

WORKING_DRAFT

2024
Strategic Communications
Plan

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Introduction

The purpose of this plan is to improve the visibility, recognition, and engagement of the Working Draft magazine. By doing this, we will increase subscribers, viewers, and the quality of the Working Draft magazine. Our plan is focused on acquiring two important key publics: longform readers and Manitoban communicators.

We must embed a sense of community and credibility in our key publics to engage and attract them. Our strategic tactics and tools will strive for our aspired objectives from January 2025 to March 2025. To determine the success and expense of our strategic approaches, I have provided evaluation methods and an estimated budget.

Objectives

- Increase the number of subscribers to the Working Draft magazine newsletter from 146 to 200 by March 2025.
- Increase the number of subscribers who open or click our newsletters from 93 to 120 by March 2025.
- Increase active users on the Working Draft magazine from 7,400 to 8,000 by March 2025.
- Increase the highest-viewed article from 2,899 to 3,500 views by March 2025.



Situation analysis

Catalysts and context

To better understand our key publics, we must understand ourselves. This situation analysis will identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the Working Draft magazine and its newsletter. We do this to evaluate current landscapes to guide our strategic decisions.

Strengths

Low production costs: The Working Draft magazine offers opportunities for students to create content they are passionate about. In exchange, these students must work for free. However, students acquire valuable learning experiences from writing at the Working Draft magazine.

We can leverage engaged students by promoting experience rather than payment. To leverage this factor, the Working Draft magazine can arrange workshops on writing, graphic design, and website development. The Working Draft magazine can also hire experts – Anna Leventhal – to inspire students.

Unique selling point: The Working Draft magazine is the only student-produced and longform magazine in Manitoba. As an economic factor, the Working Draft magazine can advertise this unique selling point and attract sponsorships from businesses.

Archived content: The Working Draft magazine is entering its sixth year of publication. Over the years, the Working Draft magazine has created an archive of past articles. Some of these articles are considered timeless, so the Working Draft magazine can leverage this strength by using these articles whenever they want.

Loyal customers: The Working Draft magazine has built a strong community. Currently, the newsletter has 146 subscribers and 154 recipients. The newsletter has grown in subscribers and recipients since its creation. To leverage this strength, we can promote exclusive content and tailor our newsletters for our loyal customers.

Award-winning platform: The Working Draft magazine has won numerous publishing awards. This reputation contributed to acquiring our loyal customers. As one of my content pillars is promoting award-winning articles, I will leverage this strength by advertising the winning reputation of the Working Draft magazine.

Sustainability practices: The Working Draft magazine does not print a physical copy of its magazine. Genres and articles in the Working Draft magazine focus on our planet, health, and society. We can leverage this strength by partnering with environmentally friendly companies. In the newsletter or website, the Working Draft magazine can also highlight articles on sustainability topics.



Weaknesses

Online presence: The Working Draft magazine has an inconsistent publication approach. In the past, the Working Draft magazine has published its content in a three-month window. To mitigate this weakness, the Working Draft magazine can use search engine optimization for its key publics. Interactive features in our newsletter or magazine can also avoid this weakness.

Dependency on student contributions: The Working Draft magazine does not have the budget to hire writers, so it offers students an opportunity to gain publishing experience. However, the writing skills of students vary. With a structured publishing and feedback process, the Working Draft magazine can mitigate this weakness.

Limited resources: As the Working Draft magazine receives little funding, this restricts them from purchasing paid advertisements and paying salaries. Currently, the Working Draft magazine utilizes free social media platforms. However, the Working Draft magazine can mitigate this weakness by seeking sponsorships or donations from organizations.

Lack of strategic partnerships: The Working Draft magazine does not capitalize on collaboration opportunities with other publications. If the Working Draft magazine were to collaborate with a similar platform, more people would see who we are and what we do. The Working Draft magazine can promote past success and find partners to mitigate this weakness.



