THEMFA GUIDE

Everything you need to know about the media agency industry.
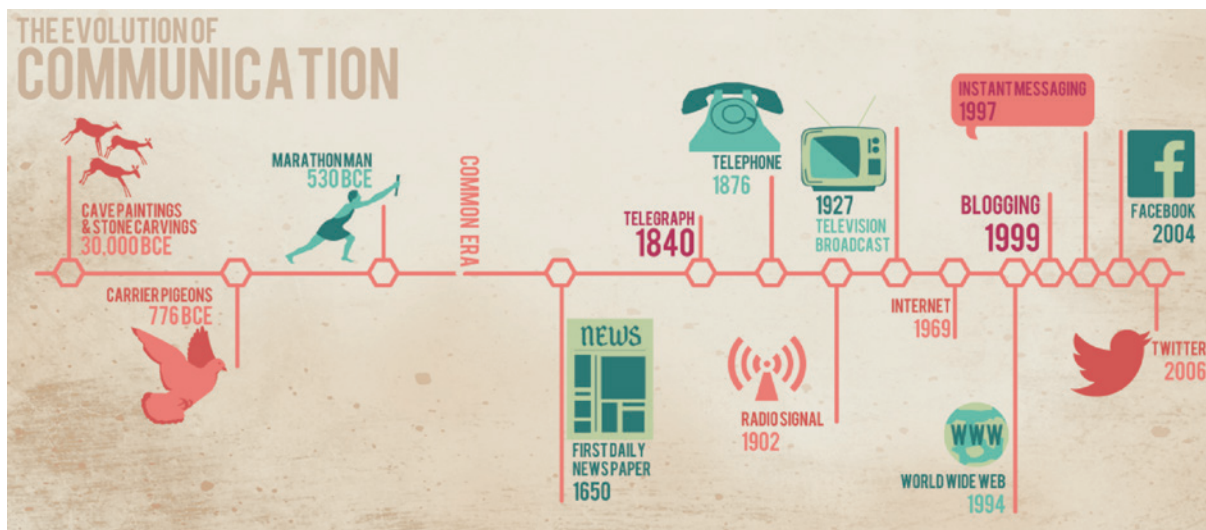
2.

PROCESS

Everything you need to know about the media agency industry.

Overview

Media communication is an effective contributor to the growth of any business because it can change and drive consumer behaviour.

In the past, advertisers could build SCALE rapidly, even in a single channel. Now, no single communication channel retains that scale in its own right so the ability to deliver mass reach is compounded. FRAGMENTATION makes it hard to deliver an audience at SCALE.

Today, people are more connected than they have ever been before. Leaps in technology have always led to new ways to communicate and interact, but the rate of technology change in recent times now means an individual has an abundance of communication touchpoints open to them. This, however, leads to greater distraction – which means the opportunity to capture consumers' attention is fleeting.


Cycle of disruption has escalated

An optimum mix of complementary media channels needs to be strategically planned to REPLICATE SCALE. Effective communication planning needs to build an audience, not by mass reach "shotgun" tactics but by a one-by-one approach achieved through "sniper-like" targeting strategies.

How we think about media channels has also evolved.

PAID channels remain an important part of a communications mix as they deliver effective reach. With businesses realising the greater communication value of their owned assets, the use of **OWNED** and **EARNED** channels are growing. The consumers themselves are becoming the "channel" by engaging and **SHARING** content. They are also on the rise as they prove to be powerful, authentic ways for brands to connect with consumers.

Communication planning needs to ensure that Paid/Earned/Shared/Owned strategies are complementary to one another so that the sum of the parts delivers a greater return.
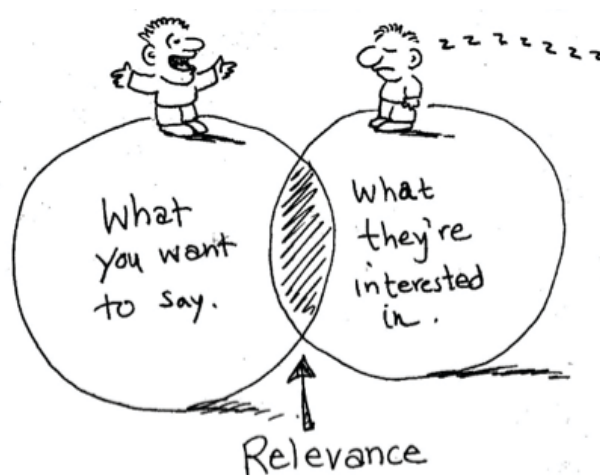
The communication landscape may seem more challenging than before, but the discipline and principles of media planning can, in fact, turn these challenges into opportunities. The best planning creates a roadmap to navigate communication touchpoints to bring brand, consumer and message together.

As Jonathan Perelman, formerly of Buzzfeed, said:

"Content is king but distribution is queen. And she wears the pants."

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Steps

1. BRIEFING

The advertiser/client provides a brief that defines the business problem/objectives that marketing communications is to solve/achieve. That brief contains vital information, knowledge and expectations for the client's brand/product /service for effective communication planning.

2. DEVELOPING A MEDIA STRATEGY

To implement an effective campaign, a high-level communications roadmap is required that accounts for Paid, Earned, Shared and Owned Media to deliver the right message to a Target Audience in the right context. The process for developing a strategy involves:

- Understanding **WHY THE CLIENT IS ADVERTISING**, as defined by the desired **BUSINESS & COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVE(s)** and challenges.

- Identifying and understanding the **TARGET AUDIENCE**.

- Developing relevant **INSIGHTS** that connect **CONSUMER & BRAND**, as well as identifying cultural / environmental zeitgeist that drives or changes behaviour.

