**American Chamber of Commerce Best Marketing Guidelines**

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce you to some of the best ways to plan, execute and evaluate a successful marketing campaign. The points below are not exhaustive; every company, industry and situtation is different. However the principles remain the same and the guidelines and checklists below are a good starting point.

By way of a brief introduction, the Marketing Committee spent much of this year debating how best to maximise marketing campaigns in a challenging economic climate. The hot topic was efficiency; how to make the most of your marketing budget, what new tools are available to marketers, and how to evaluate the campaign’s impact – essentially, how much bang did you get for your buck?

The chapter is split into four sections, a discussion and guidelines around each of the following:

1. Planning a marketing campaign
2. Tools available for you to use
3. Messaging and how to create a brand story
4. Evaluation and measurement

How to use this chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce you to the principles of creating and managing an efficient marketing campaign. Each section poses a series of questions, which we urge you to use as a starting point for developing your own marketing plan. The AmCham marketing committee is made up of passionate marketing professionals; as ever, if you need additional counsel, feel free to reach out to us and we’ll be happy to help.

**INTRODUCTION**

When marketing your products, you need to create a successful mix of what we call the 4 P‘s:

* the right Product
* sold at the right Price
* in the right Place
* using the most suitable Promotion.

To create the right marketing mix, businesses have to meet the following conditions:

* The product has to have the right features - for example, it must look good and work well.
* The price must be right. Consumer will need to buy in large numbers to produce a healthy profit.
* The goods must be in the right place at the right time. Making sure that the goods arrive when and where they are wanted is an important operation.
* The target group needs to be made aware of the existence and availability of the product through promotion. Successful promotion helps a company to spread costs over a larger output.

**PLANNING**

They say that success is where preparation and opportunity meet. You are going to need both to think like an effective marketer. This means developing an intuitive understanding of market trends, fostering the ability to ‚think‘ like a consumer, and honing a talent for telling your brand story.

This is no easy task. Luckily there are some key questions you can address at the beginning that will help you stay one step ahead of the curve. Ask yourself the following questions:

* Setting objectives

Do I want to generate leads, sell something or a combination of both? Determine what you want by creating specific marketing objectives. Be realistic about what you want to achieve and understand that marketing for the sake of marketing should be avoided. Smart objectives are linked directly to a business need.

* Defining marketing strategy

Once you have a clear idea of objectives, you must then define how best to reach your target audience. Be ruthless in choosing media channels. A press release might generate a few articles or interviews, but if your target audience doesn’t read that publication, then your efforts are wasted. Similarly, broadcast media such as TV and radio are a good way to reach a wide audience, though perhaps you would be better off spending budget targeting specific demographics on facebook or LinkedIn for a fraction of the cost. Be honest; have an idea of what you are willing to pay per exposure to reach your market via your chosen media channel and do some research so that you don’t overpay for media that won’t generate a positive return on your marketing campaign.

* Understanding your target audience

Who is going to buy my product or service for the price that will give me my expected profit, market share or position on the market. Do I know exactly who they are, how they behave, what they need and how they communicate? What language do they use when they speak about your products / services? As importantly – is what you say to your target audience understandable and desirable. Are you speaking in a tone of voice that appeals to them?

* Understanding the external environment

Key to creating a unique and memorable marketing camaign is an understanding of the playing field. There is no point going to market with a product that is directly comparable to a competitors. More than that, you must understand who are the stakeholders affecting your business? Who are your main competitors, what similar products or services are available on the market? How do your competitors behave? How much money do they make by selling my type of product or service?

**TOOLS**

Choose the right tool for the job. You know who your audience are, you have an idea of what you want to say; but how are you going to promote it? What channels will you use to bring your product to market? There are plenty of options out there; it’s your task to choose the promotional mix that most fits your objectives and budget.

Promotion represents all the methods of communication that a marketer may use to provide information to different parties about the product. Promotion comprises elements such as advertising, public relations, personal selling and sales promotion.

