

KSER Pledge Drive Pitch Playbook

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Pledge Drive Fundamentals

The Strategic Goal: Getting core listeners to become *new members* is the goal of every pledge drive. Core listeners are the people who either listen *exclusively* to KSER or choose us first among several stations. And this means they love the station as much as they love your show in particular (so pitch the whole station).

Current number of active donors in the database:	972
Current number of listeners:	12,500
The potential target audience for this drive:	3,000
The Realistic Goal:	250 members
Dollar Goal:	\$21,634

About the Numbers: numbers change from quarter to quarter so it's *critically* important that everyone say the same thing when publicly quoting figures. Please consistently use the following:

The Budget numbers:

- Our biggest source of income is individual donors (47%).
- 25% comes from Tower rental income
- 12% from businesses in the community
- We get **NO MONEY** from the Federal Government. Nothing. Zip.
- Our operating budget this year is \$420,000
- **We need over \$1100 per day to operate the radio station**

47% of our financial support comes directly from listeners; and almost all the money we received from member donations goes toward operating expenses. Staff salaries are mostly covered by the rent we charge on the broadcast tower we own in Lynnwood.

Democracy Now! costs us \$3,300 a year
BBC costs us \$15,400 a year
THE TAKEAWAY costs us \$10,880 a year
Public Radio Satellite services cost us \$7100 a year
Local programming costs us \$240/HOUR

The Listener numbers:

- Close to 13,000 local people tune in every week
- We currently have about 1000 contributing members

This drive's goal is to get 250 people to become members:

- We'll focus on # of calls each hour, and the dollar goal for the hour
"We're looking for 3 more calls this hour..."

Fundraising in Difficult Times

Many people are wondering how the current economic situation will affect our ability to raise funds during the pledge drive. The evidence from the past is that **giving to community and public radio goes UP in times of crisis.**

While this may seem counterintuitive, the reason is straightforward: when people worry, they turn to someone they trust—and that's us!

Everybody feels good about helping us succeed! You should too!

With that in mind, here are some things to think about during our pledge drive:

Plan to Succeed: The Economy

Do:

- Talk about the economy as a news item
- Emphasize the value of public radio during turbulent times
- Remind them how much they rely on your service
- Encourage gifts of any size

Plan to Succeed: The Economy

Don't:

- Assume your givers can't give
- Feel guilty for asking for listener support
- Apologize for the state of the economy
- Tell them you know they probably can't give as much

Pledge Pitch Tips

The reason people give is because of what we give them:

- With news, it's the accuracy, the ability to explain complex issues, to stay with them over time to help people understand them.
- With music, it's the fact that people look for a relief from tough times with music. Music provides a great break, a relaxing way to get away from today's news.

Example:

"Maybe you're listening more than usual. That's why it's worth supporting. Right now, you need us even more to understand what's going on in the world or to simply take a break from it all."

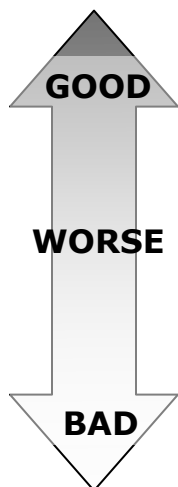
- Get comfortable asking for money. **Focus on a call to action.** Specific dollar amounts work.
- The best fundraising technique is to *listen* to the programming you're fundraising in. **Why is it important to your listener? What makes it unique or special?** Answer these questions in your presentation; talk about the specific program elements in your pitches.
- Fundraising *is* programming. Fundraising needs to be compelling and engage the listener. Make smooth transitions into and out of pledge breaks. Be conversational while maintaining a *calm sense of urgency*.
- Focus on the listener rather than the station, or "us." **Use the word "our"** to refer to you and the listener, not to the station. (And please, the phrase "you, the listener" is redundant. If they can hear you, they're listening...)
- **Talk to one person** and imagine what he/she may be doing at the moment and why he/she has the radio on right now. Engage that one listener's imagination and relate everything you and your pitch partner say to that listener.
- Be very careful about what you want the listener to do: **Ask them to go to the phone and make a pledge of support by dialing 425-303-9070.**
- **Make sure people feel that their individual participation counts.** Your vote counts. Vote for the essence of the station. Just \$5/month makes a difference. Any amount makes a difference - \$35 to \$365.
- Make connections between fundraising elements and programming elements. (Your music or your song and the theme of your pitch).
- **Prepare for your breaks.** The best breaks are planned *in detail* beforehand. Pick a theme, rehearse, make notes, follow your notes.
- Talk about *no more than* two pledge levels and/or thank you gifts per break.
- Get into *the zone*. A sense of excitement or urgency can't be faked.
- Keep smiling. Literally.
- Never apologize for a fund drive. Don't mention "we only come to you twice a year."

