Media Planning Guide

Successful media planning is about getting the right message in front of the right person at the right time to generate a particular response, all while keeping within your budget. Simple enough, right? Yet even with the multitude of digital and traditional advertising options, there are a few fundamental steps you can take to make sure your media efforts are as successful as possible. This media buying guide is designed to provide you with a strategic framework to shape your media plan.

**Step One: Targeting**

1. Every successful media campaign begins with selecting your audience. Are they students, alumni, faculty and staff? Identify your target market, research their behavior and media consumption habits.

**Step Two: Identify Media Channels**

2. What are the best ways to reach my audience? Determine what options are available in your area. With traditional mass media, that may be broadcast, print, out-of-home, direct mail or radio. Online options may include banner ads, Facebook and other social ads, Pandora, Hulu or streaming video. Develop an understanding of the size and reach of your audience and how they use different media options.

**Step Three: Geography**

3. Identify the geographic footprint you want to cover and identify any new areas for growth. Do you need to reach people on campus? The town you’re located? Or are they coming from other areas?

**Step Four: Scheduling**

4. Know what days and times your message is most likely to connect with your audience. Are you looking for long-term, continual messaging, a flight right before an event, or a mix of the two strategies? Understand what scheduling options are available within each channel, and determine the level of frequency needed to achieve your objectives.
Step Five: Delivery

Define a strategy that aligns with your budget and that will help accomplish your objectives. Then place your media buy and develop your creative materials.

Types of Media

**Traditional** – Although a greater and greater percentage of overall media spending is going towards digital, traditional media can still be an effective option depending on your location, audience and goals. Options include:

- Television – Local or cable TV advertising is a broad, impactful option that builds awareness quickly. However, it can be more expensive (though not always as expensive as you’d think), and is increasingly being bypassed with changing TV-viewing habits.

- Radio – Local radio can be great for building a local presence, there’s low barrier to entry, and is often good for frequency of message. However, it’s often a background, non-intrusive medium, there’s no visual exposure, and can be expensive depending on coverage goals.

- Newspaper – Newspapers are often still a key source of information in some markets, may provide unique targeting options (e.g. by zone or inserts) and may have high levels of engagement. However, readership rates among younger consumers is very low, there’s a short shelf life, and they can be ad clutter.

- Magazine/Guides – Magazines, regional guides or other publications can be selected based on their audience’s demographics, location and lifestyle, they have a long shelf-life and are often high quality. However, they often have a limited reach, higher cost and long lead times.

- Out-of-Home (Outdoor/Transit): Billboards, transit, and other outdoor option have a broad reach, can build frequency of message and locations can be strategically targeted. However, you may have limitation on copy, they’re a passive form of media, and often have out-of-pocket production costs.

- Direct Mail – Direct mail can be highly targeted, easy to track depending on the call to action, and informative compared to other advertisements. However, it can be costly to acquire lists, print and ship, and may be seen as ‘junk mail’ by some consumers.
Digital – Digital advertising – which includes search, display, social media, online video, Internet radio and more – will account for more than 30 percent of all ad spending in 2016. More than a third of Chief Marketing Officers indicate digital will account for 75 percent or more of their marketing budget by 2020. Ad can be targeted based on geography, demographics, context, or behavior. Numerous targeted digital advertising options are available and include:

- Search - Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is the practice of paying for media to run on a search engine like Google when certain keywords are searched. It is a cost-per-click system based on a bid model, where one’s bid and relevancy to the search term determines if your ad is displayed.
- Banner Ads – Use display networks and ad exchanges to place your banner ad in front of target audiences. You can use a variety or combination of targeting methods and use remarketing to serve ads to those who have previously visited your site.
- Video – Video ads via Youtube or other streaming services a powerful engagement option to connect with your audience. Ads can be any length you choose.
- Social Media – Connect with consumers using social media’s unique set of user-generated targeting methods. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram (through Facebook), offer advertising options.
- Streaming Radio – Whether you’re using Pandora, Spotify or another streaming music service, Internet radio offers advanced targeting, and robust analytics to help you connect with your target.