



# **Integrated Marketing Communications Plan for Uber Technologies Inc.**

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## **I. Marketing**

### **1. Executive Overview**

This plan outlines Uber Technologies Inc. marketing strategy in implementing integrated marketing communications. To be able to achieve success through IMC, Uber will plan, execute, evaluate and control various promotional mix elements in order to create effective campaign messages that will be received by the target audience. These integrated marketing communications will be adopted to accomplish the marketing and communication objectives of this plan. This plan also addresses some of the issues and challenges surrounding developing, implementing and controlling the organization's IMC program.

#### **A. Marketing History**

Uber was founded in 2008 by Travis Kalanick and Garrett Camp, who believed getting a ride should be as easy as tapping a button. Uber connects people across borders, cultures and languages who need a reliable ride or a way to make extra money. Uber launched their mobile application in 2010, the company was the catalyst for using technology to change the taxi industry. Uber positioned themselves as the primary transportation service for businesspeople and millennials. The quality of the Uber experience stands out from competitors with their simple, efficient and on demand approach to the car service industry.

#### **B. Current Marketing Plan**

Uber's current marketing strategy is based upon the experience they deliver to their customers and value the customer is receiving versus the expense when comparing other cab and service car companies.

## **1. Product, Price, Place & Promotion**

*Product:* User friendly app increases efficiency, and eliminates inconvenience of calling or hailing a cab. With the app the company is able to maintain a consistent and high quality service to their customers.

*Price:* Uber provides affordable prices based on location due to diverse gas prices, trip mileage, and the amount of available drivers in the area. The app gives an exact price of the ride before the rider has to confirm and pay for the trip.

*Place:* Uber will expand their services beyond the 529 cities worldwide they currently serve. Currently the top cities are San Francisco, London, Los Angeles, Washington D.C, Mexico City and Sao Paulo. Uber will increase their amount of drivers to decrease wait times and surge rates to be even more efficient in meeting customer needs. This will help Uber reach a substantial amount of customers while increasing overall efficiency.

*Promotion:* Uber has currently adopted national advertising as the primary method of promotion all around the world. One can see the message of “anti discrimination” spreading all over it’s website, application, and news releases which seems to be a great marketing tool. We can a lot of personal selling as they have posted many multiracial stories about the user experience. This adds on to the value of the service because the customers will feel more comfortable and more people get encouraged to join the team as drivers. They have created jobs on the market like never before. Even people with full time jobs have the opportunity to earn more by Ubering. When it comes to social media, Uber is active in all popular sites but could definitely benefit with some new ideas about fresher deals.

## **II. IMC Planning**

### **A. Target Market Statement**

Ridesharing services like Uber and Lyft have a diverse range of target demographics, but there are distinctive demographic characteristics of the rideshare passenger. Riders tend to be young, with 57 percent of all rideshare passengers falling into the range of 25 to 34 years of age. While older demographics do use rideshare services, the percentage of passengers that are 45 and older only make up seven percent of the market. This data suggests that an effective target marketing age would be those 25 to 34 year old passengers. (Ovugo).

The gender demographic amongst ridesharing passengers is mostly split. The makeup of female passengers is around 40 percent, and the male demographic is around 60 percent. With this in mind, a marketing communications plan should be gender agnostic when segmenting a target market. The vast majority of rideshare passengers are educated—with data showing that around 80 percent of passengers hold a bachelor's degree or higher. With education comes affluence. Over half of all rideshare passengers reported household incomes of \$71k and higher. 40 Percent of passengers reported a combined household income of \$100k and over. (Ovugo).

Uber's target market for an integrated marketing campaign consists of middle to upper class, educated, 25-34 year old passengers. A successful campaign directed at this demographic should prove to be quite rewarding financially.

### **B. IMC Objective**

There is no doubt that Uber has already been successful creating awareness of their ridesharing service and their brand, so this campaign is not about building brand awareness but brand reinforcement and highlighting Uber's unique selling proposition. Uber is struggling to come back into a favorable view after their unpopular response to immigration

protests, a confrontation between CEO Travis Kalanick and a driver (Harvey), salacious management activities, and numerous stories about bad business practices and childish smear campaigns mounted against competitors. (Lazzaro). These recent activities have caused even the most loyal Uber customers to delete Uber and download Lyft—causing a PR nightmare for the company. But the actions of the CEO and some upper level employees shouldn't reflect poorly on the frontline employees. Drivers are an integral part of the Uber experience, our campaign will highlight these drivers through driver interviews, testimonials, and customer stories about their favorite drivers or rides.

Our target market—affluent millennials that are highly educated—are the ones who have retreated from the brand. In an effort to gain back market trust, our campaign will target this demographic. By highlighting positive and even humorous stories about fun driving experiences, Uber will redirect focus away from bad news onto those memorable ride experiences that makes Uber unique.

