

Integrated Marketing Communication Portfolio Proposal

Integrated Marketing Communication Portfolio

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COM 590 Capstone

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Executive Summary

This document provides the rationale for my final portfolio project. I have included my best work from the IMC program at UNCW as well as two projects from my time in undergrad. Each project applies IMC theory to solve various IMC issues. My portfolio is organized into three different categories, branding and organizational analysis, crisis communication solutions, and applied learning IMC campaigns. The methodology, theory, and application of IMC are discussed in each featured project. Viewers of the portfolio can see my growth and development in IMC through professionally written documents, visual aids, and oral presentations. Please view the entire portfolio at the end of the rationale (see *Appendix A*).

The portfolio will provide a reference for potential employers as I enter into the field of IMC. Currently, I am seeking entry-level roles in the marketing and advertising industries in Charlotte, North Carolina

Introduction

My portfolio showcases the work I have completed in the Integrated Marketing Communication graduate program at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. The purpose of the portfolio is to demonstrate my knowledge of different applied IMC and IMC theories through my various projects. My portfolio will be utilized after my graduation to present to potential employers and clients. The completion of my portfolio has helped me navigate my expectations for my future professional endeavors.

Branding & Organizational Analysis

COM 532 - Brand Analysis - Cleveland Browns Football Organization

My team and I conducted a brand analysis on the Cleveland Browns Football organization. More specifically, I led the team in analyzing the messaging and communication aspects of the team's branding. The Cleveland Browns organization has one of the most loyal fanbases in the league which was the guiding idea for the analysis. Based on this, we curated recommendations for the football team based on Turner and Tajfel's Social Identity Theory which can be understood as social identity based on group membership and how it promotes purpose, self-worth, and belonging (McLeod, 1970). We worked to redirect the team's brand image towards its philanthropic endeavors and refocus attention on the loyal fanbase. Our brand analysis provides professional recommendations to improve communication strategies and reinforce the Cleveland Brown brand image.

The intended audience is the Cleveland Browns' communication or marketing department. The brand analysis of the Cleveland Browns is a great addition to my portfolio as it demonstrates my ability to analyze important aspects of branding as well as discover the relationship between sports fandom and IMC. The analysis can be used as a reference for employers or clients who are looking to hire someone with branding expertise. The project focuses on applying IMC research to analyze an organization's artifacts to understand brand offerings, audience, and current messaging strategies to form brand recommendations.

COM 533 - Communication Audit - Monkee's of Blowing Rock

Monkee's clothing stores are a series of franchised boutiques located throughout the southeast with more than forty locations to date. Monkee's of Blowing Rock is owner-operated, built on a small hardworking team, and it is one of the most successful stores in the franchise. The communication audit provides an in-depth assessment of Monkee's of Blowing Rock's internal and external communication strategies as well as insight into the organizational culture and organizational control at Monkee's. Qualitative data was collected through a series of interviews, surveys, and artifacts based on consistency, effectiveness, and inclusivity. The findings were presented in a memo and verbal presentation, determining that Monkee's has satisfactory communication and a strong organizational culture but lacks inclusivity standards. Additionally, most communication issues stemmed from the owner of the store. Based on the idea that employees are controlled through organizational identification. Cultural leaders aim for identification by creating a team atmosphere, Monkee's has a role culture with a concertive control strategy and a normative approach with employees (Gossett, 2009; Tracy, 2009).

The intended audience for this specific communication audit is the management team at Monkees of Blowing Rock to implement new strategies in the workplace. It is necessary to include the communication audit in my portfolio because it demonstrates my ability to assess organizational communication and showcases my work with actual clients. The ability to perform a communication audit and present the findings is important in the communication marketing industry. The purpose of the communication audit is to understand organizational strategy identify any external or internal communication issues, and provide recommendations to enhance the organizational culture (Gossett, 2009). The application of Organizational Control Theory and Organizational Culture is necessary when performing a communication audit. Identities were hidden during data collection to ensure the privacy of participants and all conversations were non-judgemental and unbiased to preserve accuracy.

