



MARKETING TOOLKIT



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INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

Communicating the unique characteristics of your products or company, if done well, can increase your company's awareness and sales opportunities. Yet knowing how to do this can be overwhelming and time consuming to a business owner. That is why Midwest Partnership has prepared this Marketing Toolkit, designed to help you interact with your target audiences and establish and maintain a marketing presence.

This marketing toolkit contains helpful information, tips and tools to integrate advertising, public relations and social media tools into your marketing arsenal.

By integrating various items from the toolkit throughout the year, you can create a comprehensive marketing program.

In this toolkit you will find simple "how to" guides and templates for each marketing element and general rules for implementing them effectively.

We encourage you to use this kit in your promotion efforts. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your Midwest Partnership team.

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BRAND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Brand management is a communication function that includes analysis and planning on how that brand is positioned in the market, identifying which specific audiences the brand should target, and maintaining a desired reputation of the brand. Developing a good relationship with target audiences is essential for brand management. Tangible elements of brand management include the product itself; look, price, the packaging, etc. The intangible elements are the experience that the consumer takes away from the brand, and also the relationship that they have with that brand.

To take the concept of brand management a step further, in marketing, brand implementation refers to the physical representation and consistent application of brand identity across visual and verbal media. In visual terms, this can include brochures, posters, signage, branded company wear, advertisements, websites, mobile applications and more. For a brand to maintain its integrity, a company should adopt brand implementation strategies and guidelines that will provide continuous and consistent applications of your brand's image in all business units, communication channels and media outlets.

Having a strategy and guidelines is important to protect and maintain your company's brand. To do this, considering adopting the following three strategies that many companies use as a guide for brand management. Keep in mind that these strategies are not perfect – but simply a good starting point when it comes to maintaining the value of your brand.

Corporate branding focuses on the brand as a whole. For example, one “brand identity” may include a company or product logo, one tagline, and one color scheme associated with the entire company. Think Intel and their logo and tagline “Intel Inside.” This kind of branding makes it simple to associate brand with benefit, and it can be simpler to maintain brand consistency.

Product-specific branding concentrates on one “star” product that carries the bulk of the brand's reputation. This is useful for a company that has one superstar product. Should you choose to go this route, be sure the product you choose is the very best in your product line-up since it is representing everything for which your product stands.

Product range and product line branding are similar branding strategies that focus on branding a product line in your company or, in some cases, branding a type of product. For instance, GEICO is often associated with its auto insurance packages (product line), even though they sell many different types of insurance under the same name. If you choose to adopt this type of brand strategy, remember, this type of branding means that product quality and satisfaction levels must be closely monitored. If your customers or clients are not happy with the products, they are more apt to dismiss the entire group of like-branded items.

COLLATERAL GUIDELINES

Marketing collateral, in marketing and sales, is the collection of media used to support the sales of a product or service. These sales aids are intended to make the sales effort easier and more effective. The brand of the company usually presents itself by way of its collateral to enhance its brand. The production of marketing collateral is important in any business' marketing communication plan.

Some common pieces of marketing collateral include business cards, letterhead, brochures, fliers, and direct mail, to name a few.

Business Card

The design of your business card is and if done correctly, can be a great tool. A great business card should be visually appealing, show clearly who you are and what your business does and why people should do business with you. If you get this just right, it could be one of the most cost-effective marketing tools open to you and your business. Remember, even in the age of smartphone contact exchanges, your business card is often the first impression.

Here are five tips for getting your business card development:

- 1. Leave a lasting impression.** Your design should stand out from the competition. Make sure it is original, visually appealing and reflects your brand. Consider your use of color very carefully; it could make a significant difference to the overall look and perception of your business card.
- 1. Get it professionally printed.** A cheap looking finish is not going to give the best impression of your company to potential customers so get your card professionally printed.
- 3. State your USP (unique selling point).** One short line telling the bearer of the card why they should do business with you will go a long way.
- 4. Standard size is best.** Make sure your business card will fit in wallets and business card holders. The standard size is generally considered to be 85mm (w) x 55mm (h).
- 5. Make sure it's clear.** Use a clear font that is not too small so that the bearer can quickly pick out the information they need. On the same note, make sure it is not too busy and cluttered or they may throw it away without actually reading.

Letterhead

A professional letterhead design is an essential element of any business communication package. Letterheads represent your company to clients - and will typically feature company logo and contact details printed in corporate colors. Ideally, your letterhead will provide easy to read information that is consistent with your other corporate

branding. It should also be easy to use when created as a template in your office software (Microsoft Word or other similar software). An effective letterhead is a cornerstone of professionalism in business communication.

Here are five tips for letterhead development:

1. **Define your letterhead text.** The starting point of any letterhead design is to determine exactly what text will be used within the layout. Company name and logo are essential elements to include together with all relevant contact details. Feature your company's postal or street address, phone and fax numbers and email. Your company slogan may be also incorporated if desired.
2. **Select your letterhead font.** If a particular typeface has been utilized elsewhere within the corporate identity - it may be appropriate to use that typeface within the letterhead design. Otherwise, as a rule of thumb, incorporate no more than two fonts in any design. Fonts should be selected to remain consistent with company image at all times.
3. **Keep your layout design simple.** Ensure your letterhead design is easy to read for clients. Remember simple is always best. A typical design will feature a logo and/or company name at the top or left corner of the page. Contact details are located in the top right corner. Leave plenty of white space for letter content.
4. **Incorporate color if appropriate.** Company colors are typically used to ensure the letterhead design remains consistent with other corporate branding. At all times color must be used selectively to the purpose of emphasizing your company name. Limit color choices to those that are consistent with corporate identity. White space remains a key element of any letterhead design.
5. **Carefully review your proof copy.** Before ordering your completed letterhead from your printer, print out a proof copy and carefully review. Take the time to ensure contact details are correct. Ask others for feedback on your design.