Opportunities

Promoting awards and accolades: The Working Draft magazine has built a reputation for publishing credible and award-winning content. In our newsletter, we will spotlight award-winning articles. This opportunity builds credibility and trustworthiness with our consumers.

Subscription incentives: The Working Draft magazine can establish incentives for its subscribers. These incentives can increase engagement rates and build a commitment to its customers. For ways to leverage this opportunity, the Working Draft magazine can create curated reading lists or reader submissions.

Threats

Legal challenges: The Working Draft magazine can face trademark, copyright, and defamation laws. To mitigate legal challenges, the Working Draft magazine can establish clear policies, offer mentoring programs, and create a crisis plan.

Increased competition: Increased competition may lead to fewer subscribers and a weak brand identity. The Working Draft magazine can mitigate this threat by monitoring competitors and enhancing its search engine optimization process.



Changing consumer preferences: As more people have turned to shorter content, the Working Draft magazine may lose customers for its longform publications. This can lead to less engagement and a decreased audience for the Working Draft magazine. To mitigate this threat, the Working Draft magazine can learn what their key publics prefer.

Key public analysis and desired outcomes

Readers who enjoy longform writing

By showcasing our community and diversity, longform readers will receive access to multiple perspectives, quality content, and engagement opportunities. For the Working Draft magazine, we will improve our reputation, build a stronger community, and increase our readership.

Role: As actors decide on outcomes for an organization, longform readers would fill this role. If longform readers dislike a strategic approach, the Working Draft magazine will need to adapt.

Pain points: Longform writing is a large investment of time, so longform readers expect quality and interesting articles from the Working Draft magazine. As readers build habits around their content consumption, longform readers do not appreciate the inconsistent publishing approach of the Working Draft magazine. With longform readers enjoying highly specific articles, they may have difficulty finding and navigating our website for certain articles.

Geographical and informational habits: Longform readers are likely to attend writing festivals, book clubs, and bookstores. Longform readers gather their information from longform magazines – The Narwhal – and news outlets. They care about creativity and are intrigued by awards.

Personal preferences: Longform readers expect an informable and personable tone because they enjoy critical thinking and want to find a connection with our writers. As the material in the Working Draft magazine is long, critical, and award-winning, longform readers likely attended or completed post-secondary education.

Cultural norms and preferences: Longform readers have created a bond with reading and crave it. As the Working Draft magazine cannot publish consistently, this causes confusion between them and the Working Draft magazine. However, longform readers enjoy the quality and trustworthy articles the Working Draft magazine publishes.

History: Longform readers perceive the Working Draft magazine as a reputable and creative source of writing. They have been loyal readers, but they are demanding. As they tend to be returning customers, they are familiar with Working Draft's content and reputation. Longform readers have a positive attitude to the Working Draft magazine because of the creative writing it provides.

Longform readers appreciate giving feedback. They may be annoyed with the limited opportunities the Working Draft magazine provides them to voice their opinions. If Working Draft was to ignore longform readers, it may lose engagement and fail to foster a sense of community.

Needs: Longform readers need to be entertained and reassured of the quality content in the Working Draft magazine. By showcasing its awards and standards, the Working Draft magazine can accomplish this. Longform readers want diverse topics and perspectives, so I will spotlight timeless articles.

Outcomes

- Increase the average number of views per active user to three by March 2025.

Professional communicators in Manitoba

With our intended strategy, the Working Draft magazine will provide Manitoban communicators with credible, relevant, and informative articles. In return, Manitoban communicators will offer advice and support for ethical standards. They will also build the number of subscribers to our newsletter.

Role: Manitoban communicators are actors and enablers. As their attention defines Working Draft's decisions on publishing certain content, this would lead them to be actors. However, Manitoban communicators can create opportunities and build networks for students.

Pain points: Manitoban communicators are knowledgeable of the current news landscape, so they will likely be frustrated by irrelevant information and articles. Manitoban communicators need to be credible in their careers, so the Working Draft magazine must avoid a lack of credibility and professionalism.