- **Always have a goal.** It won't happen without your urgency and enthusiasm.
- Say the phone number often and slowly. **425-303-9070** - often and slowly.
- Fundraising is a genuine emotional interaction with your listener. Be honest, be real and treat your listeners with respect.

Top Ten Reasons People Don't Pledge

10. Someone else will do it
9. I don't have the time...it's inconvenient
8. I can't remember the number to call
7. I can't afford to make a pledge
6. Our taxes pay for public radio, don't they?
5. Rich people should support the station
4. Radio is free, isn't it?
3. I pledged to this station a couple of years ago
2. I already pledged to the other public radio station
1. I didn't know you needed the money

How listeners respond to our pledge tactics listed from most effective to least effective:



1. **Lighten up.** (*Intelligent* humor works.)
2. **Personal importance of the music personified**
3. **Funding facts and figures**
4. **Give to get** (focus on pledge premiums)
5. **Blaming, pleading, negativity**
6. **Frantic and manic energy**
(opposite of why they listen)

Samples of Negative versus Positive Framing

NEGATIVE

We haven't heard from anyone in Snohomish... our Snohomish listeners haven't called in.

Unless we hear from three more of you, we won't make our goal for this hour

If you've been listening to KSER for a long time but you haven't pledged, you've been taking a free ride.

Without your membership support, this program (station) could go off the air

Only 15% of you are members of this radio station. That means that 85% of you have **never** called. We need many more of you to support this station.

IF you are enjoying this program...call in now...

POSITIVE

We have lots of listeners in Snohomish who love this station and we hear from you all the time. Snohomish never lets us down. If you're listening in Snohomish right now, we'd love to hear from you.

We're so close! Just three listeners away from our goal—and you can make it happen right now by calling (#) in these last few minutes.

If you've been listening to KSER for a long time, NOW is the time for you to step forward and be counted as a member. We know you've been meaning to call, just waiting for the right time, so please do it now.

Your membership is vital to keeping this program on KSER. Protect it with your support.

We're so proud of the fact that over **1000** listeners have made the decision to become family members of KSER. Please join this special group of satisfied customers by calling 425-303-9070.

BECAUSE you're enjoying this program, call in right now.

Formatics and Tips

The phone number: (425-303-9070). Regularly make it your end cue as you hand off talk to your pitch partner. **Make it the last (or very close to last) thing you say every break.** Resist the common practice of making the phone number a run-on with words too closely following the last digit. Pause for the ear and *italicize* the number for your listener.

Listener supported, member-supported. This is a powerful descriptor. Use it.

Forward promotion: this is just as important as always, perhaps even more so when certain people's fingers will jump for the off/change button during pledge. "I have music from Mali coming up in this next set, and we'll enjoy that after..." **(Fill in your own musical example)**

Thank You Gifts. (Please remember to use "thank you gift" and not the public radio term, "premium.") The emphasis on pledge breaks should always be FIRST on *making the case*, and only LAST on the close, for which the **THANK YOU GIFT** is just an added incentive. **The "what's in it for them" nature of our argument is spiritual, not physical. This year, we will not be focusing on thank you gifts.** The emphasis is on being frugal with your money (the listeners money) and using your money just to support the shows you love.

The "Case & Close" sequence should be in every break:

1. Listener must first realize/acknowledge the personal importance of the music
2. Listener must *be aware* of the need to support the station
3. Listener must agree that the need is valid and real
4. Listener must take responsibility for meeting the need
5. Listener must take action—call or go to the web site

—► **Get more calls by focusing on being sincere, relevant, easy to understand and by appealing to the listener's heart.**

Key Words, Phrases, Concepts

Remember that this is an emotional (right brain), not an intellectual (left brain) appeal. Our music provides emotional comfort, inspiration and connection to what is timeless and enduring.