* **Advertising** covers any communication that is paid for, from cinema commercials, radio and Internet advertisements through print media and billboards.
* **Public relations** is where the communication is not directly paid for and includes press releases, sponsorship deals, exhibitions, conferences, seminars or trade fairs and events.
* **Word-of-mouth** is any apparently informal communication about the product by ordinary individuals, satisfied customers or people specifically engaged to create word of mouth momentum.
* **Sales staff** often plays an important role in word of mouth and public relations.

Convergence of media is changing the way that many companies promote their products and services. Increasing smart phone penetration and access to high-speed internet allows us to integrate campaigns like never before, achieving cross-platform messaging; a campaign that runs in print, TV, through digital channels and mobile handsets. You shouldn’t ignore the importance of tying in a strong digital campaign to traditional ATL (advertising) and BTL (sales promotion) activities.

A few questions to ask yourselves:

* Direct communication

What are the “friction points” when your company meets the client? Who communicates with your client? What’s your client feedback to your direct communication? What tone and messages do you use when you communicate directly with your clients? What instruments do you use to boost client loyalty, such as event management etc? Do you know what works for you? Do you know what´s your position on the market, and what are your clients thinking about you / your products / services / offering…?

* Digital communication

Is your website an efficient and useful business card for your company? What is your conversion rate (the number of people landing on your web who do what you want them to do – register, buy)? Do you have a regular newsletter that is short, clear and highly useful for your customers? Have you invested in Search Engine Optimisation to increase your ranking on google and other search engines? Is your wesbite optimised for mobile and tablet devices?

* Media Relations

Do you know the right media? Do you know journalists covering your sector by their first names? Do you build your company visibility on trust and close personal realtions, or are you expecting the media to come to you when you think you have something to say? Do you have the right people for media relations and are they properly trained? Do you understand PR’s role in your marketing campaign?

* Digital Communications

Does your social media strategy tie in to your overall communications strategy or are you just out there to tick a box? How do you measure your social media communication results? Are you measuring the right things? Do you have the right people on the job? Why should your intern be in charge of one of the most powerful communications tools around? Do you know what you should be posting, how frequently and what does that say about your company?Are you stuck on facebook – there are so many more tools out there that might fit your business objectives better.

**MESSAGING**

You can always tell good messaging from bad, because you will remember good messages positively for a long period of time. The anatomy of a message is simple: it is relevant to me, it is something I want to hear, and it is memorable. Companies that can develop a set (or sets) of messaging that delivers across this are likely to steal a march on competitors.

Key messages are clear, concise, bite-sized chunks of information that may stand alone, but are more likely to be used to develop other materials such as advertising copy, speeches, press releases and social media dialogue. They are easy to say and – more importantly – easy for the audience to understand and remember. Key messages are not your only messages, merely the most important.

There are various ways to build your company’s key messages depending on whether it is a brand promise or a corporate communication. A simple way of doing it as follows:

* Sometimes, key messages are handed down by head office – in those cases, take the guidance and apply necessary elaboration / localisation, tweaking where necessary.
* To prepare key messages from scratch, begin by identifying all the points that you want to get across to the audience, then focus in on the most important points.
* Keep in mind that you will likely have to develop sets of key messages depending on your target audience. Don’t be afraid to draft up 5 or 6 different sets depending on where the messages will be used and to whom they are directed.
* Refine the messages, remove any business language or jargon, make them brief. Would the key message fit on a T-shirt or a car sticker? If not, it’s too complicated – shorten or simplify it.
* Generally, have no more than three key messages per audience.
* Begin with a premise statement. This is the key message.
  + Make sure the key message is in the active voice – no passive!
  + It should be positive – what you can do, not what you can’t do.
* Develop a few supporting points, statistics or quotes to back up the message.
* Come up with some good examples that bring the key message to life – the more visual, the better. Tell a story that helps the audience empathize.
* To test the messages, try them out on someone unfamiliar with the topic – someone from another division, a family member, a teenager. If that person has difficulty understanding, refine the message until it can be understood

**MEASUREMENT**

Whatever gets measured gets managed. If you are not tracking the effectiveness of your marketing, you will be unable to replicate successes or avoid mistakes in the future. Below are some tips and hints to ensure you are tracking the right type of information, and evaluating it effectively.