- Assessing the full spectrum of Media **CHANNELS** available to a client:

  - **PAID MEDIA** – communication channels where third parties are paid to distribute client/advertiser communications to determine the OPTIMUM CHANNEL USE that connects consumer and brand;

  - **EARNED MEDIA** – communication channels where consumers/ third parties share and distribute client/advertiser communications (e.g. PR, Social);

  - **SHARED MEDIA** – refers to user-generated content and social media, such as the participation and interaction with content by consumers on social sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, etc. Think about how Paid and Owned content influences Shared media and Shared media influences Earned media.

  - **OWNED MEDIA** – communication channels that are controlled and owned by the client/advertiser *(e.g. Website, Social platforms, database (loyalty programs, e-commerce and eDM), Packaging, In-Store).*

  - Agreeing the channel role, its objectives and the METRICS against Business Objectives.

3. IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

Identifies and plans the most effective way of using each media channel based on delivering against planned channel objectives and metrics.

PROCESS

4. MEDIA BUYING & NEGOTIATING

Undertakes negotiation of the most competitive rate, relevant positioning, and added value for each medium and then books that negotiated activity with the selected supplier.

5. IN-CAMPAIGN MONITORING

Monitors performance against metrics while campaign is live, and implements counter-measures to address underperforming placements and (where possible) upweighting over-performing media to maximise measurable return.

6. POST-MONITORING

Monitors performance against metrics while campaign is live, and implements counter-measures to address underperforming placements and (where possible) upweighting over-performing media to maximise measurable return.

7. INVOICING

Generating financial invoices for all booked media activity.

The Brief

To ensure that the media agency can meet the expectations of the client, they must have a clear **understanding of the reason behind the campaign and what they expect to achieve as a result.**

This makes the Brief the single most important piece of documentation in the Communications Planning Process.

The process of effective briefing would usually involve the client presenting their brief to the agency, along with any other key business partners. The brief is usually accepted by the agency's Group Manager and/or Strategic Planner.

The client needs to consider the amount of effort required to adequately respond to this brief and allow the agency sufficient time to review the brief, ask further questions and ultimately respond with a communication solution that best meets their needs.

To provide the most comprehensive brief possible, sometimes a client may need an agency to input to the brief before it's formally presented. Usually that input is data that the media agency can access – e.g. an analysis of competitive media activity, identification of key target audiences etc.

In an ideal scenario, the Client will invest sufficient time in preparing information that the agency will use to conduct their role effectively. Occasionally, the process of briefing can be impacted when an advertiser is faced with a challenge that needs to be addressed immediately and they need to get into the market as soon as possible. Best practice actually has an agency responding to any client brief with their own reverse brief so as to ensure they have interpreted what has been asked of them correctly.

Stephen King – who founded the planning department at J. Walter Thompson back in 1968 – determined key questions for The Advertising Planning Cycle that can form the basis of a thorough brief:

1. Where are we now? *i.e. Background/Current Situation*

2. Where do we want to be? *i.e. Business Objectives*

3. What are we doing to get there? *i.e. Communication Objectives*

4. Who do we need to talk to? *i.e. Target Audience*

5. How will we know when we have arrived? *i.e. Measurement of Results*

Based on the previous page, **THE BRIEF** should comprise the following:

Background

An overview of the whole Business and its imperatives as well as rich information on the Category, Brand & Product, recent performance and market dynamics. **Ideally insights should be shared around:**

- **Category definition:** Competitive brands and competition from related product classes
- **Shares, sales, volume:** category/brand/competitor trends
- **Interest level, high/ low:** i.e. fashion or cars versus detergents
- **Responsiveness to advertising**
- **Purchase cycle:** users/ heavy users
- **Life cycle stage for brand:** i.e. new, mature, extension
- **Awareness/attitude information:** loyalty, negativity etc
- **Market expansion opportunities:** category penetration, frequency of use, new volume opportunity

Competitive Advertising Patterns

Understanding what the competition does in the market, from a media perspective as well as a creative perspective. Information such as where, when, how and what the competitors are advertising, who they are targeting with their communication and what they are trying to achieve. The detail of expenditure by medium, seasonality, program and title selection and the amount of effort they are placing in the media with their brand / product assists in identifying these patterns of behaviour.

Geographic Distribution & Sales Profile

Understanding the needs of different geographic locations given the variables:
- Product distribution, sales, advertising
- National versus local support priority and requirements
- Data and trends for category/brand/competition in terms of sales volume, sales factors and market potential
- Market costs of advertising versus potential

Business Objectives

Information on measurable objectives, such as volume sales, share of market, profitability etc.

Source of Business

A client will already hold a lot of data on their current customers and insights around these available customer profiles can be the basis of clearly identified further growth strategies that deliver against Business Objectives and determine Communication Objectives.

For example, identifying and profiling current brand users can lead to strategy that:
- gets current users to increase frequency of use
- determines need to change the customer profile and appeal to a different target group
- attracts customers from competitive brands
- expands the category

Key Learnings

Information from previous activity that can be of benefit. What is driving the business, what has worked/not worked and reasons why.

Communication Objectives

Clarity provided on the Business challenges that Marketing Communications is to address and **what the client is trying to accomplish through communications.**

Communication Objectives may include:
- stimulate product/service trial
- increase awareness
- grow share or position in the market
- launch a new brand
- improve image or reputation
- elicit direct response etc

Target Audience

Client view on who communications are to speak to, usually identified by segment opportunities like:
- **DEMOGRAPHY** – age/sex/income/education/employment/ethnicity
- **PSYCHOLOGY** – lifestyle/outlook/interest/motivations
- **GEOGRAPHY** – state/metro/rural/franchise area
- **BEHAVIOUR** – online/payment
- **PURCHASE INFLUENCE / DECISION** –purchaser versus end user evaluation

At times, a brief may ask for the agency to investigate other target opportunities and recommend additions/changes to the target audience.

