



SOULOTM

newsletter

August 2020 ISSUE

Featured Articles

Vertical Integration	pg. 1
Top Tips Checklist on Vert. Integrated Marketing	pg. 3
Utepils Case Study	pg. 5
Meet Shannon	pg. 10

Vertical Communications Integration – the SOULO Way

By Marilyn Phillips

Would you build a new house without a general contractor?

Most of us are happy to hand all that planning, coordination, and timed construction to an experienced team who understand the complete project, not just the wiring, framing, roofing, or plumbing. A group that can work seamlessly together from start to finish and solve problems as they go. Where planning and building go hand in hand. And the finished work makes everyone proud.

Having a vertically integrated communications resource like SOULO is like having a general contractor for your brand. With SOULO you get a tight team that works closely together to execute your brand vision and drive greater sales.

It's More Efficient for You.

It costs time and money to create digital assets such as graphics, images, and content. Sharing those assets across channels eliminates the need for duplication.

It Ensures Protection of Your Brand Assets.

We are the guardians of your visual brand equity across multiple channels.

Your Key Messages Are Integrated Across Multiple Channels.

Not surprisingly, consumers want to see integrated marketing messaging. It reinforces their confidence in you.

** 72% of consumers want an integrated marketing approach.*

*** Content published in two or three channels had a 24% increase in engagement.*

* Source: "4th Annual Consumer Insights Survey", E-tailing group)

** Source: Mike Lewis in his book "Stand Out Social Marketing" (McGraw-Hill)

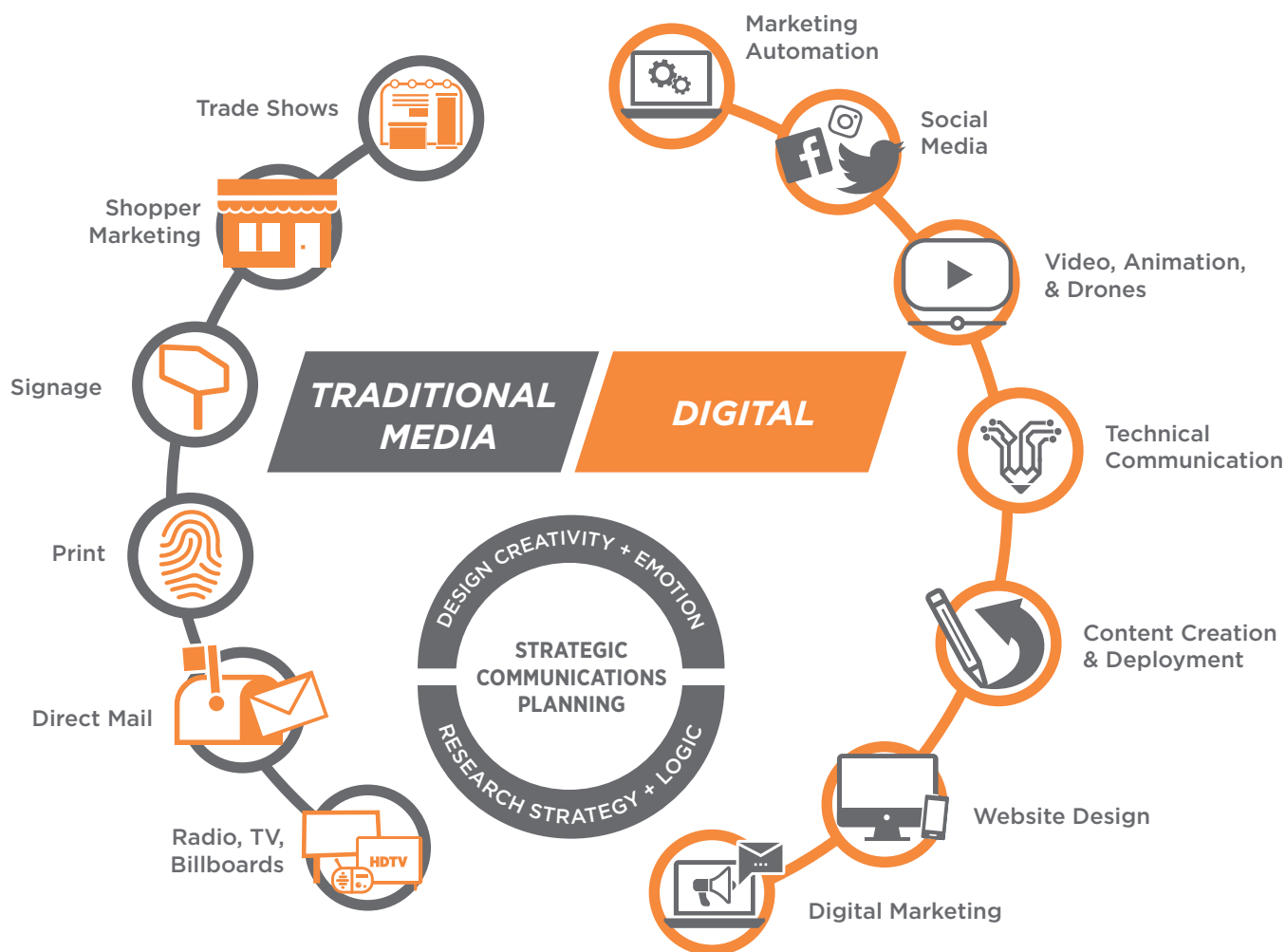
Our Communications Planning Can Provide the Right Messaging for Every Touchpoint.