Firstly, what are we measuring? Measurement metrics should directly relate to your campaign objectives which in turn should relate to a clear business goal. In most cases, brands will develop a campaign to generate sales and increase brand awareness.

In this case, you should be looking to measure:

1. Sales and profit generated by the campaign vs the cost of the campaign.
2. Brand awareness after the campaign vs before the campaign.

You must ask yourself; do I have the right systems (processes and software) and people in place to track, measure and evaluate the success of your campaign?

Measurement is not an after-thought – it is as important as the successul execution of the campaign, so you should set aside an appropriate level of budget for set-up, monitoring and analysis. There are various tools available to marketers, some of which are listed below. Clearly the goal is to aggregate the results of your campaign into a set of learnings - what worked well and should be repeated, and what didn’t work so well and should be avoided in the future.

* Measurement checklist

Make sure you have clear marketing goals. You might want to boost business overall, but your objective should be more specific: to increase sales of a new product or service, to build awareness of your company, to spur volume during a certain time period, or to expand your business in a particular market. Tailor your evaluation methods to your goals.

To assess the effectiveness of your campaign, you can monitor sales, new customers, requests for information, phone inquiries, retail store traffic, website traffic, or click-through rates. Consider using these tactics to gauge the power of your marketing efforts:

* A simple way to tell if your advertising is working is to track retail. Don't forget to monitor traffic before you start the campaign, so you'll have a basis for comparison. And ask new customers how they heard about your business.
* Compare sales before, during, and after the campaign. Keep in mind that marketing activities often have a cumulative or delayed effect, so ad-driven sales may not materialize immediately.
* If advertising, include a unique coupon or code that customers can redeem for a discount or gift.
* Offer an incentive for customers to tell you they're responding to your communications, for instance: "Mention this trade event flyer and get a 10 percent discount on your first order.” Put it on your website or in the newspaper, or use it as part of an ad on TV or radio. It’s an easy way to know where customers are finding out about you.
* Compare pre- and post-campaign traffic on your website. Your web host logs the hits on your site and should be able to provide you with daily, weekly, or monthly reports – if in doubt, ask an IT expert to hook you up with google analytics.

External measurement tools available for marketers:

* Digital Media

Sprout Social – a social media management tool that allows you to monitor your brand and manage conversations from one platform, publish updates across channels, manage teams and measure efforts with analytics.

Radian6 – a tool owned by Sales Force which enables organisations to become socially engaged enterprises, with the power to understand and gain insights about social media through metrics, measurement, sentiment and analytics reporting.

* Public Relations

Measurement of public relations campaigns has long been a hot topic. For basic monitoring of media coverage achieved, marketers can use a monitoring service that will track mentions of your company in print, broadcast, radio and online media. It is best if you ask your PR agency to incorporate sentiment testing before, during and after a PR campaign.

Newton media - delivers news digests of print, radio, television, internet and agency news. Newton monitors current events, advertising, and social networks in order to provide clients with valuable information and high quality documentation for strategic planning or the creation of marketing campaigns.

* Advertising

Before any ads go to market, they should have been tested and evaluated in a series of panels (both quantitative and qualitative), which will deliver recommendations based on how effectively the ad will deliver the desired message to the correct target audience. Media companies are experts at giving sales predictions based on advertising spend; as in, you spend X, you will increase sales by Y%. Work with a research agency to evaluate the advertising copy, and an advertising agency who can help you fine tune the ad to maximise its effect.