**Waterfront Renewal Coalition[[1]](#footnote-1)**

You are a recent college graduate locked into a 3-year contract with the major league’s Central Coast Seabirds. However, instead of bashing home runs or turning double-plays, you work in the front-office as the Seabirds’ new vice-president of marketing. You were hired to increase the interest level in the Seabirds across the Central Coast market, which would be measured in ticket sales and television/radio audiences.

However, just after the Seabirds’ 8th-consecutive pennant-less season ended, your boss texted you: “meet me at Royals Diner tomorrow 7am, muy importante”. Maria Delis had owned the Seabirds since her father’s death in 1998. She was a no-nonsense owner with a fierce competitive spirit that consumed her. She expected to win at everything, and she was ready to give the Seabird organization a new beginning.

The next morning, before you had even ordered breakfast, Maria told you that she had $1.35 million worth of media inventory at her disposal for a new project, and you would be responsible for researching, planning and executing a media plan. Maria wants to build a new stadium for the Seabirds, but needs the public’s support in order to get the necessary zoning and building permits passed through city council. Your job is to recommend how the $1.35 million in advertising should be allocated among nine different types of media vehicles for the two-month campaign.

**The Waterfront Renewal Coalition**

Maria established a community organizing effort called the Waterfront Renewal Coalition (WRC) in 2011. The WRC’s original purpose was to serve as a coordinating and communications hub for Maria’s stadium agenda, dubbed the Seabird Waterfront Stadium Development Project. According to WRC’s market research, about 1.1 million adults (18 years and older), or 14.9% of all adults in Central Coast, have attended at least one Seabirds game in the past 12 months and watched/listened to at least one Seabirds game on TV/radio. These adults are considered “*Seabird core fans”*.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Central Coast adult population** | **7,411,361** | **100.0%** |
|  |  |  |
| Attended Seabirds game past 12 months | 1,288,752 | 17.4% |
| Listened to Seabirds radio broadcast last 12 months | 1,318,815 | 17.8% |
| Watched Seabirds TV (broadcast/cable) broadcast last 12 months | 3,256,459 | 43.9% |
|  |  |  |
| ***Attended & Watched/Listened to Seabirds past 12 months*** | **1,105,963** | **14.9%** |

Based on WRC’s market research, the advertising campaign will be targeted at the 14.9% of adults who are current “Searbird core fans.” The goals of the campaign are to (1) increase awareness of the Seabird Waterfront Stadium Development Project among current Seabird core fans, (2) stimulate civic engagement (e.g., writing/calling local city council representatives), and (3) encourage Seabird core fans to continue their support of the Central Coast Seabirds.

**The WRC Advertising Campaign**

Your task is to present a recommendation for allocating the $1,350,000 budget across the nine different media vehicles where time and space is being made available to the WRC advertising campaign. Although all time and space is being donated by Maria - who has an ownership stake in each media property - you want to use the market cost of the donated media to help guide your decisions about the media mix in your campaign.

As a cost yardstick, a WRC colleague has prepared a table showing “cost-per-thousand impressions” for each of the nine media. Sometimes “impressions” are also called “exposures” or “opportunities to see.” Your estimated costs-per-thousand impressions range from a low of $7 cost-per-thousand for transit advertising to a high of $55 cost-per-thousand for print ads in the major metropolitan daily newspapers.[[2]](#footnote-2)



Using consumer research available to the WRC, you’ve estimated the percentage of media audiences who are likely to be your target “Seabird core fans”, the 14.9% of adults who attend and watch/listen to Seabird games. For example, on Daily Newspaper Websites, Seabird core fans make up 23.2% of the audience while Seabird core fans are only 13% of the audience on prime access television shows such as “Wheel of Fortune”.

**Your WRC Media Plan**

We have prepared an Excel spreadsheet to assist you in allocating the $1,350,000 campaign budget across the nine media vehicles (the spreadsheet is attachment A.) As a starting point we have allocated $150,000 to each of the nine media vehicles. The spreadsheet is designed to re-calculate all values as you change the dollar amounts in the grey-shaded column.

Your goal is maximize the number of Seabird core fans impressions (Column H) by changing the dollar amounts in column A and playing “what-if?” – while using your judgment regarding the appropriate mix of the nine media. The WRC executive director has told you that it is not necessary to use all of the nine media.



Before beginning to try different scenarios, you should familiarize yourself with the underlying formulae in the spreadsheet by clicking on different cells to see how the values are calculated. For example, Seabird core fans make up 15.6% of the audience for late-night television programs as shown in column D – this is slightly higher than the 14.9% incidence of Seabird core fans in the total Central Coast population. This is reflected in column E, which shows a Seabird core fan media index of 104 – index values above 100 indicate that a media vehicle is more likely to reach Seabird core fans. In other words, late-night television audiences are 4% more likely than the average Central Coast adult to be Seabird core fans.

A late-night television budget of $150,000 with an average cost per thousand impressions of $15 (column C) gives us a total of 10,000,000 estimated impressions with adults 18 years and older (column G). Since we know that, on average, 15.6% of these impressions will be with Seabird core fans, our spreadsheet estimates that we will achieve a total of 1,560,000 impressions with our target Seabird core fans (column H) on late-night television.

In columns J and K, we see that late-night television currently accounts for 11% of our total impressions with Seabird core fans, and is 11% of our total media budget. Our average cost for reaching Seabird core fans on late-night television is $96 per 1000 Seabird core fan impressions (column L). These figures will change as you manipulate dollar amounts in column A.

As a starting point, you have allocated an equal $150,000 to each of the nine media. At the bottom of the table you see that this yields a total number of adult impressions of 72,344,395. Comparing our adult impressions to the adult population of 7,411,361, we see that our impressions are equal to 976% of the adult population – in media math, this means we have achieved 976 gross rating points (GRPs) among adults. Among our target Seabird core fans, however, we have achieved a higher 1,236 GRP level. An effective media plan will have a target GRP level that is higher than the overall adult GRP level.

**Submitting Your WRC Media Plan to the**

**Washington Media Scholars Foundation**

Submissions should include the following:

1. The Excel spreadsheet with your recommended allocation of the $1,350,000 budget. Make sure that your name and contact information appear on the spreadsheet where indicated.
2. A document file, no longer than two pages single-spaced, in which you answer the following questions in support of your media mix allocations. If you desire, the document may include tables and/or charts. Include your name and contact information at the top of the word document.
3. What media received the largest shares of your budget and why? What media received the smallest shares and why?
4. Beyond maximizing the number of Seabird core fans impressions, what were some other factors that you took into consideration when determining your recommended media mix?
5. If the WRC could solicit the donation of other types of media, what other media vehicles would you like to see included in your plan?

E-mail files to Kara.Watt@mediascholars.org. File names must include your team name.

1. The situation described in this case study is fictional. Research data for Central Coast is modeled using Scarborough Research data from the Chicago media market, and has been altered for the purposes of the case. Population estimates, media audiences, costs and other data do not represent any actual market conditions, and should be used only by competitors in the first round of the 2014 Washington Media Scholars Foundation scholarship competition. Copyright 2013 by WMSF. Do not reproduce without permission. More information at <http://mediascholars.org/case-competition/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For more information about media planning terminology, see the WMSF website for a glossary. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)