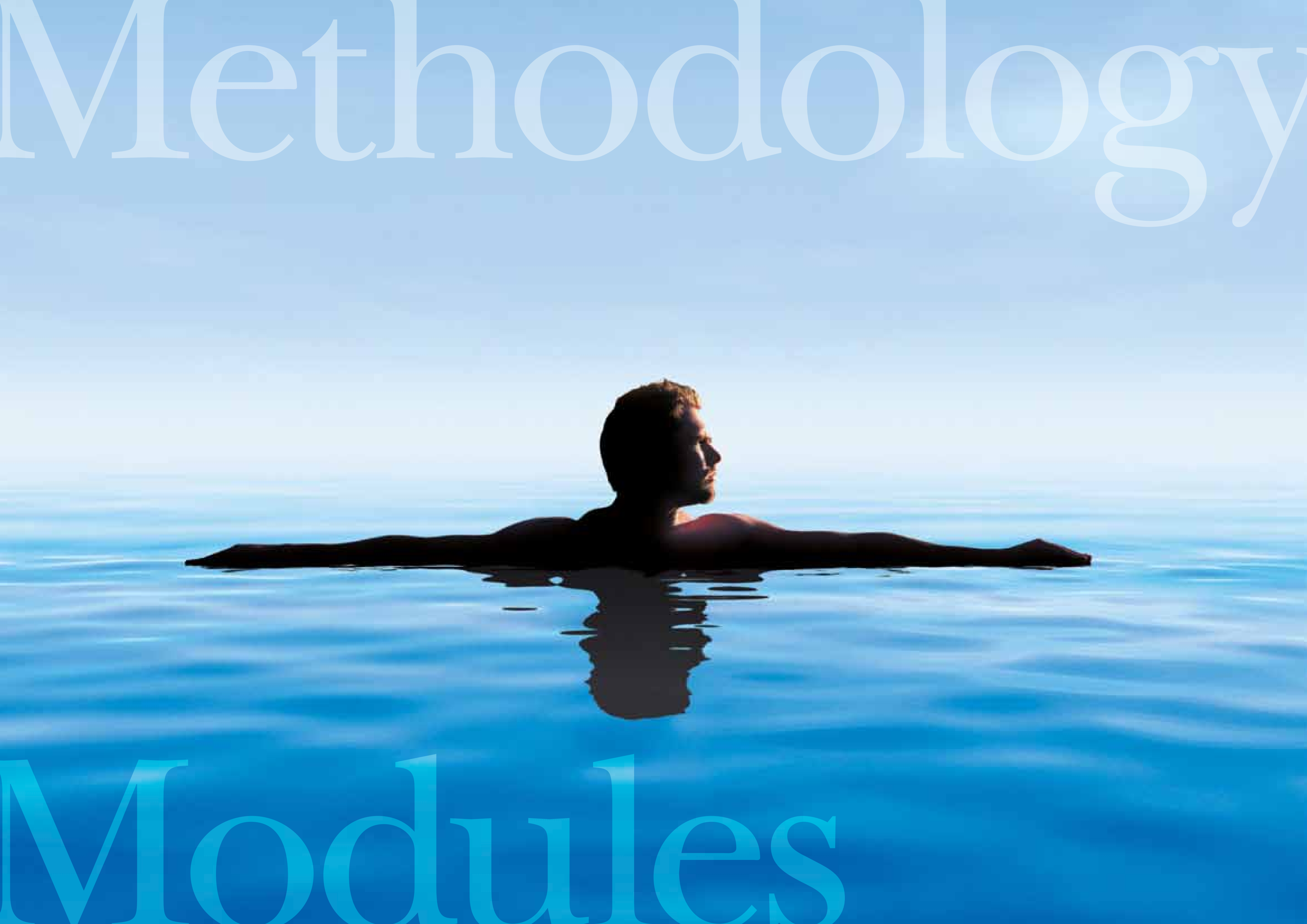

Methodology
Modules

Methodology Modules

To understand and answer a complex marketing challenge requires hard work and inspired creative energy.

