

Account Planning & Management

STRM4222/6222

FALL 2025

Tuesday & Thursday 2:40am – 4:05am

Prof. Joel M. Nichols

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Office Hours: Tues & Thur 11:30am – 2:30pm or By Appointment

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog description

Exploration of how advertising account management is the center of decision-making and problem-solving—critical skills in today’s advertising structure. Trends in account management such as the account management information system (AMIS) will be included. Paid media, business-to-business, and digital and interactive techniques will be explored, created and evaluated.

Prerequisites

STRM 3200 Intro to Strategic Media

Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

Dickman, Don and Davis, Craig, “The New Account Manager,” Melvin & Leigh.

Course Introduction

Account service professionals are the voice of the consumer within ad agencies. They constitute the crucial link between client objectives, account management, creative development, and the media teams. Account planners are strategists that are particularly attuned to the emotions and thoughts of the target audiences of advertising messages. As such, account planners need to know how to obtain valid information from the consumers of communications. Most importantly they need to know how to obtain key kernels of knowledge and emotion that will make advertising campaigns successful. After all, only advertising that sells the intended products, services, or ideas is ultimately successful.

Course requirements and evaluations

- In-class contribution. Adequate preparation for, regular attendance of, and full participation and involvement in the class sessions
- Various assignments (group and individual)
- Final project

Course Objectives

At the end of the semester the student will be able to:

- Describe the function of an account manager in an advertising agency
- Explain the context of planning
- Identify the role of advertising in marketing
- Enumerate the perils of not involving consumers in advertising planning
- Practice the skills needed by an account manager
- Gather consumer input for the purposes of account planning
- Become a critical doer and consumer of research
- Obtain practice in generating insights from consumer speech and behavior in general
- Uncover the roots of truthful consumer thought and emotion
- Stimulate creative ideas through research or “creative development research”
- Develop an advertising strategy
- Compare different types of creative briefing and their attributes
- Develop creative briefs
- Gather opinions of creatives regarding creative briefs
- Rehearse how to avoid the perils of researching rough creative ideas
- Create the conditions in the advertising agency context for a successful strategy to prosper and capitalize on the synergy of all the parties involved
- Describe the role of the planner in campaign evaluation
- Coordinate with the media planning function
- Enumerate issues in international account planning
- Describe the potential role of the planner as consultant to clients and other communication industries

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis eLearn home page: <https://memphis.instructure.com/>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. In the Term Year course list available to you, click on the link for STRM4222 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

Format

The course is designed for active participation. Most weeks there will be assignments due where individuals or groups will make presentations to the class. Thus, a combination of lectures, interaction, and presentation of assignments to the class will be common during most class sessions. Student presentations and papers are to be submitted electronically via the class Dropbox on the day they are due. See details below.

Grading

Assignment categories and points or percentage weights.

A+ = 96.5-100%; A = 92.5-96.4%; A- = 89.5-92.4%

B+ = 86.5-89.4%; B = 82.5-86.4%; B- = 79.5-82.4%

C+ = 76.5-79.4%; C = 72.5-76.4%; C- = 69.5-72.4%

D+ = 66.5-69.4%; D = 59.5-66.4%

F 0-59.4%

Assignments #1-5	35%
In-Class Exercises #1-4 (Groups)	15%
Communications Plan	25%
Final Presentation	20%
Peer Evaluation	5%

Graduate Student Assignment for STRM 6222 (graduate section only)

In addition to the overall class project, graduate students will develop a complete advertising plan and creative strategy for a local small business. Advertising plan will include a communications/advertising challenge and tactical recommendations to address the challenges. The creative strategy document will include all message requirements and background information for the “Big Idea,” which in a real-world setting, would be given to a creative team for concept development.

COURSE SCHEDULE *(Schedule is tentative and subject to change as necessary.)*

Week 1

Introduction to the course, review of syllabus, overview of account management and the advertising industry in Memphis.

For next class: Read Chapter 1 – The View from 20,000 Feet

Week 2, Chapter 1 – The View from 20,000 Feet

Assignment #1: Scoping Out the Big Shops – Due by next class.

Visit the websites for some advertising agencies and see how they differentiate themselves in terms of their creative philosophy, their work, and their client list.

- Grey Worldwide
- J. Walter Thompson
- McCann-Erickson
- FCB Global
- Leo Burnett
- BBDO
- DDB (Doyle Dane Bernbach)
- Goodby Silverstein & Partners
- Crispin Porter + Bogusky
- RGA

Select one and analyze how the agency differentiated itself from the others on the basis of:

1. Creative/business philosophy
2. Display of creative work
3. Presentation of client list
4. Overall look and feel of their website

Submit a 2-3 page paper that documents your analysis of the 4 areas above and be prepared to present your findings to class.

For next class: Read Chapter 2 – The View from 200 Feet & submit Assignment #1

Week 3, Chapter 2 – View from 200 Feet

In-Class Exercise #1: Building a Marketing Mix Spreadsheet

Divide into groups of 2-3 and build a matrix grid/spreadsheet (There is a worksheet on page 80 for reference). On the left, list all the communication types found in the promotional mix (Chapter 2, section 2.2). Then set up three columns. Select three local agencies' clients and document the marketing mix list based on their websites. You can choose from:

- Archer Malmo
- Sullivan Branding
- Loaded For Bear
- Inferno
- DCA
- Farmhouse
- Harvest
- Red Deluxe
- Hemline

Submit your spreadsheet by end of class.