Consumer Insight

Client view on how the brand/consumer relate to each other and what the benefit/point of relevance is. Again, at times an agency may be asked to test the validity / challenge this Insight.

Strategy/Planning

1. STRATEGY TEAM

Interrogating the client brief and clarifying the role for communications.

Using tools, conducting research or analysing data to discover insights about the category, the brand, society or culture and the target consumer.

Arriving at a data-led problem or insight, and a resulting opportunity for communications.

2. STRATEGY TEAM

The insight and opportunity are used to determine the strategic platform – a strategic thought that acts as the glue for all communication activity.

3. STRATEGY & PLANNING TEAM

Working with planning teams, digital specialists and media partners, the communications platform is then translated into a creative solution that works across channels.

The campaign detail is then designed in terms of the consumer journey, including considerations like channel selection, geographic priorities, phasing and flighting, targeting strategies and moments planning.

Campaigns are often visualised in terms of the consumer journey and interaction across touchpoints, demonstrating the relationship between paid, earned, owned and shared, due to the non-linear and dynamic nature of consumption.

4. IMPLEMENTATION & INVESTMENT TEAM

The final phase is the execution of the strategy and plans through negotiating cost-effective media deals and collaborating with partners to bring the campaign to life.

Planning does not end once the campaign is live. Activity is monitored in real time to ensure maximum return on investment (ROI), and insights can feed into strategic insights for future activity.

Questions to Ask

The first step in discovering a powerful insight is asking questions.

What is the?...

Category Truth	Brand Truth
Cultural Truth	Human Truth

Category Questions

Useful tools
- Google Trends
- Nielsen AdEx
- Roy Morgan
- WARC

1. **What is the dynamic in the category?**

2. **What brands are leading and who has momentum?**

3. **How do people relate to the category?**

4. **What are the category barriers/drivers?**

5. **Where does the opportunity lie?**

6. **Is there any seasonality for our competitors' spend?**

7. **How does our channel spend compare to competitors?**

8. **Is the category expected to increase or decrease?**

Brand Questions

Useful tools
- Google Analytics
- Social Listening
- Brand Data

1. **How does the brand behave?**

2. **What is the brand personality?**

3. **What do people love/hate about it?**

4. **How would it like to be perceived?**

5. **What is their existing communications strategy?**

6. **Are there trends in their sales data that are useful for communications?**

7. **Are there spikes in their search, social or website traffic?**

8. **How do their assets convert?**

9. **What are the insights from an econometric or brand lift study they have provided?**

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Cultural Questions

Useful tools
- ABS Data
- Social Listening
- Nielsen
- ComScore
- Industry reports
- Trendwatching Forecasts

1. What are the hot topics in tech that relate to our challenge?

2. What is the economic landscape? Are people upbeat/downbeat?

3. What is the political climate?

4. Is consumer confidence up or down?

5. From social listening data, what are the things that everyone is currently talking about?

6. How is technology uptake and usage evolving?

Human Questions

Useful tools
- Roy Morgan
- Brand Qualitative Research
- Media Owner & Industry Body Audience Research Reports

1. Who should we be speaking to?

2. Who are the key influencers?

3. What are they thinking, feeling, wanting?

4. What are their lifestyle and passion points?

5. What are the barriers and drivers to them buying brand / using service/ changing behaviour?

6. What are the relevant media touchpoints?

7. What similarities and differences can we see in their segmentation?

8. How many of them are there?

9. Where do they live and what lifestage are they in?

Media Channel Selection

Channels are selected based on their ability to effectively achieve the communications task and deliver on the strategic platform. Considerations for channel selection also include:

- Target audience media consumption
- Creative
- Category conventions

TV

Strengths	Weaknesses
Immediate mass reach	Production costs
Targeted via programmes	Lead times
Impact through sight, sound, movement *i.e.. demonstrative*	Cancellation deadlines
	Cluttered (generally plus competitively)
Emotive & impactful	Limited product information - short message
Credible	Ad avoidance
Accountable	Difficult to deliver reach against under 40's - cost inefficient to reach young adults
In program opportunities	
Able to target all demographic groups	Can't measure out of home viewing for major events
Geographically selective	
Specific day/time placement	High overall cost
Upcoming audience targeting opportunities through programmatic	Limited inventory (13 min/hr)
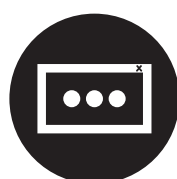
DIGITAL VIDEO

Strengths	Weaknesses
More accurate audience targeting	More fragmented than TV
Relevant contextual environments	Takes longers to build reach
Fewer competing ads in break	Lower reach levels available (as percentage of total online/TV audience)
Engagement tracking	Shorter formats recommended in pre-roll - 15" recommended
Incremental reach to standard TV plan	Premium inventory in short supply
Only pay for viewed content	Can be expensive

RADIO

Strengths	Weaknesses
Listening remains stable	Ad avoidance (changing channels during ad breaks)
Allows for frequency of message - especially effective for pushing sales windows	Background noise, passive listening
Speed to market-immediate	Digital radio still only 23% penetration
Cheap cost of entry to utilise talent	Reliance on breakfast talent
CPM's are low and low production cost	Audience numbers can be small in the morning and afternoon
Can target by demographic	Fragmentation across analogue, digital, online and music subscription services
Connection with local community	Old school survey measurement
Sponsorship opportunities including open Broadcast, talent appearance, on-air giveaways etc...	Low reach of individual stations (difficult to build broad reach)
Celebrity jocks have strong followings	
Strong in 'drive times' i.e. in the car	

