Follow this simple step-by-step playbook to create a marketing communications plan that supports its marketing strategy.
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### MARCOM PLAN Framework

Leverage the framework below to quickly empower your organization's marketing communications strategy.

### 1. STRATEGY
- Marketing Strategy Plan
- Brand Assessment Tool
- Industry Analysis Tool
- Competitor Analysis Tool
- Competitive PR and Advertising Analysis

### 2. AUDIENCE
- Product Marketing Plan
- Customer Profile Template

### 3. OBJECTIVES
- Marketing Strategy Scorecard
- Objectives Worksheet

### 4. MESSAGES
- Positioning Statement Worksheet
- Message Mapping Tool

### 5. CHANNELS
- Marketing Channel Ranking Tool
- Campaign Impression Calculator
- Tradeshow Evaluation Matrix
- Events Database Template
- Social Media Channel Selection Tool
- Social Media Posting Calendar
- Press Release Template
- Public Relations Calendar
- Web Content Audit Tool
- Mobile Marketing Maturity Assessment
- Advertisement Evaluation Matrix

### 6. MEASURE
- Budget Template
- MarCom Calendar
- Key Marketing Metrics Dashboard

Click the buttons below to access all related training, tools, templates, and other resources.
What Is the Purpose of This Playbook?

To help you develop a marketing communications plan that:

- Is guided by the corporate marketing strategy
- Supports individual product-marketing plans
- Achieves your awareness and promotion goals.

Your marketing communications plan directs how you will communicate with various audiences: employees, clients, media, and others.

How to Use This Consulting Playbook

This playbook consists of six stages, each with a description, steps, and action items. Action items include using our premium tools and templates. Our intention with this playbook is to help you:

- **Align** your marketing communications with your marketing strategy and positioning
- **Optimize** your marketing communications for your audience and each communications channel
- **Execute & Measure** your plan using our planning, scheduling, and tracking tools

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**Corporate Marketing Strategy**

**Product A Marketing Plan**

**Product B Marketing Plan**

**Marketing Communications Plan**
What Is a Marketing Communications Plan?

Marketing communications (MarCom) plans are often called marketing plans or marketing strategies.

Demand Metric believes the MarCom plan is separate and supports the marketing strategy and individual product-marketing plans.

The marketing strategy traditionally is more strategic in nature and broader in scope, covering the classic four Ps of the marketing mix:

- Product
- Place
- Price
- Promotion

The MarCom plan is more tactical in nature and focuses primarily on Promotion.

Outputs from This Playbook

- **Stage 1 - Strategy & Environment**
  Environmental Assessment
- **Stage 2 - Audience**
  Audience Understanding, Customer Profiles
- **Stage 3 - Objectives**
  MarCom Plan Objectives
- **Stage 4 - Messages**
  Key Messages
- **Stage 5 - Channels**
  MarCom Channel Selection, Plan, and Schedule for Each Channel
- **Stage 6 - Budget & Measurement**
  Consolidated Budget, Master Calendar, MarCom Dashboard
Begin the creation of your MarCom plan by reviewing corporate marketing strategy. If no corporate marketing strategy exists, Demand Metric recommends you develop one before attempting to create a MarCom plan. Use the Marketing Strategy Playbook as a guide for this strategic process.

The goal of this stage is to ensure your MarCom plan supports the strategic direction of your company. You’ll examine the overall marketing strategy and objectives, review or complete a competitive analysis, and assess environmental influences.

**STEP 1:** Marketing Strategy Review

**STEP 2:** Environmental Assessment
STEP 1
Marketing Strategy Review

**Action Item**
If you have not developed a Marketing Strategy, do that first before attempting to create your MarCom Plan. Use the Marketing Strategy Plan to do this.

Regardless of how your marketing strategy was developed, refer to it to get the context for developing your MarCom plan:
- What products or initiatives will your MarCom plan support?
- What core values or strategic objectives should influence the development and content of the MarCom plan?
- What core competencies can you exploit or showcase through this MarCom plan?

STEP 2
Environmental Assessment

**Action Item**
Understand where the company or brand has been, the current position, where it needs to go, and how it will get there.

Consider your external environment and assess the influences they will have on your MarCom plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consideration</th>
<th>Demand Metric Tool or Template</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Awareness</td>
<td>Brand Assessment Tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political, Regulatory and Economic</td>
<td>STEP Industry Analysis Tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Competitor Analysis Tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media coverage</td>
<td>Competitive PR and Advertising Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STAGE 2

MarCom Plan Audience

During this stage you will identify all the audiences you need to reach with your MarCom plan. Common target audiences for a MarCom plan include customers, media, market & research, analysts, employees, industry thought leaders, and business partners.

STEP 1: Audience Identification
STEP 2: Develop Personas
### Audience Identification

**Action Item**

Identify each audience your MarCom plan will address. "Audiences" are types of businesses or people that share common characteristics (e.g. "Community Banks" or "Active Seniors"). You’re better served defining your audiences as narrowly as possible.

If you are creating this MarCom plan to support a **Product Marketing Plan**, refer to the market segments identified in that plan to help identify and understand your audiences.