Geographical and informational habits: Manitoban communicators attend networking events to share information and build strategic relationships. For education purposes, Manitoban communicators visit colleges or universities to share their experiences. They host and visit workshops to ensure future communicators understand ethical codes. Manitoban communicators gather information from local news outlets.

Personal preferences: Manitoban communicators expect a clear and professional tone from the Working Draft magazine. As most communication jobs require a degree or diploma, Manitoban communicators have completed a post-secondary education.

Cultural norms and preferences: With not every student having work experience in the communications industry, the Working Draft magazine may produce content not to the standards of Manitoban communicators. The Working Draft magazine does not always publish information-heavy articles. This might frustrate Manitoban communicators.

History: As many writers of the Working Draft magazine pursue careers in the communications industry, Manitoban communicators have heard of this magazine. Manitoban communicators have a positive attitude to the Working Draft magazine because of the quality writing and credible information it provides. If the Working Draft magazine were to avoid Manitoban communicators, it would lose valuable relationships and credibility.

Needs: Manitoban communicators need to see relevant articles and acts of credibility by the Working Draft magazine. The Working Draft magazine can leverage its awards and relevancy by promoting award-winning and timely articles. To leverage its ethics and guidelines, the Working Draft magazine can showcase its commitment to ethical journalism.

Outcomes

- Decrease our newsletter unsubscribes by two by March 2025.

Strategies

Leveraging award-winning articles

Our first strategic approach is to leverage award-winning articles published by the Working Draft magazine. I have chosen this approach because our key publics find this trustworthy, diverse, and credible. This also aligns with an objective the Working Draft magazine suggested.



Key publics: Manitoban communicators enjoy credible and informative writing, so we plan to repurpose the best articles the Working Draft magazine has published. For longform readers, these award-winning articles feature creativity and are entertaining.

Strengths: With archived content on the Working Draft magazine website, we can easily find these articles and highlight them on our newsletter or website.

Principles of persuasion: When leveraging award-winning articles, the scarcity principle is in action. By emphasizing the exceptionalness of winning an award, people may perceive this as a limited opportunity to read these articles. Authority is displayed by leveraging award-winning articles because it creates credibility.

Exclusive content

The second strategic approach is creating exclusive content for our newsletter subscribers. I have chosen this approach because it shows our loyalty and ability to acknowledge our key publics.

Key publics: As our key publics enjoy different genres of articles, we will perform a personality test to identify their preferences. We will create a curated reading list for them with articles in the Working Draft magazine.

Strengths: This strategic approach incorporates numerous strengths from our situation analysis. Depending on our tools and tactics, we can promote our exclusive content with our archived content and the ability to acknowledge our subscribers. As this exclusive content will be produced by students, it will have low production costs.

Principles of persuasion: If the Working Draft magazine emphasizes the limited availability of exclusive content, this would incorporate the scarcity principle. The Working Draft magazine can provide exclusive content to align with the needs of our key publics to show the consistency principle.



Interactive newsletter experience

Our final strategic approach is delivering interactive features for our newsletter subscribers. By doing this, we hope to increase our click-through and open rates. I have chosen this because it aligns with our objectives. Our interactive features – feedback section – will allow our key publics to provide feedback on the Working Draft magazine.

As this approach intends to create the newsletter as a platform for interaction, I will also create an opportunity for our subscribers to publish an 800-word article in the Working Draft magazine. This tactic allows a subscriber to experience the publishing process of the Working Draft magazine.

Key publics: This strategic approach allows our key publics to be heard and connected to the Working Draft magazine.

Strengths: We will leverage our loyal customers by allowing them to be heard with our interactive content. Both these tactics will have low production costs.

Principles of persuasion: With subscribers making small commitments when interacting with our interactive content, this creates the consistency principle. As only one subscriber is chosen for the reader submission, the scarcity principle is displayed.

