

Transmedia Marketing Marketing Plan Template

This template from Anne Zeiser's *Transmedia Marketing: From Film and TV to Games and Digital Media* will help you frame your film, TV program, book, game, digital media, or transmedia project's content and marketing plan. In its entirety, this outline covers the Four "Ps" of Marketing — Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. After the analysis of your project, the plan follows a hierarchical structure beginning with broad goals first, followed by objectives, strategies, and tactics – each supporting the previous category. The promotional tactics will vary by platform, genre, target audience, topic, environmental landscape, and many other factors of your project. You can flesh this out with a combination of narrative and bullets. There is leeway in the detail and you should use what works best to communicate your vision and activities.

Title Page

- The title is your media property's working title followed by "Marketing Plan"
- Art (photo, painting, screen shot, or logo can set the tone, but is optional)
- Date (plans are usually updated)

Executive Summary

This two-paragraph project and marketing overview is critical. It should include, but not necessarily in this order:

- Project description (genre, archetypal story, media platforms, plot, characters, mood, themes)
- Marketing and environmental overview (project goals or mission, timing, key Environmental Landscape and SWOT Analysis points, target audiences, overall marketing approach to reach audiences).

It sets up the detailed plan that will follow. It shouldn't be didactic, but must be compelling and engaging. The executive summary, used here and elsewhere, is an important tool to persuade partners or funders to come on board.

Story Bible Overview

This section is optional and primarily applies to fictional properties. It can be just a paragraph or a few bullets if a longer treatment, story bible, or script is available:

- Characters
- Mood
- Theme
- Plot (conflict, contingency storylines)
- Audience calls-to-action (what audiences must do/where they go to get more story, character, plot information)
- Story timeline

Transmedia Platforms

Here, you identify which platforms your transmedia project will use, and which are primary, secondary, or tertiary. Provide a brief description of how your project will play out on each platform and how the platforms relate to each other:

- Film
- Television
- Radio
- Books
- Publications (newspapers, magazines)
- Games
- Digital (Web sites, blogs, social media platforms, apps)
- Experiential (theater, concerts, exhibitions/live installations, events, theme parks, toys)
- Other platforms (including merchandise, music CDs, home video DVDs/Blu-ray)

Distribution

Here, distribution partners (or desired distributors) are described. If there is more than one media platform, each platform's distributor should be identified and the relationships between them should also be included. This section may be combined with the Transmedia Platform section, together providing detail on platforms and distributors:

- Distributors (by platform)
- Releases (how audience accesses the media, windowing of content)
- Timeline (of release by platform)

Situation Analysis

Overview

The situation analysis may begin with a short narrative overview of the overall landscape and challenges and opportunities, but may not be necessary if these critical elements are covered in your executive summary.

Environmental Landscape

In this section, you use secondary research (from existing sources) to fully lay out the "situation" in which you're developing, launching, and marketing your project. You must look at the overall media landscape, as well as the specific marketplace in which your project will be operating. This includes examining similar projects on your project's platforms or within its genre:

- General leisure landscape
 - Leisure time trends
 - Entertainment trends and usage
 - Technology penetration and trends
 - Film, TV, games, digital trends
 - Industry marketing trends

- Competitive audit by platform and genre
 - Specific platform and genre trends
 - Segment analysis by platform, genre, and target audience
 - Competitive project marketing analysis (taglines, audiences, marketing tactics, spending)

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT Analysis examines your project’s assets and liabilities by evaluating its **SWOT**:

- **S**trengths (of your project)
- **W**eakness (of your project)
- **O**pportunities (in the marketplace)
- **T**hreats — or Challenges (in the marketplace)

Strengths and Weaknesses are an *internal* assessment of your media property (or Product) and Opportunities and Threats are an *external* assessment of the marketplace.