The process and its result are not magic, but rather the systematic application of a clearly defined methodology. Pyramid Communication applies this methodology in its work for clients, both existing and potential. The purpose is two-fold: to ensure ourselves the information necessary to successfully fulfill each assignment, and to provide our clients with an accurate orientation to the work we will carry out for them, as well as its progress.

The Pyramid methodology is described in detail on the following pages, and summarized opposite.

We hope that this information enlightens the reader, and enhances the outcome of our subsequent work together.

The Marketing Action Plan

Part 1
Marketing Goal
Product Definition
Market Definition
Target Audience Definition
Sales Overview
Marketing Situation
Product and Company Profile
Competitor Analysis
Communication Objectives
Media Analysis
The Marketing Action Plan

Part 2
Concept Descriptions
Creative Strategy
Creative Elements
Activity Plans
Activities
Communication Tools
Media Plan
Editorial Activities
Production Plan
Resource Allocation Analysis

Assignment Definition

Our methodology is a systematic process designed to help you develop an integrated and measurable marketing communications program.

The critical first step in this process is the achievement of consensus between client and agency concerning the nature of the assignment, its scope and defining parameters. This initial discussion will quickly result in development of a project definition and budget for a Marketing Action Plan.

Timelines and Checkpoints

If the proposal is approved, it leads to the Pyramid Marketing Action Plan, incorporating Modules 1 to 4 of our methodology.

This phase can take up to eight weeks, depending on the job's scope and complexity. It provides the client with a detailed plan, including proposed creative solutions and cost frameworks. Its completion is the client's next checkpoint – offering the opportunity to review and adjust the plan before taking the decision to execute it.

Module 5 is the finalization and systematic execution of the agreed Marketing Action Plan, or 'Master Plan', along with the auditing which verifies its success and/or identifies its weaknesses. This phase's time span is often measured in years.

Auditing is an often overlooked aspect of the mix, particularly in business-to-business marketing communications. Correctly implemented, however, it is one of the best guarantees of your company's long-term marketing investment.

Module 1

1. Capture Existing Client Knowledge
2. Identify Knowledge Gaps
3. Implement Research to Fill Gaps

Module 2

4. Conduct Issues Analysis

Module 3

5. Produce Focused Communication Plan
6. Develop Creative Objectives and Strategies

Module 4

7. Launch Creative Effort
8. Test Creative Concepts

Module 5

9. Fine-Tune and Execute
10. Audit Results

Gathering Information

Methodology Module no.1

Initial information gathering is of utmost importance as it quickly provides us with a large body of critical information. It also plays an important role within your organization by establishing a forum where all the communication "stakeholders" (sales, marketing, management, etc.) come together in one room. This helps eliminate contradictory information generated by various points of view. More importantly, it builds consensus.

Module no.1 outlines the first three steps of the process. Step 1 describes where we need to gather information in order to focus an effective communication plan. Pyramid uses this framework to debrief the client team. Then we organize all of the information into a concise "database" document, including a list of all missing information and assumptions that need to be researched and verified.

Step 2 presents the ways Pyramid identifies knowledge gaps. And Step 3 details how we implement the necessary research to fill them.

1. Capture existing client knowledge

1.1 Product Definition
Classify by product category.
List major features.
Correlate major benefits.

1.2 Market Definition
Determine which segment(s) the product targets:
- Consumer
- Retail
- Trade/Business-to-Business
- Technical/Industrial/Professional

Define market size.
Define market share patterns.
Define competitive products or methods.
List relevant market trends.
List general environmental conditions which affect the market.
Define where and how the product is used.

1.3 Target Audience Definition
Define who buys the product.
Define who influences the product purchase.
Develop a complete profile of the buyer/user:
- If consumer, prepare a complete demographic profile:
  – Age
  – Employment
  – Income
  – Children
  – Residence
  – Region
  – Profession
  – Media habits
  – Education
- If non-consumer:
  – Title
  – Areas of responsibility
  – Role
  – Purchasing authority limits
  – Function
  – Psychographic profile
  – Location
  – Trends and factors of interest
- Buying patterns:
  – Capture the dynamics of the purchase by determining who buys what, when and how
  – Determine who is involved
  – Determine how often they buy
  – Determine where they buy
- Answer these key questions:
  – Does the user know and understand the product?
  – Does the user have prejudices which affect us?
  – What does the user really expect from the product?
  – Are we competing with another product or way of doing something?

