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The Boston Plan 1979-1984 [excerpt]

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HEARTBEAT:
THE BOSTON PLAN
1979 - 1984

RESEARCH DOCUMENT
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Heartbeat: Background and Purpose	1	
II. Purpose of Project	4	
III. Overview and Analysis of the Boston Market	5	BB
IV. Consumer Analysis and Target Audience	9	BB
V. General Strategic Framework	15	BB
VI. Action Plan and Analysis	25	
Life Resource Center Placement	32	
Seminar and L.R.C. Time Phasing	46	
Framingham	55	
Quincy	59	
Media Action Plan and Analysis	74	
Appendix A. Survey of Lowell and Pittsfield Seminar Attendees	A-1	BB
Appendix B. Future Evaluation and Measurement	B-1	
Appendix C. Media Analysis	C-1	

I. HEARTBEAT: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Brief History

Heartbeat began in 1971, growing out of a conviction that there was a need for a daily radio program which used short segments to reach the rapidly growing secular audience. The first year was spent researching the medium of radio, the nature of the audience to be addressed and the best approach to the task.

Here are some of the more important events:

1972 Heartbeat went on the air in January.

1974 Heartbeat tripled its number of stations and developed a series of teaching letters, "Beyond Heartbeat," which were designed to meet the vital need for an on-going relationship with the listeners.

1975 Landmark year -- NBC network accepted the program. Heartbeat began broadcasting over NBC radio network in May, the first religious paid program ever accepted to be aired on the network. Also, this year follow-up meetings were held in cities where the programs were heard.

1976 The first training program was developed in St. Louis to provide trained workers for follow-up activities and future evangelistic needs.

1977 A strategy was developed to put the Gospel within reach of every person in the United States (in ten years). Forty cities were visited in face-to-face evangelism. Houston was chosen

as the "home" of Heartbeat.

1978 Nine major campaign efforts were conducted in 1978, including the testing of Heartbeat's city strategy in two Massachusetts cities, Pittsfield and Lowell. Included in the nine campaigns was the establishment of two new congregations. A six-part audiotutorial follow-up course was developed. Special one-minute Heartbeat spots were heard by five million people during two of the holiday bowl games.

1979 Building on the city strategy tested in 1978, plans have been laid for efforts in cities all across America -- from Oshkosh to Boston to Las Vegas. The program is currently heard on 450 stations.

Landon Saunders began Heartbeat in 1971. He is Heartbeat's administrator and speaker. He brings over twenty years of experience of observing and teaching people. He has travelled extensively in over sixty nations.

Purpose and Strategy

Heartbeat exists to evangelize the growing secular majority of the United States who are not being reached by other approaches. A recent study done at Princeton University stated that 61 million adults in the United States had no religious affiliation of any kind. These are the people to whom Heartbeat wants to present the message of Jesus.

The model for Heartbeat is Jesus's approach to ministry. He had four basic steps. One, he did good by helping people with perceived

needs. Two, he taught the "good news" to meet their deepest needs. Three, he trained workers for multiplication of impact as well as to insure the future. Four, he created permanent community.

Heartbeat applies that strategy in the several ways. Heartbeat creates a bridge of trust to the secular audience by giving them solid help for their perceived needs through media and seminars. On the basis of that trust relationship Heartbeat enables the person to deal with his deepest needs and to make the decision necessary to conversion through teaching letters, courses, and one-on-one study opportunities.

In following Jesus's model Heartbeat also will be training workers in hundreds of cities. It will work to establish permanent communities of believers. It will provide those communities and previously existing groups with strategies and tools to support the growth and health of these groups.

Finally, Heartbeat will do strategic planning in the role of catalyst and clearing house for matching money-power from individuals, foundations, and churches with manpower and opportunity.

II. PURPOSE OF PROJECT

Heartbeat, having had some experience in applying its strategy in Lowell and Pittsfield, Massachusetts, is ready to begin the evangelization of its first major metropolitan area, the Boston metropolitan area. In order to maximize the effectiveness of the effort in Boston, Heartbeat needs a clear understanding of its target audience and a comprehensive marketing plan designed to reach those people. This study's purpose was to do exactly those things.

There are some constraints under which Heartbeat must operate. It will not appeal to everyone. No fundamental changes can be made in its product line particularly in the first two or three years. The amount of workers and funds available is limited. The study has recognized these constraints and works within them.

The remainder of this report develops a marketing plan for Boston and approaches that task in the following manner. First, the Boston area is discussed. Secondly, the target audience is analyzed. Thirdly, Heartbeat's strategy as it applies to a specific city is made explicit. Lastly, an action plan with supporting analysis is presented.