- Join the family (we invite you to...)
- We're in this together
- We can't do this without you
- Reliable, dependable, trustworthy (us). Can we rely on you?
- Conservative custodians of your dollars
- (Do your part to) (Help) Keep the music alive
- Who is going to do this important work? **We are**...together.
- What part of (fill in blank responsibility) belongs to you?
- Think about a time when...
 - You first experienced a piece of music
 - You were having a difficult time
 - You had one of those driveway moments
 - You experienced transcendent joy or peace
- The transformational power of giving. Like buying stock in the company; now you are an owner, not a bystander. Now you have a place at the table and a say in the outcome.

Challenges

Keep them urgent, time-based within the hour. Say "dollar for dollar" and "double the power/value of your pledge." Remember to mention that "your employer may match your gift to KSER. Your phone volunteer has a list of local companies that do match."

People tell us they listen because the music is:

- Beautiful
- Intelligent
- Fascinating
- Alternative
- Relaxing
- Escape from bubble-gum pop culture
- Refuge that preserves beauty
- Take a break from the world

Example pledge drive scripts

You can invent your own; these are basic, core issues. I put them on one sheet so that this, plus a thank you gift, is all the host needs to do the break.

[Put a Value on the Music](#)

[Democracy Now](#)

[The Costs of Running Your Radio Station](#)

[Doing the Family Budget](#)

[Family Matters](#)

[The Meaning of Member-Supported Radio](#)

[Welcome New Listeners](#)

[Welcome Internet Listeners](#)

[Welcome Back to the Family, Former Members](#)

[The Importance of First-Time Giving](#)

[Our Mission in the Community](#)

[Core Values: Authentic Host Presentation](#)

[KSER Listeners: What we've learned from YOU.](#)

BREAK #1: Put a Value on the Music You Love

→ **Call toll free from anywhere: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.**

*** Every break needs to stress the hourly member calls goal ***

What's it worth? Can you really place a monetary value on a music experience like listening to John Lee Hooker play the blues? It might be difficult, but I want you to try.

You know what your television is worth. Though sometimes you might not agree when the cable bill comes every month!

You know what you pay for your newspaper, your special coffee drinks, your movie tickets, all the little things we do for ourselves.

So what should your music bill be? Only you can say, but let me suggest \$10 a month. That works out to be a whopping 33 cents a day for all the great music you hear on KSER that you simply can't hear anywhere else.

You tell us you love the variety of music you hear on KSER. You tell us you hear music that no one else is playing, music from every culture and every time.

You say you appreciate the unusual, the beautiful, the amusing, the incredible variety of music you get on KSER.

And you tell us that the hosts help you learn a little bit about the music in the process. So what is that worth? What is dependable, reliable, consistently exciting music 365 days a year worth? You decide, then call and let us know what number to fill in.

» Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.

BREAK #2 : Democracy Now Break

—▶ **Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.**

Every break needs to stress the hourly member calls goal *

For a long time *Democracy Now*, was not available on any radio station in Snohomish County.

In 2004 we began carrying *Democracy Now* and just last year, moved it to 7:00 in the morning to reach an even larger audience. Now, it is the most listened to news program on KSER.

We received tremendous support for bringing this vital alternative news program to listeners in our community. Others were upset that we chose to place it at a different time of day.

What are your thoughts? Do you like the program? Would you like something else in the mornings or evenings? Call us at 425-303-9070 and let us know how you feel.

We're a very listener-driven radio station. We listen to you. Do you want more of *Democracy Now*? Are you aware that it costs us over \$3000 a year, plus the fees for our satellite system, almost \$7000.

If you love the program, please let us know.

Call 425-303-9070 now and let your phone volunteer know how you feel...

» **Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.**

BREAK #3: The Costs of Running Your Radio Station

→ Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.

Every break needs to stress the hourly member calls goal *

Pick one show that you can connect to specific programming:

- Democracy Now: over \$3000 per year
- BBC News—affiliate fees (PRI) plus program costs: \$17k per year
- The Takeaway costs us \$4600 a year
- Our webstream now costs us \$600 a year.

» Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.

BREAK #4: Doing the Family Budget

→ **Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.**

Every break needs to stress the hourly member calls goal *

Every family goes through this process. Some people do it at the kitchen table, others in the den. Some people wait for the weekend, others on Monday night. Some do it alone, others together...

We're talking about paying the bills and doing the family budget. Since we're asking you to join our family during this special membership drive, we thought we'd open up the books and show you how we operate.

- 50% of our support comes from individuals
- 30% comes from Tower rental income
- 15% from underwriters in the community
- 5% comes from Corporation for Public Broadcasting and various other granting institutions
- Our operating budget this year is \$250,000
- **We need over \$700 *per day* to operate the radio station**

Let's go back to the 50% that comes from individuals. Most of that comes \$100 at a time from people just like you, people who love the music and news and want to keep it coming day in, day out, forever.

So think of that \$700 per day. Think about how often you listen and how much the music means to you. Think about how much richer your life is because KSER is in it. Then make a call and take care of just *a small part* of that daily cost with your very important pledge of support.

Think of it this way: could you add just \$10 per month to the family budget? Would \$10 per month put a strain on your life? Are 24 hours a day, every day filled with incredible music and news and the rest, worth \$10 per month? Please make that call now.

» Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.

BREAK #5: Family Matters

—▶ **Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.**

*** Every break needs to stress the hourly member calls goal ***

Our membership drive is a “Family Matter.”

Families share together—they share in love as well as sorrow. In good **and** bad times. Families make us crazy sometimes, but in the end, mostly they are what give us a richer meaning of life.

People who love KSER and who listen are in a family, too. Whether they realize it or not. And like all family members, we support each other. We give and we take in equal balance.

Our task on the family to-do list is to bring you a great variety of music and news 24 hours a day, every day. And we do that job to the very best of our ability.

Your item on the list is to support your *Member-Supported Radio Station* so we can continue to bring you what you need.

Public Radio is different that way. Public Radio belongs to us. To the people. It’s our right, created by Congress, to have a public radio system. And like all rights, it comes with responsibilities.

So please pick up the phone right now, call us at 425-303-9070 and tell the volunteer who answers the phone: I want to join the family. I want to become a member of KSER. I’ve been thinking about this for days and the time has come for me to do my part.

» **Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.**

BREAK #6: The Meaning of “Member Supported” Radio

➔ **Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.**

*** Every break needs to stress the hourly member calls goal ***

The theme for our spring membership drive is “KSER, your renewable resource.” That can mean a couple of things: KSER is a resource that keeps coming back to you each and every day; or KSER relies on your renewed support to continue to provide the service you’ve come to trust and love.

Like all renewable resources, KSER is there for you everyday, 365 days out of year, powering you through your day with great music, local and international news. But like all renewable resources, it takes wise use and careful stewardship of that resource to keep it flowing.

And like all resources, public radio is part of our shared heritage.

Public Radio belongs to us. To the people. It’s our right, created by Congress, to have a public radio system. And like all rights, it comes with responsibilities.

So please pick up the phone right now, call us at 425-303-9070 and tell the volunteer who answers the phone: I want to protect my natural resource. I want to become a member of KSER. I’ve been thinking about this for days and the time has come for me to do my part.

» **Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.**

BREAK #7: Welcome New Listeners

→ **Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.**

*** Every break needs to stress the hourly member calls goal ***

- Today 12,000 people visit every week.
- Whether you're a new listener or a long-time listener, we encourage you to become a new MEMBER today. Join the family
- You're just now finding out how wonderful adding KSER to your work life, your home, your commute can be
- Here's how member-supported media works vs. how commercial media works
- How wonderful it is not to have the music interrupted with noisy, intrusive, prerecorded commercials... nothing to destroy the (soothing) (exhilarating) (entrancing) mood created by the music.
- Accept our invitation to join the member-supported public radio FAMILY
- Please tell a friend about the great new station you've discovered

» Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.