MAGAZINES

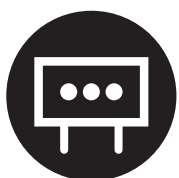| Strengths	Weaknesses
Strong brand building medium	Continual declines in audiences
Large circulation magazines can deliver high reach	Lack of cross platform measurement
Offers contextually relevant and targeted options by title	High cost/CPM
Excellent added value and merchandising programmes	Readers can often get content from other sources (digital)
Offers integration with publishers online and event properties	Long lead times for monthly magazines
Ability to include detailed information	Less impact than TV or video (no audio or video)
Native and advertorial opportunities	Not ideal for product demonstration
Strong reader relationship and editorial credibility	Clutter can be high, particularly for certain industries such beauty
Seen as treat by readers	

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NEWSPAPERS

Strengths	Weaknesses
Geographic flexibility	Readership is declining
Conveys sense of urgency	Cluttered ad environment
Allows detailed copy	Inefficient relative to radio or TV - high costs
Wide variety of ad sizes and ad hoc creative options available	Lack of cross-platform measurement
Short lead times (2-3 days)	Difficult to reach younger audiences
Journalistic integrity and editorial credibility	Digital offerings are not retaining readers lost from print
Native or editorial opportunities available	Readers can get the information from other sources - content is not unique
Offers integration with publishers online and event properties	
Sections can allow contextual relevancy and targeting such as travel, property, style etc...	

OUT-OF-HOME

Strengths	Weaknesses
Digital screen roll-out	MOVE measurement doesn't include all formats
Cost efficiency	MOVE measurement favours smaller formats
Delivers broad reach and high frequency	Production/installation costs can be cost prohibitive
Mutliple formats	Council restrictions on new builds
Geographic targeting	Speed to market
Local area marketing	Inflexible posting periods
Path to purchase proximity	Visibility/transparent of ratecards/value
Mobile integration on path to purchase	Regional footprint
Can drive people online	
Interactive panels and special builds allow creativity, engagement and stand-out	
Can demonstrate brand stature	

CINEMA

Strengths	Weaknesses
Captive and engaged audience	Slow reach builder
Opportunity to become a part of the consumers experience	Must develop the right creative to maximse effectiveness in theatre
High impact	Higher cost per thousand (CPM)
Highly targeted	Uncertainty at the box office
Uncluttered environment	Doesn't work for all clients *e.g. direct response*
Powerful creative solutions to build additional awareness and value beyond the screen	
Higher recall	
Introduction of a new audience measurement, CineTAM, based on rewards members & ticket sales demographic data	

DIGITAL DISPLAY

Strengths	Weaknesses
New rich formats	Top 5 portal audience numbers are declining as the long tail gets longer
Alignment with premium environments	Fragmentation
Creative opportunities	Cost
Cookie harvesting	Response rates declining
Redefining display to include Native/ Content advertising (not just banners). Ads don't feel like ads	Banners are now seen as only a DR tactic
Mass reaching (one day buyouts)	Clutter
Fast tracking US programming with strength in GBCH	Verification above the line
Integrated bigger plays	High production costs/unique production requirements across all publishers
Strong measurement metrics	Long lead times required for home page buyouts
Impact and frequency	Hard to ensure brand safe environments

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MOBILE

Strengths	Weaknesses
New tech, cheaper tech	Accidental clicks (CTR misleading)
Beacons and NFC	Cowboy providers
56% of website traffic is mobile - its mainstream	Walled eco-systems creates high production cost for the development of apps
New measurement providing greater accountability	Intrusive
Lean forward audience	Clutter
New finger printing technology	No cross platform measurement
Provides communication opportunities close to the point of purchase	Ad sizes are often small
Ubiquity	Not effectively frequency capped
Accessibility of audience	Lack of standardised tracking methodology
Great targeting opportunities - demographic, geograply, app, content	

SEARCH

Strengths	Weaknesses
Accountability and reporting	The algorithm
Convert demand from other channels	Organic search is user defined and web interaction is difficult to control
Immediate optimisation	Monopoly of Google
Multiple copy opportunities based on user experience	Must list in top 3 to be noticed
Reach of Google	SEO not leveraged by clients – long term and head hour based
Differing ways to be featured in search results - video, social, images news etc.	Auction – competitive pressure on price
ROI focussed	Continuity required to remain effective (can't burst)
Pricing can be immediately updated in search function from company websites	Lack of diversity
	Lack in ability to trade

SOCIAL

Strengths	Weaknesses
Engaged audience	Advertising a turn off for audience
Ability to target	The monopoly of Facebook
Alignment with influencers	Advertisers continually need new news for their brand pages
Time spent on social networks is growing rapidly	Advertiser to personal content ratio
Facebook owns the market	Measureability - lack of understanding
Can communicate 1 to 1 or 1 to 100,000's	What are the right metrics to measure each campaign
Social can be a content distribution platform for advertisers	Restricted formats and rules by publishers
Platform to target youth	Protection of personal data
	Invasion of privacy/personal space

Implementation Planning

At its core, Strategic Planning is about the **who, what and why.** Implementation Planning on the other hand has a singular focus – **HOW.**

A Strategist will identify who the consumer is; a Planner will identify how they consume media.

A Strategist will identify when the consumer experiences the need state associated with the brand/product; the Planner will identify how to leverage the media to create engagement in a way that is most effective to achieve the campaign's role.

In essence, a Planner's goal is to ensure that the blueprint laid out by the Strategist is brought to life in the real world, within the budget available and to the KPIs identified.