The ultimate outcome of this campaign is to earn back customer trust and ultimately their business. This will be tracked through app download numbers, and through customer review and driver ratings and comments. One of Uber's corporate goals is to improve access to transportation, but through our campaign, we hope to increase access to quality transportation and deliver a better passenger experience.

## **C. Copy Platform**

### **1. Basic Problem**

While Uber became a worldwide phenomenon almost overnight, lately, it has been receiving negative backlash in the news that is affecting business and the brand overall. Those issues, which we outlined above, have impacted loyal customers who are now questioning Uber's integrity and are even causing many passengers to switch to competing services such as Lyft.

When reading customer reviews, many passengers have complained about their ride experiences, exclaiming that they were overcharged and that the driver did not know what they were doing or where they were going. Although all Uber drivers use the same GPS system, many drivers miss turns or take longer routes, increasing the price of their fares.

But, like any service business, the negative reviews outweigh the positive reviews. Even if there are more positive experiences than negative ones, people focus on the negative ones to determine their position about the service. We want to bring the positive experiences back to the forefront and highlight Uber's efficient yet rewarding business model.

<http://www.recode.net/2017/1/30/14445122/delete-uber-trump-protest-immigration-ban>

## **2. Target Market (Could be the same as IIC)**

As discussed above, we will focus on millennials, aged 25 to 34 who have a college degree and a household income of \$71k or higher. But the demographics are not as important as what millennials want out of life. They crave experience whether it's traveling to new cities or brunching with friends on the weekends, they want life to be fun and full of adventure. And they want to document these experiences on social media to prove that they are having a good time and living in the moment. Their feedback is relayed to all of their friends and families and can be seen by almost anyone. So it's important that they report on a positive experience rather than a negative one. If passengers have to wait a long time for their Uber to arrive or if they have a bad Uber driver, they will tell their friends, write a bad review and ultimately, their night is ruined.

## **3. Major Selling Idea**

Uber doesn't just drive passengers from one fun experience to the next, they can be a *part* of the experience itself.

Picture this: you and your best friend just arrived in a new city and are ready to hit up all of the hot spots and do everything. You've done all of your research but it's unfamiliar

territory and you want to go off the beaten path instead of being a typical tourist. You request an Uber to pick you up from your hotel and drive you into the heart of the city. When they arrive, you strike up a conversation with the Uber driver and learn that they have lived in that city their entire life. Intrigued, you ask them for recommendations for things to see and do. Instead of telling you all of the touristy places that you had researched, they recommend the best restaurants and attractions that only the locals know about. You and your friend try out those places and are blown away. Your trip has been enhanced all because your Uber driver had the inside knowledge that you couldn't read about online.

#### **4. Creative Strategy Statement**

- a. Campaign Theme: Uber isn't just for driving you to and from your next destination, it is part of the destination.
- b. Campaign Slogan: "For all of your life's requests, request Uber."
- c. Appeal: Your experience shouldn't be tainted by the in between travel rides, it should be enhanced by them.

#### **5. Execution Technique**

The majority of our campaign execution will involve testimonial accounts from both the drivers and passengers. We will interview a variety of drivers and customers in different cities across the world in order to gather insight into their experiences. Once we have processed and analyzed the information from the interviews, we will select a few unique ones to feature in the advertising campaigns. The personal stories and accounts will transfer nicely into the multiple mediums we will utilize: TV, print, OOH, radio, social media, etc. For example, we can develop a :60 or :30 TV spot that will highlight one of the stories and can either act out the scenario or describe it using an actor retelling the story. We will feature a photo and some lines of copy to retell a specific story. Fans of "Humans of New York" love

the personal accounts that are highlighted and usually result in a feel good story that people crave, especially when there is so much negative news circulating on social media.

## **6. Support Information and Requirements**

All of our advertising efforts will begin with the disclaimer that says, “This is a real passenger/driver story.” If actors or models are used to portray the subjects of our stories, then that will also be added to the beginning disclaimer. All advertisements in this campaign will end with the campaign slogan, “For all of your life’s requests, request Uber.” followed shortly after by the Uber logo—for visual ads only. This will ensure consistency of our campaign appeal, and the continued reinforcement of the Uber brand.

## **III. Creative Work Social Media Ads**

Rather than simply stating the features or benefits of Uber’s service, we must put the advertising message into a form that will engage the audience's interest and make the ads memorable. Since Uber’s target market for an integrated marketing campaign consists of middle to upper class, educated, 25-34 year old passengers, who have a college degree and a HHI of \$71k or higher. We will incorporate social media platforms and technology instead of TV or radio ads. This specific target market are more likely to watch Netflix instead of TV, and listen to apple music or other music subscriptions instead of the radio. Social media now plays almost as large a role in purchasing decisions as TV, and 57 percent of consumers say they’re influenced to think more highly of business after seeing positive comments or praise online. Social media is important today, but even more so tomorrow. 90 percent of young adults—ages 18 to 29—use social media (compared to just 3 percent of those over age 65). A third of millennials say social media is one of their preferred channels for communicating with businesses.