1.4 Sales Overview
Determine our method of selling:
- Sales/Subsidiaries
- Distributors
- Agents
- Profile the selling organization:
  – Compensation
  – Perceptions
  – Professionalism
  – Biases
  – Background
  – Operating style
  – Habits
  – Mindsets
- Define distribution:
  – Do we sell direct?

– Do we use wholesalers, distributors, jobbers?
– Do we work with brokers or consultants?

- Detail each channel in depth:
  – Type
  – Buying patterns
  – How competition handles them
  – Structure and operating style
  – Size and locations
  – Habits, attitudes and mindsets
  – Typical support tools used
  – Define the kind of margins we look for
  – What percentage of the whole does each sales channel represent?
- How complex is the selling/buying interaction? Is it uniform for all our products?

1.5 Competitor Analysis

Evaluate the competition. Consider both directly competing products and competing technologies:

- Sales
- Share
- Distribution patterns
- Key products
- Key point of difference
- Sales team profile
- Technology base
- Resources
- Marketing know-how
- Recent trends
- Growth patterns
- Media spending
- Support tools
- Customer perceptions

1.6 Marketing Situation

Determine who dominates.
Determine our position.
Define our distinctive competence.
Define how we are perceived.
Determine if the marketplace is changing – if so, how?
Determine if we are visible.
Determine if our price is a problem.
Determine if our product is new or mature.
Determine what general market conditions can impact our effort (e.g. government legislation, foreign competition, community perceptions, competitive rumors).

2. Identify knowledge gaps

Following are some of the ways we identify areas that seem incomplete or contradictory:

2.1 We draw correlations between sections – for example, if distributor sales are low, we look at how we communicate with the distributor base. Or if product isn't moving, we compare the marketing strategy to the selling strategy to see if they're compatible.

2.2 We'll list all the areas where we feel uncomfortable with the information or feel more input is needed.

2.3 Pyramid will classify the missing areas into general categories, then assign responsibilities to locate the missing information.

2.4 If necessary, we'll utilize secondary resources.

2.5 If primary research is needed, we'll create a framework for getting things done and have a researcher develop a proposal to address the need.

3. Implement research to fill gaps

We don't delay getting research under way. We apply these proactive guidelines to ensure that we get the complete picture:

3.1 Informal research is handled by us to reduce the likelihood of important information being missed.

3.2 Whenever possible, we call on end-users in the actual working environment. This gives us a better feel for the user, and the priorities which can affect the purchasing decision.

3.3 We oversee formal research – focus groups, interview audits, etc. Once we've gathered all the necessary information and filled any knowledge gaps, we use this database to conduct an issues analysis. Please refer to the next module for a complete explanation of this process.

Issues Analysis

Methodology Module no.2

The issues analysis could well be the most important step in the process. Here Pyramid summarizes the key topics which need to be addressed, and provides concise recommendations. This module presents the kind of questions we ask and "clues" we look for when sifting through the information.

Our mission is to assimilate the data and correlate it into meaningful patterns. To do this, we analyze the information in terms of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Then we look for incongruities and anomalies. These become the key issues we address.

The end product of the issues analysis is a written evaluation summarizing three key areas:

- Background – the information that led us to the key issues.
- Issues – listed one by one with thinking and analysis as support.
- Recommendations – proposed resolutions with rationales as support.

4. Conduct issues analysis

4.1 Competitor Strengths
Where do they have an advantage?

4.2 Competitor Weaknesses
Where are the chinks in their armor?

4.3 Our Strengths
Where do we have the upper hand?

4.4 Our Weaknesses
Where do we need to improve ourselves?

4.5 Our Opportunities
Which of our resources can add to our success:

- New technology?
- New resources?
- Weak competition?
  - No competition?
- Confused marketplace?
- Virgin territory?

