**Integrated Marketing Communications Plan Outline**

1. **Executive Summary**

The executive summary is an important piece to your IMC Plan. Often, CEO’s will not take the time to read all of the details of the plan, so this particular part of the plan should be a one page summary of the goals, execution plan, and potential results.

1. **Marketing Communications Objectives**

The marketing communications objectives set the tone for the whole plan. They should be specific, measurable, and used throughout the rest of plan so that all of the tools are aligned to enhance the overall goals.

The Marketing Communications objectives should also be bereft of any mention of raising sales. Instead, they should be focused on actual communication objectives, such as “increase web traffic by 20%,” or “reach 15% of the target market in the first month.”

1. **Situation Analysis**

The situation analysis is the point in the document where you should discuss the initial research findings that will guide your recommendations. Only relevant information should be displayed in this area, as you will need to invoke it, when discussing the actions that need to be taken to accomplish the marketing communications objectives.

You will also want to identify your stakeholders, target audiences, discuss geographic considerations, seasonality, the competition, the creative strategy of the competition, and perform a SWOT analysis.

1. **Research**

This section should clearly articulate the research tools, mediums, and points of emphasis for the campaign. This is not only about past research, but on-going research that can be used to help with the evaluation of the campaign.

An important question to ask is, “how do we plan to review the changing perception of the brand and product”?

1. **IMC Campaign Strategy**

Outline the overall strategy and how/why it should be effective to accomplish the marketing communications objectives. Discuss how you intend to message the stakeholders and target audiences and why it makes sense to do so in the manner you have selected.

This section should also help you identify why key stakeholders will act favorably or unfavorably to messaging, identify potential challenges, have a market segmentation strategy, rationale for the recommendations, and fully develop the creative strategy statement.

1. **Creative Brief**

The creative brief is a document all on its own, often used in advertising to develop an ad plan. The Big Idea of the creative should be discussed, and the logo and tagline should be developed in this section.

It is often a good idea to reiterate the overall communications objectives and more clearly define communications objectives that will support the main objectives.

Also write out the actual features and benefits of the product or service, as this will help develop the message and points of differentiation from the competition. The brief should then tell strategy of the creative, give tone and include a supporting statement of the big idea.

1. **Advertising**

Tell the reader what mediums will be used for each target audience, the objectives, the media plan, and timing of the communications. Additionally, each of the mediums will need to have rough scripts, tone, colors, and artwork conveyed.

1. **Direct Response Email**

Talk about the objectives and execution strategy of emails. Also, the reader should understand where the email lists will come from, what the call to action will be, and how often the emails will go out. If testing will be performed, explain what will be tested and how that testing may affect the email message and delivery.

1. **Public Relations**

Every company has a public relations message, whether they know it or not so the IMC Plan should have a strategy associated with this particular communications vehicle.

1. **New Media**

New media is growing and must be developed to reach consumers where they are networking. Blogs, Vlogs, Podcasting, Mobile Marketing, Display Ads, and Social Networks can all be strategically used to help you accomplish communications objectives, but the plan must identify how.

1. **Consumer Promotions**

Consumer promotions can generate engagement, but a discussion about what fits with the big idea and the brand message should be performed. What are the objectives, how will it be measured, and will you do a sweepstake event, or contest? Also, another media discussion should be opened, as promotions can happen in stores, online, at experiential events, and on the phone.

1. **Budget**

The budget is quite important, as the details of how and when the money will be spent need to be understood so that the reader can know where the money is going. A suggestion is to develop a spreadsheet by month by medium and time (month, week, quarter) that will allow for dollar placement in each specific cell to make it easy for the reader to understand the complete picture.

1. **Measurement and Evaluation**

All of the measurement and evaluative tools must be explained. Once again, develop objectives. What specifically will be used to measure and evaluate the effectiveness can be spelled out, specifically. Questionnaires, word of mouth measurement, focus groups are all good options, but which will work for your product/company will have to be identified.

It is smart to look at each recommendation and set an evaluation plan for it. The process should be repeated for advertising, sales promotions, etc. An overall measurement and evaluation plan is not acceptable in a fully developed professional plan. Specifics about each medium need to undergo extensive analysis for an on-going review of each tactic as its own entity.

1. **Appendices – (Communication Chart, Media Plan, Online Plan, Etc.)**

Appendices are optional, but placement of charts, artwork, and spreadsheets can clutter the plan.

1. **References**
2. **Footnotes**