



The *Think Out Loud* Hiring Process

When we launched *Think Out Loud*, we had a unique opportunity to build a show staff from the ground up. We took this chance to carefully construct the position descriptions, and to set up a rigorous hiring process. Documents and practices we developed, with valuable assistance from Jim Russell, are attached.

Documents include:

- ◆ Position announcements for the broadcast and web hosts and senior show producer
- ◆ Sample interview questions for each of the three positions
- ◆ Overview of exercises candidates engaged in during interview process

OREGON PUBLIC BROADCASTING
POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

**Senior Producer
(Radio Talk Show)**

Position: Full-Time, Regular, Exempt Status, position

Compensation: Salary, plus benefits package

Primary Duties/Responsibilities:

Develop and produce daily one-hour local news/discussion program on OPB Radio and opb.org. Lead producer for pilot and launch phases. Oversee the process for choosing program topics, guests, stories and recurring elements. Create and maintain system for tracking current and planned show topics, daily promotional plan and archive of past subjects. Supervise all aspects of day-to-day broadcast program production. Work on show prep and in studio to direct program during live broadcast. Work with executive producer, on-air and web hosts and program staff to create a format that integrates on-air and online content per the “Town Square” mission and plan. Integrate findings of audience research into pilot program development. Help define the sound of this regional program, so that it clearly reflects a “sense of place” and OPB’s mission.

Necessary skills: Demonstrated ability to meet daily deadlines which will include strong organizational and time management skills. Sr. Producer will have demonstrated ability to formulate programs around newsworthy topics and to work with office and digital audio editing software, and the ability to edit copy for broadcast. Lead, as well as, work constructively with team members. Knowledge of public broadcasting environment and online news evolution.

Working Conditions: Most work is done in an office, studio or other indoor location. Some travel in-state and nationally may be necessary. Lifting or carrying equipment up to 50 lbs. may be required. Extended periods of sitting and standing may be necessary. Work schedule may require early arrivals, some weekends.

Required Qualifications:

- Bachelor’s degree in journalism or related field, or equivalent experience.
- Three years experience in radio news, with experience as a producer and editor.
- Demonstrated broadcast news writing skills and ability to produce live news shows consistent with public radio standards and style.

To apply: [position closed]

OREGON PUBLIC BROADCASTING
POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

**Online Community Leader
(Radio/Online Talk Show)**

Position: Full-Time, Regular, Exempt Status, position

Compensation: Salary, plus benefits package

Primary Duties/Responsibilities:

Manager and leader of Town Square online community. Will be a creative force in creating a new dynamic for discussion in both the online and broadcast environment. This position is high-profile, so this person must be able to reflect OPB's mission as a responsible, informed ambassador.

Necessary skills: Must have experience participating in online interactive content creation (examples: writing a blog, producing a podcast, creating Flash content). Must be committed to discussion that is civil, engaging, surprising at times, but also fair and inclusive. Online Community Leader must be willing to engage community members in face-to-face dialogue as well as in online social media framework. Demonstrated knowledge of and interest in the Pacific Northwest, or a demonstrated ability to become knowledgeable about issues of concern in the region. Must be able to work cooperatively in a fast paced, flexible, team environment. Knowledge of public broadcasting environment and online news evolution.

Working Conditions: Work will be done in office and studio locations as well as in a variety of community settings. Frequent local and in-state travel. Lifting or carrying equipment up to 50 lbs. is required. Extended periods of sitting and standing may be necessary. Work schedule may require varied hours, including early arrivals and some weekend work.

Required Qualifications:

- Demonstrated ability to create online content, preferably for a journalism-oriented site.
- Demonstrated writing skills suitable for online environment.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree.

To apply: [position closed]

OREGON PUBLIC BROADCASTING
POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

**On Air Host
(Radio Talk Show)**

Position: Full-Time, Regular, Exempt status, position

Compensation: Salary, plus benefits package

Primary Duties/Responsibilities:

Host of live daily radio show on OPB. Will be a key creative force in creating this new program. Host must also have the ability both to lead and support the production team, and contribute creative ideas for shows in a collaborative environment. This position is high-profile, so this person must be a responsible, informed ambassador for OPB, and must be comfortable in a public role.

Necessary skills: Must possess a wide range of on-air skills in live and pre-recorded settings, especially the ability to lead discussions that include people entering through an array of platforms (callers, texters, in-studio interviews, call-outs, e-mail contributions). Must be committed to newsworthy discussion that is civil, interesting, surprising at times, but also fair and inclusive. Host must have an innate curiosity and interest in a wide range of issues and good journalistic instincts to handle breaking news and complex topics in a journalistically-sound manner. Demonstrated knowledge and interest in the Pacific Northwest, or a demonstrated ability to become knowledgeable about issues of concern in the region. Ability to work in a fast-paced, flexible environment.