To make this a reality, a Planner needs true insight and understanding in three broad areas:

1. Understanding of the target audience's media behaviour	**2.** Understanding what's possible from a brand perspective per media channel	**3.** Understanding cost associated with marrying 1 & 2
This is about a few fundamental questions: • What do my target audience consume? • Where do they consume it? • How do they consume it?	This is about having an in-depth knowledge of the characteristics of all communications channels. The strength of different media channels helps define the role of the channel. This can vary from delivering explicit information that requires heightened attention, to delivering implicit information that focuses on building impressions/feelings about a brand.	Many things are possible within the media, none are free! Part of building the bridge to the consumer is understanding the related costs of each and every activity within the campaign. To determine the best planning approach for a campaign, it is best to use a framework that helps guide decisions based on the campaign's objectives. This ensures that each channel serves a determined purpose and is judged fairly within the context of the campaign objectives.

CHANNEL'S ROLE

Determining the job the channel needs to achieve within the campaign.

REACH & COST

What type of reach is important for the campaign.

ENVIRONMENT

Where and when to influence consumers.

MARKETS

Determining an approach to market priorities.

MEDIA FLIGHTING

Aligning your flighting to your campaigns function.

THE PLANNING APPROACH
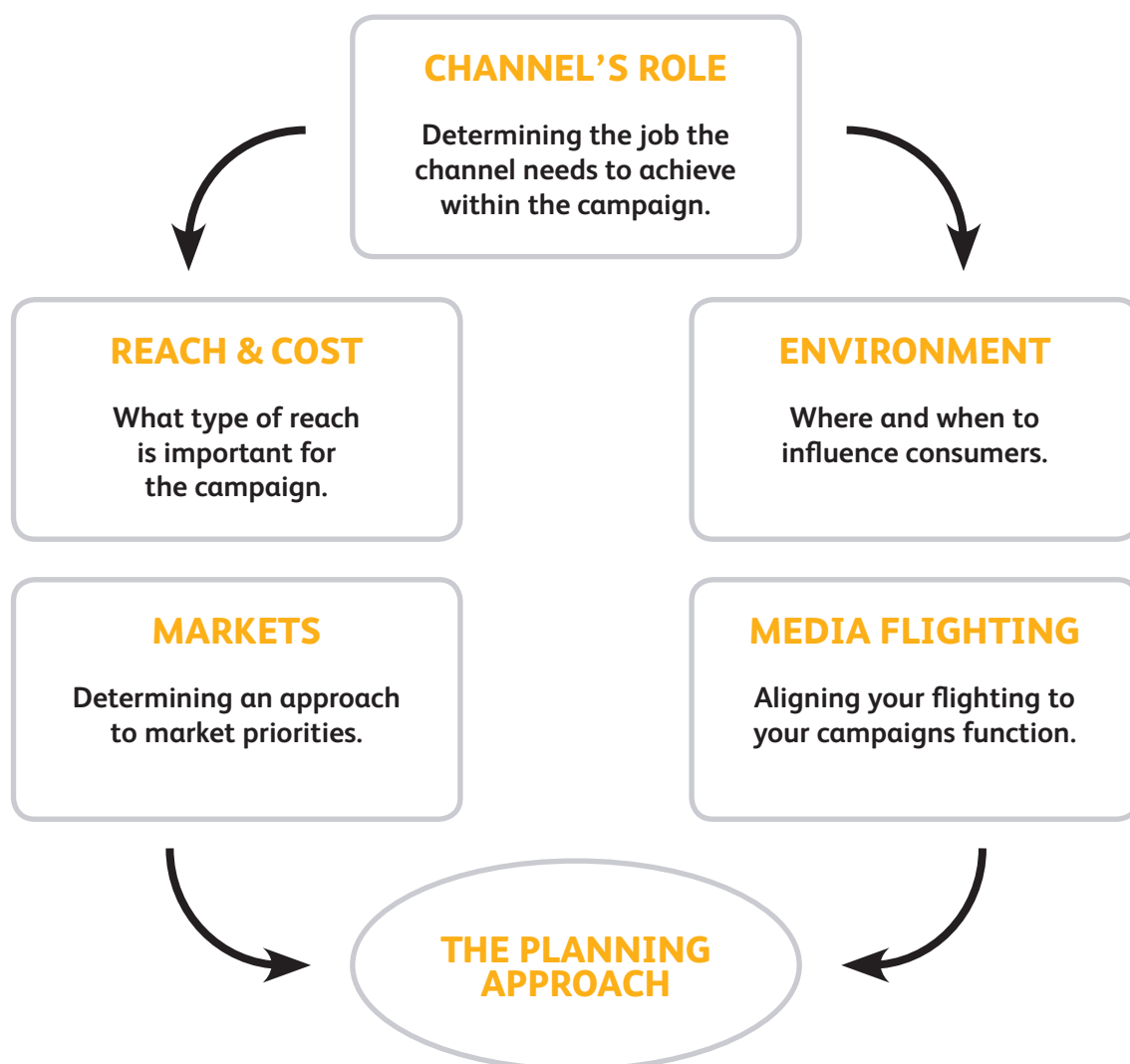
Step 1: Channel's Role

Understanding how a channel fits within the strategy's blueprint for the campaign is how the role of a channel is decided.

A channel's function within communications can be determined based on two distinctive factors:

