS READ WBUR STORY TRANSCRIPTS (EX. KID READS PODCAST FOR HER DAD'S COMMUTE TO BOSTON)



# PROTOTYPE & SHARE IDEAS WITH THE PUBLIC

## *Opportunity Area 4*

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Someone at IDEO once described a prototype as “a question made tangible.” The listeners we met inspired and excited by the idea of rapid ideation and prototyping new offerings, and they were more than willing to give their time and feedback generously. This is an opportunity to continue in this vein of trying low-commitment investments and getting honest reactions to your questions.

### WE HEARD

*“It’s actually inspiring me to learn that WBUR is doing this – trying to learn what its listeners like and think.”*

*“This conversation [about my listening habits] has been the highlight of my week.”*  
*At our lemonade stand: “Any time I see WBUR’s logo I have to stop and look.”*

### WE KNOW

Our Listener Whine & Dine was the first step. Our Lemonade Stand on the streets of Boston was the second. We have the means and ability to make small, low-investment trials as we invite people to participate in our experimentation. Listeners are delighted to see you in the streets, and won’t turn away when you ask them what they think.



# PROTOTYPE & SHARE IDEAS WITH THE PUBLIC

## *Opportunity Area 4*

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### *MORE IDEAS*

- + UNDERWRITING OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT INNOVATION
- + FOSTER ONLINE CO-LAB COMMUNITY WITH SPECIFIC ASKS. PEOPLE JOIN TO TALK TO EACH OTHER, HAVE OWNERSHIP, PROVIDE IDEAS & FEEDBACK.

# MEMBERSHIP WITH MEANING

## *Opportunity Area 5*

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What if there were another way to demonstrate one's affinity and commitment to WBUR beyond listening hours and a one-off pledge? This opportunity is about creating new offerings that will build upon your listeners' desire to be brand ambassadors for you.

### WE HEARD

Loud and clear that listeners acting as guardians of your brand. For those in our Whine & Dine, what felt *"aligned with WBUR"* and what felt contrary, was instinctive.

*"[WBUR] is such a valuable part of my life, and I know we way undergive. I subscribe to things way less important to me than this."*

*"It's just occurring to me that I might be missing out on so much [beyond just listening]. I want to get to know WBUR with my other senses, like see what they're up to on Tumblr, and go to more events."*

*"I give an annual membership to my husband every year on our anniversary. It's a tradition now and it feels good."*

### WE KNOW

Once they're listeners, people share content with each other in myriad ways. For new or light listeners, this may be our opportunity to find a trigger that gets them to know us, and not forget us. We have an immense listener base that wants a vehicle to better connect them with their social groups; we have to help them do it.

# MEMBERSHIP WITH MEANING

## *Opportunity Area 5*

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### *MORE IDEAS*

- + UNIQUE DISPLAYS OF GRATITUDE FOR PEOPLE WHO BECOME MEMBERS
- + FRICTIONLESS GIVING CONCEPTS TO REMOVE BARRIES TO ENGAGE AND SUPPORT, LIKE DIPJAR & TXT TO JOIN

# MIND YOUR D'S: DATA & DIGITAL

## *Opportunity Area 6*

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Data and your digital platforms are not to be relegated as side efforts; there's an opportunity to start small here and run experiments to make your listeners' experience better every day. As you move into the next stage of your digital platform overhaul, keep stock of what's working well, what's causing frustration, and what behaviors might be emerging that we need to account for next. The key to knowing your listeners better is knowing where you're starting – who's listening, who's following us, and who's giving – so that you can serve them better.

### WE HEARD

*While WBUR's digital audience has quintupled in the last three years, revenue generation here is largely missing the mark.*

*"Making money off the absolutely essential digital platforms that the public uses every day is still a profound challenge."*

*"I love the NPR app because of its push notifications. They're always timely with headlines and they're things I definitely want to know."*

*"It's absolutely mind-boggling that I've given to WBUR several times and I don't receive any email from them."*

### WE KNOW

As someone on the WBUR team reflected after our Listener Whine & Dine, "the connected car is here." Even those without cars or analog radios understood how to get that content digitally, but they may not understand secondary or tertiary options for them that exist. There's a lot of energy and resources behind overhauling the web and app-based digital experience; let's use this momentum to better understand gaps in people's potential listening hours and giving behaviorsnwhere the app or website content could answer an unmet need.

# MIND YOUR D'S: DATA & DIGITAL

## *Opportunity Area 6*

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### *MORE IDEAS*

- + FOSTER COMMUNITY FEEDBACK LOOPS
- + GROW COMMUNITY
- + COMMUNITY DRIVEN CONTENT DEVELOPMENT
- + CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
- + ON DEMAND EXPERIENCES

# EXTRA CREDIT: THINK WITH YOUR HEART

## *Opportunity Area 7*

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We were struck by the internal messaging cry “Smart With Heart” that was shared with us. This notion carries a lot of resonance as the role you play in listeners’ lives; they have an intense emotional connection with WBUR that leads them to be fiercely protective of your brand. This is about creating delightful moments for Boston and the people in it. Building a culture of empathy (which has a great foundation already at WBUR) is a great place to start. Trusting your gut and going after the emotional moments, like a program offering that is tailored toward helping people decompress. Support needs of a busy and successful population to take the pressure off.

### WE HEARD

*Listeners are the first to rave about you to another person, but they feel deep disappointment when they feel like they may not be heard or understood. First things first: ways to make giving feel frictionless.*

*“We texted to donate to ‘This American Life’...We do whatever Ira tells us.”*

*WBUR’s credibility and earned trust come from high-caliber and unbiased reporting (we’re great functionally). We can further this affinity by supporting the needs of a busy and successful population (we can grow emotionally).*

### WE KNOW

Decompression time is a gap where we don’t currently fill listeners’ needs like music or entertainment-based programming does, but we can educate the public about our ongoing efforts to grow in this space (Dear Sugar, Kind World, etc).

Just like Chicago has Ira, Boston’s got strong players, like Tom and Meghna for starters. We can use their draw amongst the fan base to try out creative ideas to amplify giving.

# EXTRA CREDIT: THINK WITH YOUR HEART

## *Opportunity Area 7*

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### *IDEAS LIST*

- + STORIES INSPIRING END OF DAY ACTIVITY: “HOW WE EAT” STORIES ABOUT DINNER ROUTINES
- + “THE DECOMPRESS” PLAYLIST OF KIND WORLD, LIVE WORLD, HUMAN INTEREST NEWS THAT YOU PROBABLY HAVEN’T HEARD TODAY
- + “KNOW YOUR MEME” DAD BOD, NOTORIOUS RBG