Working Conditions: Most work is done in an office, studio or other indoor location. Some travel in-state and nationally. Lifting or carrying equipment up to 50 lbs. may be required. Extended periods of sitting and standing may be necessary. Work schedule will require early arrival, may include some weekends.

Required Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in journalism or related field, or equivalent experience.
- Demonstrated professional, public radio style delivery as an announcer, host or reporter.
- Demonstrated writing skills that reflect public broadcasting journalism standards and style, including editing skills.
- Ability to make editorial decisions.

To apply: [position closed]

HOST:

1. Describe your daily news diet: what do you read, watch and listen to and why?
2. Choose a characteristic of the Pacific Northwest that appeals to you and describe how your interest in that subject (person, etc.) would help you in your role as a host.
3. How would you describe your style? And what would you describe as your top priority as a host?
4. Who are you talking to when you are on the air? How do you know who you are talking to?
5. How do you convey your sense of curiosity and exploration within the framework of a broadcast program?
6. Describe a time when you were on-air live, and had to handle a breaking story. What happened, and what did you do?
7. How do you keep up with what is important in the lives of people who aren't like you?
8. How would your colleagues describe your on-air style? Your communication style in the office?
9. What kind of relationship with your supervisor helps you do your best work and grow professionally?
10. This is a program that is committed to this community/region. We have no national ambitions, though we may become model nationwide for local stations. Are you comfortable with that, and could you be committed to a show that has that focus? (and are you prepared to make a 2-3 year commitment?)

ONLINE HOST:

1. Describe your daily news diet: what do you read, watch and listen to and why?
2. What are the sites that you admire and why? What bloggers do you admire and why?
3. How would you go about creating a sense of community, journalistic balance and civil discourse on our website?
4. Choose a characteristic of the Pacific Northwest that appeals to you and describe how your interest in that subject (person, etc.) would help you in your role as an online community leader.
5. In your view, what is the role of partnerships in online content development? Describe an example of a partnership you have participated in and what you learned from it.
6. Are you comfortable acting in a mediator/moderator role, rather than an opinion/blogging role?
7. How do you keep up with what is important in the lives of people who aren't like you?
8. Describe your technical skills as they relate to online communities. Are there areas where you feel you would benefit from additional training?
9. How would your colleagues describe your communication style in the office?
10. What kind of relationship with your supervisor helps you do your best work and grow professionally?
11. Do you have broadcast experience? If so, please describe it. If not, please tell us why you think you would be a good fit for that aspect of the position.
12. This is a program that is committed to community and to the region. We have no national ambitions (though of course, the website will have

global reach). We are committed to using the web to build community in our region. Are you comfortable with that? And how would you accomplish that?

SENIOR PRODUCER:

1. Describe your daily news diet: what do you read, watch and listen to and why?
2. What do you think are the most important qualities for a senior producer of a live, daily show to have?
3. How do you ensure that every element in a show moves the conversation forward?
4. Choose a talk show currently available to public radio stations that you admire and tell us, from a producer's point of view, what is effective about that program, and what you would do to improve it.
5. Choose a characteristic of the Pacific Northwest that appeals to you and describe how your interest in that subject (person, etc.) would help you in your role as producer.
6. How do you balance the needs of a high-profile host & show staff? How would you build a highly functioning team?
7. Describe a time when you were producing a live show and you had to handle a breaking story or a real-time technical problem. What happened, and what did you do?
8. How do you develop a strategy (or strategies) to ensure that your show has more "hits" than "misses"?
9. How do you keep up with what is important in the lives of people who aren't like you?
10. How would your colleagues describe your on-air style? Your communication style in the office?
11. What kind of relationship with your supervisor helps you do your best work and grow professionally?

Interview exercises

During the interview process, we asked candidates to engage in the following exercises:

On-air host:

First Round-Each candidate interviewed a member of the station team about the new show. They were supplied with background information prior to the interview. Each interview lasted 10 minutes. The conversations were recorded.

Second Round-During the interview process, we gave the candidate a piece of wire copy and a couple of pages of background on a breaking local news story and gave them 5 minutes to write a billboard for a show on that topic. The candidate read the billboard on tape, one take at the end of the 5-minute period.

Web host:

First Round-We asked each candidate to assess a [recent demographic study](#) of Internet users and analyze how that research should be applied to the new program we were launching.

Second Round-We provided each candidate with background information on a controversial ballot measure before Oregon voters and asked them to prepare a post to launch an online discussion about that subject.

Producer:

We asked each candidate to critique a current public radio talk show and apply that critique to OPB's talk show plans.