



## **Jefferson Awards For Public Service Frank N. Magid Associates Recommendations**

### ***The Benefits To Our Media Partners: Localization, Impact, Branding And The Connection To The National Ceremonies***

#### **Executive Summary**

During 2002 Brent Magid, the President of Frank N. Magid Associates, joined the Board of Selectors of the American Institute for Public Service and the Jefferson Awards for Public Service. Over a six-month period, the Jefferson Awards for Public Service staff and Magid Associates have been reviewing the Jefferson Awards marketing and program materials.

The following are the highlights of these conversations:

#### **Interviews With Brent Magid and Magid Professionals:**

##### **Issue Number ONE: *Localization And Branding***

Today, media outlets are facing serious competition and tight economic realities. New competitors challenge them and breakthroughs in technology create uncertainty.

The media is paying outside consultants to determine their best competitive positioning to maintain the economic value of their station/newspaper. One answer continues to be emphasized: **Localization.**

The message is that readers/viewers need to feel that the station/newspaper cares about them. The Jefferson Awards “Unsung Heroes”(volunteer recognition) are an excellent opportunity to connect to your community.

A key objective of a television station and a newspaper is to “Build Brand” and to be seen as the entity that most cares about the local community – “Localization.” The idea is that each media outlet wants the viewing/reading public to perceive of them in a known and repetitive way. Localization and branding are very important to the media.

**Localization**  
**Build Your Brand**  
**Burnish Your Brand**  
**Enhance Your Brand**

## **ISSUE NUMBER TWO: *The Maslow Pyramid And An Emotional Connection***

**In their research, Frank N. Magid Associates demonstrate that an emotional connection is powerful and has a great impact on viewers/readers.**

In all our psychology courses we studied Maslow's pyramid measuring psychological impact. Emotional issues have the highest impact and motivate people. The top of Maslow's list is **self-esteem and self-actualization**. This is followed closely by **social belonging and community betterment**, and then **safety**.

Visualize the pyramid as follows:

**Self-Esteem**  
**Self-Actualization**  
**Social Belonging**  
**Community Betterment**  
**Safety**

Magid research shows that viewers best identify with a TV station or newspaper that they feel emotionally connects with their needs. "How does the life of others compare to mine?" "How does my community relate to others?"

The research shows that people like stories about unrecognized individuals that are having an impact in the community. These stories test their perception of themselves. They can see their commitment and measure it against others. "I'm doing that, or I could do that." They feel connected one way or another.

Social belonging breaks down into "peace of mind" and "comparison to others."  
A viewer feels emotionally tied to a media outlet that presents images of social belonging. This makes the viewer/reader feel safer. "We're doing something about these problems."

On the Maslow pyramid, **safety** ranks high. If people see stories of local problems being addressed, they feel safer. "I am being protected."

### **Television: Branding Through Function**

Many television stations focus on **function** as they define their brand. Functions include:

- Having a helicopter to cover news faster.
- Having more live coverage.
- Our news people are people you like.

All these attributes relate to function and are important, but they might not be as significant as the emotional connection described above.

### **ISSUE NUMBER THREE: *New Sources Of Revenue***

The Jefferson Awards offers their media partners an opportunity to reach out and bring in new revenue. This includes traditional commercial sponsors such as banks and car dealerships. Most importantly, the Jefferson Awards opens the door for nontraditional revenue (NTR). Examples include hospitals, the YMCA, and civic organizations. These organizations want to be partners because of a powerful link with “community betterment” and “volunteering.”

### **ISSUE NUMBER FOUR: *Benefits To The Media***

#### **#1. A Timeless Opportunity**

The Jefferson Awards program offers our media partners the opportunity to undertake a quarterly or year round community service project that is timeless. Local “Unsung Heroes” and their impact on the community will be as vital twenty years from now as it is today.

#### **#2. Non-Partisan and Non-Political**

The media does not want to be associated with one political viewpoint or another. A review of over 30 years of the Jefferson Awards shows that it is non-partisan and non-political.

#### **#3. Good News Stories**

Often the media is characterized as carrying “bad news” stories.” Here is a rich opportunity to carry “good news” stories.

#### **#4. Combine Local Winners and National Prestige**

The combination of honoring grassroots “Unsung Heroes” combined with national newsmakers makes an important statement about “Service to America.” This is unique and should be utilized to benefit all partners.