Explicit Information
Rational & detailed

Implicit Feeling
Emotive & implied
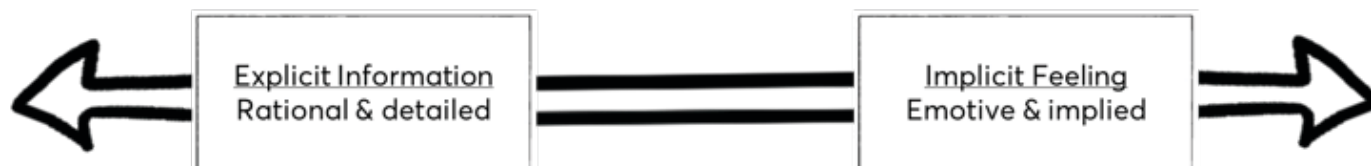
Explicit information may focus on channel opportunities where consumers' attention is heightened, such as a radio announcement or ads before video content.
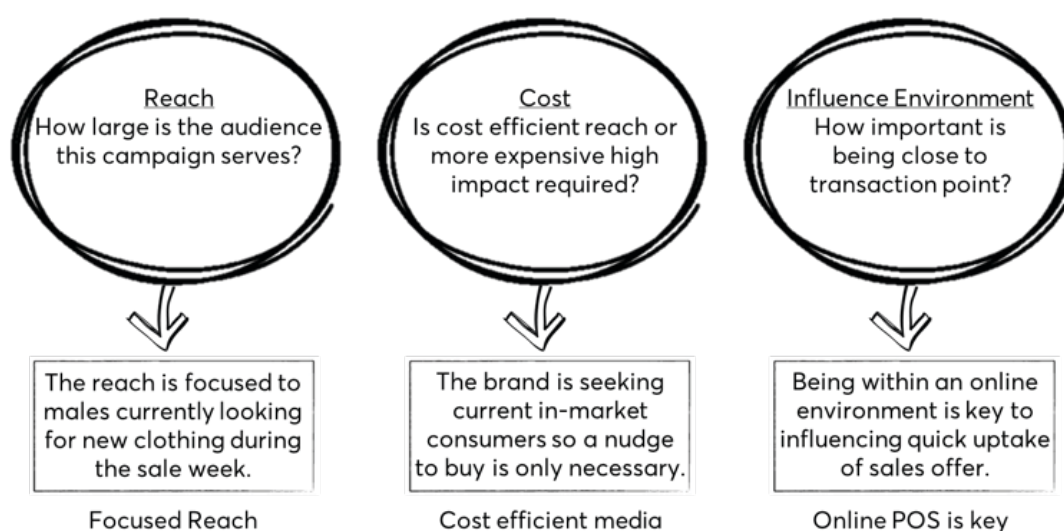
Implicit feeling may focus on channel opportunities where consumers are more likely to absorb an emotive message, such as TV or Cinema ads.
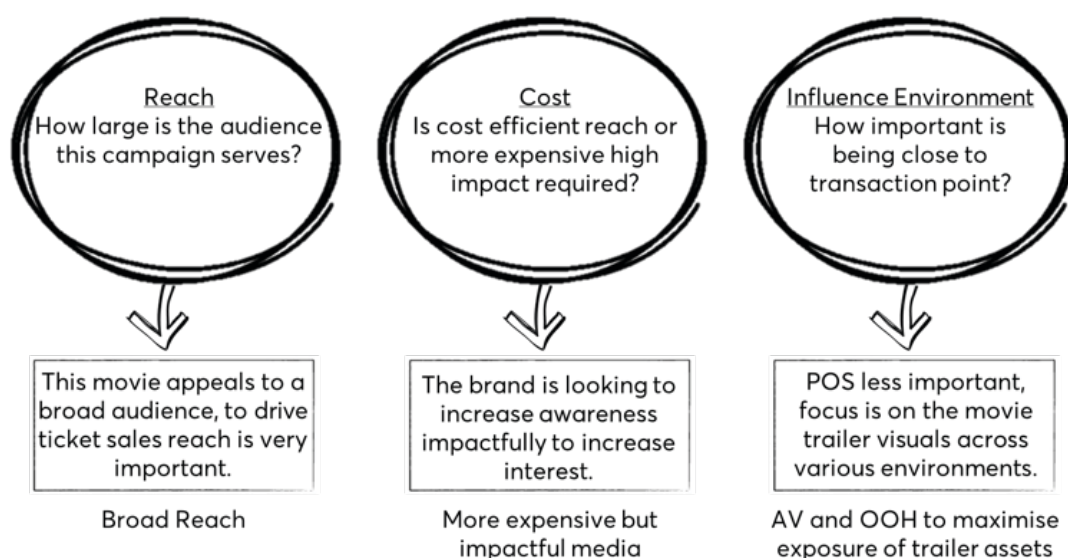
Step 2: Reach, Cost and Environment

The next step to determining the planning approach is assessing channel activity based on the campaign objective, target audience and influence environment. Doing this will determine how you gain reach, the cost of reach and the environments you fall within. For example, you may be planning a campaign for an online promotion of male t-shirts for one week only.

Your criteria may look like the diagram below:

Reach How large is the audience this campaign serves?	Cost Is cost efficient reach or more expensive high impact required?	Influence Environment How important is being close to transaction point?
The reach is focused to males currently looking for new clothing during the sale week.	The brand is seeking current in-market consumers so a nudge to buy is only necessary.	Being within an online environment is key to influencing quick uptake of sales offer.
Focused Reach	Cost efficient media	Online POS is key

A different scenario may produce an output at the other end of the scale. For example, you may be planning a campaign for a new movie launch coming out in three weeks.

Your criteria could look like this:

Reach How large is the audience this campaign serves?	Cost Is cost efficient reach or more expensive high impact required?	Influence Environment How important is being close to transaction point?
This movie appeals to a broad audience, to drive ticket sales reach is very important.	The brand is looking to increase awareness impactfully to increase interest.	POS less important, focus is on the movie trailer visuals across various environments.
Broad Reach	More expensive but impactful media	AV and OOH to maximise exposure of trailer assets