Identifying and understanding your audiences helps you:

- Create messages specifically for each audience
- Understand which communications channels and tactics can best reach your audience with your message

### Develop Personas

**Action Item**

Create Personas, a hypothetical profiles, for each audience you’ve identified using the [Customer Profile Template](#).

Personas will help you:

- Focus your communications on the needs of your audience
- Create messages for a specific person rather than a nebulous group

**Helpful Hint** —If you are creating this MarCom plan to support a **Product Marketing Plan**, refer to any Personas developed to support that plan.
MarCom Plan Objectives

Your MarCom plan objectives ideally are a subset of your marketing strategy's objectives and are specific to communications.

In this stage, you will write your communications objectives for each audience you intend to reach through your MarCom plan.

**STEP 1:** Marketing Strategy Objectives

**STEP 2:** Determine Your MarCom Objectives

**STEP 3:** State Your MarCom Objectives
STEP 1

Marketing Strategy Objectives

**Action Item**

Review your corporate Marketing Strategy Objectives Scorecard to help frame the development of your MarCom objectives.

While business objectives are different from communications objectives, the latter should support the former. Regardless of how you developed your marketing strategy, take time to understand how it should direct the setting of your MarCom plan objectives.

**Helpful Hint** – If you used the Marketing Strategy Plan, refer to Stage 4.

STEP 2

Determine Your MarCom Objectives

**Action Item**

MarCom plan objectives often fall into one of the following categories:

- Educate or inform
- Change perception
- Enhance brand status or reputation
- Create sales leads
- Recruit partners or employees
- Generate media coverage

Based on what you know about your audience, determine a primary objective for your MarCom plan.
STEP 3

State Your MarCom Objectives

**Action Item**

Use the **MarCom Objectives Worksheet** to write your MarCom plan objectives for each audience your plan will address, including each of the following elements:

1. Target audience for the communications
2. The desired or ideal response to these communications
3. Indicators or measures of response
4. The timeframe over which the communications should occur and the response made

**Example:** To inform members of new services offerings provided by our company, so that at least half our members visit the new “Services” page on our website by the end of Q2 2012.
To this point, you’ve determined the objectives and audience for your MarCom plan. During this stage, you’ll create the messages that will serve as the building blocks for your plan. The messages you create provide information designed to get the audience to respond in some desirable way.

Your messages are not the actual communications themselves, but summaries of what you wish to communicate. **These messages will help you create your actual communications, which can include press releases, web content, ad copy, etc.**

**STEP 1:** Primary Message  
**STEP 2:** Message Refinement  
**STEP 3:** Test Messages
**STEP 1**

**Primary Message**

*Action Item*

Author your primary message. As you do so, reference any relevant positioning information. If none exists, use the [Positioning Statement Worksheet](#) to develop it now.

Your primary message articulates the main thing you need your audiences to know and will:

- State what you’re doing and why
- Have consistency with your MarCom plan objectives
- Address all identified audiences

**STEP 2**

**Message Refinement**

*Action Item*

Use the [Message Mapping Tool](#) to document the key messages that are important for your target audience to hear about your product.

For each identified audience, determine what each needs to know that is unique.

For example, a media audience may need amplification of your primary message through a set of secondary messages in a different way than your employee audience. Determine your secondary message requirements now and author them.
STEP 3

Test Messages

Action Item

Conduct some qualitative research, such as a focus group, to test the efficacy of your message(s). Use the free How-To Guide Facilitating Insightful Focus Groups to help do this.

Before committing to the messages you’ve crafted as the foundation for your marketing communications, make sure they resonate with your audience. You must have some assurance that your audience cares about the messages you desire to communicate.
With Strategy, Audience, Objectives, and Messages determined, Stage 5 will lead you through the process of identifying the optimal channels for delivering your marketing communications.

Few companies have the resources to fully exploit all possible marketing communications channels. Rather, they must be selective and base decisions on a set of criteria. During this stage, you’ll identify the optimal set of channels and schedule communications through them.

**STEP 1:** Channel Evaluation & Selection  
**STEP 2:** Events  
**STEP 3:** Social Media  
**STEP 4:** Public Relations  
**STEP 5:** Web & Online  
**STEP 6:** Mobile  
**STEP 7:** Advertising  
**STEP 8:** Lead Generation
Introduction

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Strategy & Environment

Audience

Objectives

Messages

Channels

Budget & Measurement

STEP 1

Channel Evaluation & Selection

**Action Item**

Use the **Marketing Channel Ranking Tool** to evaluate current and planned MarCom channels. Based on this assessment, select the mix of channels you will use to support this MarCom plan.

The right mix rarely includes all possible channels, and usually includes more than one. Use **Brand Perception Effectiveness**, **Lead Generation Effectiveness**, and **Cost Effectiveness** to assess how well current and/or planned channels are performing.