*Timeline:* Roll out ads towards the end of the week closer to the weekend, when consumers are most likely to travel and request an Uber ride.

*Theme:* Uber isn't just for driving you to and from your next destination, it is part of the destination.

*Purpose:* To get consumers to request a ride with Uber when traveling to a new area, to experience new people and places. Let Uber take you for the ride of your life. We will feature a photo and some lines of copy to retell a specific story.

*Key Message:* Uber drivers have more to offer than just driving. They are locals and will recommend the best restaurants and attractions that only the locals know about.

*Images:* We can incorporate images of a customer, Uber driver and the unique experience/destination.

*Outlet:* Instagram, and Facebook.

*Call to Action:* In a new town or unfamiliar area? Request a ride with Uber to uncover the best local restaurants and attractions.

Instagram Ad example:



Jason Harris - I discovered Uber on a trip to New York...and it was a life saver. A 10 minute, less than one mile trip in a taxi, was almost \$20. The next day, my friend sent an Uber twice the distance for only five dollars. We Ubered all weekend long. You designate where to get picked up and how long for them to arrive and determine the size of vehicle depending on

how many people you have. They supply a picture of the driver, make and model of their vehicle, license plate number, NO GUESSING AT ALL!! You can choose to share a ride with your fellow passengers (it's cheaper if you do). The prices are so much cheaper than taxis and the drivers are FRIENDLIER!!! My Uber driver was born and raised in New York and suggested I try a local tavern, The Fox - I LOVED IT!!!

#### **IV. Media Plan**

##### **A. Broad Media Classes**

Among all the broad media classes, Uber can mainly benefit from television, social, digital and potentially billboards. Media like radio, newspaper and magazine can be a backup option as their popularity has decreased. The fact that Uber is operated from a mobile phone and not just limited to a website proves the point that our media plan needs to add a modern spin to all forms of advertisements.

##### **B. Media within Classes and Media Schedule**

*Television:* Traditional advertising spots—30 to 60 seconds—that play in areas where Uber is available, on networks that are watched primarily by educated, high income millennials, and during times just before the weekend and in the early evening. We will also run before on-demand content to capture viewers who are not watching programs live.

*Social:* Targeted Instagram videos with on-screen captioning that tell these micro-stories to audiences with short attention spans. Targeted Facebook advertising that mixes both static images coupled with a micro-stories, and the same ad format as the instagram ads, but with no content overlap. Each of these ad campaigns will feature content from cities that are adjacent to the target audience's home city to create excitement in being adventurous.

*Digital:* Advertise on travel sites like TripAdvisor and review sites such as Yelp to target our content to those individuals interested in travel and trying new things.

## **V. Media Use Decisions**

### **A. Broadcast Television**

*Traditional Television Advertisements:* 30 to 60 second video micro-stories targeting well-educated, affluent millennials on the following networks: NBC, ABC, Fox, Univision, Adult Swim, ESPN, TBS, AMC, FX, Telemundo, and Comedy Central. (Statista).

*Creative:* Micro-stories that highlight a customer experience, or a driver story. The stories will involve a positive experience of using Uber. These advertisements will also try to appeal to a sense of adventure and spontaneity.

*On-Demand Pre-Content Advertisements:* Before playing restricted on-demand content, 15 to 30 second micro-stories will be presented to viewers. These spots help advertisers reach an audience that typically fast forwards through advertisements.

*Creative:* Same micro-stories and similar content as in the traditional TV spots, but told much more succinctly. They will also be staggered to reduce duplicate stories during a consumer TV program binge.