Experts say it takes eight touchpoints to make a sale.

Our portfolio of Integrated tactics can reinforce brand messaging and unique point-of-difference (POD) along the entire shopper journey, nurturing leads and leading to conversion.

SOULO Has Vertically Integrated Resources In-House

One of the things that is unique about SOULO is that we're like a general contractor for your communications project. We have the resources in house to do your strategic communications planning, define the creative vision, create brilliant designs, and produce in-house for a finished product that makes us proud and builds your sales. And we have a breadth of services to offer:



We are not cookie-cutter

Our approach is to customize our portfolio of services to your project's needs.

Call us today and let's get started on building a great communications plan for you.

UP NEXT

When Should You Consider a Vertically Integrated Marketing Agency?



When Should You Consider a Vertically Integrated Marketing Agency?

By Marilyn Phillips

There's no time in your busy workday for yet another agency meeting.

In this age of fragmented media specialization, a business may need to work with as many as five or six independent agencies: advertising, direct mail, social media, digital/website, PR, marketing automation SaaS agencies, among others. If you are a small business owner and you are “the Marketing Department” managing these resources and making informed decisions can take up a lot of your time.

You are spending a fortune on visual assets.

You are bombarded with requests for jpgs and digital files for multiple communication programs. You need a resource who can create and maintain a centralized visual asset library so these assets can be deployed across many different platforms. Instead of you digging for the right image, a vertically integrated agency does the work for you, and it saves time and money.

You are worried about message consistency across platforms and you really don't have time to educate your agencies.

72% of consumers* prefer to see commonalities of Brand messaging across platforms. It drives familiarity and reassurance. And integrated messages drive 24% higher engagement. A

vertically integrated agency will have a well-defined Master Brand Architecture framework that ensures each program reflects both the unique communication needs of the channel while also building brand image, reputation, and meaning. So consumers and customers will encounter your brand the way you intended. That's a good thing!

Your different communication programs are siloed and you don't have a holistic view of performance/ROI for your communications program.

Each agency provides you with different performance metrics but other than sales rates, it's hard to get a good feel for whether the marketing mix is effective or not and which tactic is driving the results. A vertically integrated communications agency plans, designs, and executes in a wide range of communications tactics and sets performance goals for each.

An agency's Marketing Automation platform will provide holistic metrics for each digital touchpoint across the shopper journey and that can be overlaid with traditional media performance metrics, providing that broader perspective you seek.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

A vertically integrated agency is “media-neutral” and seeks to optimize effectiveness for the brand.

You sometimes feel at the mercy of vendor claims and promises. How to evaluate?

Vertically integrated agencies work with a diversity of clients, industries, and communication platforms, and you benefit from that wide-ranging experience. Moreover, the agency is up-to-date on the latest thinking and innovations and its experts and specialists will be able to fairly evaluate new programs and tactics in a broader context.

You question how directly your communication tactics are driving leads and conversion. And that’s really the most important task.

