

A NOTE TO THE CEO

Imagine crafting a gourmet meal for a prestigious dinner party. Your nonprofit, church, or business is the chef, and the creative campaign process is akin to selecting the perfect ingredients, experimenting with recipes, and presenting the dishes with finesse. Without this culinary craftsmanship, the meal might fail to impress, leaving guests unsatisfied—just as a poorly planned campaign can leave your audience disconnected from your message.

A creative campaign is a coordinated series of marketing activities and initiatives designed to achieve specific goals through creative and innovative strategies. These campaigns typically involve a combination of advertising, branding, messaging, and promotional efforts across various channels such as print, digital, social media, and events. The primary aim of a creative campaign is to capture the target audience's attention, engage them emotionally or intellectually, and ultimately drive desired actions, such as purchasing a product, signing up for a service, or supporting a cause. Creative campaigns often leverage unique concepts, storytelling, visual elements, and interactive experiences to stand out and leave an impression on their audience.

We've documented our Creative Campaign Process as a structured framework designed to help create valuable and compelling creative campaigns. It all begins with developing a comprehensive [Creative Brief](#), a foundational document essential for guiding all stakeholders involved in the campaign.

In Phases 1 & 2, we guide you through the process of formulating pertinent questions to construct a valuable creative brief. This phase serves as a crucial foundation, ensuring that every aspect of the campaign is planned for and aligns with the objectives/goals of the campaign. In Phase 3 we provide details on how to run and manage the campaign successfully.

The intent of this document is to provide guidelines for planning, executing, and evaluating creative marketing campaigns effectively.

PHASE 1

Intake/Research Phase

- What is the purpose/goal of this campaign? (we'll dive deeper further in the document)
- Is there a pre-established budget? (we'll dive deeper further in the document)
- What is the timeline for the project? (we'll dive deeper further in the document)
- Understand the value of the success of the campaign
 - What are the limitations within deliverable/goal (what is the timeline, capability within the team, etc.)
 - Does the potential amount that can be made in revenue/value exceed the amount being spent on the creative concept and direction?
 - What are the risks associated with failure of the campaign not meeting the goal?
 - Will donations be pulled? Do we lose trust with key donors? Do we over extend our team on something that isn't valuable?
- Is there an example of success that we can model? (Has this campaign gone well in years past?)
- Are there other non-profits or churches that have been successful in reaching this goal?
- If any of these questions can't be answered, there needs to be a contingency budget added to the project based on the campaign's complexity.
- Identify additional time needed for any unanswered questions or for any unknowns.
- Identify the key performance indicators (KPI's) and what the expected return on investment (ROI) forecast will look like.

PHASE 2

Planning

- Identify Campaign Details
 - Vision & Strategy
 - How does this campaign fit into your organization's overall goals?
 - Has a clear statement on what the campaign should accomplish been crafted?
 - Goals & Objectives
 - Define the goal at a deeper level.
 - Will this campaign be for brand awareness, product awareness, customer retention, introducing a new program, increasing donations, increasing attendance/participation?
 - What does the user need to "do"? What is the call to action?
 - What emotional response does the campaign need to generate?

PHASE 2 (continued)

Planning

- Target audience(s)
 - Has the target audience been identified
 - Who do you want to reach?
 - Who is this campaign geared to?
- Define the Campaign Budget
 - Have you identified any additional costs for risks based on unknown answers or gray areas?
 - Has an itemized budget been produced?
 - Has a possible cost for ordering print or swag been included?
 - Have all stakeholder review times been considered in the budget?
 - If working with anyone outside of your organization has additional onboarding time been considered? Volunteers? Freelancers?
 - What ROI is expected?
 - Will there be A/B testing/market validation and has that time been accounted for?
 - Will there be iterations after A/B testing?
- Identify Asset Needs
 - What assets will be needed for the campaign? Digital media, print media, video, social media, publicity, email, blog, website, direct mail, radio, TV, event/trade show
- What are the Creative Expectations?
- Create Campaign [Creative Brief](#)
 - Is it clear what the target audience is supposed to do?
 - Is it clear what the target audience is supposed to feel?
 - Is everything saying the same thing and is it clear to the target audience? Is it the most effective presentation of the content?
 - Is there available time to test campaign angles or ideas? How does this affect the budget and timeline? Does the budget allow for testing? If not, then stay on the less risky, safer side.
 - Has the campaign been done before and is there historical data/design of previous work?
 - What are the unidentified “foreign objects” or “insider language” in the campaign? Is there a need for additional time to make those things familiar?
 - Are the expectations realistic when it comes to time, budget, and quality of production? If not, what needs to be modified to hit expectations?

