

CMGT 599: Marketing Communication for the Entrepreneur | Spring 2016

Instructor: Freddy J. Nager, MBA, fnager@usc.edu

Class Time: Wednesdays, 6:30-9:20pm, January 13-April 27

Classroom: ASC 228

Office Hours: on class days by appointment

Description

This intensive, fast-paced course serves both aspiring entrepreneurs and communications consultants. Students will learn how to develop promotional media and messages (written, visual, and presentation) to support an array of entrepreneurial initiatives, from crowdfunding to consumer sales. Toward these ends, students will conduct market research, apply theories and analytical frameworks, and play the role of both "clients" and "consultants." This is not a business planning course — no detailed instruction of finance or operations management; rather, this course focuses on the *communications strategies and skills* that help entrepreneurs succeed.

Due to the fast pace of this course, no students will be added after the second class meeting.

Goals

By the end of the course, students will know how to do the following:

- Create distinctive and compelling mission and vision statements
- Develop elevator pitches and unique selling propositions
- Leverage social networks to support crowdfunding campaigns
- Implement persuasion strategies for all levels of sales
- Craft stories to pitch media outlets, bloggers, and other influencers
- Incorporate differentiation strategies into brand development
- Learn methods for accelerated market researching and analysis

To accomplish these goals, this course combines theoretical readings, case studies, and hands-on experience, with students expected to demonstrate strong writing, time management, and collaboration skills.

Instructor

Freddy J. Nager has 25 years of professional experience in marketing and media. In 2007, he launched the consultancy Atomic Tango LLC to serve entrepreneurs in various industries. He previously held creative positions at MCA Records (Universal Music Group), major ad agency Saatchi & Saatchi, and numerous startups. A second-generation Trojan, Freddy received his MBA from USC and his BA from Harvard, and has taught at Annenberg for 4 years.

Textbooks

Required. Readings from these texts will be assigned, with discussion questions posted to Blackboard.

- **Frederick Crane, *Marketing for Entrepreneurs: Concepts and Applications for New Ventures*, (2013) Sage**
- **Jeff Cox & Howard Stevens, *Selling the Wheel: Choosing the Best Way to Sell for You, Your Company, Your Customers*, (2000) Touchstone**
- **Guy Kawasaki, *The Art of the Start 2.0*, (2015) Penguin**

Recommended. These books provide professional advice on writing and strategy.

- **Chip Heath & Dan Heath, *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*, (2007) Random House**
- **Adam Morgan, *Eating the Big Fish: How Challenger Brands can Compete Against Brand Leaders (2nd Edition)*, (2009) Wiley & Sons**
- **YoungMe Moon, *Different: Escaping the Competitive Herd*, (2010) Random House/Crown**

In addition, articles from academic journals and business publications will be assigned and discussed at each lecture.

Assignments

Most of the assignments will center on a future entrepreneurial venture. You will assume the role of the communications consultant, interviewing an entrepreneur (one of your classmates), then planning and articulating their venture. In turn, you will serve as an entrepreneur that they will consult.

These assignments are not reports; they should demonstrate your original thinking and ability to apply research, theories, and frameworks to support your ideas. All papers must be posted as an MS Word document (no PDFs) to Blackboard by the due date. Without an exceptional circumstance and permission from the instructor in advance, late papers will not be accepted. The specific assignment instructions will be provided on each assignment prompt.

