Introduction for Faculty Colleagues

Strategic Communications Campaigns (COM 452) is a “capstone” course for majors intended to utilize previous course learning and skills to create a unified, multiplatform strategic communications plan for real corporate, nonprofit, association and/or government clients.

This is one of five individual assignments, along with five small team assignments, to prepare the students for the final project. In essence, each of these assignments are the building blocks they need to bring together to offer a comprehensive final strategic communications plan for a client at the end of the semester. Individually, each assignment is generating the content and will be revised multiple times to finally be packaged in the final project. And, students as can use these assignments as industry replicated evidence of learning to obtain internships and jobs in professional strategic communications environments.

The Assignment I Distribute to Students

COM 452 – Strategic Communications Campaigns
Foundation for Effective “On-Strategy” Tactics

Description and Purpose
This is one individual assignment that contains four deliverables. Although each deliverable may appear to be separate, they complement one another to address the considerations that will ultimately lead to effective messaging and message placement.

All four deliverables are grounded in your findings and insights from your “secondary research, implications and insights report” already completed. In this assignment, you will translate that data into industry communication tools that serve as the foundation for your future choices about what to say, to whom, when and where, so that it offers consumer value. This is the “bridgework” from the research that you have done → to → the strategy and tactics that you will do.
Remember, this is the building of your strategic foundation so that ultimately your tactics will speak to the right person, in the right place, at the right time, in the right way, to motivate the desired response.

**YOUR Deliverables**

(generally 1-2 pages each – be creative, utilize inspirational words and visuals) (while these deliverables augment each other, I usually approach the building of this platform in this order, but you may choose any order you wish):

1) The **Target Narrative/Profile/Collage** = a verbal and visual representation of the ideal target audience founded in segmentation commonalities of demographics, psychographics, behaviors, and brand usage.
2) The **Personal Media Network** (PMN) = the typical media consumption, or said differently, where the target receives their messages and how they process brands’ communications. *(visuals also help sell the deep meaning accompanying words).*
3) The **Brand Manifesto** = The mission, values, core principles, rational benefits, emotional benefits, and brand offerings that make the brand a perfect fit for the target’s lives to offer a true higher order value when the brand and person come together. *(visuals also help sell the deep meaning accompanying words).*
4) The **Creative Brief** = the short, inspirational, summation of all the above that the agency creative teams and the client will “need to know” to start to build brand strategy platforms to generate smart messaging, smart message delivery, and connective/impactful/meaningful activities to generate thoughts, beliefs, and actions to support/grow our client’s business.

When **assessing** all four deliverables in totality, your industry standard communications formats (deliverables) should:

1) Reflect the facts/data AND your original insights from your primary and secondary research to prepare the foundation to communicate them via tactics.
2) Creatively/visually provide context (vernacular, human interpretation of the marketing-speak and data already generated) to focus future tactical efforts to address who are we speaking to, what are their hopes, dreams, wants, fears, and barriers to receptivity to making this brand a part of their life. (i.e. “humanize the data, reveal the insights(s), set the foundation for your communications recommendation to solve problems and maximize opportunities).
3) Provide necessary information AND generate excitement needed to inspire the reader for future communications tactics that are “on strategy” and employ impactful-resonance with the target audience.
4) Analyze media consumption and processing, i.e. where and how does the target receive branded messages and what influences their thoughts, beliefs and actions in relation to making brand choices so
that we communicate in the right place and at the right time in our future tactics.

5) Free from grammatical and otherwise strategic communications deadly sins such as not capitalizing the clients name or misuse of industry appropriate terminology.

This assignment will be viewed through the lens of what is expected from a superior intern or junior employee in a professional strategic communications firm.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remarkable – Very Good</th>
<th>Good – Fair</th>
<th>Poor – Unacceptable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 9 8</td>
<td>7 6 5 4</td>
<td>3 2 1 0</td>
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The deliverables and thinking are advanced and reflects a remarkable intern or Jr. employee in a strategic communications firm. It is organized, displays critical thinking, uses industry appropriate terminology, is supported with facts and reasonable hypotheses, and provides inspirational, actionable direction for future activities. It shows skill in interpretation, synthesizing, and connections from research to strategy for “a-ha” insights. The author of this work would be considered an excellent/prepared intern or Jr. employee.

The information is good and answers the necessary questions posed in the purpose of the assignment. It provides quality information by may not be fully advanced to inspirational and critical thinking that will lead to great strategic communications strategies and tactics. This intern or Jr. employee would be viewed as good and worthy of promotion with some supervision/mentoring.

The assignment barely speaks to the needed elements or purpose of the assignment. The reader likely could have found this same information and drawn these same conclusions. It reads and feels disjointed and does not link to the bigger challenge of how to make this information actionable. It does not go in-depth into seeking insights that are usable for future strategic communications strategy and tactics development. The author would probably seen as very average or worse in an internship or as a Jr. employee.

**Future uses of these four deliverables you create in this assignment**

After each team member creates these communication tools, later your team will:

1) Synthesize these deliverables and form a consensus that directly serves as the grounding for your communications *messaging strategies and tactics* in Team Assignment #3.
2) Synthesize and form a consensus that directly serves as the grounding for your *media strategies and tactics* in Team Assignment #3.
3) Display these tools in the Final Client Presentation so the audience better understands the demographic and psychographic profile of needs and wants in the target audience to help them connect to your smart strategies and tactics. This will “contextualize” the target audience.
4) Communicate these tools in the Final Client Leave-behind as the foundation for the paid/earned/owned media choices your team made to deliver the messages.

**Resources for this assignment**

1) Lots of examples on Moodle of past students’ Ind. Assign #3 highlighting best practices for each of the deliverables.
2) Review class slides from W3C1 and W3C2 where we discussed each of these.
3) Review textbook readings from W3C1 and W3C2 for further detail.
4) And as always, review “comprehensive campaign” examples on Moodle to see how these will be used in the final write up and presentation to help guide you now.