

Faculty toolkit

Best Practices One Pager

Subject area: Advertising strategy

Faculty: Janet Dooley

College/University: Marshall University, Huntington, WV

Tool: Roundtable prep and reflect

Narrative: Roundtables stimulate discussion and practice in advertising strategy and account planning. Students are assigned reading or directed to complete an activity a week in advance of a scheduled roundtable. They respond to the reading or to the activity with a one-page preparation or "prep."

During the roundtable, students sit physically in a circle and discuss the topic of the day. Because each student has a "prep" in front of him or her, it is easy to call on those who are not as actively engaged or who tend to be more quiet and ask what they have written. It often pulls into the conversation students who may not otherwise participate. Their thinking is already committed to paper, making it easier to join the conversation.

If the class is cross-listed with undergraduate and graduate students, this is a good opportunity to put graduate students in charge of the discussion.

During the last five or ten minutes of the class period, students write a "reflection" that can be an open consideration of the discussion or guided with prompts. To receive credit for a roundtable, students must complete the prep, they must participate and they must write the reflection.

The attached roundtable sample assignments cover the areas of analyzing a client charge, case studies, observation, question design, writing a brief and online tactics, but the exercise can easily include marcom proposals, audience segmentation and business pitches.

Roundtables are an engaging break in classroom routine that involve students in course content in a memorable way.

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Roundtables

Six Roundtable discussions are scheduled during the semester. You are expected to read assigned materials or perform assigned tasks in preparation for the Roundtables. Some Roundtables will focus on course content, others on will be centered on projects at hand.

On the days Roundtables are scheduled, come with a one-page, typed summary of the reading or activity, and a brief discussion of what you discern to be the three main points of the material or activity. Use your "preps" as prompts for the discussion. Participation in the discussion is part of your Roundtable grade, so make your contributions, and, remember, you can't participate if you aren't present. "Preps" will be collected at the end of the discussion, and a five-minute "reflection" will be completed by all Roundtable discussants. To receive credit for the Roundtables, you must have a "prep" and a "reflect" and you must have participated.

Preps = 10 points
Reflects = 5 points
Participation = 5 points
Total = 20 points each

Of the six Roundtables scheduled, you must completed a "Prep and Reflect" for any five. To get full credit for Roundtables you must complete a prep, a reflection and you must participate in the discussion.

Graduate students will direct some of the roundtables, and they must be prepared with questions for the group and main points they think should be made. Each graduate student in class will direct one Roundtable.

(Topics could vary if there are class developments that merit a change.)

			Grad Asst.
Roundtable 1—What did the client ask?	September	7	_____
Roundtable 2—John Steel cases	September	26	_____
Roundtable 3—Observation	October	10	_____
Roundtable 4—Asking the right questions	October	24	_____
Roundtable 5 —Writing a brief	November	7	_____
Roundtable 6—Online tactics	November	28	_____

Five Roundtables = 100 points

Graduate Direction = 50 points

Roundtable 1
What did the client ask
Prep

Read the Nissan case thoroughly, cover to cover.

What is the client asking you to do?

Don't simply feed back the first sentence of the case: "to develop a fully integrated marketing campaign to help Nissan build awareness and lasting favorability among African American, Hispanic and Chinese millennial consumers in the United States."

That's the surface challenge.

What has to happen to attract the multicultural audience? Do what they've always done? Offer a different line of merchandise? Shift to a more upscale/downscale image? Reposition Nissan?

What has to happen to acquire African American, Hispanic and Chinese target members?

Nissan has given you a clear marketing objective and overall directive. They've given you a lot of "data" and "information." Now go beneath the surface. What change in thinking among the target is Nissan really asking you to achieve. What's the desired "tiny reaction in someone's head?"

What is Nissan asking you to do even though they don't realize they have asked you to do so?

Your prep should be about a one-page description of what you believe the client is asking you to do and justification of why you think that.

Point Value: 20

Due: September 7

Reflection 1

What did the client ask?

Student ID number _____

1. What one word reflects what Nissan believes their strongest creative point to be?
Because . . .?
2. What problem does the Nissan ad campaign have to solve?
3. You have one question to ask Nissan. What is that question and why?
4. After reading the case and discussing it today, what would you say the client has asked you to do?

Roundtable 2
Jon Steel cases
Prep

In chapter 5 of the Jon Steel book, make particular note of four of the cases he describes.

- Bell Helmets pages 162-166
- Polaroid pages 173-178
- Sega pages 180-182
- Foster Farms pages 182-187
- (include the Izuzu cases if you like)

On a single sheet of paper, type and double-space a brief summary of the cases individually or collectively. Follow up with three main points about strategy, insight and account planning that you gained from the cases. Be prepared to discuss your conclusions.

Point Value: Prep = 10
 (reflection = 5)
 (participation = 5)

Due: September 26

Reflection 2
Jon Steel cases

Student ID number _____

1. How do Jon Steel's case examples relate to creative briefing?
2. What three new things do you now know about consumer insight that hadn't occurred to you before reading Steel's chapter 5 and the case examples?
3. Identify an "AH HA" moment you had as you read the cases, that is, one point at which you said to yourself, "I get this strategy stuff."

Roundtable 3

Observation

Prep

Spend a few days in unobtrusive observation of a consumer. You could

- watch someone eat breakfast,
- watch a shopper in a grocery store,
- go with someone who is test driving a car,
- watch a mother of young children in a restaurant,
- watch a man try on shoes,
- watch a woman try on shoes,
- watch a woman put on makeup,
- watch a man shave, or
- watch someone select a book.