Brochures

A well written, well-designed brochure is an important marketing tool for a business. Brochures offer a great opportunity to go into detail about your product or service. You only get one chance to make a good impression with your brochure. It's worth taking the time to get it right.

Here are 10 tips for brochure development:

1. **Identify the purpose of your brochure.** It's important to know what you want out of your brochure before you begin. Is it to promote a new product or service, generate more sales or simply to raise the profile of your company? You will need to be clear about this before the design process begins. That way, your designer will know how to approach the job in order to deliver the best possible design solution.
2. **Get organized.** Make a list of all the information you want to include in your brochure. Organize your list in order of priority. This will make it easier when it comes to plotting where your info needs to appear within the brochure.

3. Consistency. Decide on a typeface for your headings/sub headings and body text and stick to them. Keep the body text typeface simple but feel free to use something a bit different for the headings if you wish. All headings should be kept the same size. The same applies to sub headings and body text. Don't suddenly change your body text from 12pt to 13pt just to fill a bit of awkward space. Keep everything consistent and your brochure will look neat and professional.

4. Make sure it is well written. This is essential. Poorly written copy will reflect very badly on your company. If you're not 100 percent confident that your writing is up to standard and your budget allows, use a professional copywriter. If money is tight, write the copy yourself and hire a copywriter to fine-tune it for you. This will always be money well spent.

5. Use high quality, appropriate images. Well-chosen, professional quality images can set your brochure apart from others. Don't be tempted to use poor quality images just because they are all you have available. Better to leave them out altogether. Additionally, you'll want to ensure you're not using the same stock photography as your competitors. Consider hiring a professional photographer to take photos of your products, your facilities and your location. It will be money well spent.

6. Use headlines to draw attention. Don't assume that people will read your brochure thoroughly and carefully. A lot of busy people will 'skim' your brochure. It's important to use headings to good effect. This will grab the readers' attention and hopefully encourage them to read further.

7. Break it up a bit. If it's necessary to have a large quantity of text within some of your brochure pages, break it up into bite size chunks. You can do this by using borders, lines, shaded boxes etc. A good graphic designer will know of many techniques to make a text heavy page look as attractive as possible.

8. White space. Don't feel that you have to fill every millimeter of your brochure with text and photo's. Leave plenty of space. A cramped brochure will look messy and unappealing to the reader. If you think there might be too much content don't be afraid edit the text down a bit. Alternatively, you can add more pages to the brochure.

9. Proofread. This one goes without saying. If you are on a tight budget, it's perfectly okay not to hire a proofreader. Just don't do it yourself. Get somebody else to do it. Better still, ask two or three people to proofread your brochure for you before it goes to print. Also, remember to request a proof from the printer of your brochure and proofread it carefully before you authorize the brochures to be printed. Once again, consider hiring a proofreader at this step as well.

10. Print on good quality paper. Have your brochure printed on good quality paper. Don't feel that you have to spend money on the finest paper on the market. Just make sure that it reflects the quality of your product or service.

Flyers

A flyer can be a good tool for promoting an event such as a contest or special event. When planning your flyer, first think about who is looking at it and ensure it is easy to read, short and concise.

Here are five tips for flyer development:

- 1. Choose your message.** Once you have chosen the message you want to promote, you'll need to outline the major and minor elements you want to convey. For example, if you are promoting an event, be sure to include what your event is, when it is, where it is, cost and contact information. In addition, be sure to include the specifics of the event, who should come and why.
- 2. Format according to importance.** Now that you have all the information identified that needs to be included, prioritize each area of information and lay out the flyer according to the hierarchy of importance.
- 3. Space space space.** Don't jam-pack your flyer. Better to reduce font size and create more space between elements than cram everything together. Space allows the eye to see everything more clearly.
- 4. Use a theme to make it all come together.** If your theme is a bake sale, use a couple of food images. But keep it simple, neat, uncluttered. A little goes a long way. If you use too many graphics or pictures, you'll distract people from seeing the important info in the flyer.
- 5. Keep your flyer to 1 page.** People don't want to take the time to read something long or complicated so keep your flyer to one page. If you can't fit all your content on one page, then you are trying to convey too much information in this medium. In this case, you may need to consider creating a brochure.

As mentioned in all of the elements above, proofread, proofread, proofread.

Direct Mail

Successful direct mail production embodies several disciplines – marketing strategy, design, print, and mail; all of which need to come together in harmonious unison for your direct mail piece to provide a suitable return on your investment.

In the direct mail business, you need to think in terms of both impressions and conversions. An impression is when someone sees your brand and your offer. A conversion is when they buy what you are selling. **Both impressions and conversions are valuable.** Ultimately, if you want to translate impressions into conversions you need to keep your name in front of your customers. The more times a prospect sees your name and relates it with your service, the more likely they will become your customer.

Here are 10 tips for direct mail development:

1. Develop Your Direct Mail Plan. Start with a plan. Begin by identifying a few key factors –identify who you want to reach and what you want them to do. From there, consider what is the best time or season to reach them with your offer. If you have multiple segments of prospects, you may develop a direct mail plan that targets different segments, with different offers, at different times of the year. During this process, begin thinking about how you are going to measure success. Think in terms of things you can see and easily track: calls, email inquiries, visitors to your website, and new sales are all things you can count and track. What will spell success for you?

2. Think Direct Mail Campaign (not just one mailer) and Test, Test, Test. Direct mail is not magic. A good response rate on a first time mailing; with a cold mailing list, one you have not used before, is about one percent. It is not until you refine your campaign over a series of mailings that it really becomes the most cost effective. So, plan to mail to your list more than once – think and budget for a direct mail campaign.

3. Develop Your Direct Mail Budget. Naturally, you should plan a budget. Key cost items include design/copywriting, list rental [if you don't have a list already], list management, printing, and postage.

