

USC Iovine and Young Academy

*Arts, Technology and the Business
of Innovation*

IDSN 599 Marketing Strategy for Startups

Units: 3.0

Fall 2022 / Mondays / 7:30pm-9:50pm PT

Location: Online

Instructor: Jay Clewis

Office / Office Hours: Virtual / By Appointment

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IT Help: Digital Campus Online Technical Support

Contact Info: 1-833-740-1273,

TechSupport@digitalcampus.2U.com

Course Description

How do you attract your first 100, 500, or 1,000 customers? This course focuses on a subset of marketing strategies and tactics that are ideal for early-stage startups seeking to build communities of early adopters and beta testers for their products, services, and systems. We will take a strategic approach to developing an omnichannel content strategy that aims to build lasting customer relationships across all possible channels and touchpoints including digital and real-world environments. There will be an emphasis on audience acquisition tactics that align stakeholders in understanding who our desired audience is, how to find them, and engage them with quality content, incentives, and offers. Additionally, this course will explore customer retention, content delivery, performance, and measurement to optimize desired outcomes.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

Students in this course will learn how to design, build, and execute a strategic content marketing plan. Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the foundational components of a marketing plan for an identified audience segments
- Devise a strategic plan aimed at building an audience for a new product/service/company
- Identify and measure the success metrics associated with an omnichannel marketing campaign
- Understand methods to test and optimize marketing campaigns and content

Prerequisite(s):

IDSN 510 Integrative Practices Residential; IDSN 540 Processes and Perspectives; IDSN 545 Integrative Project; IDSN 560 Narrative and Storytelling

Course Notes

This course will be conducted online, using a combination of the 2U Digital Campus (Canvas) and Slack for notifications, group messaging, submission URLs and grading. Google Drive will be used as a repository for all coursework, deliverables, and shared documents. Zoom will be used to conduct all live synchronous sessions. Students are responsible for all additional assigned material, including video lectures, interviews, and reading materials offered by the instructors throughout the course.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Students must provide their own laptop. The laptop specifications take into consideration that students will be creating, streaming, and downloading audio and video; communicating using video conferencing applications; and creating and storing large multimedia files.

	Apple	Windows PC
Laptop (Minimum standards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.6 GHz dual-core Intel Core i5 or 2.0 GHz quad-core Intel Core i7 • Minimum 13" display • 250 GB SSD or larger • 16 GB memory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intel Core i5 or Intel Core i7 • Minimum 14" display • 250 GB SSD or larger • 16 GB memory
Warranty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturer warranty or extended warranty coverage (AppleCare) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturer warranty or extended warranty coverage
Operating System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mac OS X 10.13 or higher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows 10 operating system or higher
Peripherals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HD webcam, speakers and microphone (Most newer laptops have built-in webcam, speakers and microphone) • Digital camera (Cameras on newer smartphones are acceptable) • External drive for cloud account for backup and storage 	
Software	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adobe Creative Cloud (Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign) • Adobe Acrobat Reader • Microsoft Office Suite • Sophos Endpoint Security (antivirus) • Browser: Most recent version of Firefox, Chrome, Safari, or Internet Explorer 	
Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cable modem, DSL, T1/T3 or higher 	

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Required content and readings may be assigned by faculty and will be drawn from textbooks, articles, papers, cases, and online publications available through available outlets online. Students will also be required to view online videos; complete web-based, interactive exercises; and respond to peer and faculty comments (within an online discussion forum or group discussion). In addition, the following books are recommended for more in-depth knowledge and context:

- *Start With Why*, (Simon Sinek), 2009.
- *The Psychology of a Website: Mastering Cognitive Biases, Conversion Triggers, and Modern SEO to Achieve Massive Results*, (Matthew Capela), 2021.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

Unit	Topic	Assignments
Module 1: Marketing Strategy and Planning		
1	Marketing Strategy for Startups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Introduction and Overview • How is Startup Marketing Strategy Different? • Content Strategy Basics • Inbound Marketing vs. Content Marketing • Diversity in Marketing • Marketing Trends and Examples 	

