

## The Five and a Half M's of Marketing Communications

1. **Map** – Identify clear project objectives before considering the best strategic and tactical routes to get there.
2. **Markets** – Determine the ideal target audiences and the best channels to reach them.  
  
2 ½. **Media** (Paid, Earned & Digital/Social) – Media shouldn't be viewed as an audience, but rather as avenues to reach target audiences. Large scale media buys are expensive, especially given the diversification of modern communications channels, but there's still value in investing in specific outlets that generate targeted user traffic based on common goals and/or interests. Digital content also assists in augmenting message via social networking sites where information is easily posted and shared among friends and colleagues with personal credibility among social circles.
3. **Message** – Define three to five core message points that are both concise and consistent. Avoid acronyms and industry terms that may not resonate with typical consumers. Ensure that all content (text, audio, photos, video) is produced in a way that is best suited for the intended audience and channel.
4. **Monitor** – Pay close attention to relevant conversations both online and off. Engage with key influencers where appropriate. In some cases, your best advocates may consist of strong community voices outside of your industry.
5. **Measurement** – The ultimate success of the project should be determined by your ability to achieve the objectives laid out in the "Map" phase mentioned in Step 1 above. Additional statistics and metrics are important, but keep the numbers in perspective. For example, if your mission is to sell a product online, 1 million page views of a website will ring hollow if only a handful of sales are generated.

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