**Helpful Hint** – Use the **Campaign Impression Calculator** to compare costs for each of these channels.

STEP 2

Events

**Action Item**

If your channel mix includes **Events**:
1. Use the **Tradeshow Evaluation Matrix** to assess your options
2. Track all events and tradeshows using the **Events Database Template**

**VIEW RESOURCE**

**VIEW RESOURCES**
STEP 3

Social Media

<Action Item>
If your channel mix includes Social Media:

1. Use the **Social Media Channel Selection Tool** to narrow your Social Media channel selections
2. Schedule your communications through these channels using the **Social Media Posting Calendar**

STEP 4

Public Relations

<Action Item>
If your channel mix includes **Public Relations**:

1. Properly write and format your Press Releases using the **Press Release Template**
2. Schedule the issuing of your Press Release using the **Public Relations Calendar**
3. Track editorial opportunities using the **Editorial Calendar Template**
**STEP 5**

**Web & Online**

*Action Item*

If your channel mix includes Web & Online:

1. Determine what new or modified web content is required to support your MarCom plan
2. Use the [Web Content Audit Tool](#) to help complete your assessment

**STEP 6**

**Mobile**

*Action Item*

If your channel mix includes Mobile:

1. If you have not yet exploited the Mobile channel, take the [Mobile Marketing Readiness Assessment](#)
2. Use the [Mobile Marketing Channel Selection Tool](#) to narrow your mobile channel selections
**STEP 7**

**Advertising**

*Action Item*

If your channel mix includes Advertising:

1. Use the Advertisement Evaluation Matrix to test the effectiveness of your advertising concepts
2. Use the Advertising Plan Checklist Template to develop your advertising plan
3. Schedule and track your plan using the Advertising Calendar & Budget Template

**STEP 8**

**Lead Generation**

*Action Item*

If your channel mix includes Direct Marketing (e.g. email) for Lead Generation:

1. Use the Qualified Lead Definition Tool and ensure that Marketing and Sales agree on a definition
2. Use the Lead Generation Prioritization Tool to evaluate lead-generating alternatives
3. If your lead-generation plan includes email, read Effective Email Marketing Campaigns for guidance.
STAGE 6

Budget & Measurement

Finish this MarCom planning process by building your budget and determining how you will measure your MarCom Plan’s results.

**STEP 1:** MarCom Budget

**STEP 2:** MarCom Calendar

**STEP 3:** MarCom Dashboard
STEP 1
MarCom Budget

**Action Item**
Use the *Marketing Communications Budget Template* to develop and track the budget for the channels and campaigns you identified in Stage 5 of this playbook.

Your marketing communications budget will include:
- Total Budget
- Year-to-Date Spending
- Budget Remaining ($ and %)
- Budget Category Breakdown

STEP 2
MarCom Calendar

**Action Item**
Use the *Marketing Communications Calendar* to create a master calendar of all channel activity and campaigns you identified in Stage 5 of this playbook.

The communications you could prepare may include:
- Advertisements
- Public Relations
- Social Media
- Mobile Marketing
- Events
- Other

**Helpful Hint** – Ensure that each communication properly reflects the key messages you identified.
STEP 3
MarCom Dashboard

Action Item
Develop and implement your MarCom Plan dashboard. Use the Key Marketing Metrics Dashboard to define, track, and report on key metrics.

Carefully review the metrics and systems for capturing them:
- Ensure that the measurement systems are in place to track progress toward these objectives
- Consider other measurements you should add to ensure your strategy is effective

Helpful Hint — Review the Implementing Effective Marketing Dashboards How-to Guide to gain a better understanding.
Conclusion

At the end of any business process, it’s always a good idea to review it and identify areas for improvement.

Demand Metric has the tools and expertise to help you build an effective MarCom Plan.

- Create or audit your MarCom plans
- Assist with using any of the tools referenced in this playbook
- Provide hands-on marketing assistance to accelerate achieving your marketing department’s goals.

To learn more, contact Demand Metric: info@demandmetric.com
About This Playbook

The **ANA (Association of National Advertisers)** makes a difference for individuals, brands, and the industry by driving growth, advancing the interests of marketers and promoting and protecting the well-being of the marketing community.

Founded in 1910, the ANA provides leadership that advances marketing excellence and shapes the future of the industry. The ANA’s membership includes more than 1,000 companies with 15,000 brands that collectively spend or support more than $400 billion in marketing and advertising annually. The membership is comprised of more than 750 client-side marketers and 300 associate members, which include leading agencies, law firms, suppliers, consultants, and vendors.

Further enriching the ecosystem is the work of the nonprofit **ANA Educational Foundation (AEF)**, which has the mission of enhancing the understanding of advertising and marketing within the academic and marketing communities.
About This Playbook

Demand Metric is a marketing research and advisory firm serving a membership community of over 106,000 marketing professionals and consultants in 75 countries.

Offering consulting playbooks, advisory services, and 500+ premium marketing tools and templates, Demand Metric resources and expertise help the marketing community plan more efficiently and effectively, answer the difficult questions about their work with authority and conviction, and complete marketing projects more quickly and with greater confidence — thus boosting the respect of the marketing team and making it easier to justify resources the team needs to succeed.

To learn more about Demand Metric, please visit www.demandmetric.com