- **Class participation (20%):** Each student must contribute to the learning in this class and on Blackboard. You will not earn the full score simply by attending. In most class sessions, you must speak, ask questions, and debate respectfully. To do so, you must prepare: complete the assigned readings before class; research additional materials; and apply to personal and professional experiences. Staying silent is unacceptable behavior, especially when we have guest speakers, since it conveys disengagement. Here is how class participation is evaluated:
 - Is your contribution relevant to the discussion?
 - Do you consider ideas offered by the reading and by classmates?
 - Do you increase everyone's understanding or merely repeat facts?
 - Are your views supported with data, third-party theories and research?
 - Do you test new ideas and challenge assumptions, or just "play it safe"?
 - Are you respectful of others in the discussion?
- **Article Summaries (10%):** While you're responsible for all readings, you will also be assigned specific articles and textbook chapters to summarize, evaluate, and apply to real world examples. You will then post your summaries on Blackboard for the benefit of your classmates.
- **Entrepreneur Bio (10%):** Your first assignment is also a test of your writing skills. You will interview your entrepreneur and write a brief (500-1000 word) biography that explains their idea, conveys their passion, and builds their credibility. This will help "sell" them to investors and early customers, and serve as the "About" section in any future website or business plan. Your first draft will receive an initial grade then returned to you for revisions. The purpose is to improve your writing skills and clarify expectations for the semester. Revised papers are not guaranteed to receive a grade increase.
- **Venture Communications Plan (3 parts = 60%):** These three components make up the qualitative section of most business plans. (Financial analysis and projections are beyond the scope of this course.)
 - **Part 1 — Mission, Vision, Position + Proposition (20%):** For this exercise in concise, persuasive writing, you will describe the venture's purpose, long-term goal, competitive differentiation, and benefit to the customer and society. Include the entrepreneur's "elevator pitch" for future use.
 - **Part 2 — Stakeholders Analysis (20%):** For this research-intensive paper, you will analyze the key people and organizations that may have a significant impact on the venture, including potential customers, competitors, influencers, regulators, and investors. Your findings will shape your final plan.
 - **Part 3 — Kickstarter Launch Plan (20%):** For this final paper, you will write a very specific, step-by-step plan to launch the venture on Kickstarter. This will include an analysis of a competitor's Kickstarter campaign, setting a crowdfunding goal, developing a supporter management plan using social media, setting rewards and a budget, outlining a calendar of deliverables, and writing a press release. You will then pitch this plan to potential supporters (the class) in a live presentation.

Schedule

This schedule is tentative, and will likely change depending on the pace of class discussions, and the availability of guest speakers. Final schedules will be announced in class and in the lecture slides.

Part I: Ideation

Successful entrepreneurs go beyond merely selling products and services; they examine their motivations, set goals, and build distinctive, compelling brands. In this module, we will cover different approaches to developing entrepreneurial ideas and expressing them in a manner that inspires stakeholders inside and outside the organization.

Class 1, January 13: The Mind of the Entrepreneur

- Critical Thinking
- Writing and Presenting for the Entrepreneur
- Entrepreneurial Approach vs Market Orientation
- Idea Generation + Innovation
- Readings for next week:
 - Synecticsworld Imagine Book
 - Crane, Intro + Chapter 1
 - Kawasaki, Chapter 1
 - David Meerman Scott, "The Gobbledygook Manifesto"

Class 2, January 20: Setting Goals

- S.M.A.R.T. Goals + Kickstarter
- The "Why": Mission Statements that Work
- The "Where": Vision Statements
- B-Corporations + Triple Bottom Line
- Assignment:
 - Entrepreneur Bio, due before Class 3
- Readings for next week:
 - Crane, Chapters 2, 6, 7
 - Gerald E. Hills, Claes M. Hultman, Morgan P. Miles, "The Evolution and Development of Entrepreneurial Marketing," *Journal of Small Business Management*, 2008 (PDF on Blackboard)

Class 3, January 27: Developing The Brand

- The Elements of a Brand
- Value Propositions, Positioning Statements, and The Elevator Pitch
- Assignment:
 - Paper 1: Mission, Vision, Position + Proposition, due before Class 6
- Readings for next week:
 - Crane, Chapter 5 (Positioning only: pp. 94-97)
 - Chip Heath & Dan Heath, "5 Tips For Creating A Sticky Strategic Vision," MadeToStick.com, 2009 (PDF on Blackboard)
 - Guy Kawasaki, "The Top 10 Mistakes of Entrepreneurs," Berkeley-Haas, 2014, YouTube, <https://youtu.be/Oe5c9KK3ZIs>

Part II: Evaluation

Entrepreneurs do not work in a vacuum. They must identify and analyze the people and organizations ("stakeholders") who can affect their plans, positively or negatively.