4. Create a Call to Action. To get the desired response your direct mail piece needs to create excitement. So, focus on what you want your prospects to do and then make sure you ask them to do it in a creative way. Things like discounts, buy one get one free offers or something as simple as "Call Today for more details" helps the recipient understand how to take advantage of what you are offering.

5. Design a Super Direct Mail Piece. Will a postcard work, or do you need a sealed #10 envelope? Will your budget allow for 4-color or just 2-color printing? These are all important questions. Equally important is the impact your direct mail piece has when someone sees it for the first time. You get about 2-3 seconds to grab and hold a prospect's attention. So, it's a good idea to invest in a graphic designer. A good use of color, images, logo and other branding is vital and your call to action must be instantly visible.

6. Build or Rent Good Mailing List. The best direct mail response rates always come from mailing lists a business has generated and cultivated over a course of years. If you are just getting started, or if you are looking to expand an existing business, you should consider renting a mailing list. The more targeted your mailing list is, the better the response will be.

7. Clean Your Mailing List and Get Postal Discounts. Once you have your mailing list, keep it clean by removing duplicates and old, outdated addresses of people or businesses that have moved. In addition, pre-sorting your mailing will help you get postal discounts.

8. Personalize Your Mail Piece. Have you noticed how you respond differently to mail that is address to “Current Resident” as opposed to your full name? For most people, ‘current resident’ is an instant turn off. If at all possible, personalize every piece of mail you send. Want to take it a step further, then considering moving beyond just personalizing the addressee name. For example, if your data includes other variable data – such as customer past purchases, the date of their last visit to your location, or even past donation amounts, you can integrate that data into your design and print run to produce a highly targeted and powerful mailing.

9. Give Prospects Multiple Ways to Respond. Everyone is a bit different – some like to email, some prefer to call, and still others want to research you before they do either. Make sure you provide multiple ways for people to contact you. Include your phone number, email address, and website at a minimum. If you are on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [Twitter](#) – consider adding that information as well.

10. Track Results and Make Improvements. Knowing your product or service and your market goes a long way toward direct mail success, but you never know exactly what your prospects will respond to until you try. The best way to increase response is by testing three elements of your direct mail campaign, one at a time in successive mailing. The elements are the headline (or opening sentence), the offer and the pricing. In successive mailings, however, you should split test your mailing. Send ½ of your list the same piece, and send the second ½ the new piece with the new headline, offer or price. Then, track which elicit the best response. By knowing and using what has already proven to be successful, future campaigns will be more efficient and will generate higher ROI.

Just like all forms of collateral, white space is your friend. In addition, it is critical that you proofread before sending your direct mail piece to the printer, and when you request a proof before the full print run. And lastly, be sure to print your direct mail piece on quality paper.

Advertising 101

Advertising, if done correctly, can do wonders for your brand and product awareness. While it alone can't guarantee the success of your business, it can help pave the way for great sales opportunities. Beginning an advertising campaign can be a bit daunting, so here are a few steps that will get you on our way.

What can advertising do for your business?

- Promote your business to customers, clients and others.
- Encourage existing customers to buy more of your product/service.
- Attract new customers.
- Remind customers and inform prospective customers about the benefits of your product or service.
- Establish and maintain your brand identity.
- Enhance your reputation.
- Slowly build sales opportunities to increase revenue.

For everything advertising can do, there are some things it cannot do:

- Create an instant customer base.
- Create an immediate, sharp increase in sales (but certain advertising discounts or coupons could encourage a brief increase in sales).
- Substitute for poor or indifferent customer service.
- Sell useless or unwanted products or services.

As you begin the process of developing your advertising campaign, it is helpful to remember two things. **First**, you have complete control. Unlike public relations or certain aspects to social media, you determine the exact message, where it will be seen and how often it will appear. You also determine what the look and feel of your advertising will be.

Second, you can be consistent by presenting your company's image and sales message frequently to build awareness and trust. Over time, this process will create a distinctive identity for your company and customers will recognize your brand and product quickly and easily if you remain vigilant of your brand identity and create a consistent public presentation through your advertising campaign.

It takes time to develop a great advertising campaign and it works best and costs the least when the planning and preparation are done in advance. For example, purchasing a media schedule in October of one year for the full next year will cost you less money than purchasing one ad at a time at the last minute. And planning a year of advertising messages ensures your campaign will be thoughtful and relevant to the market timing and be more brand consistent.

An effective advertising campaign takes time and persistence and the effectiveness of your advertising improves gradually over time because it's impossible for every potential or current customer to see every ad you place. In addition, not all customers are in need of your product at the time they see your ad, so repeatedly reminding customers about your products or services will keep your company top of mind when a new customer is ready to buy.

5 Steps to Develop Your Advertising Plan

1. **Establish the theme** that identifies your product or service in all of your advertising. The theme should fit within the brand identity guidelines you have set for your company and the promotion of your products.

2. **Consider developing a tag line.** They reinforce the single most important reason for buying your product or service.

3. **Design the Framework.** What is the purpose of your advertising program? Start by defining your company's long-range business goals, then map out how marketing can help attain them. Focus on advertising routes complementary to your marketing efforts. Set measurable goals so you can evaluate the success of your advertising campaign. For example, do you want to increase overall sales prospects by 20 percent this year? Boost sales to existing customers by 10 percent during each of the next three years?

How much can you afford to invest? Keep in mind that whatever amount you allocate will never seem like enough. Given your income, expenses, and sales projections, simple addition and subtraction can help you determine how much you can afford to invest. Some companies spend a full 10 percent of their gross income on advertising, others just 1 percent.

4. **Fill in the Details.** What are the features and benefits of your product or service? Next, determine the benefits those features provide to your customers. How does your product or service actually help them? For example, a powerful engine helps a driver accelerate quickly to get onto busy freeways.

Who is your audience? Create a profile of your best customer. Be as specific as possible, as this will be the focus of your ads and media choices.

