

Take the road less travelled when you communicate with your target audience

 ByShae Leigh

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Many clients approach me with their hands in their hair - overwhelmed by the task of marketing their brand and not knowing how to effectively engage their target audience.



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Although expertise, experience and strategy are key elements of a communication strategy that reaps long-term results, communicating effectively and building a strong brand identity is simpler than most people believe. Answer these five key questions and you will be well on your way to formulating an effective communication strategy.

1. What do you want to be?

Firstly, be very clear on what you want your brand to be like and how you want people to experience you. What do you want to look like, smell like, taste like and sound like? Ask yourself: if your brand was a car – what make, model and colour would it be? Ultimately this is how you create a corporate identity which is your corporate image – and you need to decide what you want this image to be. Another way of looking at it is to decide what you definitely *don't* want to be like.

2. What do you want to say?

Now that you know who you are, decide what you want to say. Why are you talking and why should anyone be listening? This becomes your *primary message* as a brand and serves as the foundation of your strategy. It guides every post or communication effort. Although you might run a variety of campaigns, there will be a common 'thread' or message that runs through it all.

3. Who would you like to talk to?

Knowing *who* you want to engage with is pivotal to the success of any form of communication. This determines *how* you talk to them and where you need to be to build trust and relationship. Be intentional about gaining insight into the shopper behaviour and opinion of your primary and secondary target groups.

4. Where do you want to be?

Where do you want people to engage with you? On social media? While reading a newspaper or magazine? At the local shopping mall, on the radio or TV, or in their personal inbox? Do the necessary research to decide which platform both will communicate with your target group effectively, and still be within your marketing budget.

5. Where do you want to go?

Have a clear vision of where you want to take your brand in the next year, as well as where you want it to be in three, and even ten years. This will serve you well as you plan your communications. Where do you want to take this brand – what are your dreams and hope for this? This question will most likely also lead you to collaborative opportunities with other brands and platforms.



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Although these questions are by no means a comprehensive guide to developing a marketing and communications strategy, it will get you thinking in the right direction. The more you explore these (and other) answers, the better you'll be able to brief and direct the marketing experts who will develop a detailed strategy to market and build your brand.

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