4.6 Our Threats
What must we overcome to be successful?

- Internal:
  - Pricing?
  - Product?
  - Attitude?
  - Manufacturing?
- External:
  - Market conditions?
  - Economic climate?
  - Buyer perceptions?

4.7 Our Product/Service points of difference (p-o-d)
Distill the feature/benefit list:

- Where are we really different?
- What does our target audience think of those differences?
  - Prioritize them.

4.8 Pricing Comparison
How do we fit into the market?
What's our strategy:

- High/low?
- Margins, etc.?

4.9 Market Potential/Share Strategy
What is the optimum level of market penetration:

- How big is the market? How big is our current share?
- What kind of growth can we expect?
- What are we after? When do we aim to have it?

Communication Plan/Creative Objectives and Strategies

Methodology Module no.3
This module covers two critical steps in the process. Step 5 explains how we produce a communication plan. We lay out the recommendations set forth in the issues analysis in a clear, executable plan.

The various communication disciplines – advertising, sales promotion, public relations, documentation, training, new media, etc. – are individually represented with schedules, budgets and results-tracking procedures.

Step 6 details the development of objectives and strategies for each individual discipline. Also included in this module is information on how we develop a creative platform for advertising and sales promotion efforts.

5. Produce a focused communication plan

The communication plan contains complete program recommendations addressing every key topic outlined in the issues analysis. All proposed activity is organized according to product, service or market. Pyramid follows this outline:

5.1 Background – summary of the findings of the issues analysis.

5.2 Communication Objectives – exactly what we want to accomplish. Four or five specific and, if possible, quantified goals.

5.3 Communication Strategies – the guiding plan of action for each objective, with rationales included.

5.4 Tactics – we organize program elements under their disciplines and state the desired results.

5.5 Budgets – listed is the cost for each program element. Where possible, we plot spending over the program life.

5.6 Calendar – we provide a 52-week summary showing where each program element starts and stops. Critical timetables are identified, where applicable.

5.7 Appendix – includes relevant exhibits, situation analysis, research and other decision-making tools.

6. Develop creative objectives and strategies

As outlined in the previous step, each discipline in the communication plan comes with its own set of objectives and strategies. In the case of advertising and sales promotion, creative executions are involved. That's why Pyramid has developed a comprehensive creative platform. This will serve as the foundation for all creative efforts. In a clear and concise way, we outline key issues, background data, market situations, competitors and any other information relevant to the assignment.

We conclude with a succinct positioning statement clearly defining the perception we want the target audience to embrace, as well as the creative strategy and support concepts which will convey our most important selling message.

Once approved by the client, the creative platform serves as a yardstick for judging all creative recommendations. Pyramid has developed a creative platform based on the following outline:

6.1 Assignment – in a sentence or two, we describe what the assignment is about.

6.2 Objectives – our mission. Specifically, what our creative effort will make happen. We make it clear, single-minded and measurable.

6.3 Background – a list of all key details that affect the assignment – such as competition, market environment, etc. Here we refer to any relevant research.

6.4 Product Focus – we list key features and user benefits along with the meaningful points of difference.

6.5 Target Audience and Mindsets – a list of the prospects and their beliefs or attitudes that affect our mission. The list includes important points such as interest level, believability of product claims and awareness.

6.6 Positioning Strategy – how we want the product/service to be perceived. Our positioning formula reads like this: It is our strategy to position (product/service) to (target audience) as the brand of (generic description) that provides (meaningful points-of-difference).

6.7 Creative Strategy – the single most important message we want to communicate to our prospect. Ideally, a combination of intellectual and emotional appeals, i.e. how we want the prospect to think and feel. We use this formula: Our strategy is to communicate to the prospect (product/service) that fulfils (actual/intellectual/emotional need that is met).

6.8 Strategy Support Concepts – these are different ways of expressing the creative strategy. The creative department develops several alternatives, all grounded in the strategy.

6.9 Copy Points – key points that need to be communicated in the text. No communication should comprise more than five or six key points.