Marketing Research

All good marketing is based on audience insight and data collection. Whether you have a large budget or not, you must conduct some informal research with your potential target audiences to guide marketing approaches, messages, spokespeople, and other key marketing decisions. In this section, you indicate what research has already been conducted and what additional secondary and primary research you will conduct for your transmedia project:

- Secondary research (collection of existing data or research that is pertinent)
- Primary research (research that is conducted specifically for your project)
- Quantitative (statistically-significant research conducted among a larger target audience population from which conclusions can be drawn: online panels, telephone surveys, etc.)
- Qualitative (not statistically-significant, but offers “directional” insight from small audience segments: focus groups, Beta-testing, dial-testing, etc.)

Target Audiences

Here you identify your project’s key audiences. Because your project may have many audiences, it’s important to determine which are primary. Don’t just say “general public”; be targeted:

- Influencer audiences
 - Press, industry leaders, distributors, tastemakers, educators, government officials
- Public audiences
 - Varies greatly, but can range from soccer moms to tech-savvy college students (be specific)
- Demographic profile
 - Age, gender, ethnicity, education, household income, geography
- Psychographic profile
 - Predispositions and interests

Goals and Objectives

This is the heart and soul of your marketing plan. Goals are broader strokes on what you are trying to achieve. Objectives pay off on the goals and are tangible, concrete, and quantifiable. Sometimes goals and objectives are combined and only goals are used, but in this case, the goals should be measurable:

- Goals (general intentions of what is to be achieved; articulate one to three main goals)
- Objectives (specific, time-bound, and measurable through evaluation; articulate key objectives for each of the general areas you plan to measure)
- Psychographic profile
 - Quantitative objectives measures (box office sales, Niensens, downloads, views, unique visitors, click-throughs, time spent viewing, shares, tweets, GRPs, media impressions, ad equivalencies, audience awareness)
 - Qualitative objectives measures (reviews, key message pick-up, anecdotal comments, buzz, cultural currency, audience perceptions)

Marketing Strategies

Marketing strategies explain the “how” for goals and objectives. They offer approaches you might use to reach audiences and achieve goals. There are usually several strategies that support an objective and several tactics that pay off on a strategy:

- Strategies (raise awareness among tastemakers, launch product at critical timing or event, create dialogue among certain target audiences)

Branding and Positioning

This is where you establish guidelines for how you want to establish a persona and give voice to your project:

- Brand attributes
- Brand essence (internal expression of what your project is)
- Brand positioning (external expression of what your project is)
- Messaging (what you want to communicate and how)
- Spokespeople (who will represent the project to the public)

Strategic Partners

By forging partnerships with entities that believe in your project and have capacity in areas in which you don't, you can give your project breadth and depth. Many partners will offer support in more than one of these areas:

- Media (media creators, distributors, publishers)
- Marketing and promotion (distributors, sponsors)
- Outreach (membership organizations, partners)
- Cause (non-governmental organizations [NGOS], charities)

Marketing Action Plan—Tactics

This is the nuts and bolts of your marketing plan and where the Promotion “P” of your plan begins. There is no template for this section because your tactics will be determined by many things—from your goals and audiences to your platforms and budget. But ensure your tactics follow the outline and flow of the rest of the plan. Activities that target the media and entertainment industry may help you secure funding, distribution, or industry buzz early on. You’ll also have many marketing activities to reach out to your public audiences to get them to watch, listen to, read, play, or interact with your project.

You can set up this section in a number of ways—by *timeframe* with ordered tactics within each phase, by *audiences* with tactics targeted to each, or by *strategy* with various tactics that pay off on each. There is no right or wrong; it’s intuitive. If others understand it, then it’s working. These examples will get you started:

- Influencer tactics
 - Industry trade publicity
 - Markets, festivals, and industry events
 - Awards

- Public tactics
 - Consumer publicity
 - Trailers and sizzle reels
 - Advertising
 - Online marketing
 - Social media
 - Public events

Evaluation

Since you have set measurable goals, you should evaluate what worked and what didn’t, both mid-stream and at your project’s end. It’s best to conduct your evaluation against your project’s stated goals and objectives. Some aspects of your plan are likely to be slam-dunk successes, while others are riskier and are meant to be learning opportunities.