Who is your competition? It's important to identify your competitors and their strengths and weaknesses. Knowing what your competition offers that you lack - and vice versa - helps you show prospects how your product or service is special and why they should do business with you instead of someone else. Knowing your competition will also help you find a niche in the marketplace.

5. **Arm Yourself with Information.** What do you know about your industry, market and audience? There are many sources of information to help you keep in touch with industry, market and buying trends without conducting expensive market research. One

way you can quickly and easily learn more about your customers is by simply asking them about themselves, their buying preferences, and media habits.

6. Build Your Action Plan - Evaluating Media Choices. Your next step is to select the advertising vehicles you will use to carry your message and establish an advertising schedule. In most cases, knowing your audience will help you choose the media that will deliver your sales message most effectively. Use as many of the tools as are appropriate and affordable.

When developing your advertising schedule, be sure to take advantage of any special editorial or promotional coverage planned in the media you select. Newspapers, for example, often run special sections featuring real estate, investing, home and garden improvement, and tax advice. Magazines also often focus on specific themes in each issue.

7. Using Other Promotional Avenues. Advertising extends beyond the media described above. Other options include imprinting your company name and graphic identity on pens, paper, clocks, calendars and other giveaway items for your customers. Put your message on billboards, inside buses and subways, on vehicle and building signs, on point-of-sale displays and on shopping bags.

Other ideas: you might co-sponsor events with nonprofit organizations and advertise your participation, attend or display at consumer or business trade shows, create tie-in promotions with allied businesses, distribute newsletters, conduct seminars, undertake contests or sweepstakes, send advertising flyers along with billing statements, use telemarketing to generate leads for salespeople, or develop sales kits with brochures, product samples, and application ideas.

The number of promotional tools used to deliver your message and repeat your name is limited only by your imagination and your budget.

Media buying 101

Media buying is when creative, such as an advertisement, is placed in a newspaper, magazine, radio station, TV station, billboards or online publication such as a newsletter, website or blog. Buying media basically means purchasing space (print, website, outdoor) or time (radio/TV) from an outlet's available media inventory. The goal of placing ads is to drive traffic or increase brand awareness.

For websites, purchases are determined by the CPM, or the cost per one thousand impressions. In this example, websites have what's called an ad chain, where the ad rotates on the site with other ads. The higher paying CPM ads are shown first followed by the lower paying ones. However, the earlier in the ad chain a creative is shown, the higher quality of traffic that will be delivered.

Understanding the Media Buying Process

Step 1: Identify your target market. Who are you trying to reach? Who is your target market? Create a profile that reflects the consumer or client you are trying to reach. This profile will be helpful when trying to identify the best venue in which to place media.

Step 2: Research your target market. Once you have identified your target market, research where they are. What types of media are they using? Are they reading newspapers, listening to the radio, or are they most engaged in the online space such as a news site such as CNN? It's important to understand the behavior of your target audience – this will help in placing a media buy that is effective and perform by achieving your identified objectives.

Step 3: Set your objectives: When you set the marketing objectives that you want to achieve with your target market, you can begin to create a plan. What do you want to do with your media buys? Are you looking to create awareness or is your goal to increase sales opportunities? Identify what objectives are most important to you for each media buy so you can measure whether or not those objectives are being achieved.

Step 4: Define and plan out your strategy: Your plan should include where you will buy your media. Are there specific outlets you are interested in? What is your budget and where can you allocate that budget so that you can achieve the objectives you have identified? What components should your media plan contain?

Step 5: Execute your plan: Your first step is to begin contacting the media outlets you have identified and start negotiating your media buy rates. Keep a calendar and budget in front of you at all times. Make sure you negotiate rates and ask for bonuses or add-ons that they are willing to give you if you choose to purchase an ad with the media outlet. As your media buys are executed, be sure to keep track of the results and evaluate how your plan and strategy is working for you. If you find that your campaign is not meeting your objectives, alter you plan as necessary.

Example media insertion order

Date: _____

Client Account # _____ Insertion # _____

Sales # _____

ADVERTISER INFORMATION:

Company Name _____

Contact _____

Agency Name _____

Contact _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

INSERTION SCHEDULE:

ISSUE

AD SIZES & RATES

		<u>1x</u>	<u>2x</u>	<u>6x</u>	<u>12x</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> January	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Col x 2 inches	\$240	\$230	\$215	\$200
<input type="checkbox"/> February	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Col x 3 inches	\$340	\$325	\$300	\$285
<input type="checkbox"/> March	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Col x 2 inches	\$440	\$420	\$390	\$375
<input type="checkbox"/> April	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Col x 3 inches	\$540	\$515	\$490	\$460
<input type="checkbox"/> May	<input type="checkbox"/> ¼ page	\$770	\$725	\$695	\$650
<input type="checkbox"/> June	<input type="checkbox"/> ½ page	\$1,210	\$1,200	\$1,185	\$1,140
<input type="checkbox"/> July	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Page	\$2,440	\$2,360	\$2,325	\$2,250
<input type="checkbox"/> August					
<input type="checkbox"/> September					
<input type="checkbox"/> October					
<input type="checkbox"/> November					
<input type="checkbox"/> December					

TOTAL: _____



PAYMENT INFORMATION: All payments are to be **PREPAID**.

I understand that my credit card number

_____ Exp. _____ will be charged in accordance to the above insertion schedule chosen by advertiser. When a multiple insertion schedule is in effect, your credit card will be charged in a monthly manner and your ad will be picked up from the previous month. No cancellations will be accepted prior to the "Press Date" or a cancellation fee will apply. No cancellations will be accepted without written notification. Please note that your below signature is permission for [COMPANY] to periodically communicate via email & fax.

X _____

Date _____

Signature (Your signature accepts responsibility of this insertion schedule)

Date _____

Print

Phone

Fax

E-mail

Public Relations 101

The Public Relations Society of America defines public relations as: **“Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.”**

If done well, an effective public relations campaign not only develops a positive awareness about your company and its products, but it will also help your company sell products.