2	Know Thyself, Know Thy Enemy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining Brand, Mission, and Message • The Importance of Brand Pillars • Market Research and Competitive Analysis • Seeking Differentiation (Unique Value Proposition) • Audience Definition, Targeting, and Personalization 	Assignment 1.1
3	Content Development and Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PESO Content Model • Content Atomization • Websites, Blogs, and Owning Your Narrative • The Magical Science of Storytelling • The Power of Storytelling for Brands 	Assignment 1.2
4	Setting the Stage: Semester Project Pitch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Initial Semester Project Presentations and Q&A</i> 	Assignment 1.3
5	If You Fail to Plan, You Plan to Fail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to Build a Marketing Strategy and Plan • OKRs: Creating Clear Objectives and Desired Results • Conscious Marketing: A Path to a More Loyal Audience • Data Collection & Ethics: Privacy, Transparency, and Trust 	
Module 2: Audience Acquisition		
6	Search Engine Optimization, Part I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How Search Works • On-Page SEO Techniques • Off-Page SEO Techniques • Keyword Research 	Assignment 1.4
7	Search Engine Optimization, Part II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crafting and Promoting Content for SEO • Voice, Mobile, and Local Search • Measuring SEO Efforts • Search Engine Marketing: The Paid Side of Search 	
8	Email Marketing Magic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email Marketing Strategy and Automation • Email Design Best Practices • Landing Page Optimization and Testing • <i>Semester Project Meetings and Consultations</i> 	Assignment 2.1
9	Social Media and Influencer Marketing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media Marketing Overview • Organic vs. Paid Social • Community Building • Importance of Influencers 	Assignment 2.2

10	PR and Promotions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press Releases and Media Relationships • Conferences, Webinars, and IRL Events • Contests and Giveaways • <i>Semester Project Meetings and Consultations</i> 	Assignment 2.3
Module 3: Performance and Measurement		
11	Hacking Growth Through Marketing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guerilla Marketing Tactics • Buzz Marketing: Cryptic and Stealth • Viral Marketing • Referral Marketing 	Assignment 2.4
12	Content Mapping, Performance, and Measurement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value and Importance of Content Calendars • Measuring Content Performance • Setting SMART Goals and KPIs • <i>Semester Project Meetings and Consultations</i> 	Assignment 2.5
13	Campaign Performance and Testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media Listening and Monitoring • A/B Testing • How to Run a Smoke Test • Conversion Optimization 	Assignment 3.1
14	Building Your Dream Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisiting Brand Values/Pillars • Key Roles and Responsibilities • Setting Team Norms, Expectations, and Accountability The Final Countdown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dry Run of Final Presentations in Breakout Rooms</i> • <i>Instructor Feedback Ahead of Final Presentations</i> 	Assignment 3.2
15	The Big Show: Final Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Final Presentations: Marketing Strategy Decks</i> 	Assignment 3.3

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Below are brief overviews of each assignment and deliverable in the course. Unless specified otherwise, all assignments will be submitted within the 2U Digital Campus (Canvas). If you experience technical difficulties submitting assignments, email the course instructor directly and utilize 2U student support for assistance. Additional assignment details will be provided separately.

1.1 – Marketing Trends (individual)

Identify two strong examples of brands using one of the current marketing trends discussed in Unit 1. In a few short paragraphs, explain what tactic they're deploying, how you know, and your assessment

on the execution. The deliverable should be a PDF (of a Google document or slide deck) and include images of examples and/or citations.

1.2 – Brand Stories (individual)

Identify two examples of companies using powerful storytelling to share their brand values, mission, and message. In your assessment, explain what content type(s) are they using, how is it being distributed, and the impact they are striving for. The deliverable should be a PDF (of a Google document or slide deck) and include images of examples and/or citations.

1.3 – Semester Project Pitch (team)

The semester project is a team project where you will select a company to create a full startup marketing strategy over the course of the semester. For this initial pitch, you will conduct research and identify: 1) the company (an existing business or IYA student project/company), 2) their stated or perceived brand mission and pillars, 3) their target audience, 4) their core products/services, and 5) the competition and their current market positioning. The deliverable should be a PDF (of a Google document or slide deck) and include any relevant citations. Plan to present this pitch in the live session.

1.4 – OKRs: Objectives and Key Results (team)

Semester project teams will collaborate on setting clear objectives for the project and articulate the key desired results to track outcomes of the overall marketing strategy. The deliverable should focus on two inbound marketing and two content marketing-related OKRs based on the semester project, include specific timelines, and result in a PDF (of a Google document or slide deck) to share in class.

2.1 – SEO Audit and Recommendations (team)

Semester project teams will conduct an SEO audit of their brand's website and/or its main competition (at least two) to create benchmarks for keyword research, competition, and technical SEO recommendations. The deliverable, a high-level plan for improving search engine optimization, should be a PDF (of a Google document or slide deck) and include screenshots/samples of your work.

