

Framework for:

Global communication coordination

Date: _____

Company: _____

Participants: _____

Globally coordinated communication

An increasingly fast-paced and intense world competition increases the need for coordination of communication. Central control and production of all major campaigns and heavier communication devices are becoming an increasingly important competitive parameter.

The advantages of a global approach are significant:

- Focus on the brand. Through a central control of messages, tonality and arguments you build a strong brand that is perceived in the same way on different markets.
- Shortened time-to-market (TTM) is more important than ever. Through a central development of ideas, strategies and communications carrier you can launch the product faster and at the same time on all markets. This way you will save a lot of time, which you can focus on sales with higher revenues as a result.
- Lower production costs. It is fairly obvious that it costs more to develop a communications solution for each market, instead of a universal one. Printing costs, for example, will go down, which will save a lot of money at a major launch. Overall, one can reduce development and production costs by about 2/3. Money that could be used for major investments in the media, or to hire additional sales people.
- Invest in the company's future, not the agent's. Companies working with agents or distributors will not spend resources on building the agent's brand. It may prove to be a waste of money and a lost market.
- Optimum utilization of resources. Local sales people are often involved in local and time-consuming advertising projects.

The obstacle to the success of coordination is often marketing companies, who look with suspicion on the parent company's ambitions to develop all communications in Sweden. They do everything they can to defend their independence presenting a number of arguments for why, for example, a French launch must be developed in France. This is a syndrome termed NIH (Not-Invented-Here). Marketing companies feel pressured in the development process, and protest by finding errors in the campaigns and materials.

It's a shame, because there are relatively easy ways to get marketing companies committed and motivated, and with full enthusiasm utilize the central campaign.

Framework for ...

Pyramid has extensive experience in B2B branding, and we would like to share it with you.

This document summarizes the issues worthy of consideration in the development of a branding strategy. Don't expect any fixed or general solutions. Successful solutions are the result of a concerted effort, based on the right assumptions and facts.

We use a customized version of this structure when we go through projects so feel free to use the material as a checklist or as a basis for discussion.

If this seems interesting and you want to discuss marketing strategy on a deeper level, you are always welcome to contact us at info@pyramid.se

Situation analysis →

Consider and respond to the following statements. If you respond "not at all" to more than 50% of the statements, this indicates that your global communication could be much better coordinated.

