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Course Project: Integrated Marketing Communications Plan

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Objectives

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The Course Project will involve you in developing an *integrated marketing communications (IMC)* plan for a brand of your choice. Integrating marketing communications entails identifying a brand message and then conveying that brand message through a series of touch points that are relevant to the target customer. The figure presented in the Week 1 Lecture captures the steps involved in developing an IMC plan—the brand is the central concern around which the IMC plan is developed. Early in the process, we establish who the customer is, what the customer wants, where the customer is, and then we think about how we will reach the customer in the space they are in, with what message, and which media. *Please note, this is not a marketing plan or a business plan.* The IMC plan focuses on the what we traditionally refer to as the *promotion P*, and what we are now viewing as *communicating the value*.

The objectives of this project are to

1. demonstrate a good understanding of a typical marketing problem, through a clear identification of the problem and careful analysis;
2. apply marketing concepts associated with branding and communications;
3. implement steps that are sufficiently clear and detailed for effective execution; and (Would your plan work?)
4. present your work in clear, compelling, and relevant documents.

Guidelines

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Select a brand that you feel passionate about. You are going to live with it for the next 2 months. You might select a brand that you can see has an obvious problem that can be helped by an IMC. For example, the brand may be organic but nobody that matters knows this, and because this is a growing market, there may be considerable growth potential that could be realized with a campaign that creates awareness, interest, desire, and gets action. Follow the process presented in the Week 1 Lecture carefully. Give extensive thought to your topic proposal, which can be downloaded from Doc Sharing, and complete this in Week 1. Use the brand analysis document to gain an understanding of your selected brand. Work on gathering data, and map out your ideas for the Week 4 deliverable, the Course Project outline. The outline should help you determine what you know and where gaps still exist. This document will guide you through to successful completion.

Your *final report* should be about 10–15 pages, please use the APA format for your paper and references. Keep in mind that you should use a professional writing style. This should be based on business English, and involve the correct use of marketing terminology. Use tables to summarize your information. A report is more likely to be implemented effectively if it is brief, but sufficiently detailed, clear, and relevant. Remember to experiment with the demand metric tools that are included in the Week 6 Lecture, these may give you some ideas for organizing your campaign. For each of your communications strategy plans, you should identify a specific objective, a media strategy, a media plan, and a budget. You are asked to provide the five typical options that form the communications strategy mix. Marketers must think about how they need to match competitors or provide novelty, you may want to substitute a campaign for something different—check this out with your professor.

You should include the following sections.

Executive summary

Introduction

IMC objectives

Market analysis

Communications strategy plans

- Traditional Media
- Internet
- Direct marketing
- Sales promotion
- Public relations (PR)

Conclusions

Your PowerPoint presentation will be based on your final report and should include 10–15 slides. A professional PowerPoint presentation in marketing should be based on good quality content, your slides should be clear and compelling. It is important to engage your audience and convey all of the important points that you have developed in your written report. Please include the artwork that you have developed, this is what your audience will want to see.

Grading Rubrics

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Topic Proposal	Points	%	Description
Content	20	100	A clearly completed topic proposal form that identifies a brand that meets the professor's approval
Total		20	

Outline	Points	%	Description
Good Quality Content	20	20	Use of high-quality sources
Clarity	20	20	Ideas expressed clearly
Includes all Sections	20	20	Mapped out all sections of the plan
Relevance and Accuracy	20	20	Ideas and data are relevant and reported accurately
Total		100	A quality paper will meet or exceed all of the above requirements.

Final Report	Points	%	Description
Documentation and Formatting	25	16.6	Follows Course Project guidelines and APA format
Organization and Cohesiveness	25	16.6	Report is well organized in a logical sequence and provides a plan that could be successfully implemented
Editing	25	16.6	Report was carefully revised, edited, and proofed
Content	75	50	Relevant and high-quality data and ideas presented as a result of careful analysis and creative interpretation, manifesting in a practical implementation plan

Final Report	Points	%	Description
Total		150	A quality paper will meet or exceed all of the above requirements.