BREAK #8: Welcome Internet Listeners

→ **Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.**

*** Every break needs to stress the hourly member calls goal ***

- Visit our improved **web site with improved streaming options:** KSER-dot O-R-G (We added a higher-resolution MP3 stream, we added open-source listening options)
- We have listeners from **all over the world** (*list three different places around the country/world*)
- Listen all day (or night) at work from wherever you are in the world
- ** Web listeners have an *added* responsibility to support their station because of the way “web-economics” works
- Every new listener who logs on to receive the stream from KSER.org costs the station money. It’s like having your own direct personal radio connection.
- Support what you use, support what you depend on, support what you love

» Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.

BREAK #9: Welcome Back Former Members

→ **Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.**

*** Every break needs to stress the hourly member calls goal ***

- Maybe you supported your local public radio station once, and for that we say thanks very much
- Maybe you thought that once was enough, that your pledge was good for years and years. Well...
- Maybe you can't remember the last time you supported your member supported radio station. If you can't remember, it's probably been over a year
- Look in your check book, or even your 1040 return for the tax deduction to 90.7 KSER
- We need you to make this contribution part of your giving lifestyle...so that we can continue bringing this music into your life
- If you listen to the great news and information on 90.7 KSER, if you enjoy the music regularly, please consider coming back to the family

» Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.

BREAK #10: The Importance of First Time Giving

→ Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: **KSER-dot O-R-G.**

*** Every break needs to stress the hourly member calls goal ***

- Nearly 12,000 people choose **KSER** as their radio station **every week**. We have 1,000 contributing members. We'd like to close that gap by adding YOU to our family right now.
- How do you know whether you should join the family of member-supporters? If you listen to KSER every day
- If we're the only station you listen to, or...
- If we're your favorite among all the stations you listen to
- If you listen and you haven't yet made your *first* pledge of support, let me describe how easy it is. ((Describe the process of phone call and pledge))
- Our research shows that thousands of people listen every day, yet they have yet to make their first contribution.
- Perhaps that's because they don't know how listener supported/member supported radio works
- You'll feel good knowing you've done the right thing
- You'll feel different after you pledge, better, involved, not like a bystander anymore, like an owner
- Pledge \$100, \$200, \$500, \$50, whatever number is right for you... the most important thing is that you *make the call*.

» Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.

BREAK #11: KSER Mission in the Community:

➔ **Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.**

*** Every break needs to stress the hourly member calls goal ***

- A forum for members of the community, especially those under represented by other media resources, to constructively express their ideas, opinions, and concerns.
- Be the North Puget Sound's news, music, and culture "bulletin board" so that everything that happens in music, local politics and culture is reflected on this radio station.
- The only public radio station licensed in Snohomish County, and the only station that focuses on life here in the North Puget Sound.
- We're reliable, consistent, dependable. Can we depend on you in the same way?
- Connected to the arts, connected to the community, connected to you
- Promoting positive values in a world in great need of "positivity"
- Listener supported means *member*-supported. That's where you come in.

» Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.

BREAK #12: Core Values: KSER Host Presentation

—▶ **Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.**

*** Every break needs to stress the hourly member calls goal ***

In this age of iPods, satellites, CDs, even cell phones, we know you can get your music from a number of sources. But we try to add value and a personal, human touch to your listening experience on 90.7 KSER.....

- Hosts are knowledgeable companions
- Hosts are credible, accurate, honest, authentic
- Intelligent humor, always respectful
- Hosts are focused on the music, not on themselves
- Hosts are enthusiastic and share their passion/love of the music
- Thoughtful presenters able to connect music from the past with life in the present. They help you learn a little bit about the music.
- Presenters are conversational, talking *with* you, not up or down to you
- Presenters enhance your musical experience, not intrude upon it

» Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.

BREAK #13: KSER Listeners: What We've Learned From Listening to You

→ **Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.**

*** Every break needs to stress the hourly member calls goal ***

We hear from listeners and supporters every day. They visit the station, they write letters, emails, make phone calls. We've learned a few things about KSER fans:

- You have a love of lifelong learning, about the music, about everything in life
- You want something substantial, not here today, gone tomorrow
- You expect credibility from us; you hold us to a high standard
- You're curious, which naturally goes with intelligence
- You have high ideals, you believe that society needs art and culture
- You believe in civility
- You want to preserve and protect the important things in life

» Call now: 425-303-9070 or pledge securely online at our web site: KSER-dot O-R-G.