6.10 Tone and Manner – the choice of communication style with reasons why. Features or benefits? Create anxiety or answer expectations? Compare with competitors or define new criteria? Assertive or conversational? Short or long copy?

6.11 Call to Action – what we want the prospect to do. Call, write, send coupon, etc.

6.12 Executional Guidelines – include colors, pages, sizes, graphic rules, logos, tag lines, addresses, etc.

Refer to Module no.4 for information on how we launch and test the creative product.

Creative development

Methodology Module no.4
This module covers the steps that detail the all-important process of creative development.

Step 7 explores how we launch the creative effort, and explains what we provide the creative department with in order to develop strong concepts.

Step 8 presents the testing of creative concepts. Here, we discuss formal and informal testing, and present the kind of techniques we use for getting the most out of the process.

7. Launch creative effort

This is where process and imagination meet – where the creative framework outlined in the previous module is clothed in an attractive and communicable package. Once objectives and strategies are set, the team – account manager(s), art directors, graphic artists and copywriters – will subject the creative platform to a thorough brainstorming until the elements of a winning solution are identified and tested for universal strength. From there, we develop the creative direction. Here are some of the ways we make sure we're aiming at the right target:

7.1 The entire creative team is thoroughly briefed on the product and its promise, on the market's defining criteria.

7.2 The proposed creative platform is reviewed and any questions are answered in depth.

7.3 Any research results are presented.

7.4 The creative team is connected with end users wherever possible, to gain firsthand exposure to the mindsets and attitudes of the prospect.

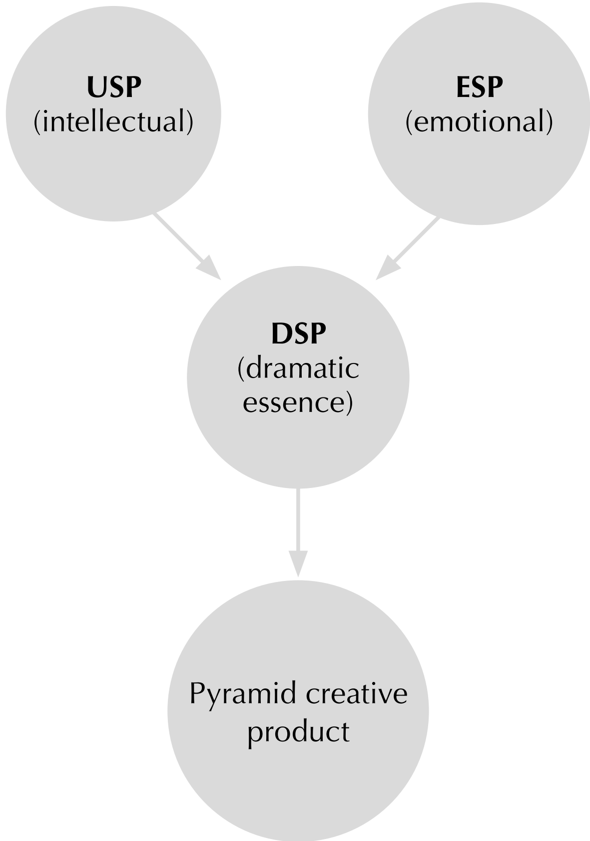
7.5 Account management helps set direction, then follows up with a written summary of where the project is headed.

Pyramid's creative philosophy

Consider this: the average business person is bombarded by thousands of messages each day. Therefore, a communication must create attention. What defines memorable communication is the result of this attention-getting exercise. It is this that shows the caliber of an advertising agency, particularly where complex selling processes are involved.

At Pyramid, we believe that every product or service has its own drama – a combination of intellectual and emotional appeal. Our creative philosophy is this: combine the USP (unique selling proposition – what we want the prospect to believe about our product/service) and the ESP (emotional selling proposition – how we want the prospect to feel about our product/service) to arrive at the DSP (dramatic selling point – the distillation of the emotional and intellectual appeals). By presenting the DSP in the most compelling and memorable way possible, a communication is born that cannot be ignored.