Or come up with another inventive idea. Use your roommate as a subject. Observe a friend. If it doesn't interfere with him or her, study a stranger's interaction with a product.

You need to observe only one consumer. You don't have to complete every observation on the list. Don't tell your subject what you are doing. They'll be tempted to stage a show for your benefit.

Make notes of all your observations. What do you notice? What ideas for products or product positioning does it suggest? What is your consumer doing that you never thought about before? What's the insight on which you could build a marketing idea or advertising campaign that connects? What is the "sweet spot?"

Write a one-page summary of your observations and conclusions. Include a brief demographic/psychographic description of your subject, and be clear about "sweet spot" discoveries. What is the "sweet spot?"

Be prepared to share your observations and conclusions with the class during the roundtable.

Point Value: Prep = 10
(reflect = 5; participation = 5)

Due: October 10

(Adapted flagrantly from Lisa Fortini-Campbell)

Reflection 3

Observation

Student ID number _____

1. What does observation as a data collection technique offer that can't be obtained by using a simple survey?
2. Think of another technique that might have gleaned the same information as your observation.
3. Identify something you found revealing about gathering data through observation. It could be something you realized in your own observation or something that came up in class discussion. Now, tie that revelation to at least one (more if you like) of Fortini-Campbell's principles.

Roundtable 4
Asking the right questions
Prep

Steel and Fortini-Campbell have both recommended careful construction of probing questions that guide consumers to insightful responses. Fortini-Campbell has made it a significant part of her ninth principle (“... work hard on your questions ...”).

Visit these two websites.

First the VALS survey site.

<http://www.strategicbusinessinsights.com/vals/presurvey.shtml>

Take the VALS survey if you like, but more to the point, study the questions. Activate the “VALS Types” button on the right hand menu and study how “resources” and “innovation” affect the classifications. How can the question, “I like my life to be pretty much the same from week to week,” possibly help sell cars? Why do the questions not inquire into product preferences or other specifics?

Second, do some zip code lookups.

www.claritas.com/MyBestSegments/Default.jsp (Note this is case sensitive.)

Look up the zip code where you live in Huntington. Look up your hometown. How accurate, in your experience, is Claritas? What did they ask to arrive at their conclusions?

Now, reflect on the data gathering techniques we have discussed in class and that have been described by Steel and Fortini-Campbell.

In a paragraph or two analyze the questions you’ve seen and the techniques we’ve reviewed in relation to consumer insight. Conclude your prep with your three “rules” for designing questions for account planning. Be prepared to discuss your ideas with the class.

Point Value: Prep = 10
(reflect = 5; participation = 5)

Due: October 24

Reflection 4
The right questions

Student ID number _____

1. Write one probing question to tease information from the target of your local case project.
2. What insight do you hope to gain from the question you posed in #1?
3. Identify from the class discussion one "rule" you heard from a peer that you want to add to your own list. Why?

Roundtable 5

Writing a brief

Prep

Business writing is concise, tight, and to the point. It often uses bullet points

- to get a message across quickly,
- to draw attention to central issues, and
- to create reading ease.

In that same vein, a strategy must convey a great deal in a few words. It summarizes all your thinking about promoting a product or a service and describes succinctly how you are going to captivate a target. It isolates the single critical message that will motivate customers.

A variety of formats, many of which you have seen, can be employed to help develop a strategy and write a brief—identifying the target, listing features (or attributes)/benefits, stating what consumers think and what you want them to think, etc. All of this is part of strategic thinking, but ultimately it comes down to a strategy statement that delineates the single most important thing you need to say to consumers, or identifying the “sweet spot.”

Do some quick research on each of the products listed below. Write a brief, including that surgically precise strategy statement, for each product/service. Use any strategy format your like from among the ones we have studied or one you have discovered elsewhere. Use the same format three times, or experiment with three different approaches. Be prepared to discuss your writing, why you selected certain points of information and left out others, and business writing in general during the roundtable.

Adbuster Blackspots

<https://www.adbusters.org/campaigns/blackspot>
Target: 18-34-year-old men and women

Smithsonian Magazine

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/>
Target: 45-year-old and older, well to do men

Mad Men, AMC, Sunday, 10 p.m.

<http://www.amctv.com:80/originals/madmen>
Target: 35-50-year-old women

Point Value: Prep = 10
(reflect @5 and participation @ 5 = 10)

Due: November 4

Reflection 5

Writing a brief

Student ID number _____

1. What are your three tips for writing a strategy (creative brief, copy worksheet, copy platform, etc.)?
2. How are the sweet spot and strategy linked?
3. What is the key to brilliant strategy?

Roundtable 6
Online tactics
Prep

Using the Plummer text as a guide write online strategies for either Nissan or for you local client. Write a one tactic for each of the following situations.

- capitalize on online searching
- use e-mail effectively
- stimulate return to the website.

One of the most fascinating aspects of marketing online is the ability to innovate and do something different. Propose an online activity for one of your clients that has never been done before. Be innovative and clever.

Point Value: Prep = 10

(reflect @5 and participation @ 5 = 10)

Due: November 18

Reflection 6

Online tactics

1. Other than your own, identify one online advertising application that you thought was particularly innovative. What about that application captured your attention?
2. Relate at least one principle from Steel or from Fortini-Campbell that ties directly to online strategy.
3. Suggest one way to seamlessly integrate online and digital emphasis into the advertising curriculum in the W. Page Pitt School of Journalism and Mass Communications.