PowerPoint	Points	%	Description
Clarity	25	16.6	Presentation is well organized in a logical sequence of ideas and provides a plan that could be successfully implemented
Compelling	25	16.6	Slides have been developed that inform and engage the audience
Editing	25	16.6	Slides were carefully revised, edited, and proofed
Content	75	50	Relevant and high-quality data and ideas presented as a result of careful analysis and creative interpretation, manifesting in a practical implementation plan and given in an effective presentation
Total		150	A quality presentation will meet or exceed all of the above requirements.

Best Practices

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The best advice is to read through the assignment instructions carefully, and get feedback from your professor.

Read ahead in the textbook. Look around you and think about how your preferred brands are promoted.

Run through your PowerPoint with a friend before submitting it.

Remember the acid test is would this plan achieve the objectives that you outlined?

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The Course Project:
An Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) Campaign Plan

The Course Comprises 4 Deliverables:

Week 1: Topic Proposal Form
Week 4: Course Project Outline
Week 7: Final Report
Week 8: PowerPoint Presentation

The 4 Key Objectives of this Project:

1. Demonstrate a good understanding of a typical marketing problem, through a clear identification of the problem and careful analysis
2. Application of marketing concepts associated with the marketing mix, branding and communications
3. Provision of implementation steps that are sufficiently clear and detailed for effective execution (- would your plan work?)
4. Presentation of your work in clear, compelling and relevant documents

The Course Project

The course project will involve you in developing an *integrated marketing communications (IMC)* plan for a brand of your choice. Integrating marketing communications entails identifying a brand message and then conveying that brand message through a series of touch points that are relevant to the target customer. The figure presented in the Week 1 lecture captures the steps involved in developing an IMC plan—the brand is the central concern around which the IMC plan is developed. Early in the process, we establish who the customer is, what the customer wants, where the customer is, and then we think about how we will reach the customer in the space they are in, with what message, and which media. PLEASE NOTE THIS IS NOT A MARKETING PLAN OR A BUSINESS PLAN - The IMC plan focuses on what we traditionally refer to as the *Promotion P.*, and what we are now viewing as *Communicating the Value.*



Select a brand that you feel passionate about - you are going to live with it for the next 2 months. You might select a brand that you can see has an obvious problem that can be helped by an IMC - for example the brand may be organic but nobody that matters knows this - and as this is a growing market there may be considerable growth potential that could be realized with a campaign that creates awareness, interest, desire and gets action. Follow the process presented in the Week 1 lecture carefully. Give extensive thought to your topic proposal this can be downloaded from DocSharing, and complete this in week 1. Use the brand analysis document to gain an understanding of your selected brand. Work on gathering data and map out your ideas for the Week 4 deliverable the Course Project: Outline. The outline should help you determine what you know and where gaps still exist. This document will guide you through to successful completion.

Brand Analysis		
Brand Problem:		
	Current	New
Target Customer		
Product/service offered:		
Competitive advantage:		
Brand name (e.g. Nike):		
Brand term (e.g. Just do it):		
Symbol (e.g. Swoosh):		
Functional benefits (basic		

benefits relating to performance – e.g. Nike – a good quality shoe):		
Emotional benefits (benefits that make the customer feel good – e.g. Nike – makes you feel fit and healthy):		
Brand concept (essence of the brand – e.g. excellence in performance):		
Brand Identity:		
Physique – tangible form, sound, smell, color, feel		
Personality - character		
Relationship – what is exchanged, shared		
Culture - the system of values represented by the brand		
Reflection – what is the aspired image?		
Self-image – what is the image of actual customers?		