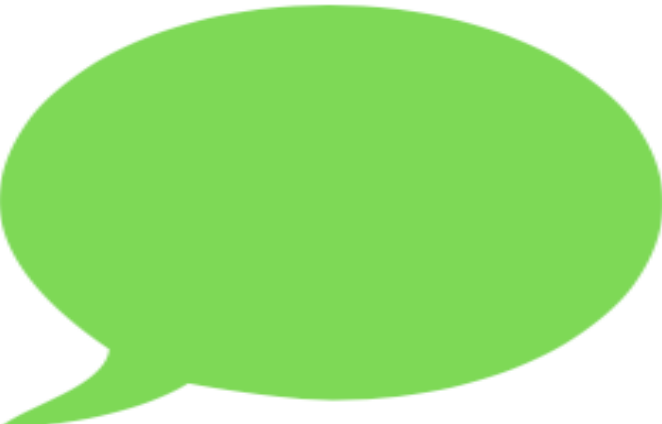
Core messages

Longform readers

Core message: The Working Draft magazine applauds your opinion and voice.

Manitoban communicators

Core message: We value credibility, relativeness, and authenticity.



Communication tactics and tools

This section of my strategic communications plan will serve as a blueprint for executing our strategic approaches. These tools and tactics target our key publics and leverage our strengths.

Tactic/tool	Key public	Cost	Content
Feedback section	Manitoban communicators and longform readers.	This tactic has a low cost because it will be completed by students using free programs. This tactic takes minimal time and will be incorporated in one newsletter.	The content in this tactic is built to create discussions and a sense of community. I will provide prompts in the feedback section about our newsletter and articles. We will provide information about this on our website.
Award-winning or promising articles section	Manitoban communicators and longform readers.	This will cost no money to implement. Students will be importing this section in three newsletters.	In this section, I will spotlight award-winning articles. As there is a limited number of these articles, I will also include articles Karen and Emily believe can win an award. This tactic will be deployed in three newsletters.
Curated reading list	Manitoban communicators and longform readers.	With students working on this section in the newsletter, this tactic will cost no money. However, it will take one to three days to incorporate this section in the newsletter.	By subscribing to the newsletter, subscribers will receive a curated reading list. Subscribers will submit a personality test before the second newsletter to allow us to identify their interests. The curated reading list will only have articles published by the Working Draft magazine.
Reader submissions	Manitoban communicators and longform readers.	Reader submissions will increase the hours of students and editors. No extra cost is affiliated with this tactic.	Subscribers will have the opportunity to publish an article in the Working Draft magazine. It must fall under Working Draft’s standards and genres. This article will be 800 words. For the editing process, students or editors will meet with the subscriber to edit and form their article.





Timeline

This timeline outlines the dates and order our strategic approaches will be implemented. This order ensures our tactics don't conflict and allows us to manage them simultaneously. Without a structured timeline, our strategic approaches may not be as strong as they should be.

Date/time	Tactic	Publics	Status
January 7, 2025	Create an award-winning or promising article section in the newsletter.	Students	Incomplete
January 7, 2025	Select two award-winning or promising articles.	Students	Incomplete
January 7, 2025	Post newsletter.	Students	Incomplete
January 9, 2025	Analyze newsletter analytics.	Students	Incomplete
January 10, 2025	Create personality test for subscribers.	Students	Incomplete
January 12, 2025	Send personality test to subscribers.	Students	Incomplete
January 15, 2025	Review personality test analytics.	Students	Incomplete
January 16, 2025	Post a newsletter with an award-winning article.	Students	Incomplete
January 17, 2025	Create curated reading list for each subscriber.	Students	Incomplete
January 19, 2025	Test curated reading list feature.	Students	Incomplete
January 19, 2025	Create a promotion for reader submissions.	Students	Incomplete
January 22, 2025	Launch newsletter with curated reading list and reader submission promotion.	Students	Incomplete
January 24, 2025	Analyze newsletter analytics.	Students	Incomplete
January 25, 2025	Create reader submission guidelines and process.	Students and editors	Incomplete