COM 534 - Ethical Rebranding Analysis - Allies for Every Child

Allies for Every Child is a non-profit organization that serves underprivileged children in Los Angeles. Formerly known as the West Side Children's Center, in 2019 the children's center started the process of rebranding as its services were needed beyond the western area of Los Angeles. The memo and presentation explore the universal humanitarian approach in the rebranding of Allies for Every Child and the implications this may have on the future of rebranding non-profits. In this particular case, the universal-humanitarian approach is taken to provide the greatest good for the greatest amount of people (Arnett et al, 2018). The expansion of the organization sets out to protect the universal good of childhood and well-being for as many kids as possible while still providing quality care.

The intended audience for the memo and presentation is my peers in the IMC program but can now be utilized as an example of my experience in rebranding. Professionally, this project demonstrates my ability to analyze the rebranding process through the lens of communication ethics. Communication ethics theories are used to guide or frame decision-making throughout the field of integrated marketing communication (Arnett et al,

2018). The analysis showcases my ethical literacy through the application of the universal-humanitarian communication approach to a preexisting IMC campaign.

Crisis Communication & Response

COM 537 - Paracrisis Identification & Response - Balenciaga

Balenciaga is a high-end designer brand known for its luxury clothing and accessories. The analysis focuses on Balenciaga and the brand's response to the paracrisis that ensued after the luxury brand created explicit content in two consecutive campaigns. The content featured young children in inappropriate clothing as well as a court document concerning child pornography. This situation was completely preventable and outraged the public. While Balenciaga's repentance strategy was somewhat adequate in resolving the paracrisis, I formulated a three-part social media response on Balenciaga's behalf to rectify the unethical messaging in the campaign. In the response, I emphasized the idea that Balenciaga needs to donate to the National Children's Alliance in addition to its partnership.

The intended audience for my paracrisis identification and response is any communication professional interested in implicating a crisis prevention plan or crisis communication team into its IMC plan. The paracrisis research and response display my ability to identify potential paracrisis situations, communicate effective responses, and formulate solutions. A paracrisis is a "reputational threat" that escalates into a crisis as public backlash to the situation increases (Coombs & Holladay, 2012). Timely crisis communication is the key difference between paracrisis and crisis. Most importantly, crisis communication is built upon the foundations of communication ethics. Communication ethics play a crucial role when responding to crises and most importantly, preventing them.

COM 537 - White Paper & Infographic - User-generated Content

User-generated content is one of the most popular and cost-effective forms of advertising today and is simply content created by social media users. The success of UGC is because it is genuine and doesn't feel like typical advertising to social media users. UGC is quite new and the ethical guidelines surrounding the marketing tactic are blurred. This white paper informs readers of the three main risks associated with the application of user-generated content as well as three branded solutions to avoid the risks. Additionally, the white paper offers a branded solution, the UGC Reward App. The app moderates UGC, facilitates a relationship between creators and companies, and offers in-app incentives. Additionally, I created an infographic that visually demonstrates the benefits and risks of user-generated content that illustrates the findings within the white paper.

I chose to showcase the white paper in my portfolio because it demonstrates my ability to synthesize information into a white paper, and how to prevent crises and create solutions and opportunities in crisis scenarios. Additionally, the white paper explores how UGC frames advertising content in a humanistic manner that is more appealing to viewers in comparison to traditional advertising. Goffman's Framing Theory is crucial for the planning of media campaigns in advertising, public relations, and political sectors" (Volkmer, 2009). The intended audience for the white paper is the leadership of any organization interested in or already using

user-generated content as a part of their marketing plan. As a communication professional it is important to know the implications that a crisis has on an organization's brand image as well as how to create opportunities from threats. Crisis prevention and preparation are integral roles in creating IMC plans for organizations (Ulmer et al., 2023).

