

Public Relations Strategic Planning Model

Format: 12-pt., Times New Roman, single-spaced, professional report style (e.g., white paper) with a cover page, table of contents, and executive summary. *Total pages will vary, but approx. 15-20 pages – not necessarily of full text - is a good estimate.*

1. **COVER PAGE, TABLE OF CONTENTS, EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** (1 page each)
2. **BACKGROUNDER:** Description of the client organization, mission, and key players (Approx. 1 page w/bullets)
3. **BUSINESS GOAL(S):** What is the ultimate goal of the organization for which the campaign is being developed? (Approx. 1-2 paragraphs w/bullets)
 - A. Sell cars and satisfy shareholders...
 - B. Provide quality health services to low income people...
 - C. Successfully get candidate X elected to position Y...
4. **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM OR OPPORTUNITY:** Background (secondary research) and a “social media audit” or analysis of existing communication strategies and tools will help you better understand the situation.

Why is this campaign being contemplated? What problems or opportunities exist in the environment? This statement provides enough information for the uninformed reader to get a sense of the challenge. What is the aim of the campaign? (Approx. 1 page)

5. **RESEARCH METHODS:** (Approx. 1-2 pages)
 - A. **Research Goals (required):** What research (primary or secondary) needs to be conducted in to better understand the rationale for the campaign? You don't necessarily need to complete this research, but you should demonstrate to the professor and the client that you are making strategic, research-backed efforts at proposing the campaign. For example:
 - i. Identify key audiences and/or audience segments who use communication platforms XYZ, purchase ABC products, like/dislike Z
 - ii. To assess stakeholder attitudes and perceptions toward X, Y, Z
 - B. **Secondary Research (required):** In addition to gaining an understanding of the client's current use of social media (social media audit), you'll want to refer to outside academic and popular press resources to build support for your campaign proposal.
 - i. You should have a **minimum of 5** reliable citations, written in APA Style.
 - ii. The reference page can be included at the end of the proposal document.

- C. **Primary Research:** Although it is **not required**, you may engage in primary research (research you conduct yourself)– for example, an interview with an opinion leader or surveys of audience members who have the potential to be impacted by the campaign. You can include results in the form of direct quotes and/or the presentation of data in tables, charts, or graphs.
6. **SITUATION ANALYSIS:** What has the research and other forms of input taught us in terms of internal and external factors affecting the client organization? Consider competitor SWOTS analyses, comparison, and implications. Use SWOTS format. *(Approx. 1-2 pages)*
- A. **Strengths:** Strengths, characteristics, and ethical considerations *internal* to the organization that could help achieve goals
 - B. **Weaknesses:** Weaknesses, characteristics, and ethical considerations *internal* to the organization that could work against achieving goals
 - C. **Opportunities:** Trends, factors, and ethical considerations *external* to the organization that could work to the organization’s advantage if properly handled
 - D. **Threats:** Trends, factors, and ethical considerations *external* to the organization that could work to the organization’s disadvantage
 - E. **Strategic Implications:** What major conclusions and insights can be drawn from the previous SWOT sections? How will this affect the overall campaign? Do ethical considerations affect strategic options?
7. **COMMUNICATION GOALS:** How will the business goal(s) (see above) be achieved with strategic communication using social media? The overall, highest-level general communication-based outcome(s) to be achieved *(Approx. 1 page: presented w/bullets containing 1-2 lines of rationale/explanation)*
- A. Convince target voters that the candidate’s credentials are the best for the position...
 - B. Enhance the reputation of organization X...
 - C. Communicate the CSR values of organization Y...
 - D. Protect the brand image of Z...
 - E. Engage stakeholders online...
8. **OBJECTIVES:** Clear, realistic, and measurable statements emerging from the communication goals. SMART objectives tell us specifically how to attain that goal and solve the problem.