Class 4, February 3: Market Research – Customers

- Methodologies: surveys, focus groups, testing
- Pain points vs wants
- B2B vs B2C
- Readings for next week:

- Crane, Chapters 3, 4, and the rest of Chapter 5 (pp. 83-94)
- Daniel Yankelovich, David Meer, "Rediscovering Market Segmentation," *Harvard Business Review*, February 2006 (PDF on Blackboard)

Class 5, February 10: Market Research – Competitors

- Direct vs Indirect
- Challenger Brand strategies
- Assignment:
 - Select and analyze a competitive Kickstarter campaign (include in final paper)
- Readings for next week:
 - Richard A. D'Aveni, Mapping Your Competitive Position, *Harvard Business Review*, November 2007, <https://hbr.org/2007/11/mapping-your-competitive-position>
 - Inc. Staff, "How To Conduct Competitive Research," Inc., 10 May 2010, <http://www.inc.com/guides/2010/05/conducting-competitive-research.html>

Class 6, February 17: Market Research – Community

- News Media
- Regulators
- Interest Groups
- Collaborators/Complements
- Assignment:
 - Paper 2: Stakeholders Analysis, due before Class 9
- Readings for next week:
 - Kawasaki, Chapter 11
 - Robert Berkman, "Valuing Influentials Means More than Just Counting Connections," *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 10 July 2013, <http://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/valuing-influentials-means-more-than-just-counting-connections/>
 - Yung-Ming Li, Cheng-Yang Lai, Ching-Wen Chen, "Discovering Influencers For Marketing In The Blogosphere," *Information Sciences*, 22 July 2011 (PDF on Blackboard)
 - Trusov, Michael, et al, "Determining Influential Users in Internet Social Networks," *Journal of Marketing Research*, August 2010 (PDF on Blackboard)

Part III: Formulation

We will cover the first three elements of the classic marketing mix, with an emphasis on "signaling": how your choices and the way you communicate them are perceived by the market.

Class 7, February 24: Marketing Mix – The Product

- What are we actually selling?
- Product Features vs Benefits: beyond the physical
- Sales strategies for different targets + product maturity levels
- Readings for next week:
 - Selling The Wheel (complete in 2 weeks), discuss on Blackboard
 - Ait El Houssi, K.P. Morel, E.J. Hultink, "Effectively Communicating New Product Benefits to Consumers: The Use of Analogy versus Literal Similarity," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 2005 (PDF on Blackboard)

Class 8, March 2: Marketing Mix – The Price

- Value: more than just a bargain
- False Equivalencies
- Readings for next week:
 - Crane, Chapter 8
 - Tiffany Barnett White, Hong Yuan, "Building Trust To Increase Purchase Intentions: The Signaling Impact Of Low Pricing Policies," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 2011 (PDF on Blackboard)

Class 9, March 9: Marketing Mix – The Place

- Retail Therapy + Distribution
- Why go brick-and-mortar in a digital world?
- Assignment: create a marketing mix for your entrepreneur, include in final paper (due before Class 14)
- Readings for next week:
 - Crane, Chapter 9
 - M. Mirella Yani-de-Soriano, Gordon R. Foxall, "The Emotional Power Of Place: The Fall And Rise Of Dominance In Retail Research," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 2006 (PDF on Blackboard)

Part IV: Promotion

The final classes will examine promotional media options (both online and traditional) and how entrepreneurs can allocate their limited time and budgets to achieve measurable, bottom-line goals.