Applied Learning: IMC Campaigns

COM 536 - Digital Storytelling Campaign Portfolio - The Ordinary Skincare Brand

The Digital Storytelling Campaign compiles multiple deliverables I created that utilize various signature stories that promote a “new or improved must-have” or game-changing subcategory for the Ordinary skincare brand (Aaker, 2020). The Ordinary is a leader in the skincare industry, providing no-gimmick, functional beauty products. The game-changing subcategory is Tretinoin, a prescription strength retinol that hypothetically would be available over the counter provided by the Ordinary. The digital campaign portfolio consists of a podcast, video ads, a TikTok, and a blog post that work together to promote Tretinoin while staying true to the brand identity of The Ordinary. The mock campaign applies various aspects of IMC to promote brand growth and visibility in the marketplace (Aaker, 2018).

The intended audience for the campaign content is the Ordinary's customers and new target markets to encourage consumers to purchase Tretinoin. Storytelling, designing digital content, and campaign management are all demonstrated in this project making it a great addition to the portfolio. I would feel confident presenting this digital storytelling campaign to a future employer or potential client as it showcases my creative assets. The digital campaign is a praxis-informed project where storytelling and subcategorization are applied in a creative mock campaign. Success in this project can be attributed to the application of storytelling, creativity, design, target audience research, and brand analysis.

COM 539 - Applied Learning Project - Junior Seahawks Hockey League

The applied learning project was a team effort to create and implement an IMC plan for the Junior Seahawks Hockey League based in Wilmington, NC. I specifically worked as the project manager and created all deliverables for community outreach solutions. The project goal was to provide the Junior Seahawks with a multitude of marketing strategies to help reach the teams' communication marketing goals in the future. Additionally, the project employed business communication principles and simulated an actual working environment. As a team, we navigated working with the client as well as working through communication issues internally. The intended audience for the project was Hockey Director, Rich Brouwer so that he could implement an IMC plan for his hockey league based on our recommendations and deliverables.

The applied learning project is an important addition to my portfolio as it demonstrates my ability to collaborate with others in a team setting, and showcases my creative planning skills. Functional group communication was tested throughout the project as we learned how our communication styles and practices affected the outcome of our decisions on the project (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). Gouran and Hirokawa state communication enables a group to resume movement along the goal path (Salazar, 2009). The applied learning project exhibits many IMC concepts learned over the entire program such as crafting memos, performing client research,

presenting brand recommendations, and creating deliverables. The project encapsulates each course throughout the program and simulates working on a team with an actual client. Additionally, client deliverables exhibit knowledge of design and communication as a part of an IMC campaign.

Appalachian State Undergraduate - Campaign Project - Lost Province Brewing Co.

Similarly to the Junior Seahawks applied learning project, my team and I partnered with Lost Province Brewing Company in Boone, North Carolina to implement a campaign that would target Appalachian State students. After conducting research and analyzing data, we created a creative brief to present our campaign objectives and relay our research. The recommendations we implemented for the brewery were student discount nights, Appalachian State football viewing events, and expanding social media presence overall. We created a variety of deliverables for Lost Province to implement into its marketing campaign. We collaborated directly with the brewery and the campaign was intended to be used directly by the marketing manager at Lost Province Brewing Co.

Even though this campaign project was completed before my time at UNCW, it exemplifies the application of IMC theory just as the applied learning project we completed in COM 539. While it is not as advanced as the applied learning project, it applies formative research, creative solutions, and brand analysis while fostering collaboration with teammates and clients. As a team, we implemented the back-flow communication model to create a campaign that reflected the needs of our target market (Kitchen & Tourky, p.127 2022). As college students, we used our preferences in which we would potentially want to communicate with Lost Province (Kitchen & Tourky, 2022 p.127). The Back-Flow Communication model is “Surveys, questionnaires, or interviews are conducted with customers and prospects. We ask them to rate the various ways they would like to receive information from our company about products, services, offers, promotions, and the like” (Kitchen & Tourky, 2022 p.127). I believe that this project is an important addition to my portfolio to supplement my experience in working with actual clients in an educational setting.

