

Improving Hub and Station Operations for a Large Station Group with a WideOrbit System Effectiveness Review



ABOUT THE COMPANY

This station group is one of the U.S.'s largest, owning and operating more than 70 stations affiliated with leading networks like CBS, NBC, and FOX across nearly 60 markets.



GOALS

Identify and address pain points, inconsistent processes, and workarounds

Maximize profits and eliminate data confusion by instituting group-wide system settings and market-specific configurations

Optimize hub efficiency by documenting best practices and re-training station leaders



APPROACH

Assess WO Traffic usage on a station-by-station basis and from the perspective of the hub.



RESULTS

Ensured delivery of consistent information from stations by improving the log editing process

Eliminated backend accounting errors with training on revenue code combinations

Maximized inventory profitability across the group by optimizing plater configurations on a station-by-station basis

Collaborated with station personnel to document workflows and share them throughout the group



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ERIC SAMUELSON

WO Senior Director of Professional Services

BACKGROUND

The station group wanted to conduct an in-depth review of operations at its hub and at individual stations. The operations team's goal was to identify inconsistencies that could be preventing the hub from achieving maximum potential efficiency and improving company profitability. The group's operations team decided to engage WideOrbit Professional Services for a system effectiveness review.

“A system effectiveness review is like an opportunity to hit ‘redo’ on your WO Traffic implementation,” says WideOrbit Senior Director of Professional Services, Eric Samuelson. It’s an analysis of system use and the surrounding business processes that surfaces opportunities to streamline processes and grow profits.

The broadcast company selected four stations and its traffic hub for WideOrbit consultants to take deep dives on their workflows. These initial reviews became the basis for improvements to be rolled out at other stations.

WideOrbit’s consultants paired up with the station group’s Director of Sales Operations to visit stations, examine their *WO Traffic* configurations, and document workflows. Leaving no stone unturned, they **found four key ways to improve operations and generate more value from ad sales.**

1 Maximize Centralized Hub Effectiveness

The company had recently moved its traffic operations to a centralized operations model. When WideOrbit consultants dug into station operations, it was immediately evident that some stations and traffic managers were still following legacy processes for log editing. While this still “just worked” for these stations, it was reducing efficiencies at the hub.

Group management and WideOrbit consultants worked together to document new standards and re-train station operations managers throughout the company. All of its traffic managers now edit logs according to a set of approved guidelines, ensuring every station delivers information to the hub in the same format.

2 Prevent Costly Errors with Improved Coding

WO Professional Services consultants uncovered inconsistencies between stations in the application of inventory codes. This often resulted in reporting disparities across the company.

The consultants showed group managers how to enable revenue code combination validation and train their markets on feature usage. This prevented future costly backend accounting errors by allowing creation of orders and order lines that include revenue codes with combinations.

3 Improve Profits with System Setting Reviews

The WideOrbit Professional Services team also delved into each station’s Placer Configuration. *WO Traffic’s* placer engine is a powerful tool for maximizing inventory value and station profits by picking the optimum ad schedule based on advertising commitments made by both group and station sales teams

The broadcast company’s personnel had originally configured Placers to be the same across all markets. However, this did not match the reality of how the individual markets sold inventory. By consulting with each market, the company was able to implement market-specific Placer configurations accommodating the sales strategy of each individual market.

WideOrbit consultants shared guidelines for spot priority and displacement, along with recommendations for managing automated spot placement. These guidelines empowered managers to use *Traffic’s* placer engine to grow overall revenue.

4 Train for Operational Consistency

Improper training can institutionalize incorrect practices, which can become an even larger issue when a group acquires new properties or adds new staff.

As a company that had grown from years of mergers and acquisitions, it had integrated many new staff members and legacy systems along the way. Not surprisingly, many of these “new” people also brought their own way of doing things, and these alternative processes were handed down in training sessions to new employees.

When WideOrbit consultants reviewed station workflows, they found many ingrained, inconsistent workarounds and processes across the company’s traffic hub. One example: several different practices for handling format templates.

WideOrbit consultants documented best practices and proven templates to the hub. After a round of internal training, traffic managers were able to ensure that consistent processes could be followed while still allowing for market-specific variations in selling strategies.

OUTCOME

The WideOrbit Professional Services team provided the broadcast company’s team with a trove of best practices and configuration improvements. The company was left a more profitable and united company that is confident in its traffic training, workflows, and overall management of the business with *WO Traffic*.

“The outcome of a system effectiveness review is knowledge. We make sure you can maximize the power of WO Traffic,” said WideOrbit Professional Services Consultant Debbie Bishop.