PHASE 2 (continued)

Planning

- Create Timeline
 - Has a timeline been successfully scheduled to be completed before the promised delivery date to the client?
 - Has A/B testing/market validation been accounted for in the timeline?
 - Have iterations on marketing content been accounted for in the timeline?
 - Who are ALL of the decision makers on approvals for this campaign?
 - Has the review and feedback implementation time for each decision maker been accounted for in the timeline?
 - What other large projects, campaigns, or local/global events are happening during this campaign to be aware of? These events could be positive (like a marketable opportunity) or negative (like staffing being pulled away and reducing team capacity or a major event in your area which would compete for the attention of your target audience).
 - Have print, production turn-around times been taken into consideration?
- Assemble the execution team and define roles

By this stage, the team should possess a fully developed creative brief containing all essential details for executing the campaign successfully. This comprehensive document outlines objectives, target audience, messaging, and branding guidelines, ensuring clarity and direction for team members. With all necessary information provided, including logistical details like budget and timeline, the team is well-equipped to produce and manage the campaign effectively, maximizing its potential for achieving desired outcomes.

PHASE 3

Execution

- Creative Team Kickoff and Brainstorm
 - Has the creative brief been approved by the key stakeholder(s) before moving on?
 - If yes, present to the creative team
 - Schedule meeting with the creative team (may need several depending on the scope of the campaign)
 - Brainstorm at least 2-3 different concepts for the campaign.
 - Are the messaging concepts clear as to what the audience is supposed to do and feel with the information?
 - Is this the most effective presentation on the campaign objectives?
 - Does this concept translate to all deliverables?
 - Does this concept align with the brand?
 - Schedule concept review with any key stakeholders (repeat if necessary)

PHASE 3 (continued)

Execution

- Copy/CTA development & Art Direction development
 - Phase 1 - internal review feedback/revision loop (timeline is effected based on campaign size and needs)
 - Messaging - one line describing the product or service
 - Positioning statement - one-liner
 - Visual alignment with brand
 - Information hierarchy
 - Phase 2 - stakeholder review
 - The best practice would be to restrict this to 3 rounds of revisions to set expectations and capitalize on feedback rounds.
- Marketing Calendar development
 - Defining the assets that need to be created for all marketing and communication channels. Campaign asset development below dives into the various asset possibilities.

Campaign Asset Development (Batched design work)

- Verify asset channels, and any rules and regulations around the creative that can be used (ie. digital ad size, amount of text on image for FB ads, email image size, etc)
- Digital Marketing (Usually 1 round of revisions, assuming global creative has been approved)
 - Digital campaign
 - Running an A/B test?
 - Verify paid media spend
 - Verify platforms we are running on
 - Verify the target audience
 - What type of digital campaign should be included in the campaign? (i.e. goal for clicks or brand awareness)
 - Google Ads
 - Social (posts, banners)
 - What ad formats will be used? (ie. carousel, single image, video, slideshow)
 - Email
 - Is it mobile-friendly?
 - How will the email content be structured to guide the recipients' attention and encourage them to read further?
 - What content will be placed above the fold, and what will be revealed as the recipients scroll?
 - Is the info presented clearly?
 - Blog
 - Press Release

PHASE 3 (continued)

Execution

- Print (Usually 1 round of revisions, assuming global creative has been approved.)
 - Mailer
 - Is it designed to speak to the target audience?
 - Is the messaging concise and to the point?
 - Has the best size and configuration been identified?
 - Is there room for the mailing information? Check with your local post office for guidelines on mail handling.
 - What is the primary CTA?
 - Will there be a way to track or measure recipient interactions?
 - Print execution questions:
 - Target audience (age, household income, zip code)
 - Is there a mailing list that can be purchased or is already accessible?
 - How are results on the mailer being measured?
 - Leave Behind
 - Banner
 - Billboard
- Landing Page (2 rounds for revisions due to design approval, and implementation approval)
 - Are the value props and CTA's clearly defined?
 - Are the headlines and subheadlines clear and concise?
 - Is the organization of the content easy to scan and digest?
 - What is visible "above the fold" and how will you encourage scrolling?
 - Is it mobile friendly?
- Video Production (3 rounds of revisions)
- Misc creative
 - Are there any other specific use cases we need to consider? Partnership opportunities, etc.

Campaign Launch

- Are there any new team members, volunteers, or additional stakeholders, internal or external, that need to be brought up to speed on the campaign to kick off the launch of the campaign?
 - This would aid in success to rally the right people in support of the goal to ensure a successful campaign.
- What KPI's will show that this campaign leads to success?

PHASE 3 (continued)

Execution

Campaign Analysis

- Campaign running
 - [For paid campaigns] The paid advertiser should be analyzing and optimizing the campaign daily, and reporting results weekly to stakeholders.
 - This verifies whether the benchmarks are being met and would lead to success.
 - Weekly checking in on KPIs. This could look like program sign ups by a certain date, donations coming in by a certain date, etc.
 - If KPI's aren't being met, how can the strategy or creative of the campaign be adjusted?
- Post Campaign
 - Compare KPI's with the ROI
 - Which strategy produced the best results if you A/B tested or tried out multiple mediums.
 - Can this campaign's success be used to build and extend future campaigns or be developed further for greater effectiveness?
 - What lessons can be learned from this if the campaign was a failure or did not hit the KPI's? What went wrong?
- Feedback Gathering
 - Seek feedback from both the internal team and the stakeholders regarding the campaign's execution, communication, and collaboration.
 - Use this feedback to refine internal processes and enhance the results on future campaigns

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