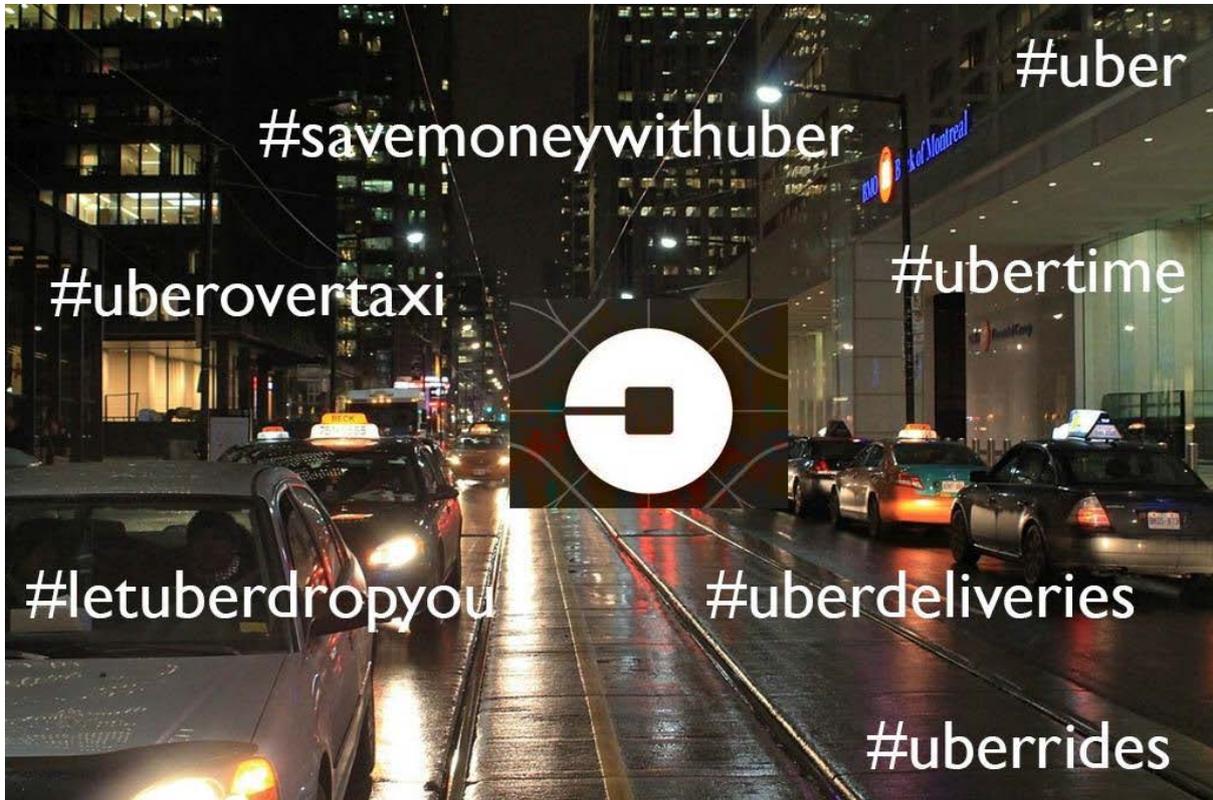
### **B. Print**

*Magazine Advertisements:* We will focus on the following publications, due to a higher percentage of target market readership: Maxim, ESPN the magazine, Wired, Vibe, Rolling Stone, Glamour, US Weekly, Sports Illustrated, Game Informer, Entertainment Weekly, Vogue, Allure, In Touch Weekly, Men's Fitness, Game Pro, Modern Bride, Fuse, Elle, PC Gamer, and Marie Claire. (Huff). We will also advertise in popular travel publications such as Conde Nast Traveler, AAA, and Southwest.

*Creative:* Full-page and spread advertisements that tell micro-stories of positive Uber experiences from both the driver's and the rider's perspective. These will be presented in a very visual and succinct way.

### C. Social/Internet

Customers should be encouraged to use hashtags while sharing content on social media platforms. Hashtags have been trending digitally and it helps with grouping and instantly sharing posts that fall into a certain category. Some of the hashtags could be:



*Instagram Video:* Instagram allows advertisers to publish highly targeted advertisements in a variety of different formats. For our purposes, we will focus on video micro-stories.

*Creative:* These 15 to 30 second micro-stories will be in a similar narrative style to the television advertisement, but will be much more concise. Due to the nature of Instagram's autoplay on mute functionality, we will include an easy to read video caption of the story dialogue.

*Facebook Video Promotions:* Facebook owns Instagram, so the advertising works in a similar way.

*Creative:* The ads featured on Facebook will be the same format as the ones on Instagram.

*Facebook Photo Promotions:* Utilize the advanced targeting that Facebook offers to present visuals along with a written story. We're not including calls to action because we're only trying to create a positive brand image and create more brand awareness.

*Creative:* Diverse stories of rider adventures and driver experiences.

*Website Advertisements:* Advertise on top travel websites such as: Orbitz, Priceline, Travelocity, TripAdvisor, and Booking.com. (Reviews.com). We can partner with major international airline companies that have direct flight to our country to have a banner ad published in several pages, mainly checkout. Also on websites for major cities' top attractions, like music venues, clubs, and museums.

*Creative:* Visually appealing imagery coupled with our campaign slogan.

## **VI. Conclusion**

Uber is in need of an image adjustment. It has been a highly successful company but lately it has been struggling for many reasons. Our plan is to highlight one of Uber's strengths, and salvage their image among consumers. Having taxis and Lyft as major competitors, the company needs to step up the strategic ladder of marketing. With our approach of highlighting personal stories through a mix of traditional and social mediums, we can effectively reach the audience that uses and engages with Uber the most, in an effort to increase sales.

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