When you are setting goals it’s important to identify the difference:

- Goals and objectives results (measures *exactly* what you set out to achieve as designated in your Goals and Objectives)
 - Quantitative objectives (box office sales, Niensens, downloads, views, unique visitors, click-throughs, time spent viewing, shares, tweets, GRPs, media impressions, ad equivalencies, audience awareness)
 - Qualitative objectives (reviews, key message pick-up, anecdotal comments, buzz, cultural currency, audience perceptions)

Project Timeline

While it's impossible to accurately predict how long it will take to fund, develop, produce, launch, and market a project, estimating a timeline is critical. Timing affects funding, distribution, launch strategies, and much more. Below are phases in which your planning and execution activities might occur. Ascribe estimated dates within your timeline:

- Development (research, planning)
- Production (creating content and marketing elements)
- Launch/distribution (where the most content and marketing activity occurs)
- Post-launch (continued deeper audience engagement activities)
- Ongoing (maintenance activities to keep project relevant; social media, new content)

Budget

This is the section where the rubber meets the road. Start with a marketing budget based on industry norms. On average, big film studios spend one-half to one-third of production budgets on marketing, and smaller companies spend about one-quarter. TV networks and cable companies spend about one-third of the production budget, and games publishers spend about one-third. So, taking the industry average, you should aim for about one-third of your production budget for marketing your transmedia project. If you're an indie producer, be sure to include marketing costs in your crowdsourced fundraising goals. While you must be able to pay for your ideas, don't shut down a great idea because of money. If you have the potential for a unique project and have articulated a brilliant marketing plan, partners and distributors can help fund both the production and the marketing. The media and entertainment industry understands that success in today's world requires marketing. Still, you can develop fantastic marketing plans with small budgets if you wisely use assets that you "own" or "co-own."

Set up your budget by activity or timeline, but ensure it corresponds directly with the sections of your marketing plan. Within the plan, your budget may just have total amounts for key categories and you can create a detailed budget as an attachment. The budget should include:

- Funding strategy and sources (current and prospective)
- Resources and personnel required
- Production budget by activity (seven key categories)
 - Above-the-line (creatives such as producers, directors, writers, actors, casting directors and their costs such as travel, development, and assistants)
 - Below-the-line (crew, equipment, food, transportation, props, locations and other resources)
 - Post-production (editor, composer, sound designer, visual effects, colorist, etc.)
 - Overhead (office space, legal fees, postage, etc.)
 - Marketing and distribution (research, advertising creative, media buys, public relations, social media, Web and digital design, graphic design, photography, opens and trailers, events, film prints, supplies, travel, etc.)
 - Contingency (a percentage of the overall budget; extra money set aside for something that pops up that you want to ensure you can do)
 - Insurance (a percentage of overall budget; or can be placed in budget sections)

You also may want to develop a phased version of the budget, based on a timeline that corresponds with fiscal years, existing financing, or with the stages of production: development, pre-production, production, and post-production.

Project Team

This critical section underscores your project creators' expertise and the project's pedigree. Cite other similar or successful projects and relevant experience of key project personnel and partners:

- Biographies (around 150 words each)
- Partners' boilerplates (one-paragraph company descriptors for the project, production company, distributors, promotional or outreach partners)

The marketing plan begins as an internal document to be shared among the project team members, but eventually, after it is refined, it may become a more public document used with prospective partners and stakeholders. If you are sending it out for these purposes, your marketing plan may also be accompanied by a longer project treatment, story bible, or script and a detailed budget.

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Companion content to Chapter 4, "The Marketing Plan" of *Transmedia Marketing: From Film and TV to Games and Digital Media*