2.2 – Email Marketing Campaign (team)

Semester project teams will create an email marketing campaign to complement the content strategy of the project. The deliverable should include at least two sample emails (an offer email and a retargeting email); plus, a mockup of an optimized landing page for the campaign. The deliverable should be a PDF (of a Google document or slide deck) and include screenshots/samples of your work.

2.3 – Social Media Marketing Campaign (team)

Semester project teams will create a social media marketing campaign to complement the content strategy of the project. Include at least four sample social media posts (at least two different channels); pointing to your optimized landing page (from 2.1). The deliverable should be a PDF (of a Google document or slide deck) and include screenshots/samples of your work.

2.4 – PR and Promotions (individual)

Students will independently research and identify two public relations or promotional opportunities for their teams to consider for inclusion in the overall marketing strategy. The deliverable should be a PDF (of a Google document or slide deck) and include screenshots/samples of your work.

2.5 – Growth Hacking (individual)

Students will independently create a detailed concept of an alternative marketing tactic covered in class for their teams to consider for inclusion in the overall marketing strategy. The deliverable should be a PDF (of a Google document or slide deck) and include screenshots/samples of your work.

3.1 – Content Calendars (team)

Semester project teams will create a content calendar (at least four weeks long) that complements the overall content mapping strategy of the project. The deliverable should be a PDF (of a Google document or slide deck) and include any relevant examples and/or citations.

3.2 – A/B Test (team)

Semester Project teams will collaborate on creating an A/B test (or multivariate test) for the one of the marketing tactics outlined in the team's strategy. The deliverable should be a PDF (of a Google document or slide deck) and include any relevant examples and/or citations.

3.3 – Marketing Strategy Plan and Final Presentation (team)

Finalize your team's semester project by creating a cohesive marketing strategy plan (template will be provided) and presentation deck aimed at the selected company's relevant stakeholders to demonstrate your vision for audience acquisition and growth, as well as the tactics and measurements used to achieve the desired results. Full requirements, grading criteria, and a rubric will be shared early in the semester. The deliverables should include two PDFs (Word/Google document for the plan and slide deck for presentation). Teams will formally present their marketing strategy decks in class.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Participation (individual)	150	15%
1.1 – Marketing Trends (individual)	25	2.5%
1.2 – Brand Stories (individual)	25	2.5%
1.3 – Semester Project Pitch Presentation (team)	100	10%
1.4 – Objectives and Key Results (team)	25	2.5%
2.1 – SEO Audit and Recommendations (team)	50	5%
2.2 – Email Marketing Campaign (individual)	75	7.5%
2.3 – Social Media Marketing Campaign (individual)	75	7.5%
2.4 – PR and Promotions (individual)	50	5%
2.5 – Growth Hacking (individual)	50	5%
3.1 – Content Calendars (team)	50	5%
3.2 – A/B Test (team)	25	2.5%
3.3 – Marketing Strategy Plan and Final Presentation (team)	300	30%
Total	1000	100%

Assignment Rubrics

The instructor will provide evaluation and grading criteria for assignments throughout the course.

Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments must be delivered by the date and time (**Pacific Time**) that deliverable is listed as due per instructor guidelines. The instructor(s) will provide due dates for all assignments and deliverables during the first week of the Capstone. Late assignments will be subject to the late submission policy indicated below. **All assignments must be completed in order to pass this class.**

Late Submissions

Assignments will be accepted after the deadline with the following grade penalties. Do not ask for extensions; the below are the extensions.

Submission in the 24 hours after the deadline	10% deduction
Submission between 24 and 48 hours after the deadline	20% deduction
Submission between 48 hours and 3 days after the deadline	50% deduction
Submission more than 3 days after the deadline	100% deduction

Keep copies of all your files and emails until the end of the semester.

Grading Timeline

Instructors will provide feedback and grading on all deliverables in a timely manner, usually within 48-72 hours following an on-time submission.

Correcting a Grading Error or Disputing a Grade

If you don't inform the instructor of missing or incorrect grades within two weeks of those grades being posted, the grades will be assumed correct. Do not wait until the semester's end to check or appeal any grades. If you feel a grade merits re-evaluation, you are encouraged, within one week of the instructor providing a grade and initial feedback, to send the instructor a memo in which you request reconsideration. The memo should include a thoughtful and professional explanation of your concerns. Be aware that the re-evaluation process can result in three types of grade adjustments: positive, none, or negative. (Note: Complaints on the date of a graded assignment's return to you will not be addressed; it is essential to wait one full day prior to raising a concern.)