While there is no one perfect way to define public relations, it may be helpful to compare the difference between advertising and public relations. For example:

Advertising	Public Relations
Paid Placement (i.e. newspaper ad, radio commercial, etc.)	Free placement.
Controlled message. You get to determine what message you want to deliver about your company and its products.	You can't control the message. A journalist can write what they want - no matter how you position your story.
Creates Visibility. Purchasing paid media ensures that you have a built-in audience that will see your message as you can control the frequency of the exposure.	You can't control how often a journalist will write about your company.
Media-savvy consumers know that this ad is from a company and thus are skeptical of its message.	Having a third party write about your company and/or its products creates credibility.
Easy to create an advertising campaign if you have money to spend.	A PR campaign, especially one that is done right and maintained over a long period of time, can be time consuming with no guarantees.

PR includes a variety of activities, ranging from creating a specific strategy to positioning a brand in the marketplace; leveraging relationships with the media (media relations) to telling a brand's story; facilitating opportunities for key spokespeople to participate on panels and attend various industry-related events; developing and executing social media plans; and nominating clients for awards. There is no one formula to developing a successful PR campaign.

In the pages that follow, the most basic PR tactic, the news release, is demystified. In addition, the toolkit includes tips, tactics, guidelines and templates to aid in the development of an effective news release.

ANATOMY OF AN EFFECTIVE MESSAGE

It doesn't matter how much money or savvy you have behind your public relations campaign, if you don't have an effective media message, your campaign and ultimately your company, will not have the success you desire.

To help you begin writing successful messages, first you must know and understand your company's or industry's key goal(s). You can have a great message, but if it doesn't sell your product, create awareness or spur action, then you've not achieved your mission. Always remember that one message does not fit all. So focus on creating key messages for each of your target audiences. If you only remember one tip: your message should be clear, concise, free of industry jargon, and memorable.

Your message should be targeted to one key audience. One message does not fit all and the same message won't resonate with all of your target audiences. So it is important to understand the demographics, geographics and sociographics of your audience before writing your key messages.

Your message should be clear, concise and memorable. A long, drawn out, multi-thought message will confuse your audience. Keep your key message short, simple and on target and use supporting messages to deliver additional information.

Your message should be credible. Wild, over the top statements might get attention, but when people do a little digging and find no substance, you lose credibility. So to ensure your spokesperson, and thus the message is well received, make sure you can support your claims with research.

Your message should contain one key point. We're living in a world full of distractions where multi-tasking is standard procedure. In this type of environment, people can't absorb multiple ideas at one time, nor will multiple messages resonate with everyone. So stick to one point within each key message.

Your message should be free of industry jargon. Many people within your target audience will not be familiar with your industry and using industry jargon will confuse and alienate them.

Your message should be customized to your medium. People do not absorb or react to information the same way in different mediums. Delivering a message via TV? You need short, pithy soundbites. Delivering a message via Twitter? You have 140 characters. Delivering a message through a blog? Write like you talk and slang is just fine. The take-away? Develop your key messages for your target audience and then customize them for each medium you are targeting.

STRATEGIC MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET

Company Mission Statement:

Company Goal:

Target Audience:

Key Message:

Supporting Statement:

Supporting Statement:

Supporting Statement:

NEWS RELEASE GUIDE

Write Your Headline.

Write Your Tagline:

Write Down the 5 W's of Your Story.

Who:

What:

When:

Where:

Why:

The Main Body of Text:

Product, service or initiative....including type, special characteristics, etc.

How your product, service, initiative or company is different from the your competitors.

Where and how is your product or service available?

Compelling Quotes - who should say them and what should they be about?

Company Boilerplate.

Now go back and write your lead paragraph.

Now go back and write the text for the body of your news release.

Now add your boilerplate to the end. A boilerplate is a one sentence description of your company and includes your website address and links to any social media tools your company is using.

You've just written your news release!

NEWS RELEASE TEMPLATE

News Release

For more information contact:

Name, title

Company

Phone

Email

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HEADLINE

subheadline

City, State, Date – lead paragraph - Include your key message in the lead paragraph.

<Insert quote >

<insert supporting statement>

<insert supporting statement>

<insert quote>

<insert final supporting statement>

<Insert copy regarding how to get more information>

###

About <insert your company name>

<insert boilerplate>

NEWS RELEASE CHECKLIST

1. Is it really NEWS?
2. Is the letterhead appropriate? Does it correctly identify the source of the release?
3. Is the contact person identified (name, title, phone number, email address)?
4. Is a release date given? (or is "For Immediate Release" acceptable?)
5. Is the dateline appropriate? (Does it include place, time or, if crucial to story, is time and place mentioned in the body copy?)
6. Does the lead contain the 5 Ws in order of importance (Who, What, Where, When, Why and How)?
7. Is the lead statement attention getting? (Will it interest reporters? Will it interest your target audience? Does it tell you what the story is about?)
8. Is the story attributed in the lead or second paragraph? (Should it be?)
9. Is the most important information at the beginning of your press release? If an editor only publishes the first three paragraphs of your release, will the reader still know the key pieces of information?
10. Are paragraphs well designed and well written? (Are ideas divided into eye-appealing units? Are they in the order you want to read them?)
11. Is the style suitable for intended readers? Read through with these suggestions in mind:
 - sentence length—25 words or less;
 - word choice—jargon avoided or explained in context;
 - sentence construction—use subject-verb-object and action verbs;
 - clarity—use precise word in every case and avoid ambiguity; and
 - brevity—omit needless words; phrasing—watch for misplaced modifiers.
12. Is information suitably documented? (Would a skeptic question any assertions or statements made without attribution?)
13. Is the subject and treatment appropriate for intended readers? (Will they read it? Can you improve upon either subject or treatment?)
14. Is the copy clean and neat? (Will the credibility of the story, and of your company, be destroyed by the errors?)