Appalachian State Undergraduate- Brochure Design Project - Virginia Creeper Trail

For this project, I researched the Virginia Creeper Trail and translated my findings into a well-written and designed brochure about the biking trail to entice visitors. The brochure is a graphic design project that showcases my technical design abilities and incorporates the ability to translate information into design and advertising. The project should be included in my portfolio because it not only showcases my Adobe skillset but also my visual communication skillset. The intended audience is the park office management at the Virginia Creeper Trail but can also be used to showcase my technical design work in a professional setting. Visual design is one of my stronger skills so the brochure will supplement my portfolio in terms of design work and showcase my creative abilities.

The Virginia Creeper Trail brochure applies research, branding analysis, and design to create a thoughtfully curated deliverable for a client. The brochure design process was informed through the application of various visual communication theories (Hill, 2009). The images,

theme, and typography throughout the brochure serve as symbols and signs that represent the park and provide visual meaning that supports the brochure text (Hill, 2009). While this project is design-oriented I feel that it is an important addition to my IMC portfolio and showcases other skills that compliment my work throughout the program. The brochure employs digital storytelling to create a narrative that appeals to the target market of trail users while staying true to the preexisting branding for the Virginia Creeper Trail. All photographs were provided by my instructor at the time and are copyright-free.

Project Process & Methodology

My project was carefully planned visually through a Gantt Chart that breaks down each milestone and task of the portfolio. I added contingencies to ensure that I met all deadlines concerning each project milestone. After deciding to complete the portfolio as my final project, I carefully reviewed my work from each previous class in the program and met with Dr. Willingham. I also sorted through my best work from my undergraduate program as well as my professional projects. I decided to include projects that had the best remarks from my professors to ensure that my work would be representative of the program. Next, I gathered my resources for each project and its rationale and compiled them into an annotated bibliography. After this, I completed the project proposal, considered peer feedback, and continued editing. I started to build the framework of my website and met with Dr. Willingham again. By the end of February, I have completed the Project Final Draft and have the first draft of my portfolio website. I attended one final meeting with Dr. Willingham and have concluded the rationale, portfolio, and presentation. I plan to present my portfolio on Wednesday, March 6th.

Relevance to COM 590 Capstone Learning Outcomes

The portfolio project demonstrates the application of IMC theories and concepts I have learned throughout my time in the IMC program. Each project presents a specific issue in IMC that is solved using IMC research, theory, and application. Findings from each project are presented in a professional manner (oral/visual presentation, memos, deliverables, and campaigns). Each project presents different IMC learning objectives, yet IMC concepts become fluid throughout each course. As I progressed through the program I began to understand the connection between different IMC concepts and how they interact. For example, the digital storytelling campaign not only includes the new concept of storytelling and branding, but its foundations are built on IMC research, communication ethics, and organizational communication. Again crisis communication cannot be explained without consciously considering brand image, communication ethics, and organizational control. Integrated marketing communication is built on various concepts of marketing, advertising, and communication.

Conclusion

My IMC portfolio gives insight into who I am as an IMC student and my goals for my future as an IMC professional. I will present my portfolio as a professional collection of IMC projects to potential employers and clients in the future. Each project included in my final


portfolio exemplifies my best work throughout the IMC program as well as my skills and interests in the field of IMC. After the completion of the final defense presentation, I hope to continue to add future projects to my portfolio as my career in IMC unfolds.

Appendix A

Link to full portfolio: <https://mlh4087.wixsite.com/mysite>

Integrated Marketing Communication

**Hello. I'm Madelyn Hough,
a recently graduated Integrated
Marketing Communication
professional. I look forward to
working with you.**

A portrait of Madelyn Hough, a young woman with long blonde hair, smiling. She is wearing a white lace-trimmed top with a yellow and green braided necklace. The photo is set against a background of a stone wall and is framed with a dark green border. The entire graphic is set on a background with orange and green circular patterns.

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