CHALLENGE #6

Summary
Create a non-traditional 4 p.m. newscast with a significant digital emphasis that allows viewers in a metro market to personalize and customize their news experience.

Challenge:
The 4-5 p.m. time slot is key to most metro TV stations. A strong program in that time period can essentially set up and hold an audience into the evening. The 4-5 p.m. program leads into the 5-6:30 p.m. local news, followed by the 6:30-7 p.m. national news, followed by 7-7:30 p.m. entertainment news, followed by a 7:30-8 p.m. game show, followed by the 8-11 p.m. network programming.

For its 4-5 p.m. slot, WCPO-TV (Cincinnati) wants to create a program that is "much different from a traditional newscast. We do not like to use the word 'newscast' because it pegs the show in a certain way. The pillars of what our consumers want has not changed: breaking/happening now news, weather and local coverage. What has changed is our consumers are now used to a personalized, customizable news experience. The explosion of hand held devices has changed the game and we need to build a 4 p.m. newscast that connects to these new realities. Our goal is to have a show that goes way beyond the traditional TV presentation and enters the digital space in a relevant way."

Further: “Mobile integration will be a large part of this show. The producers of this newscast need to be aggregators of the latest, greatest stories that impact our region. While we have an idea of a framework we could really use some guidance on how to translate this into a completely different newscast. Our data actually shows that the consumers want it in a different way but they can’t articulate what that looks like. That’s a real challenge. We are ahead of the game but need innovative thinking to get us to a show that resonates with the audience.”

Deliverables:
- A summary of the problem within its context
  In order to ensure your solution is truly innovative, you need to investigate the problem. Are there any existing similar approaches to what you propose? If so, how does your solution try to recreate, improve on or differentiate itself from a previously successful approach? What observations, studies, industry research, or communication best practices support your approach to the problem?

- A viable solution
  Come up with a well developed blueprint for a 4 p.m. news program that fully utilizes a range of digital platforms to provide a personalized, customized
news experience that is build on deep audience engagement.

- **A workable business model**
  Your plan should address the cost of developing and implementing this program, as well as the cost and method of marketing it to attract and hold the largest possible audience.

- **A strategy to reach diverse audiences**
  Special attention should be given to ways for engaging underserved and underrepresented audiences.

**Resources:**

WCPO is willing to provide student competitors with a comprehensive national study on audience desires/trends. The study was conducted by SmithGeiger, a leading media research firm, and it includes data specific to the Cincinnati area.

In addition, WCPO is willing to put student competitors in touch with SmithGeiger researchers and consultants. And WCPO will provide other recent studies analyzing the Cincinnati TV and digital market.

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