NEWS RELEASE DO'S AND DON'TS

The Do's

Start strong. You only have a limited amount of time to grab a reader's attention so be sure your lead paragraph delivers your news. Keep your angle relevant and be sure your release has a good hook, right from the beginning. The rest of the release will provide additional details.

Identify yourself. Be sure to include your company name in the lead paragraph. Also, don't be afraid to toot your own horn but don't give away all your secrets.

Write professionally. Do not use hype, clichés slang, excessive exclamation points or "urban" definitions in your release. Stick to the facts. Tell the truth while avoiding filler, embellishments, hype and exaggerations. Use active voice to bring your news release to life.

Limit jargon. Use plain, ordinary language – even if your product or service is highly technical.

Timely information. Be sure your information is timely, unique or highlights something new, exciting or unusual.

Illustrate the solution. Whenever possible, use multimedia tools such as hi-res photography, logos, product shots, photos from events, audio clips and more. This will better capture the attention of your readers.

The Don'ts

Here are a few things that should be avoided in any news release:

- Grammatical errors
- All capital letters to emphasize a point.
- Product advertisements, fluff and hype.
- Lack of content and substance.
- The words "you", "I" or "we" outside of a quote.

Lastly, here are few ideas for news release topics:

- Announcing a new product or feature.
- Winning an award
- Hosting an event.
- Announcing a new employee or employee change.
- Launching a new partnership.
- Sharing survey results.

REGIONAL MEDIA LIST

Adair County**Adair News**

Newspaper
403 Audubon Street
Adair, IA 50002
Phone: 641.742.3241
Fax: 641.742.3489
Email: adairnews@iowatelecom.net
Publisher/Editor/Advertising Manager: William Littler

Fontanelle Observer

Newspaper
313 5th Street
Fontanelle, IA 50846
Phone: 641.745.3161
Fax: 641.745.1201
Email: observer1@iowatelecom.net
Publisher/Editor: Ann Wilson
Advertising Manager: Tim Tracy
General Manager: Tammy Pearson

Greenfield Adair County Free Press

Newspaper
PO Box 148, 141 Public Square
Greenfield, IA 50849
Phone: 641.743.6121
Fax: 641.743.6378
Email: editor@adairpress.com
Website: www.adaircountyfreepress.com
Publisher: Ann Wilson
Advertising Manager: Tim Tracy
Editor/General Manager: Tammy Pearson
Circulation Manager: Denna Mitchell

Audubon County

Audubon County Advocate Journal

517 Leroy Street
Audubon, IA 50025
Phone: 712.563.2741
Fax: 712.563.2740
Email: news@auduboncountynews.com
Website: www.auduboncountynews.com
Publisher/General Manager/Editor: Jeff Lundquist
Editor: Jill Christensen
Advertising Manager: Mike Ruddy
Circulation Manager: Deb Baker

Greene County

Greene County News Online

PO Box 343
Jefferson, IA 50129
Phone: 515.386.3087
Email: news@greencountynewsonline.com
Editor: Tori Riley

Jefferson Herald

200 N Wilson Avenue
Jefferson, IA 50129
Phone: 515.386.4161
Fax: 515.386.4162
Email: news@beeherald.com
Website: www.beeherald.com
Publisher: Ann Wilson
Editor: Andrew McGinn
Advertising Manager: Deb Geisler
Production Manager: Rob Strabley

Scranton Journal

1006 Main Street
Scranton, IA 51462
Phone: 712.651.2321
Fax: 712.651.2599
Email: ciapub@netins.net
Website: www.iowanewspaperonline.com
Editor/Advertising Manager: Luann Waldo

Guthrie County

Bayard News Gazette

409 Main Street
Bayard, IA 50029
Phone: 712.651.2321
Fax: 712.651.2599
Email: ciapub@netins.net
Website: www.iowanewspaperonline.com
Editor/Advertising Manager: Luann Waldo

Guthrie Center Times

205 State Street
Guthrie Center, IA 50115
Phone: 641.332.2380
Fax: 641.332.2382
Email: gctimes@netins.net
Website: www.guthrian.com
Editor: Ashley Schable

Panora Guthrie County Vedette

111 E Main
Panora, IA 50216
Phone: 641-755-2115
Fax: 641-332-2382
Email: gctimes@netins.net
Editor: Ashley Schable

Stuart Herald

119 NW 2nd Street
Stuart, IA 50250
Phone: 515.523.1010
Fax: 515.523.2825
Email: news@thestuarterald.com
Website: www.thestuarterald.com
Publisher: Kristy Lonsdale
General Manager: Norma Thurman

Radio Media

Raccoon Valley Radio

Website: www.raccoonvalleyradio.com

KDLS AM 1310 Perry

Phone: 515.465.5357

News Director: Samantha Smith Email: samanthasmith@raccoonvalleyradio.com

K107 FM 107.9 Stuart

Phone: 515.523.1107

News Director: Andrew Zupkoff Email: andrewzupkoff@raccoonvalleyradio.com

KG98 FM 98.9 Jefferson

Phone: 515.386.2222

News Director: Coltrane Carlson Email: coltranecarlson@raccoonvalleyradio.com

KNOD Radio

909 Chatburn Avenue

Harlan, IA 51537

Phone: 712.755.3883

Fax: 712.755.7511

News Director: Joel McCall Email: knodnews@harlannet.com

Website: www.knodfm.com

KSOM FM 96.5/ KS 95.7

The Meredith Communications

Coverage: 21 counties in Western Iowa

Phone: 712.243.6885

News Director: Tom Robinson Email: ksomnews@mchsi.com

KSIB FM 101.3

PO Box 426

1409 Hwy 34 W

Creston, IA 50801

641.782.2155

General Manager: Chad Rieck Email: chad@ksibradio.com

News Staff: Terri Queck-Matzie Email: news@ksibradio.com

Website: www.ksibradio.com

KICK 106.7/KKRL/KCIM

Carroll Broadcasting Company

1119 Plaza Dr

Carroll, IA 51401

Phone: 712.792.4321

News Director: Jeff Blankman Email: jeff@carrollbroadcasting.com

Assistant News Director: Quinn Palmer

SOCIAL MEDIA 101

Social media, quite simply, are the technologies people use to communicate and socialize with one another, typically online, and in real-time. Millions of conversations take place daily on social media. If you're not at the table, you're missing out on your brand being part of those conversations. And if you don't proactively define yourself on social media, you run the risk of someone else doing it for you, for example a competitor. Social media platforms are not static like a website that may not need much updating on a regular basis—they are ever changing, every second of the day. This makes it important to devise a plan, set goals, and establish a routine that works for you to keep your online business presence fresh.

