

Dear Mr Secretary,

Feb 28, 2014

I am writing to express my concern with the way Rogers has handled its multicultural license not only in Vancouver but also in Calgary and Edmonton. Having been an employee with Channel m (Multivan) now Omni BC since 2006, I was originally part of a group of talented individuals who wanted to make a difference to their local communities, since 2008 they have slowly been shrunk and moulded into humble cogs in the big red giant machine that is Rogers. I wish to submit the original application granted to Multivan where the Crtc unanimously voted against Rogers indicating that they had concerns about Rogers's possible commitment to the ethnic market.

The Commission's conclusions 2002

45.

In coming to its conclusion, the Commission also noted the strong support for the Multivan application, expressed in a variety of interventions from a wide diversity of ethnic communities, producers and community groups in Vancouver.

46.

New, dynamic, and creative participants often introduce fresh concepts to the broadcasting business and offer new approaches to programming. The Commission is satisfied that, with the approval of Multivan as a new local ethnic television broadcaster, the over-the-air ethnic broadcasting system will have the better opportunity to evolve, grow and prosper through diversity. In addition to these potential advantages, the Commission considers that over-the-air ethnic television broadcasting, traditionally the highest revenue-producing component of the ethnic broadcasting sector, will benefit from the diversity of ownership that the entrance of Multivan will represent.

47.

The Commission reiterates that the essence of the Ethnic Broadcasting Policy is to encourage the reflection of local communities, both to themselves and to the wider world. The Commission considers that financially strong, local and ethnic ownership, as represented by Multivan, will foster the representation of a variety of local communities, a reflection moulded by the very members of those groups. The Commission concludes that, given the community focus of an ethnic station, local ethnic ownership takes on special and vital importance.

48.

A majority of the Commission has come to the conclusion that there are clear and undeniable advantages to the local and ethnic ownership of an ethnic television station, and that these advantages, present in the Multivan proposal, outweigh the positive attributes of the competing application by CFMT-TV. The advantages include:

- the visible presence of owners in their own communities as well as the community at large,*
- the substantial involvement of the owners in the community and the accountability to the community that flows from it,*
- pride in local ownership,*
- local decision-making,*

- a clear understanding of the local ethnic market, and
- responsiveness to the unique communities to be served.

49.

These advantages take on a particular and decisive importance when considering the conclusions reached in Public Notice CRTC 2001-31:

"The vast majority of parties submitting comments strongly believe that the licensing of a new, over-the-air ethnic television service with a strong local component is essential."

50.

Notwithstanding the strength of the CFMT-TV application, the Commission considers that local and ethnic ownership of this over-the-air television station will enhance the attainment of the objectives of the Ethnic Broadcasting Policy and that licensing Multivan is an important step in recognizing the increasing diversity of Canada.

51.

For all of these reasons, the Commission, by majority vote, approves the application by Multivan for a broadcasting license for a multilingual, ethnic television programming undertaking at Vancouver. The majority is of the view that licensing Multivan is the better means of achieving the objectives of the Broadcasting Act, the Order in Council and the call for applications to serve Vancouver. The Commission, by majority vote, therefore denies CFMT-TV's application.

But after its failure in trying to expand into Alberta, Multivan just did not have the gas to go forward and ended up selling to Rogers. During the sale Rogers made great commitments not only to the people at Channel m but also to the CRTC.

The Commission notes that Rogers has committed to maintaining Multivan's commitment to local programming and local service and that it intends to make considerable investments to achieve self-sustainability. Further, the Commission considers that Rogers will benefit from being able to achieve some synergies with its OMNI stations in Ontario and Alberta and be in a better position to compete with over-the-air broadcasters such as CTVgm and Global.

Conclusion

11.

In light of all of the above, the Commission is satisfied that the integrity of the licensing process would not be compromised by approval of the proposed transaction.

The CRTC had rightly predicted that Rogers would not have a personal vested interest in local communities in 2002, Rogers was given a chance in 2008 to prove otherwise but instead of maintaining levels Rogers gutted Channel m from about 120 employees to less than 40, **i myself was part of that reduction** (however I am currently employed with City Vancouver)

They have also reduced their commitments in Calgary and Edmonton to almost non-existent.

Rogers attributes its losses over the past few years to the general decline in Television revenue.

They also claim that the ethnic audiences simply don't tune in to Omni to be blunt.

In Rogers application under steps taken to improve Omni's Financial Performance 47.

States for Omni 2, out of a \$12 million loss \$11 Million can be attributed to English sales, yet Rogers continues to invest heavily in American strip programming and not in Ethnic language programming.

In its Vancouver submission it wishes to change its 8pm to 10pm commitments, which includes the entire local news broadcasts and especially Punjabi News. Rogers did move the Punjabi news to 10pm in 2008 but was met with a decline in viewership, revenue and lots of protests from the local community it eventually did move the news back to 9pm in 2010. Yet here we are a few years later they are trying to do the very same thing yet again.

Rogers does have a bright future in the ethnic market but they need to take the time and effort to invest in original local programming and not just in the NHL. They have great employees and a hard working group of local Managers which they often under utilize.

They need to use their strong position in the Canadian market and expand their online presence, to do more on cellphone, tablet devices and be smart and innovative instead of wishing to reduce and harmonize (which is a fancy way of saying we want to just do one big show from Toronto and everyone around Canada should love it?) This is also a concern with the City stations.

Please accept my submission in this regard urging Rogers to do more and not less, to restore employment and programming levels.

I would be more than willing to appear before the Crtc , in person or via video conference if possible.

Yours truly,

Jimmy Mistry

Former Omni Employee

Unifor Local 830m Vancouver (Currently employed with City Vancouver)