Pyramid's creative philosophy can be illustrated like this:



Here are 15 questions we ask when judging creative work. If we can answer "yes" to all of them, we've done our job.

1 Is it according to strategy?
2 Is it benefit-oriented?
3 Does it evoke an intellectual response?
4 Does it evoke an emotional response?
5 Does it have graphic stopping power?
6 Are headlines and visuals intuitively linked?
7 Is it inviting and exciting?
8 Is it well thought through and distinctively communicated?
9 Does it measure up to the 4 I's? Image, Impact, Ingenuity, Immediacy?
10 Is the idea so unique to our product or service that no one else can use it?
11 Is this a truly innovative idea?
12 Does it present a positive image for the product/service and company?
13 Does it fit with our overall product or corporate identity?
14 Is there a strong Call to Action?
15 Is it memorable?

8. Test creative concepts

Once we've developed creative concepts, we'll take them into the field and expose them to a representative cross section of the market. Research may include personal interviews and review of concepts by actual end users. Such testing quickly identifies winning ideas, and the synthesis of comments will plot the final course. Here are some techniques we follow to get the most from this process:

8.1 We show the work in a logical order.

8.2 We don't rely solely on questions. We gather impressions too.

8.3 We're not satisfied with answers like "I don't like it ". We ask why.

8.4 We ask them how they would say it.

8.5 We show them copy points and ask for additions and deletions.

8.6 We ask what's important to them.

8.7 If we have to explain a concept, then it's not usable.

8.8 We let concepts stand or fall on their own.

8.9 We ask interviewees what they need to know about a product before they buy.

8.10 We find out what they use now and what they like or dislike about it.

Pyramid will use the results of this research to structure the final creative solution, which is then presented to the client for review and approval, or modification. When the decision is made to proceed, next comes fine tuning, execution and follow-up, which is described in Module no. 5 following.

Execution & Auditing Results

Methodology Module no.5

Once the Marketing Action Plan is presented, you the client come to a second decision point – to accept the proposal and implement its execution.

The presentation is accompanied by an overall time schedule and a step-by-step quotation covering each communication piece and planned activity. This simplifies implementation by priority, category and available budgets.

Barring small final adjustments, the Marketing Action Plan is now ready to implement.

The last step in the process is auditing results – measuring the effect of a specific communication in definable terms. What results can we expect? Awareness of a product or service – yes. A predisposition to buy – hopefully. But generally, communications alone do not produce sales. After all, it is only the communicating function of the marketing mix. If other elements aren't in place, there is no guarantee of success.

Pyramid's approach to auditing results is comprehensive. We'll develop custom tracking when needed, because in the world of industrial and business-to-business communication, there are few data collection services, so it takes custom research to get a handle on awareness, image, use and inclination to purchase. Most of all, we'll be innovative and persistent, because getting useful results takes good data and good analysis.

Back in Step 5 (Module 3), we detailed the development of the communication plan. There we broke down the recommendations set forth in the issues analysis into a clear, executable plan. At that time, we determined exactly what kind of results we wanted to achieve and how we were going to track them.

It is vital to stick to the original criteria in order to get measurable, verifiable results. Changing the ground rules in mid-course eliminates the original reference point, and means that the true aim of the communication may be overlooked.

For example, a corporate campaign where awareness is measured over time cannot be accurately reinterpreted in terms of the number of reader response cards received.

9. Present map, fine-tune and execute

The final client presentation includes a summary of what was tested along with the results. This is followed by our final recommendations, which cover the complete Marketing Action Plan – copy platforms, dummies, media proposals and firm quotations on all parts included.

Once approved by the client, timetables are set, actual artwork and photography are secured, printers and/or subcontractors are engaged and media placement is booked.

Four to eight weeks after approval is given, all communication and information tools should be ready to use.

The assignment's nature determines the timetable for execution. This can range from weeks to years, but it's almost never too early to start tracking the results. This last step is outlined below.