January 27, 2025	Send an email to our subscribers with these guidelines and process.	Students	Incomplete
January 29, 2025	Collect submissions.	Students and editors	Incomplete
January 29, 2025	Select applicant.	Students and editors	Incomplete
February 1, 2025	Begin working with applicant.	Students and editors	Incomplete
February 2, 2025	Post a newsletter with an award-winning article.	Students	Incomplete
February 3, 2025	Receive first draft from applicant and provide revisions.	Students and editors	Incomplete
February 5, 2025	Receive final copy.	Students and editors	Incomplete
February 7, 2025	Revise and prepare article for publication.	Students and editors	Incomplete
February 12, 2025	Launch newsletter with spotlighted reader submission article.	Students	Incomplete
February 14, 2025	Analyze newsletter analytics.	Students	Incomplete
February 16, 2025	Create prompts for newsletter feedback section.	Students	Incomplete
February 18, 2025	Create feedback section in newsletter.	Students	Incomplete
February 23, 2025	Write an explanation for feedback section	Students	Incomplete
February 25, 2025	Publish explanation on website.	Students	Incomplete
March 1, 2025	Test feedback section.	Students	Incomplete
March 10, 2025	Publish newsletter with feedback section.	Students	Incomplete
March 14, 2025	Analyze all newsletter analytics and determine status of objectives.	Students	Incomplete



Budget

This budget outlines the strategic placement of the time, people, and financial resources the Working Draft magazine has. Identifying and evaluating these estimated resources will allow us to plan and leverage certain areas strategically.

Tactic	Estimated hours	Estimated cost
Award-winning or promising articles section	3	\$0.00
Curated reading list and personality test	6	\$0.00
Reader submissions	30	\$0.00
Feedback section	1	\$0.00
Newsletter construction	12	\$0.00
Newsletter and magazine analytics.	22	\$0.00
Total budget	74	\$0.00

Explanation

Award-winning or promising articles section: As it is a short task to import an article into a newsletter, I estimate this will take one hour per newsletter. I will release three articles with award-winning or promising articles.

Curated reading list and personality test: It will take an hour to develop our curated reading lists. However, it will take five hours to create the personality test and analyze the data.

Reader submissions: This is the most time-consuming tactic because developing, editing, and processing an article takes time to be publishable. I estimate our students and editors will dedicate 10 hours per month to this tactic.

Feedback section: Mailchimp makes it easy to add interactive features in a newsletter, so I estimate this will take one hour per newsletter.

Newsletter construction: It will take two hours to write and format each newsletter.

Analytics: I have dedicated one hour every week of my campaign length to evaluate the analytics of our newsletters. After the campaign, I will spend 10 hours analyzing analytics to determine the success of our objectives.



Evaluation

Did we bring about the changes we planned to?

- 1. SMART objective:** Increase the number of subscribers to the Working Draft magazine newsletter from 146 to 200 by March 2025.
 - **Quantifying the degree of success:** This objective will be monitored by Mailchimp and is considered successful by reaching 200 subscribers by March 2025. As our newsletters are published, I will analyze the number of subscribers we have.
 - **SMART objective:** Increase the number of subscribers who open or click our newsletters from 93 to 120 by March 2025.
 - **Quantifying the degree of success:** I will track this statistic with Mailchimp. If 120 subscribers engaged with our newsletter by the end of our campaign, I would classify it as successful. I will be evaluating this objective weekly. I will set a monthly benchmark. As this is a three-month campaign, I will need to increase this number by 10 every month to reach my objective.
- 2. SMART objective:** Increase active users on the Working Draft magazine from 7,400 to 8,000 by March 2025.
 - **Quantifying the degree of success:** For a measurement tool, Google Analytics will accumulate this statistic. I will evaluate article views and monthly active users. As we need to increase our active viewers by 600 in a three-month campaign, I will set a monthly benchmark of 200 new viewers per month.
- 3. SMART objective:** Increase the highest-viewed article from 2,899 to 3,500 views by March 2025.
 - **Quantifying the degree of success:** I will monitor the views of our most-viewed article provided by Google Analytics for this objective. I will need 601 new views on this article, so I set a benchmark of 200 new views for this article monthly.