For next class: Read Chapter 3 – Tools of the Craft

Week 4, Chapter 3 – Tools of the Craft: Documenting & Tracking Assignment #2:

Complete the Conference Report – Due via Dropbox before next class.

Review the complete agency-client meeting dialogue in the appendix for Chapter 3 on page 129. Reference the examples of what the report entry should look like on page 124.

For next class: Read Chapter 3 – Tools of the Craft & submit Assignment #2

Week 5 Chapter 3 – Tools of the Craft: Writing

Assignment #3: Re-Reverse Engineer a Creative Brief - Due via Dropbox before next class.

Reconstruct a creative brief that would have resulted in the radio spots on page 126-127. Consider what the ads and media buy tell you about what the agency was thinking when you answer the following questions:

1. Who and where is the specific target audience (demographically, geographically, psychographically and behavioristically)? Don't assume the obvious.
2. What is the target audience's mind-set when it comes to home improvements?
3. What is the Big Creative Idea? (Here is where you discuss the creative strategy and execution of spots.)

Due February 19: Submit a 2-3 Creative Brief and be prepared to present your findings to class.

For next class: Read Chapter 3 – Tools of the Craft & submit Assignment #3

Week 6, Chapter 3 – Tools of the Craft: Presenting

Assignment #4: Present the Creative – Due by next class

Divide in groups of 2-3 and prepare a digital presentation based on the creative brief and campaign you are assigned. Each presentation should be 5-10 minutes in length.

Submit digital presentation via Canvas and be prepared to present to the class.

For next class: Read Chapter 4 – Wants, Needs, Expectations and submit Assignment #4

Week 7, Chapter 4 – Wants, Needs, Expectations

In-Class Exercise #2: Defining Brand Personality

Divide into groups of 2-3 and make a list of five well-known consumer brand products from different product categories. As a group, decide on three personality traits you would associate with each of the brands if those brands were actually people. For example, if Nike were a person, its personality traits might include aggressive, athletic and cutting-edge.

Submit by end of class.

Assignment #5: Power of Observation - Imagine you are the account coordinator on a new client the agency just landed: Shelby County Parks Commission. Visit a park, (for example: Overton Park, Tom Lee Park, Shelby Farms Park, or another frequently used park near you.) And observe ten people utilizing the park. Make a record sheet for each observation. Based on what you see, make the best guesstimate you can about the following:

- Sex
- Age
- Marital Status
- Job (use your imagination based on what you observe)
- Alone or with another person
- Type of activity they are doing (walking, running, biking, playing/playground, etc.)
- Products, equipment or apparel purchased for this activity
- Behaviors that give you insight into why this person comes to the park or what they gain from the experience
- Any other observations about those observed that might give a glimpse into lifestyle or economic status?

Submit observations via Canvas and be prepared to present to the class.

For next class: Read Chapter 5 – What a Ride!, Chapter 6 Super-Human & submit Assignment #5

Week 8 – FALL BREAK – NO CLASS

Week 9 – Chapter 5 – What a Ride! & Chapter 6 Super-Human

In-Class Exercise #3: Evaluate a Creative Concept

Divide into groups of 2-3 and evaluate the ad campaign as if it were in concept stage and being presented to you, the account manager, for reaction. Use the D'Arcy/Ogilvy/Bernbach model (Page 96-97) to accomplish your assessment and then write a memo to the creative team summarizing your opinion of the ad as a creative concept.

For next class: Read Chapter 8 – Primer on Paid Media

Week 10 – Chapter 8 – Primer on Paid Media In-Class

Exercise #4: Spotting the Difference in Media

Divide into groups of 2-3 and Reference Page 325-326. Create a spreadsheet and identify each objective by its category: marketing, advertising or media. Then identify the primary focus of each objective within its category. In the case of media objectives, some will also have a secondary focus, which you should also identify.

Submit by end of class.

For next class: Research your final project client

Week 11 – Discovery Session with your client for the final project

Weeks 12 & 13 – Work on Final Project

The Final Project will be a culmination of all that has been covered in the course. The class will be broken into groups who will act as agencies all making a pitch. The team is expected to research the brand, develop a communications plan that includes a situation analysis, executive summary, goals, target audiences, strategies and tactics that include marketing, advertising and media recommendations and an allocated budget. Creative concepts should NOT be included. The plan will be delivered as a written document (10-15 pages in length) and will be presented to the client on the last day of class in the digital format determined by the group. Teams will be given 20 minutes to present their plans.

Weeks 14 & 15 – Final presentations to client & Tips on Managing Your Career

Submit communications plan and presentation by beginning of last two classes.