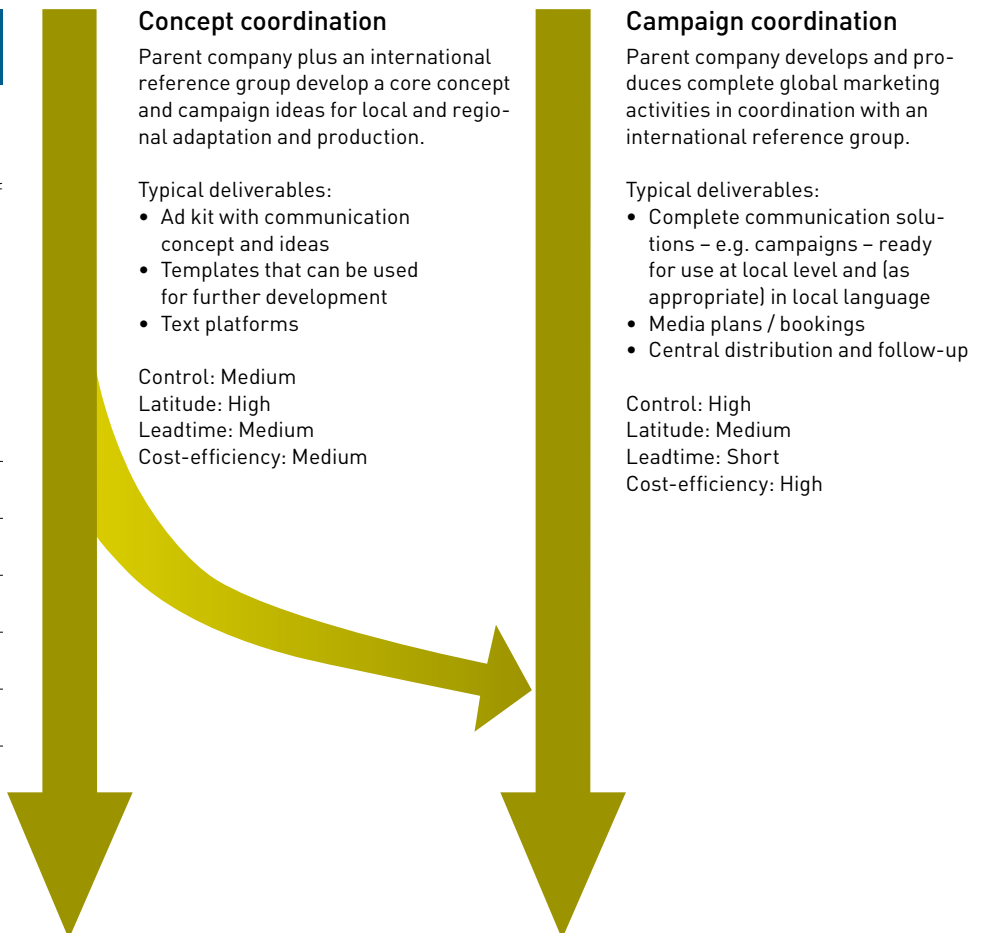
Decision

	Applies to us		
	Completely	Partially	Not at all
1. We clearly focus on our brand. Everyone in the organization shares the same image of the company, and we act unanimously when we meet customers.			
2. Our brand platform is updated and relevant.			
3. We have clearly communicated our brand platform throughout our organization, using materials such as a brand book and visual identity manual.			
4. All company communication shares a coordinated profile, and it is easy to see that it all comes from the same company.			
5. Locally developed conceptual marketing solutions, such as advertisements, are true to the spirit of the company brand platform.			
6. All markets are able to carry out launches in a coordinated and simultaneous manner.			
7. We optimize print overheads by centrally printing all large print productions.			
8. Our marketing companies continuously share market-ing and communications experience with each other, and with headquarters.			

Types of multinational coordination →

Concept and campaign coordination are the two key types of communication coordination. Each has its own degrees of control and latitude, leadtime for implementation as well as cost-effectiveness. In some instances, concept coordination provides a framework for more comprehensive campaign coordination.

My preliminary choice



The reference group →

One of the greatest barriers to successful global coordination is the so-called "Not Invented Here" syndrome. Communication is by nature subjective, and it is altogether too easy for a dissenter to come up with 'hard-to-counter' reasons why a given solution "... will never work in Country X".

The best way to combat this is to invite participation. Rather than being 'centrally steered', global communication should result from the successful collaboration of an international reference group.

My reference group

When assembling the reference group, be certain to achieve a satisfactory balance between different types of markets, and between markets and central functions. The group should comprise from 6 to 10 individuals, at least half of whom are from the marketing companies.

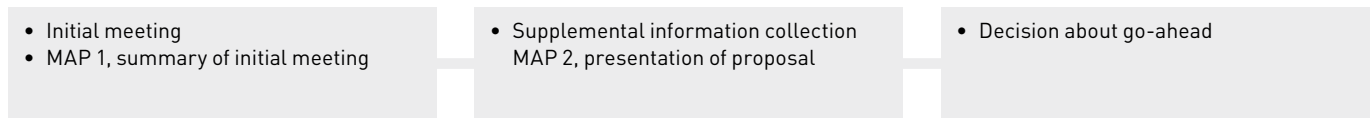
Participants from the parent organization should have a responsibility for results (e.g. CEO, Business Area Manager, Marketing Manager, etc.), both to underscore the importance of the project and to ensure that decisions can be made quickly during the project's development and execution.

Balance group representation (as appropriate to the project) between ...

- Large and small markets
- Europe, Asia and the Americas
- Subsidiaries and agents
- Different cultural backgrounds (e.g. Anglo-Saxon vs. Latin)
- People with different perceptions (e.g. optimists vs. cynics)
- ... and key central functions, such as:
 - CEO/Business Area Manager
 - Marketing Manager
 - Export Manager
 - Product Manager
 - Communications Manager
 - Development Manager

The working method →

The reference group is invited to a project that has the following structure:



Preparations for the initial meeting

A majority of the questions discussed at the initial meeting are subjective. To assure an objective starting point for discussions, it is important to 'anchor' several key points:

Image: have objective customer surveys been conducted that identify how we are regarded as a supplier, or can we conduct one? Which markets are represented? Which markets must be represented?