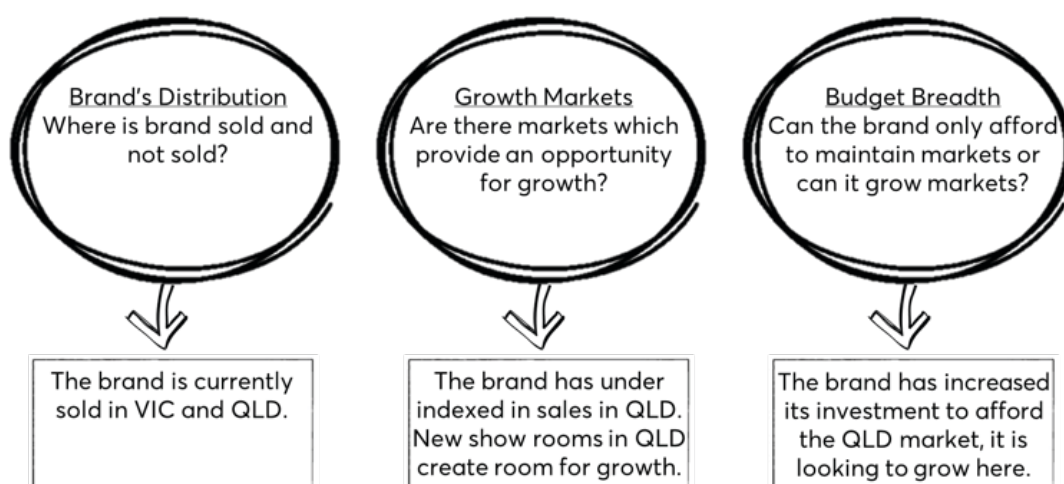## Step 3: Markets & Media Flighting

The final step is determining how you will treat various markets based on the opportunity within the campaign and lay down how media flighting is set based on the campaign objectives.

Market approaches are based largely around growth opportunities and physical distribution of the brand. This can result in a range of different approaches to markets depending on the situation of the brand.

Focus of distribution markets   Maintain market position   Maintain & grow key markets

Maintain

Grow

To determine how to approach different markets, you need to consider three core questions about the brand and the campaign's role.

Below is an example of these questions answered for a new car brand:

Brand's Distribution
Where is brand sold and not sold?

Growth Markets
Are there markets which provide an opportunity for growth?

Budget Breadth
Can the brand only afford to maintain markets or can it grow markets?

The brand is currently sold in VIC and QLD.

The brand has under indexed in sales in QLD. New show rooms in QLD create room for growth.

The brand has increased its investment to afford the QLD market, it is looking to grow here.

From these questions, we can determine that the brand will focus on maintaining its position in VIC while looking to grow in QLD. Coming to these outputs can be challenging without the client's input about their business. If possible, look at employing BDI (Business Development Index)/CDI (Category Development Index) into the equation, which can help reveal areas of growth and trouble spots within the client's brand per market. This will aid the process.
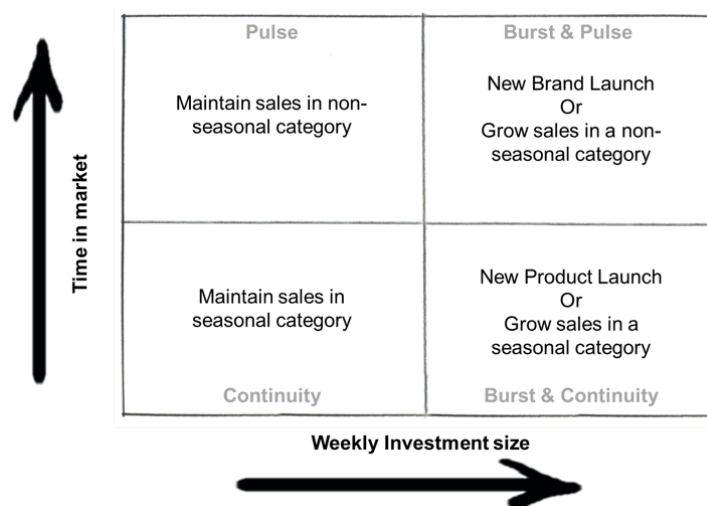
Media Flighting

Determining the flighting approach requires you to revert back to the campaign objectives to understand what function the campaign is achieving for the brand.

To do this, consider:
1. Seasonal sales factors
2. The brand's new news (if any)
3. The growth objectives from the campaign

These factors help determine which of four ways to decide the time in-market and the weekly flighting and investment, as outlined in this diagram:

	Weekly Investment size →	
Pulse		**Burst & Pulse**
Maintain sales in non-seasonal category		New Brand Launch Or Grow sales in a non-seasonal category
Maintain sales in seasonal category		New Product Launch Or Grow sales in a seasonal category
Continuity		**Burst & Continuity**

(Vertical axis: Time in market)

From this analysis you are able to apply an appropriate flighting tactic that attempts to answer the campaign's objectives under the current market opportunities. **See below for some examples of flighting tactics.**

Burst

Continuity

Pulse
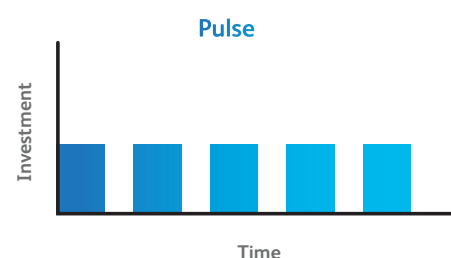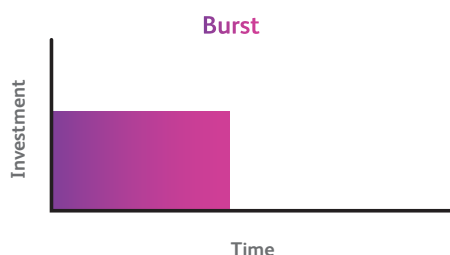
Buying/Trading

Once the approval has been submitted, the planner briefs the trading team (or buying team). There are multiple stages to the Trading Process, and these are outlined on the following pages.

The function of the buying role is to deliver on the strategic recommendations and optimise as much as possible to ensure goals are met and money is invested wisely and effciently.

