

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY WORKSHEET QUESTIONNAIRE

Communications strategy worksheet asks for ten different levels of information. Here are guidelines that will help to assure that your worksheets are both complete and consistent. In all cases be as concise and specific as possible.

1. Marketing Objective.

Purpose: To assure that the communication fits into the larger subsidiary marketing plan. If possible, use the same terminology that appears in the marketing plan or other documents.

Major question to be answered. What is the business objective that the communications will help achieve?

Examples:

- Sell _____ products during a _____ month period.
- Introduce a product/application to a specific market.
- Reposition an existing product.
- Expand/hold share of a given market
- Upgrade the position in a selected market segment.
- Generate product trial by new users or retrial by lapsed users.

2. Communications Objective.

Purpose: To put the marketing objective into a communications context; into a goal that can be reasonably attained.

Major question to be answered. How can communication help achieve the marketing objective?

Examples:

- It will increase awareness.
- It will show/demonstrate applications.
- It will change bad perceptions - reinforce good ones.
- It will encourage/change uses.
- It will encourage stocking.
- It will provide basic/detailed information.
- It will provide sales leads.

3. Target Audience.

Purpose: To define as precisely as possible the typical buyers/users of the product.

Major questions to be answered. Who are the potential buyers/users and what are their motivating needs?

Examples:

- What are their job titles?
- What industries/professions do they work in?
- Is there a geographic concentration?
- Are buyers and users the same, or different?
- Can users be categorized by light use/heavy use?
- Do they have idiosyncrasies that need consideration?

4. Applications.

Purpose: To focus strategy on the most sales-productive applications by the targeted audience. Also to assure that everyone in the strategy planning/creative preparation cycle knows how the product is actually used.

Major questions to be answered: How is the product actually used? What are the steps taken by the typical user in everyday application?

Examples:

- List applications by priority.
- In which applications is the product unique?
- In which applications is there competition?
- Explain how the product is used in each application.

5. Customer Benefits.

Purpose: To identify the motivating reason(s) why a typical customer uses the product.

Major questions to be answered. How much better off is the user because of the product(s)?

In what ways?

Examples:

- What is the single most important benefit?

- What is the second most important benefit.?
- What other, less important benefits are there?
- State the benefit(s) in user terms.
- State the benefits as precisely as possible.
- How distinctive are the benefits vs. competition?
- Be objective and realistic.

6. Support For Benefits Claims.

Purpose: To provide the detail that will allow the product benefits to be communicated in a convincing way. Technical support for claims is essential for credibility.

Major questions to be answered. What are the specific product features that make the user benefits possible? What would you say if you had to convince a very skeptical customer of the truth of a benefit claim?

Examples:

- State facts, not opinions.
- Be precise, don't generalize.
- Use numbers or other easily-recognized criteria.
- Connect specific features to specific benefits.
- Use actual situations if necessary to illustrate.

7. Marketplace Considerations.

Purpose: To help develop and evaluate communications strategies, it is necessary to have background information on the local market conditions affecting the product.

Major question to be answered., What is our position in the market and how should that affect our communications planning?

Examples:

- Is the market growing or shrinking?
- Who is the direct/indirect competition?
- What are recent competitive activities?
- Is there a specific "window of opportunity?"

8. Presentation Considerations

Purpose: To assure that the strategy developed can be creatively implemented in the way that is appealing to the interests of our target customers.

Major questions to be answered. What do you feel is the best way to show/tell the audience the specific benefits of the product.?

Example:

- Should the copy be friendly or formal?
- Should we stress technology or applications?
- Should the product be shown in use?
- Should the end result be shown?

9. Media/List/Distribution Considerations.

Purpose: To obtain the local input necessary to assure that the strategy developed is appropriate.

Major question to be answered., What do you feel are the most efficient media to use to reach the target audience?

Examples:

- List your choices.
- Data to support these choices?
- Any media limitation (e. g.,color, frequency)?
- When do you feel the media should be used?
- What % of the target audience will be reached?
- Are there seasonal/geographic considerations?

10. The Single Thing/Fact/Feeling You Want Remembered.

Purpose: To summarize the need for the communication and to focus the strategy and later creative execution on the single most essential sales point.

Major question to be answered (one sentence only): If you could choose only one thing that a potential customer would remember, what would it be?