Competitors: How do our competitors position themselves? If this has not been determined, conduct a quick survey to get basic data.

Communication material: compile a representative selection of communication materials, from your own organization as well as competitors. Even customers' marketing material can be of interest.

Actions

Initial meeting

Plan a full working day for the initial meeting. Use a neutral location away from the distractions of the office. To ensure impartiality, let an independent party conduct the meeting.

Typical agenda:

1. Marketing goals
2. Product/concept
3. Market
4. Target groups
5. Competition
6. Market situation
7. Market strategy
8. Positioning
9. Communication strategy
10. Tactics for market cultivation
11. Communication goals
12. Time plans

MAP 1, summary of initial meeting

Immediately summarize the results of the initial meeting – the perceptions that were conveyed and, in particular, the decisions in principle that were achieved. We call this summation the Marketing Action Plan, Part 1. Request immediate feedback from the meeting's participants, and/or a written confirmation that they now regard the platform as correct.

After the initial meeting

Were all questions clarified, or do we need to gather more information? Buying process(es), target groups (who actually makes purchasing decisions) and our image in the eyes of the customer are typical areas that often require further clarification utilizing focused qualitative scrutiny.

Actions

MAP 2, presentation of proposal →

Convene a meeting including all of the initial meeting's participants. Summarize the platform and conclusions drawn in a logical sequence:

- Marketing strategy
 - Branding strategy
 - Positioning
 - Communication platform
 - Communication strategy
- Relate the communication solutions to platform and strategy.

Selection of ad agency partner →

To implement a global communication project, the chosen agency must have proven experience in a range of areas. Grade your current agency on the following selection criteria.

If they don't achieve a 4 or 5 in most areas, you should consider a more appropriate alternative.

Criteria	Importance 1-3	Rating (Scale of 1 to 5 – 5 as best)		
		Current agency	Alternative A	Alternative B
Experience in international coordination				
Experience as 'global lead agency'				
Branding and strategy know-how				
Marketing experience				
Strategic market know-how				
Technical understanding				
Communications competence				
Creativity				
Project management				
English copywriting				
International personnel				
First-hand experience with all communications channels				
Production resource capacity and flexibility				
Customer list /references				
Personal 'chemistry'				

When evaluating an alternative advertising agency, consider the following:

1. First make a rough selection of about 10 candidate agencies by consulting with colleagues and acquaintances or referring to catalogues such as the Agency Book (Swedish: Reklam-byråboken). Identify those agencies who display the relevant competencies and who present themselves in an appropriate manner.
2. Conduct a preliminary evaluation. Visit the agencies' websites and read their presentation material. Select 3-5 primary candidates.
3. Contact your 'primaries' and invite them to visit you. Provide the agency with short briefings of your company and your marketing aims, which they should consider prior to a first meeting. Ask to meet those individuals who would make up your potential project group.
4. Listen to the agency's presentation. Have they understood your needs and situation? Ask to see reference examples of similar projects that they have carried out. Does the entire project team have a clear understanding of your needs? How will the individuals in question 'synchronize' with your organization?
5. Ask for customer references that you may contact.
6. Ask the agency to provide a summary of your first meeting, their preliminary evaluation of your market situation and the challenges that face you. Ask for a proposal of how you together can tackle the project. This type of fundamental evaluation is often much more valuable than sketched communication proposals – anyone can rough up a nice ad or brochure proposal, but not everyone can help you to solve your communication challenges.

Pyramid builds brands and creates remarkably profitable, cross-border communication for international companies with high ambitions and entrepreneurial spirit.

What should one do to stick out, to break through, and to do so with credibility intact? We have proven methodologies that lead to the answer.

Together we can:

- create cross-border communication beyond the expected
- attract a global market across national borders
- take advantage of all media, digital and analog, with an open mind
- bridge cultural barriers and reach professionals
- cross-fertilize knowledge and experience from different areas of industry
- integrate our skills across disciplines and coordinate the communication

In Pyramid, you have a partner who:

- spars with you on a business strategy level
- focuses on your organization
- market-adapts your offers
- positions your company
- differentiates your products and services
- builds strong brands
- stimulates your sales team
- attracts the right target groups
- gets your business to grow globally
- optimizes what you get from the Internet
i.e. boosts your growth and profitability.