1. TRADING BRIEF

The trading team needs to be briefed on the campaign details. A copy of the media plan, signed authorisation and a client purchase order(if applicable), should be provided to the trader.

Running through the strategy and implementation recommendations will help provide an under-standing of the purpose and intentions. It is the trader's responsibility to ensure the brief and objectives are clear.

2. MARKET ANALYSIS

Understanding the current market landscape is an essential step to ensure better forecasting and to assist with media negotiations. There is a truckload of market data available across a multitude of touchpoints, internal data management, external systems, media owner case studies, network formats, etc.

Market analysis should be ongoing throughout the entire trading process.
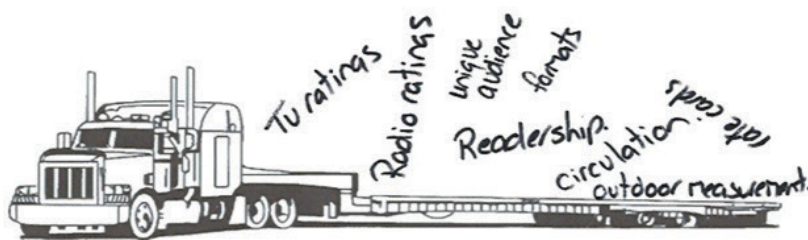
As with all research, the information is historical. While this is helpful in identifying trends, it does not guarantee what may take place in the future. Therefore, the buyer must be very aware of all the upcoming opportunities that may influence their decision.

What would you do?

Channel A has had the highest audience in the 7.30 timeslot for the past two months, but the program format is highlighting a special event on Channel B. Would Channel B be likely to get higher ratings than Channel A usually delivers?

	CHANNEL 'A'	CHANNEL 'B'
Sun 7:30pm	**The Amazing Race – Australia**	**Olympic Games open ceremony**

This scenario is played out across all media, so knowing your goals and what activity is on the other media channels might impact the campaign performance.

The type of information to be gathered when preparing to buy media is as follows:

- Performance trends
- Program formats
- Radio events
- Rate card information

- Special features in print titles and special events in other media, e.g. survey promotions
- Program availability lists (to show which programs are available to purchase)
- List of major events and holiday periods (this may influence viewing patterns)
- Ratings/Audience information for the target market group
- Details of sports schedules for television, radio, print and online

3. MEDIA NEGOTIATIONS

The time spent on this step depends on whether there are existing media contracts in place for the client you are working on (i.e. annual TV deal). If there is already a media deal in place, it is the trader's responsibility to ensure they fully understand the terms and conditions of that deal.

However, the trader should always be looking to improve on existing arrangements and market conditions to allow for further negotiations.

In the absence of an existing deal, a negotiation strategy needs to be established and position needs to be negotiated. Key considerations include spend, share, placement, added value priorities, client expenditure trends and key objectives, historic and current media performance.

4. BOOKING MEDIA

There are three ways to buy the media:

i. Briefing the media.
Involves sending a detailed brief to the media, covering off campaign objectives and constraints. Once a proposal has been received and analysed, the activity is booked, loaded into agency and media bookings systems and then confirmed.

This is not an ideal practice but sometimes necessary due to time constraints, or to use for certain media under certain conditions.

ii. Preparing a media buy
Involves the media agency evaluating all the information they have available and using their optimising systems to help create an ideal media buy that meets all expectations.

This buy is then sent to the media where they will confirm the bookings and advise if there are any adjustments required or placements not available. There are electronic systems for sending / receiving bookings, loadings and confirming activity.

iii. Programmatic
This buying method uses **data** and **technology** and finds **audiences** at scale, delivering relevant messaging in real time.

5. FINAL BUY

The client and agency team are informed of the expectations of the buy, along with details of any added value that has been negotiated.

6. TRACKING & ADJUSTING

Ongoing monitoring of the media bookings to ensure it remains in line with campaign objectives. This is a crucial stage of the trading process given how quickly the media market can fluctuate (e.g. the rapid ratings decline experienced by Australia's Got Talent when The Voice launched in the same timeslot). This is all vital to ensuring the overall campaign expectations are met and that any necessary adjustments are made because of any new information that might influence the results.

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7. **MATERIAL / CREATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

The media agency team needs to liaise with the creative agency to ensure they are informed of what has been booked. The creative agency can send the right material to the right media and within the required deadlines.

Post Analysis

The buyer is responsible for ensuring that throughout the process the budget levels are not exceeded and estimated performance levels are maintained. A client would not tolerate discovering after the campaign has finished and the post process has kicked in, that there were major shortfalls in the campaign and nothing was done to rectify it.

Underperformance is equally as unacceptable as over-performance. The client could have saved significant funds if the goals were exceeded beyond what was needed to do the job.

Once all the activity has been booked, specific steps are taken to track all the activity to ensure it appeared as requested and that it has delivered against the performance expectations.

Monitoring needs to take place as soon as possible after activity has appeared to rectify any potential issues. For example, a television campaign may not be delivering the goals expected as a certain program has rapidly declined in performance during the campaign period. The sooner a problem is identified, the sooner a solution can be found.

Likewise, if an ad didn't go to air as booked, then compensation can be negotiated and a replacement spot can be scheduled as soon as possible. There can be many variables that influence the final results and the buyer needs to be aware of the changing conditions to improve the situation.

Verification that book activity ran varies from channel to channel:

Third-party verified:

TV: Nielsen

RADIO: AudioNet

DIGITAL: Various

Media vendor supplied:

PRINT: Media vendor to supply 'tear sheets' (physical or digital), which is a copy of your ad as it appears in the newspaper/magazine.

OUTDOOR: Media vendor to supply 'proof of postings' or 'POPs', which is a photo of your live activity.

Media vendors will most often advise if there is an issue with activity going live prior to the activity date.