Class 10, March 23: Touchpoints + The Purchasing Funnel

- Promotion objectives: The 3B's (Brand, Buzz, Behavior)
- AIDA+: The Role of Media and Messages at Each Stage
- Readings for next week:
 - Crane, Chapter 9
 - Kawasaki, Chapters 7-9
 - Kirthi Kalyanam, Monte Zweben, "The Perfect Message at the Perfect Moment," *Harvard Business Review*, November 2005, <https://hbr.org/2005/11/the-perfect-message-at-the-perfect-moment>
 - Burghardt Tenderich, *Transmedia Branding* (PDF on Blackboard)
 - Charles Falzon, "Brand Development and Transmedia Production—The Geofreakz Case Study," *Journalism and Mass Communication*, September 2012 (PDF on Blackboard)

Class 11, March 30: Kickstarter as a Framework

- Crowdfunding strategies
- True test of social networks

Class 12, April 6: Storytelling + Emotion

- Creating emotion in marketing media: the 4R's of American cinema
- Readings for next week:
 - Kawasaki, Chapter 6
 - Jennifer Aaker, Andy Smith, Dan Singer, "The Power of Storytelling: What Nonprofits Can Teach The Private Sector About Social Media," *McKinsey Quarterly*, February 2011, http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/marketing_sales/the_power_of_storytelling_what_nonprofits_can_teach_the_private_sector_about_social_media
 - Jonah Berger, "Contagious: Why Things Catch On," Wharton School, 2013, YouTube, <https://youtu.be/mQzAlanlm4g>

Class 13, April 13: Pitching

- Putting the Power back in PowerPoint
- Writing press releases
- Assignment: create press release for your entrepreneur (include in final paper)
- Readings for next week:
 - Chip Heath & Dan Heath, "Making Your Presentation Stick," MadeToStick.com, 20 October 2008 (PDF on Blackboard)
 - Guy Kawasaki, "The 10/20/30 Rule of PowerPoint," GuyKawasaki.com, 30 December 2005, http://guykawasaki.com/the_102030_rule/

Part V: Expression

Classes 14 + 15 (April 20-27): Pitches

- Each student will make a 10-minute presentation to the class covering their client's venture and plan.

Grading

A	95.0% or higher (extremely rare)
A-	90.0%-94.9%
B+	87.0%-89.9%
B	83.0%-86.9%
B-	80.0%-82.9%
C+	77.0%-79.9%
C	73.0%-76.9%
C-	70.0%-72.9%
D	60.0%-69.9%
F	59.9% or lower

A's and A-minuses must be earned by "going the extra mile" to develop professional work that could be presented to a client or CEO. A-level work is mistake-free; reflects in-depth research; shows creativity and superlative communications skills; and demonstrates a strong understanding of the course material. Personal recommendations will be provided on request to students who earn an A.

- **Attendance:** You must attend every class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class (missing more than 10 minutes counts as a half absence). Makeup assignments will be given for any absences. Should you need to miss a class, notify the instructor in advance (except, of course, in the case of illness or emergencies), and obtain what you missed from classmates and Blackboard. Two absences will result in complete loss of participation points. More than two absences will result in a course grade of C- or lower.
- **Critical Thinking:** In communications there are few "right" answers: what works for one company might fail for another — or even for the same company at another time. Your assignments must describe "why" and "how," not just "what," and will be evaluated on the quality of your reasoning.
- **Professional Writing:** Since this a graduate program in communications, **your writing and formatting will be factored into all assignment grades**, so please proofread to eliminate all errors. If you need help with fluency or simply polishing your work, contact CMGT writing coach Michael Robinson at cmgt.writing@usc.edu. You may also visit the USC Writing Center or Language Academy for international students: http://college.usc.edu/writingcenter/information_for_students/online_resources.html.
- **Respect:** Treat classmates and speakers with courtesy. You may certainly question and criticize ideas — that is encouraged in the learning environment — but never criticize the person. Also, *be present: all computers and phones must be turned off during lectures — no exceptions*. Computers may be used during designated research and writing periods. You may eat in class, but not in the company of guest speakers.
- **ADA Compliance Statement:** Any student requesting academic accommodation based on a disability must register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Deliver it to your instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301, 8:30 am-5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, phone 213-740-0776.
- **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a cardinal sin in academia, with substantial penalties, including a "0" for the assignment and possible disciplinary action. You must understand what constitutes plagiarism, and exercise scrupulous effort to avoid it. Copying even as little as one sentence without proper referencing constitutes plagiarism.
- **Statement on Academic Integrity:** USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/> Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>