Getting started on social media should not be a daunting task—all are meant to be user friendly and most have frequently asked questions and help sections. Since there are numerous platforms to choose from, it's important to find the one(s) that will best suit your business rather than trying to tackle them all. So first, let's take a look at some of the most commonly utilized social media tools.

Facebook: a great place to start for those new to social media, looking for a “one-stop-shop” approach to boosting your online presence. To create a Facebook page, you first must join the more than 1 billion users with a personal Facebook profile. Facebook distinguishes between a person, whom you must ‘add’ as a friend to be connected, and an organization, which you can ‘like’ to follow updates. Your customers and the public will look for you on Facebook, and will likely use the site to rate or comment on their interactions with your company or brand. The range of content featured on your Facebook page can include product or company updates, shared content such as interesting regional or industry trends, product photos and more. It can even be considered a mini-website, with space to include contact information, store hours, and background history.

LinkedIn: similar to Facebook, yet more appropriate for professional networking. Promoting your individual team member's strengths, in a resume-style profile, is as valuable as promoting your organization. On LinkedIn, the professional networking site with more than 200 million members, you can develop a company page, share news with prospective clients or customers and also develop pages for key leaders. When used together, LinkedIn company and leadership pages can help create awareness of your company.

Twitter: one of the fastest and most effective ways to share quick bits of information in 140 characters or less, Twitter has more than 500 million subscribers today. When using Twitter for your business, stick to messages about your company, products, employees or trends in the industry.

Instagram: allows you to upload photos – and even short videos – of your personal experiences. This site allows you to share events, products, works in process, interests, people, etc. through a series of photos. You can use filters and editing tools to create fun photos for your audience to enjoy. Similar to other social media tools, photo sites are interactive and engage your target audience and a great photo can generate interest in a product or event and drive the consumer to engage in more content online related to your project.

Pinterest: a visual collection of information pulled from a variety of websites. Users can “pin” – share – the content that interests them. They can also share other pins and search for information. Pinterest allows users to then create “Boards” – categories – to pin to and store that information in their own personal account. Pinterest acts as a tool for discovering/searching, collecting, sharing and storing information that is important to an individual. By clicking on a photo, the user is taken to a site where they can learn more information. A good photo or board of photos can generate interest and engage the audience in more content related to your product, event, organization, etc. Pinterest can even be used as a mini portfolio, showcasing the types of products or services you provide.

YouTube/Vimeo: billions of users around the world use videos to tell the story of their product and company. If you have a very visual product, or dynamic team, video can be a great way to interact with current and potential customers as well as your employees. Effective video does not need to be a professionally produced, expensive and slick presentation, homemade videos can often be a powerful means of delivering your message to your target audience.

Flickr: Similar to video, Flickr is a social media network where millions of people upload photos of events, products, food and more. It is a great way to continue to interact with your audience online and can help drive people to other areas of your business such as your website or blog. Once again, photos don’t need to be professionally taken. Photos taken from your cell phone or digital camera can have the same impact, if not better, with your customer base.

Blogs: blogs are the building blocks for your social media efforts. They are the platform that positions employees of your company as subject matter experts. They are also a place where you can link people to Tweets, Facebook posts and LinkedIn pages. Blogs establish your company or organization as the trusted authority and expert in what you do.

While social media can be fun, resist the urge to mix personal and inappropriate messages with messages about your company or industry when using the tools to create awareness and generate sales for your business. No one cares that you wore a red shirt to work unless your company is participating in an event, such as heart disease awareness, that is directly tied to the message.

GETTING STARTED IN SOCIAL MEDIA: THE SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIT

Now that you know a bit about social media tools, how do you determine which tools are right for you? One way is through a social media audit, a study of how your competitors and consumers are using social media tools.

For instance, the first question to ask, “What channels are my target audience engaged with? For example, ask and answer the following questions:

- What social media channels is the target using?
- What social media channels is the target not using?
- How active is the target in each channel?

Next, determine what online publications are reaching your target audience through answering the following questions.

- What publications online is the target represented in?
- What Blogs?
- What Channels?

If your company has not yet activated any social media channels, then the next question you should ask is how well your competitors are using social media tools. Once you have deployed your own social media campaign, every few months, answer these same questions to assess how your brand is performing in each channel.

- Are the company’s profiles complete on key sites?
- Does the company have consistent branding? For example, if the company uses Twitter, is the photo the company’s logo? Is the color scheme consistent throughout all channels and sites?
- Does the company have custom landing pages? Relevant for Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.

Now that you know where your competitors are, how are they doing in the respective spaces. Is their messaging effective? Are they driving consumers to their website, Facebook page, etc.? Are they selling products? Ask the following questions to determine the effectiveness of your competitors’ campaigns. As mentioned above, once you begin your social media campaign, ask the same questions every few months to ensure your company campaign is meeting your objectives.