The American Institute for Public Service and the Jefferson Awards are prestigious and have passed the test of time – for over 30 years. The founders – Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and U.S. Senator Robert Taft, Jr. add significant prestige. The broad range of talents of the Board of Selectors – Hank Aaron, Laura Bush, Michael Douglas, U.S. Senator Richard Lugar and Lesley Stahl -is an important asset. National winners over 30 years add depth and history: Barbara Bush, Roslynn Carter, Colin Powell, Thurgood Marshall, and many other history makers.

#### **#5. Great Stories and Community Impact**

See the discussion above and below. Properly told and properly researched, the stories of the Jefferson Awards local grassroots nominees and winners can have a measurable impact on localization and the branding efforts of the media partners.

#### **#6. The Jefferson Awards Connect The Media Outlet Into The Powerful**

## **Emotions of Self-Esteem and Community Betterment.**

The Jefferson Awards “Unsung Heroes” fit high on the Maslow pyramid and help the media outlet build identification with their viewers/readers. “This media outlet cares about me and they are active in improving our community. I feel safer.”

### **#7. Community Outreach Identifying Compelling Stories**

The Jefferson Awards can provide valuable outreach to benefit the local news media. Faced with tight economic restraints, the media does not have the staff and resources to reach out and identify the best, most compelling stories.

### **#8. A Clearinghouse for Service and Volunteerism Help Undertake A Community Needs Assessment**

The Jefferson Awards can help link the media outlet to the service and volunteer community. They can help undertake a community needs assessment. On an ongoing basis, what are the themes and issues that need addressing in our community?  
We can identify critical needs facing the community and we can identify a “Who’s Who” of people servicing these needs.

### **#9. Identify Best Practices Across the Country**

The Jefferson Awards offers local media the benefit of operating in many communities. We bring to them successful ideas and content from across the country.

## **ISSUE NUMBER FIVE:    *Emphasize The Bottom Line vs. Community Affairs***

In the 1970’s our media partners had substantial resources available for community service departments and community affairs. Many media entities wished to “give back to the community” and had the resources to do so. Today these community service departments and resources are being severely diminished in size and function. For the most part, a media outlet will not be interested in a “community affairs” project. Their focus is “cutting edge news” and “the bottom line.” The Jefferson Awards program offers a bottom line opportunity.

## **ISSUE NUMBER SIX:    *Defining A Compelling Story Well Told***

To be powerful, the best stories of “Unsung Heroes” need to possess these characteristics:

## **Individual Heroic/Extraordinary Acts**

Here is an extraordinary individual. Against great odds, this individual moved mountains. The individual acts were “heroic” ... “outstanding”... “unique.”

## **Impact On Others**

Beside the heroic acts of the individual, the individual has positively impacted the community as a whole. Look at the amazing change or improvement that this individual was responsible for.

## **Community Improvement**

The story is positive. Our community is better and we are addressing important issues facing our community. The best stories bring out compelling attributes of the individual and they show that something is being done to make viewers/readers feel safer and make the community a better place. Stories of “Unsung Heroes” celebrate the human spirit and validate the choice of each viewer/reader to reside in their local community. Magid research shows that caring stories resonate with viewers/readers and boost ratings.

### **Discussion of Volunteers vs. Paid Professionals**

**This choice is left up to the Media Partner.**

Option A: Some Media Partners restrict their Jefferson Awards winners to volunteers only. An individual who is paid to perform community service is excluded from consideration. If a paid professional volunteers beyond the scope of their salary, they are eligible.

Option B: Paid professionals are eligible. The defining characteristic is community recognition. Any individual – paid or not paid – who is not a broadly known newsmaker, such as elected officials, mayors, state senators, and prominent business and community leaders – are eligible.

Many volunteer stories include the strongest elements of a compelling story – individual heroism, impact on others and community improvement. The likelihood is that “Unsung Heroes” that include paid, but unrecognized will be a source of more compelling stories.

If the Media Partner wishes to include paid workers, the Jefferson Awards’ requirement is that at least half of the honorees remain volunteers only. Currently about one third of the grassroots honorees at the Jefferson Awards national ceremonies are paid professionals, but clearly are “Unsung Heroes.”

### **Stories on Young People Compared To Stories on Adults**

Stories on young people are engaging. They are positive. People like them. Viewers/readers like seeing that young people are involved. But mostly these stories are limited to kind and generous acts, and do not contain all three elements listed above. Most youth specific stories are about – the act of the individual. They do not have the same impact as a powerful story about an adult that has helped others (Impact) and made a difference in the community. (Community Improvement.) Yes, a story about a young person that meets all three criteria is very strong, but is often harder to find.