10. Audit results

10.1 Reaffirm Tracking Procedure

We measure the effect of the specific communication using one or more of these predetermined procedures:

- Readership – Many publications offer readership studies free of charge. The chief value of readership studies is to determine who reads the ad and at what level. Other ads are provided as a standard of comparison. Readership studies help answer these questions: Is the message of interest to the target audience? Are we hitting their 'hot buttons'?

- Attitude – Attitude studies must be done over time. Conducting a series of studies over the course of a program should reveal a changing curve of specific attitudes. Generally, attitude studies are custom designed and help to answer these questions: Are they reacting the way we planned? Was our message relevant enough to change their attitude?
- Awareness – Awareness studies usually fall into two categories – free studies from publications and custom studies. Awareness is generally tracked at regular intervals for a specific brand or company name and often accompanies an attitude study. Over time, awareness studies can help answer these questions: Can they remember the product/service and positioning? Was there strong name recognition and recall? Do they think of our product/ service when they're ready to buy?
- Sales Leads – These provide a basic handle on whether or not our product is of interest to the prospect. They also present a convenient way to build a mailing list, while providing an excellent source for inquiry follow-up studies. Here are sales lead questions to ask: Are we generating qualified leads? At what level? How do we measure up against the competition, category, other advertisers and the publication's history?
- Change in Behavior – First, current behavior must be documented among a very specific target group. Then, over time, a study must be conducted to see if their behavior is changing as a result of the program. Behavior shifts must be specific and exact to be meaningful. Behavior studies can answer the following questions: Did we affect the prospects enough to make them change their way of doing things? Are they doing what we want them to do?
- Purchase – Purchase studies are often offered by publications, but a custom study yields better information. First, a large sample study is conducted to determine use patterns. Then, after the communication program has run, a balanced sample between respondents and non-respondents is taken. This not only determines whether purchase has been made, but more importantly, it measures motivation to purchase and intent to repurchase. Purchasing studies can answer these questions: When did they buy? How soon after our communication? Where? Why? And in what volume?

10.2 Determine Tracking Intervals

How we measure results during the life of the communication is very important. First, we'll determine a baseline starting point. Then, since single data points are of little value, we'll measure results over several distinct time periods such as weeks, months or years. This gives us a true perspective on how the communication is doing.

10.3 Results Analysis

Many results measurements fail because they're only designed to measure if some desired action took place or not. They seldom examine the root causes of why a communication was a success or not. To address this oversight, Pyramid provides an in-depth analysis of the final results. Here are some examples of the kinds of questions we ask:

- If inquiries are low, does it mean the communication wasn't read, the product/service is of low interest or the buyer needs more information?
- If readership is low, is the communication wrong or is the publication reaching the wrong audience?
- If the product isn't moving, where is our communication 'falling short'? Are there external factors affecting the purchasing motivation (or its absence)?

Now the final step in the process is complete. By auditing the results against the original criteria of the communication, we know exactly what we've accomplished. More importantly, we know exactly why.

One final thought. The mission of Pyramid Communication is to help our clients measurably grow their businesses through the optimum application of marketing and communication services.

We believe that our methodology is the tool that gets the job done.

I Pyramid får du en partner som:

- Sparrar dig affärsstrategiskt
- Fokuserar din organisation
- Marknadsanpassar dina erbjudanden
- Positionerar ditt företag
- Differentierar dina produkter och tjänster
- Bygger starka varumärken
- Stimulerar din säljkår
- Attraherar rätt målgrupper
- Får dina affärer att växa globalt
- Optimerar ditt utbyte av Internet

Kort och gott, vi hjälper internationella B2B-företag att lyckas.

Några som valt att arbeta med oss är:

AAK	CellaVision	Lantmännen
AkkaFRAKT	Cramo	MCT Brattberg
Alfa Laval	DIAB	Metso
ArjoHuntleigh	Duni	Munkfors
ASSA ABLOY	Enfo	Nederman
Awapatent	Gyproc	Nibe
Axis	Helsingborgs stad	Peab
Bluetooth SIG	HemoCue	Ruukki
Borgestad	JBT Corporation	Securitas
Bostik	Kockums	Sulzer
Bring	Kullaflyg	Woody

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