Last Day of Class | Study Day | Exams

AI/ChatGPT

You must obtain permission from the instructor before using ChatGPT or other AI tools to assist with assignments in this course. Once permission is granted, AI may only be used as directed. Assignment submissions may run through AI detection software. Unauthorized use may result in a failing grade or a request to resubmit an assignment. Be prepared to submit any prompts you used for assistance with your assignment as well as the original ChatGPT output and to be able to explain/show how you fact-checked and improved upon the AI's work.

ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

Five Pillars in STRM

- *Critical Thinking:* Students must demonstrate an understanding of marketing, advertising, promotions, media and evaluation objectives and strategies by planning a complete campaign.
- *Media Literacy:* Students are exposed to the vocabulary and tools of the advertising industry. Students conduct research to solve a client's communication problem and apply the gathered information beneficial for strategic campaign planning.
- *Multimedia:* Students prepare a multimedia campaign, including plans book, 20- minute presentation, which they present to the client and a panel of advertising professionals.
- *Professionalism:* Students learn the professional standards and strategies of planning a strategic integrated marketing campaign.
- *Writing:* Students write, design a final project

Professional Values and Competencies in STRM 4222/6222

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications,
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Think critically, creatively and independently.
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts
- Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

How professional values and competencies will be met

Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically)

- Conceptualize the structure of an advertising campaign.
- Understand the role cooperation plays in achieving success or failure in group and deadline-sensitive projects.

Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies)

- Apply social science and communication theory to solve problems.
- Apply the advertising process to solve problems for a client.
- Plan and budget a campaign.
- Work as a member of team or work group.
- Use group processes to produce decision options.

How assessment of student learning will be met

Awareness

- Students learn the components of an integrated communication campaign: executive summary, situation analysis, target audience identification, marketing objectives and strategies, IC objectives, strategies and tactics, media, budget and evaluation.

Understanding

- Students understand how the components of an integrated communication campaign can achieve the client's goals.

Application

- Students write, design and upload a 21-page campaign Plans Book, produce a minute multimedia presentation, including creative components and present it to a panel of advertising professionals.

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

Portfolio requirement

As an undergraduate student in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, you are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of your work. Portfolios begin in JRSM 3900/3905. The portfolio should contain samples of coursework and/or professional experiences and should develop as you build skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while you are enrolled in your capstone course.

You may use any type of web hosting for your portfolio, but it must have an independent and professional URL. You may use any content management system, but you are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix, or SquareSpace. It is also encouraged to purchase a URL if you plan to use the portfolio long term. You must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

You should have a professional email address you plan to use throughout your professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Professional social media links (minimum LinkedIn)

You may wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, presentations, design PDFs, audio files or writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career you seek after graduation. Your portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

Email

You must have your UofM email account activated. If you are using another provider, such as Google, you are required to have all UofM emails forwarded to that account. Go to the [account management website](#) for information about implementing email forwarding. You are required to check your email daily.

Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

AI/Chat GPT

The use of artificial intelligence software, such as Chat GPT, is prohibited in some courses and required in others in Journalism & Strategic Media. Please refer to specific guidelines for this course in the course-specific part of the syllabus.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism & Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual tardiness.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade (C-) in a class required by your program of study in Journalism & Strategic Media after three attempts will be dropped from the program.

You may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. Substantially reworking the original submission, or working with the same general idea, may be permissible upon discussion and with written approval from the professor of the current course.

Academic integrity

The University of Memphis expects all students to behave honestly and follow the policies stated in the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. If you need more information about the University policy on academic integrity visit the [Office of Student Accountability's website](#).

In addition to University-wide policies, the Department of Journalism & Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on your own, as acts of cheating and punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, you are expected to comply with copyright and intellectual property laws and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating originality of your ideas and to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. All creative work may be checked for policy adherence by the professor. The only exception to this policy is your online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo). By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.

Online SETEs

You are encouraged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. If completed, once the instructor has posted final grades, you can immediately see that grade. To access evaluation forms, log in to MyMemphis; click the "Student Pages" dropdown menu and select "My Resources" and find the SETE evaluation forms; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations seriously and use them to

improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. Because Journalism & Strategic Media is a professional program, students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

You may be permitted to make up missing work if it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented.

AP Style and grammar

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. You are responsible for learning these rules and checking your work for errors.

Disability and accommodations

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, contact Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Diversity and inclusivity

The Department of Journalism & Strategic Media values diversity in all its forms. Some of these forms include ability, age, appearance, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, language, nationality, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexuality, socio-economic status, and other personal identities and experiences. As such, students are expected to participate in fostering an inclusive environment that respects the differences of others.

Students are expected to approach their work through a diverse lens. Creating messages that resonate with diverse audiences requires an understanding of a variety of perspectives, which are carried out through multiple platforms, such as digital and traditional media outlets.

The department seeks to foster healthy and positive classroom discussions and experiences. As such, faculty and students are expected to remain respectful and professional at all times.

Weather policy

Always check with local media, the University of Memphis website and the LiveSafe App regarding inclement weather.

Student support

If you are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, visit the Student Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php> or contact the Dean of Students Office at 901-678-2187, or in person in Suite 359 in the University Center for assistance. You may also talk with course instructors about the challenges you are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting you with campus or community support.