



# Communications

## Managing Your Company Image

The success of most business decisions today is directly related to effective strategic communications, both internally and externally.

A properly executed communications strategy ensures everyone understands the “why” of the strategy decision and “how” their daily work contributes to the overall big picture.

Michael Best Strategies has a full-service Strategic Communications team – built by proactive professionals with decades of real-world experiences and proven track records in delivering clear and winning narratives to lay the groundwork for smart business growth and successful public policy outcomes

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## Value-Added Service Offerings



### Branding

Clearly define the emotional and functional promises that drive brand loyalty for your company, while creatively and consistently communicating about how your products, services, and people deliver on those promises.

Your brand is your reputation. It is the sum total of all the interactions with employees, customers, suppliers, and other key stakeholders. Everybody has a brand. Whether you like your brand or whether your customers like your brand is another thing.

We partner with your team to affect what people think, feel, say and do when it comes to your brand promises, when it comes to trusting your people and processes, when it comes to buying and recommending your products and services to others. We discover the right words, images, colors, and sounds that inform, engage, persuade and prompt the right actions by employees, customers, investors, public officials, and other key stakeholders.



## Competitive Intelligence

Accurately assess your competitors, their financial capacity and management capabilities to deliver, gain new insights into the competitive marketplace and identify relevant growth opportunities.

Competitive Intelligence is the process of gathering, tracking, analyzing and acting upon information about your competitors and your marketplace. With a clear understanding of what's going on outside the walls of the business, executive leaders are confident in their long-term planning abilities. Your sales reps are confident in their objection-handling abilities. Marketing teams are confident in their messaging and copywriting abilities.

Competitive Intelligence is a valuable input for **strategic planning** and **branding**. If you are going to develop a unique strategy and brand, you need an accurate, current picture of the competitors and marketplace. Competitive Intelligence also is an effective tool in **mergers and acquisitions**. While the target's financials are essential, what are the intangibles? You buy more than a balance sheet. You buy talent and reputation, local business and community partnerships, as well as customer and vendor relationships.

As you survey the key decisions your company is facing in the next 12 to 18 months, what information about your competitors and the marketplace do you need to make better, more informed decisions?



## Crisis Communications

Whether it's having a communications strategy in place or dealing with an unexpected situation, our team develops crisis communications plans and messaging for service companies, manufacturers, and a wide assortment of businesses and nonprofit organizations.

Members of our team have provided on-site assistance and support during various crisis situations, and we often advise on dealing with the media, social media, and stakeholder outreach during a crisis.



## Grassroots

Harness the power of grassroots and grass tops efforts to put your issue on the radar with decision makers and the media.

From multi-state organizing campaigns that mobilize supporters to local efforts focused on city hall, the ability to motivate people into action is often the difference between success and failure. These grassroots efforts aimed at engaging activists and impacted residents on the ground – along with grass tops efforts that engage elected and community leaders – are the most efficient way to amplify the voices of local influencers and to cut through the noise. Our bipartisan team of experts has a passion for organization and stands ready to execute a grassroots campaign that helps position clients for maximum impact.



## Issue Management

Not everything is a crisis, and savvy executives know “being the rider rather than the horse” is usually the better position to be in when dealing with controversial topics.

Issues like utility rate increases, regulatory enforcement actions, legislative initiatives, and similar topics can become a crisis if not properly handled. By developing credible messages, planning for likely media reaction, and anticipating external feedback, Strategies aids clients in preparing for the worst and hoping for the best when dealing with difficult issues in the public sphere.



### Litigation Support

While saying little or offering no comment on major litigation is often a wise approach, the court of public opinion can sometimes be as important as the court of law.

Strategies partners with lawyers and legal teams on high profile litigation, working hand in hand to develop and implement the best communications strategy to protect an organization. Our team has assisted businesses that have initiated litigation and helped prepare them for the inevitable attention from both internal and external stakeholders.



### Marketing Research

Gain greater insights into your customers, influencers, and employees to drive relevant conversations, deeper engagement, and prompt action.

The goal of market research is to provide company leaders with accurate, actionable information about consumers, a product, service or cause. Market research helps to discern and analyze the needs of the market, the market size and the competition. Market research is a way of getting an overview of consumers' wants, needs and beliefs, as well as discovering how they act.

Market research helps marketing managers link the marketing variables with the environment and the consumers. It removes some of the uncertainty by providing relevant information. The techniques encompass both qualitative techniques such as focus groups, in-depth interviews, and ethnography, as well as quantitative techniques such as customer surveys and analysis of secondary data.



### Media and Public Relations

Combine media savvy and a clear message to frame – and win – the argument on your terms.

Success often requires a victory in the court of public opinion – and a strategic public relations plan is central to elevating an issue and driving a clear message that cuts through. From engaging with reporters and pitching stories to generating earned media and executing digital campaigns, a comprehensive plan can ensure that your message reaches – and persuades – your target audience. Advance your cause with a multi-channel, campaign-like effort that achieves your desired objectives.



### Strategic Communications

Consistently communicate relevant messages, through the right channels & measured against well-defined business goals and communications outcomes. It's the difference between doing communications stuff, and doing the **right** communications stuff.

Strategic communication stands at the intersection of management strategy and execution. It drives communications that, while different in style and purpose, have an inner coherence and consistency. Grounded in research, communication initiatives accurately align with the company's values and brand; for anything from improving internal training materials to launching a digital campaign for voting rights.

Strategic communications orchestrate multiple channels and settings to burnish a brand, influence public policy or promote a cause. It frames the discussions on topics and issues that are important to the organization, building reputational and street credibility. It's about positioning all communications, materials, social platforms, and media outreach with an eye to where you want to be not just this month, but next year and five years from now.



## Strategic Planning

Craft a winning strategy to sustainable, profitable growth, driven by a clear vision, defined mission, a strong value set connected to a larger purpose.

Business leaders often are so focused on immediate issues that they can lose sight of their ultimate objectives. While not a recipe for success, a sound strategic plan with realistic and attainable goals allows corporate leaders and entrepreneurs to think strategically and act operationally. Effective strategic plans are visionary, aspirational, conceptual, and directional.

A critical review of past performance by owners and management and crafting a strategic plan beyond normal budget horizons, requires a certain attitude of mind and predisposition. Essential elements include a focus on matters of strategic importance, separated from day-to-day, detached, realistic and critical, and reviewed and evaluated periodically. It's always useful to find third-party insights and experts who can help facilitate a process that allows leaders and managers to fully-engage in the planning process.

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