Grading Scale

Final course grades will be determined using the following scale:

Letter Grade	Numerical Score
A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79

C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	59 and below

Academy Attendance Policy

The Academy maintains rigorous academic standards for its students and on-time attendance at all class meetings is expected. Each student will be allowed two excused absences over the course of the semester for which no explanation is required. Students are admonished to not waste excused absences on non-critical issues, and to use them carefully for illness or other issues that may arise unexpectedly. Except in the case of prolonged illness or other serious issue (see below), no additional absences will be excused. Each unexcused absence will result in the lowering of the final grade by $\frac{1}{3}$ of a grade (e.g., an A will be lowered to A-, and A- will be lowered to a B+, etc.). In addition, being tardy to class will count as one-third of an absence. Three tardies will equal a full course absence.

Students remain responsible for any missed work from excused or unexcused absences. Immediately following an absence, students should contact the instructor to obtain missed assignments or lecture notes and to confirm new deadlines or due dates. Extensions or other accommodations are at the discretion of the instructor.

Automatically excused absences normally may not be used for quiz, exam or presentation days. Using an excused absence for a quiz, exam or presentation, such as in the case of sudden illness or other emergency, is at the discretion of the instructor.

In the case of prolonged illness, family emergencies, or other unforeseen serious issues, the student should contact the instructor to arrange for accommodation. Accommodation may also be made for essential professional or career-related events or opportunities. All accommodations remain at the discretion of the instructor, and appropriate documentation may be required.

Additional Policies

Class notes policy: Notes or recordings made by students based on a university class or lecture may only be made for purposes of individual or group study, or for other non-commercial purposes that reasonably arise from the student's membership in the class or attendance at the university. This restriction also applies to any information distributed, disseminated, or in any way displayed for use in relation to the class, whether obtained in class, via e-mail or otherwise on the Internet, or via any other medium. Actions in violation of this policy constitute a violation of the Student Conduct Code, and may subject an individual or entity to university discipline and/or legal proceedings. Again, it is a violation of USC's Academic Integrity Policies to share course materials with others without permission from the instructor.

No recording and copyright notice: No student may record any lecture, class discussion or meeting with the instructor without his/her prior express written permission. The word "record" or the act of recording includes, but is not limited to, any and all means by which sound or visual images can be

stored, duplicated, or retransmitted whether by an electro-mechanical, analog, digital, wire, electronic or other device or any other means of signal encoding. The instructor reserves all rights, including copyright, to his/her lectures, course syllabi and related materials, including summaries, slides (e.g., Keynote, PowerPoint), prior exams, answer keys, and all supplementary course materials available to the students enrolled in the class whether posted to the LMS or otherwise. They may not be reproduced, distributed, copied, or disseminated in any media or in any form, including but not limited to all course note-sharing websites. Exceptions are made for students who have made prior arrangements with The USC Office of Disability Services and Programs and the instructor.

Participation: Students are expected to actively participate in this course. In an online forum, participation includes:

- Careful reading and viewing of assigned materials by the date due
- Regular, substantive contributions to discussions
- Active engagement with online content
- On-time attendance and full attention (with camera on) in synchronous sessions
- Significant collaboration with classmates and teammates

Course grades may be affected for students who do not contribute to the course through active participation. Students should notify the instructor in advance if they are unable to attend class. Those unable to attend will be required to review the online recording for the session missed, and submit thoughtful feedback to the Instructor.

Contact Hours

This 3-unit course requires 2,250 minutes (37.5 hours) of instructional time per semester, which equals 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of instructional time each week. In addition, it is expected that students will work, on average, an additional 288 minutes (4.8 hours) per week outside of class — on readings/viewings, homework assignments, field experiences, and individual or team projects.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)
-213-740-9355 (WELL)

<https://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault/>

Free and confidential therapy services, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services provides immediate therapy services for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (e.g., sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking).

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

USC Policy Reporting to Title IX (213) 740-5086

<https://policy.usc.edu/reporting-to-title-ix-student-misconduct/>

The university encourages individuals to report prohibited conduct to the *Title IX Office*. Individuals can report to the university's Title IX Coordinator in the *Office of Equity and Diversity*.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421

studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.