Did we reach our identified audiences and publics effectively?

1. Longform readers

Evaluation method: In the feedback section of our newsletter, I will supply questions for longform readers about what the Working Draft magazine made them feel, do, and learn.

Progress along the communication continuum: To see if longform readers are aware of the Working Draft magazine, I will monitor the open and click-through rates of our newsletter. For knowledge, I will ask questions in the feedback section about their learning experiences from our articles. I will be able to identify their opinions on our credibility with specific prompts in the feedback section. Finally, I will monitor the subscription rates of the newsletter to see if they are engaged.



2. Manitoban communicators

Evaluation method: I will evaluate the views on articles with case studies to determine the success of attracting Manitoban communicators.

Progress along the communication continuum: I will monitor how many Manitoban communicators are opening our newsletters to determine their awareness. For knowledge, I will provide questions related to the credibility and usefulness of our articles. I will gather their opinions by prompting questions related to ethical codes and trustworthiness. To identify their actions, I will evaluate our subscriber growth and feedback section.

Did we deploy our resources as effectively and efficiently as we could have?


Interactive newsletter features: I will measure the effectiveness of this tactic by counting the number of feedback submissions we receive. To determine the success of this tactic, I will analyze the open and engagement rates of other newsletters without interactive features.

Award-winning or promising articles section: As this tactic intends to create a credible reputation, I will ask if we altered their perception of the Working Draft magazine in the feedback section.

Subscriber benefits and content: To justify the effectiveness of this tactic, I will count the number of personality tests we receive. This tactic was implemented to increase subscriber engagement, so I will ask in our feedback section if they benefited from our curated reading lists.

Reader submissions: The success of this tactic will be measured by the number of reader submission forms we receive. To see if this benefited only our guest writer, we will analyze the number of views their article received.





Did we take full advantage of our environmental insights?

Strengths

Low production costs: By accumulating the number of student-produced articles, we will be able to identify if leveraging students was too much to ask for. Our editors and board will evaluate articles to see if it's at their standards.

Archived content: I will evaluate how often we promote archived content in our newsletter. Following this, I will compare the views of new and archived articles. For our newsletters, I will compare the success of including and not including archived content.

Loyal customer base: To see if we capitalized on our loyal customers, I will evaluate the open and click rates on our newsletters. With most of our loyal customers subscribing to the newsletter, I will primarily be analyzing the analytics of the newsletter.

Award-winning reputation: As this strength was leveraged to build trust with our key publics, I will ask in our feedback section if they found the Working Draft magazine more credible because of the awards we have won.

Weaknesses

Dependency on student contributions: I will ask questions in our feedback section about the quality of content produced by students. If there are numerous complaints, we did not mitigate this threat well enough.

Inconsistent online presence: This has been a returning weakness for the Working Draft magazine, so I will determine if publishing timelines improved compared to prior years of the Working Draft magazine.

Opportunities

Promoting awards and accolades: I will determine the success of this opportunity by analyzing the analytics of newsletters with award-winning and promising articles.

Subscription incentives: By analyzing the number of subscribers gained by offering subscriber benefits, I will be able to justify the success or failure of this opportunity.

Threats

Increased competition: If a new competitor were to emerge, I will compare the subscribers of our newsletters to determine if we successfully mitigated this threat. In our feedback section, I can ask if there are other newsletters or magazines our key publics prefer.



Next Steps

To pursue this strategic communications plan for the Working Draft magazine, several key approvals and actions are required.

Tactics: As some of our strategic approaches and tactics have not been permitted yet, we will need the Working Draft magazine's approval to move forward with our plan.

Timeline: As schedules are ever-changing, we will need the Working Draft magazine to permit this schedule to move forward in our strategic communications plan.

Roles: Students and editors will need various roles for the implementation of this strategic communications plan. If permitted, we need numerous students and editors to assist with the reader submission tactic.

For further inquiries about this strategic communications plan, please contact:

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