The Written Report

You should include the following sections in your written report:

Executive Summary

Introduction

IMC Objectives

Market Analysis

Communications Strategy Plans

- **Traditional Media**
- **Internet**
- **Direct Marketing**
- **Sales Promotion**
- **Public Relations (PR)**

Conclusions

To expand, the content of each section should address the following:

IMC Objectives (Quantify)

Identify the brand and the principle objectives of the campaign and quantify where possible:

- Attract new customers
- Retain existing customers
- Branding objectives
- Marketing and corporate objectives

Market Analysis

A detailed analysis will provide the specific details for decision-making:

- SWOT
- Segmentation and Targeting
- Positioning
- Product/Service
- Customer Profile
- Marketing Channels

Communications Strategy Plans

Listed here are the typical options available that form the communications strategy mix – marketers must think about how they need to match competitors or provide novelty, each strategy requires a specific objective, a media strategy, a media plan, and a budget, these are described more fully below:

- Traditional Media
- Internet
- Direct Marketing
- Sales Promotion
- Public Relations (PR)

Communications Schedule

Using a calendar that covers the timeframe of the proposed IMC indicate when the specific elements of the communications strategy mix will occur – including:

- Launch dates
- Key events

Budget and Evaluation

Develop a list of the planned communications strategy mix and estimate the costs of each component

To elaborate further on the **Communications Strategy Section** there are numerous options; marketers should consider a mix of the following depending on the

problem being addressed – you may wish to provide additional strategies that you feel are more relevant.

Each communications strategy (e.g. a traditional media campaign involving a print ad in a magazine) requires:

- Specific Objective
- Media strategy: Big idea, Message, Copy, Visuals
- Media Plan: Reach and Frequency
- Budget: How much will this cost?

Traditional Media

A paid for, mass-mediated, attempt to persuade, use to build brand identity, this is a big investment:

- Television, Print and Radio

Internet

As advertising became more expensive and the Internet grew – online communications have become a cost effective option with the added benefit of being measurable (closed-loop marketing) – this area has become highly specialized:

- Search engine optimization (SEO) strategy: Google AdWords
- Online advertising: Banners, reciprocal links
- Social media: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram...
- Website

Direct Marketing

Direct marketing evolved from the catalog business, which involved gathering customer information – this approach is data base driven and is used to send **personalized messages** either by mail, phone, email or text messages, inviting a direct response. There is an important role for direct marketing in branding as it facilitates relationship building and customer retention. This is becoming integrated into a web campaign. Direct marketing might include:

- Post cards
- Personalized mailings
- Emails concerning special offers
- Newsletters

Sales Promotion

Alongside traditional advertising, there are many options for communicating with customers and building positive associations with the brand – sales promotion is growing in popularity and can be incorporated into a direct marketing piece such as a postcard or email. Sales promotion is instant demand stimulation, it creates a perception of greater value through contests and samples, it compliments the longer term advertising campaign, it motivates trial use, and encourages larger purchases

or stimulates a repeat purchase. Sales promotion is helpful when launching new products and new product samples can be attached to existing brands. Problems arise because frequent sales promotions alter price perceptions and encourage consumers to become “deal-prone”. Examples include:

- Consumers: Coupons, price-off, gift with purchase, contests, samples, mail sampling, newspaper sampling, on-package sampling, mobile sampling
- Trade/Business: Training, allowances, incentives, trade shows
- Internet: New opportunities for contests and trial subscriptions

Public Relations (PR)

PR is a communications function used to promote understanding between an organization and its various stakeholder groups. PR is a **critical component of brand building** and generates publicity for the brand, helps solidify the public’s opinion of the brand and defines the brand; seamlessly.

Public relations involves:

- Creating publicity; buzz, viral messages
- Building media relations
- Corporate communication (issues management, community relations, government relations, industry relations)
- Building employee relations
- Maintaining financial/investor relations
- Crisis management
- Image building
- PR deals with what is difficult to control; but a company can be prepared
- PR amplifies the effects of other communications strategies

The tools of PR include:

- Press releases
- Feature stories
- Company newsletters
- Press pack
- Interviews and press conferences
- Sponsored events

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Good Luck and remember the acid test is - would this plan achieve the objectives that you outlined?