**ISSUE NUMBER SEVEN: *Linking The Local Jefferson Award To The National Program & The Benefits To The Media Partner***

From the beginning, 31 years ago, the Jefferson Awards for Public Service set out to link the importance of local community service to national public service. For over 30 years, the Jefferson Awards have highlighted grassroots “Unsung Heroes” from all across the country along with U.S. newsmakers, who serve in the President’s Cabinet, U.S. Senators, Governors and Supreme Court Justices.

The point is simple. A fundamental theme in American history is that each individual can make a difference. What makes our American democracy work is individual participation and dedication to serve the nation.

At the national ceremonies, we have recognized seven Secretaries of State, three Treasury Secretaries, three Supreme Court Justices and over 100 national headline makers. They are honored side by side with grassroots “Unsung Heroes.” One grassroots winner from each of our 100 media partners receives the Jefferson Award from their respective U.S. Senator and is saluted as part of a three-day ceremony in Washington, DC. These emerge from over 20,000 annual nominations, and reflect millions of local volunteers. During the national ceremonies, the grassroots “Unsung Heroes” stand out and their stories garner great reverence, respect, and emotion.

The benefit of the local Jefferson Awards Media Partner is to be tied into this prestigious national network.

**Strengthening the national network increases the benefits to the local Media Partners. There are five recommended ways that each local Media Partner can benefit from the national association. We will work with the Media Partners to create more.**

- **Public Service Announcements Using Stars and National Winners**  
During 2003 the national Jefferson Awards will create public service announcements using nationally recognized stars that can be used to attract local nominations for both television and newspapers.
- **News Stories/Features Of The Local Winner At The National Ceremony**  
Each local Media Partner can benefit by running news stories/features of their local “Grassroots Winner” at the national ceremony. Receiving the Jefferson Award from the U.S. Senator – Being honored along with national headliners.
- **Prestige and Branding – An Exclusive**  
Each Media Partner has an exclusive in their reading/viewing area. The Jefferson Awards offers prestige and powerful branding and news stories around self-actualization and community betterment.

- **New Sources of Revenue**

The Jefferson Awards can be a new source of revenue to the Media Partner. Many local advertisers will wish to be associated with a prestigious national network honoring service to the nation.

- **The National Television Special**

The Jefferson Awards National Television Special was created by our Media Partners to tie their local program into the national awards program. The TV Special features the local and national winners. Each Media Partner – newspapers and television - has the opportunity to tie their local winner into the show.

**ISSUE NUMBER EIGHT: *Creating Community Partnerships***

***A Look At The Future Of The Jefferson Awards And The Media Partners***

Beginning in 2003, the Jefferson Awards will raise local money to hire a part-time professional in selected communities. The purpose of the part-time Jefferson Awards professional is to undertake all the activities as stated above. The goal is to pioneer this program to create a local committee of community activists and opinion makers and to bring together the local volunteer community. As stated above, this professional can undertake a community needs assessment of vital issues facing the community. This professional can help work with volunteer agencies to find compelling stories. This professional can do the outreach work to define local service priorities. This professional can help identify businesses that might be the commercial sponsor for the local media outlet and program.

At a time when the media outlets are cutting back on their staffing and resources for outreach, the Jefferson Awards might be able to help fill that gap.

**ISSUE NUMBER NINE: *The Value Of An Impact Analysis***

***Analysis of the Community Service Time, Resources and Ads Committed By The Media Partner. What Is The Impact on Local Readers/Viewers? Hodgepodge or High Impact?***

**Television**

Any television station only has so many on air ads to sell. There is a measurable limit. Begin with a simple inventory of all time available for spots. What percentage is revenue producing? What percentage is reserved for the station for branding and marketing its upcoming programs? What percentage is community service?  
Review: ads, personnel, resources committed to community service.

As a basic rule, research demonstrates that any station that helps every local cause reaps few benefits. In the viewer/reader mind, this translates into a hodgepodge.

In contrast, if the station selects and features one or two major community service projects (potentially year round, or quarterly), and creates a station-wide commitment to these projects, they are branding the station in that community.

A defined strategy, with a coordinated station-wide focus:

News + Sales + Programming + Community Affairs = are more likely to have a measurable impact.