- Is the company integrating its social media? For example, is your Twitter account linked to Facebook and LinkedIn? Does your LinkedIn Account feature your YouTube channel and Twitter feeds?
- Is your company website and/or blog integrated with your social media profiles? Plug-in can help any company do this.
- Is your company integrating its social media through offline marketing or in its advertising campaigns? What about its internal communications? Add your social

media to swag, ads, marketing brochures, sales pieces, business cards, letterhead, proposals, etc.

- Are you integrating your social media profiles on other networks? If you submit a guest post, are you including things such as your Twitter handle?
- Are your press releases optimized? Are your SEO releases dynamic? Do they drive people to your company website, blog or other social media profiles?

It is important to be sure your content is relevant. One way to determine that your messages are working is to conduct a content audit. Answer the following questions to assess how receptive and effective your messages are within your social media channels.

- What types of updates do I share? These should be business related.
- How many times do I update per day? Don't over update, don't under update.
- Do I hard sell with my updates?
- What am I saying? Is my message being delivered?
- What feedback is being received? Are you being re-tweeted? Are people commenting positively about your articles or products?
- Do I have bait? Whitepapers, articles, swag, etc. For example, one way to utilize a social media channel is to have a Twitter contest to promote your booth at an upcoming trade show.

It is important to understand if your social media strategies are working. Approximately six months after you have launched your campaign, conduct a measurement audit. This is a way to measure whether or not your objectives are being met. If not, it will help you identify ways to tweak your social media campaign to be more effective. Ask the following questions.

- What social activities do I measure? Add measurement tools and/or a matrix to all of your social activities – Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Blogs, Website, etc. Possible tools include Social Mention, Trackur, PostRank, Google Analytics (blog, website) and Facebook Analytics.
- Do you have alerts set up to notify you of brand mentions?
- What social media sites give me the most traffic?
- What social media sites give me the most leads?
- What social media site leads have turned into product purchases?
- Are other people promoting our brand and, if so, how and where? Has a customer sent out a tweet complementing your product? [You should create a #hashtag, or series of #hashtags to follow your products/brand in the online space. These hashtags can be followed via Twitter and used in blogs as well.

While social media campaigns can last years, many specific campaigns may only last a few months. For example, you may have a six-month campaign with the specific objective of launching a new product or service with achievable sales goals. At the end of this timeframe, do a quick review of your overall campaign to determine if it was successful. An effective campaign will give you guidance on your next campaign, or if

you find little problems, this exercise can help you refine your next campaign to be more effective.

- How much time is spent each week or month on social media?
- Are you getting a return on investment from your SEO campaign? This takes time – six months, even a year is not always enough time to build your brand online.
- What is working and why?
- What is not working and why?
- How effective is my overall message? What messages delivered leads? What messages were duds?

REGIONAL PROVIDERS: MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

This list provides contact information for a variety of advertising, marketing, design and public relations providers in the Midwest Partnership region. If you know of other providers, please email lpasutti@midwestpartnership.com with their contact information.

ACGS – Advanced Computer & Graphic Services

Jennifer Danker
126 W Main Street
Panora, Iowa 50216
641-755-2966
acgs@netins.net
www.acgs1.com

Web & graphic design services, Dell Authorized Sales and Services

Ann Appleseth Communications LLC

Ann Appleseth
5471 Chimra Road, Unit 4
Panora, Iowa 50216
515-494-2567
ann.appleseth@gmail.com
www.linkedin.com/in/aappleseth/
<https://www.facebook.com/AnnApplesethCommunications>

Public relations, marketing strategy, marketing communications, news releases, media relations, advertising, writing, social media, media training, crisis communications strategy and training, community relations, employee relations

Center State Media

AJ Sorenson
101 N Chestnut Street
Jefferson, Iowa 50129
515-989-1098
aj@centerstatemedia.com
<http://www.centerstatemedia.com>

Photography, copywriting, video production, graphic/web design

Cornfed Graphics

Jessica & Brandon Peters

21984 Beaumont Ave

Linden, Iowa 50146

641-757-1651

cornfedgraphics@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/cornfedgraphics>

Custom vinyl lettering, graphic design, designs for homes and businesses. Logos, lettering, store front advertising, signs and banners. Vehicle lettering, car decals, boat lettering, personalized tiles, gifts and more.

D Vision Inc

Dina Christensen

221 S 12th Street

Guthrie Center, Iowa 50115

515-201-9288

dina@dvisioninc.net

www.dvisioninc.net

Graphic design, commercial artist, digital illustrator, photographer

eDesign Studio inc

Emily Sheeder

3127 285th Street

Stuart, Iowa 50250

515-661-9622

info@edesignstudioinc.com

<http://www.edesignstudioinc.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/eDesignstudioinc>

Graphic design, web development, web design

Piper Sign Art LLC

Kathi Piper

2070 255th St.

Greenfield, IA 50849

641-743-8255

pipersignart@gmail.com

www.pipersignart.com

Signs including engraved, magnetic, political, real estate, storefront, vehicle graphics, banners. Branded marketing materials including business cards, brochures and other printed materials. Advertising specialties and promotional items such as pens, flash drives, mugs, scarves, fans, bags and more.

Queck-Matzie Writing, Graphic Design and Photography

Terri Queck-Matzie

520 4th Street

Fontanelle, Iowa 50846

515-201-0829

terri@queckmatzie.com

<http://www.queckmatzie.com>

Writing, graphic design, photography

Real Deals

Karla Kaufman

515-360-0146

karla_realdeals@yahoo.com

Advertising needs including but not limited to Rack Cards, Map, Tourism Book, Newsletters, Mailing Services.

Sorensen Studios

Bubba/Maria Sorensen

509 SE Kent Street

Greenfield, Iowa 50849

641-343-7110

sorensenstudios@yahoo.com

<http://www.sorensenstudios.us>

Photography (seasonal), mural painting

Thompson Communications

Susan Thompson

5150 Panorama Drive

Panora, IA 50216

641-755-4382

thomcomm@netins.net

Writing, editing, news releases, communications project management