Does your research tell you that there are issues with awareness (informational), attitudes (motivational), or actions (behavioral) or a combination of these? Informational objectives seek to make the audience AWARE of something. Motivational objectives seek to change audience ATTITUDES toward something. And, behavioral objectives seek to change audience BEHAVIORS toward something. If the audience is unaware of your company, then they cannot have an attitude or behavior to it. If the audience is aware, but has a negative attitude toward your

company, then the resultant behavior (e.g., not purchasing your company's product) is also not desirable. These may occur to varying extents over periods of time among different stakeholder groups (e.g., some are aware and demonstrate supportive attitudes; some are aware and demonstrate non-supportive attitudes). *(Approx. 1-2 pages)*

- A. **Informational:** To increase the percentage of employees **who know** about event X through stories in the company newsletter and intranet [outputs] from Y% [based on existing research or environmental scanning] to Z% [outcome] by January 1 [target date].
 - B. **Motivational:** To increase the percentage of senior management **who think** that event X is important to the company's long-term goals through direct interaction at board and senior management meetings [outputs] from Y% [based on formal pre-campaign research] to Z% [outcome] by January 30 [target date].
 - C. **Behavioral:** To increase the percentage of employees **who attend** event X through an internal campaign [output] from Y% to Z% [outcome] by January 30 [target date].
9. **KEY STAKEHOLDERS:** Those specific, narrowly defined groups having a role or interest (positive or negative) in goals. In other words, those individuals who are impacted or have the potential to be impacted by the campaign. *(Approx. 1-2 pages: presented w/bullets containing 1-2 lines of rationale/explanation)*
- A. Demographics and psychographics
 - B. PLEASE NOTE:
 - i. The "general public" is never a stakeholder
 - ii. Always identify key opinion leaders, influencers, third party trendsetters, etc.
 - C. For example:
 - i. Female voters, ages 24-35
 - ii. Social media followers of company XYZ
 - iii. Volunteers of nonprofit ABC
 - iv. Local contributors to cause ABC
 - v. Professional association members of XYZ
 - D. Depending on the situation, **be as specific as possible** in defining each audience in terms of such criteria as:
 - i. Unique needs, interests, etc.
 - ii. Geographic location
 - iii. Roles/positions
 - iv. Education levels
 - v. Income, etc.
10. **KEY MESSAGES:** Specific points that are of relevance to both your organization and the key stakeholders to which they are to be communicated. Think advertising/marketing messages, when appropriate. **Organize and break them down by audience.** For each stakeholder, there may be different messages aimed at the same business goal. For

example, consider how you would approach “wear your seatbelt” among new teenage drivers versus parents of young children. (*Approx. 1-2 pages: presented w/bullets containing 1-2 lines of rationale/explanation and organized by audience*)

- A. Company Y is the leading professional organization in area X
- B. Joining Y will offer exclusive benefits and opportunities
- C. Purchasing from X saves you money
- D. “Just Do It” (NIKE); “Think Different” (APPLE); “The ultimate driving machine.” (BMW)

11. **STRATEGIES:** Broad, umbrella statements about the categories or overall scope of activity to be undertaken. (*Approx. 1 page: presented w/bullets containing 1-2 lines of rationale/explanation*)

- A. Aggressive media relations
- B. Grassroots campaign targeting UCF undergraduate students
- C. Series of high visibility social media memes with viral potential
- D. Engage local professionals

12. **TACTICS:** Very specific action steps to be undertaken within those strategies; provide as much detail as needed to explain to a semi-informed reader (*As many pages as is necessary*).

- A. Reach out to bloggers...
- B. Create video content...
- C. Send social media release to local media...
- D. Create Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/etc. posts....
- E. Note: “Social media” generally falls within the tactics. It is not a goal or objective because these are higher-order outcomes the organization hopes to achieve through tactics such as social media use.

13. **EVALUATION:** Exactly how would you measure your campaign proposal’s success? If the client were to hire you to execute this campaign, how will he/she know if goals and objectives have been reached? If the campaign was a success? (*Approx. 1-2 pages*)

- A. Pre- and post- research
- B. Sales
- C. Awareness/Acceptance/Action (info/motivation/behavior)
- D. Social media analytics
- E. Message content sentiment
- F. Gross readership, clips
- G. Achievement of measurable objectives
- H. Unexpected results
- I. **Future campaign recommendations (required):** What would you pose additionally now that you know what you know?

SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMPLES: This section is **not required**, but may be broken down into Appendix 1, Appendix 2, etc. and referenced throughout the campaign proposal document. You may include whatever you like in proposal appendices, but supplementary examples are most commonly found here.

- A. For example, a tactic may be “Instagram posts that feature individuals who have been helped by the organization (See Appendix 1 for examples).”
 - a. In this case, you might create supplementary examples (Instagram posts) to showcase your proposed idea.
- B. Tables, charts, graphs, images, references, examples, supplementary materials, etc.
- C. Including supplementary examples is also a great way to:
 - a. Provide a “value-added” component to your campaign proposal (“...look at what you’ll get with my campaign”)
 - b. Create additional portfolio materials for reference at interviews