A vertically integrated communications agency understands the relative power and appropriateness of different tactics at each stage of the customer journey: awareness, engagement, conversion, customer satisfaction. A vertically integrated agency will do synergistic communications planning and couple it to insightful creative work that is designed and produced in-house specifically for the channel. The strategy and creative team work closely with production to ensure that the vision is correctly executed. That optimizes communications effectiveness at each touchpoint.

*Source: “4th Annual Consumer Insights Survey,” E-tailing Group



SOULO™
is a vertically integrated communications agency.

Reach out to us at ***info@soulocom.com***
or call us at ***612.334.5679***.

UP NEXT

Utepils Case History



Utepils Case History

“Good Living Comes from Good Brewing”

Utepils. It’s an odd word, but for Minnesotans, the Norwegian name represents simply *great beer in a great place*. Utepils translates as *the first beer enjoyed with friends in the sunshine after a long, hard winter*. We Minnesotans know that experience well.

Utepils is a microbrewery founded in Minneapolis and dedicated to brewing classic, true-to-style beers that are traditional, timeless, and always delicious. Whether enjoyed in your own home or at the friendly taproom at the brewery itself (conveniently located minutes from downtown in a delightful setting of pine trees and creeks), you’ll find that the folks of Utepils have created not only a great beer experience but also a place where one can enjoy great new craft beer experiences. Made the old-fashioned way in time-honored European traditions.

Utepils and SOULO

Before their opening we worked with Utepils to make as many people as possible aware of this unique experience and to encourage them to make their way to the brewery along the Bassett Creek to enjoy a distinctive range of beers. There they could also enjoy the friendliness and conviviality of the team that makes Utepils a stand-out in the microbrew world. Our work has encompassed nearly all of their marketing touchpoints from new product launches (packaging, promotion) to enhanced taproom experiences (signage, collateral) to a robust multi-channel marketing and communications campaign. We are proud that Utepils considered us one of their key partners and we are thrilled with their success.



How SOULO has helped.

In the beginning, Utepils had the vision, the people, the micro-brewery itself, and a logo. They knew they wanted to create more than great beers: they wanted the experience of an European beer hall where friends and family could congregate and enjoy one another and have an unique experience. We helped by creating all the taproom signage (navigation, education, inspiration).

Though Utepils knew that the microbrewery taproom experience was key to awareness and brand advocacy, the route to success also meant that Utepils needed to develop a strong retail presence so beers experienced in the taproom could be also enjoyed at home.



Utepils Website

Multi-Channel Marketing Campaign



Email campaign for Ewald the Wildman

That task required an integrated and comprehensive marketing campaign (digital and traditional). We created a full-on digital marketing campaign for Utepils (eMail marketing, social media graphics, website banners) as well as a wide range of shopper marketing tactics such as banners, temporary signage, point-of-sale items, posters, promotional items, website content and creation, and even a vehicle wrap: the beer truck.

The frequent launch of new beers required that we have a vision, a master brand packaging design strategy, and a clear understanding of the relevant brand equities that needed to be incorporated into new products for a cohesive brand presence. Additionally, we created and placed traditional media such as billboards, print advertising, beer launch calendars, and distributor communications. Along the way the Utepils-branded merchandise became a popular item as well and we created a full range of items that highlight customers' affinity for the brand — which is growing exponentially.

How did SOULO manage this complex Utepils brand communication program.

We knew we needed a strategic framework for the launch of new beers. Building on the master brand framework, we created a full-color territory study to map out existing and opportunity areas for the brand. We wanted to be sure that the brand was shoppable in all distribution points (taproom, in retail, online) to reduce confusion.

We kept pace with the Utepils brand development and created the right message and media for the brand at the right time. As excitement for the Utepils brand began to build in 2018 as they received numerous awards at beer competitions, we and Utepils recognized that this presented an opportunity to drive awareness. Our multifaceted program included print, digital billboards, point-of-sale, free-standing banners, and pallet wraps.



Taproom Signs



Adventure Pack



Retail Endcap

How to promote one of their leading beers.

Ewald the Golden was their best-selling beer. Leveraging the equity of this popular brew, SOULO created a rich campaign to push greater awareness, including print, digital marketing, and social media to drive this product to higher levels of popularity.



Social media



Award Poster



Coaster



Shelf Label



Sellsheet



Social Distancing Guideline Signage



Magnetic Signage



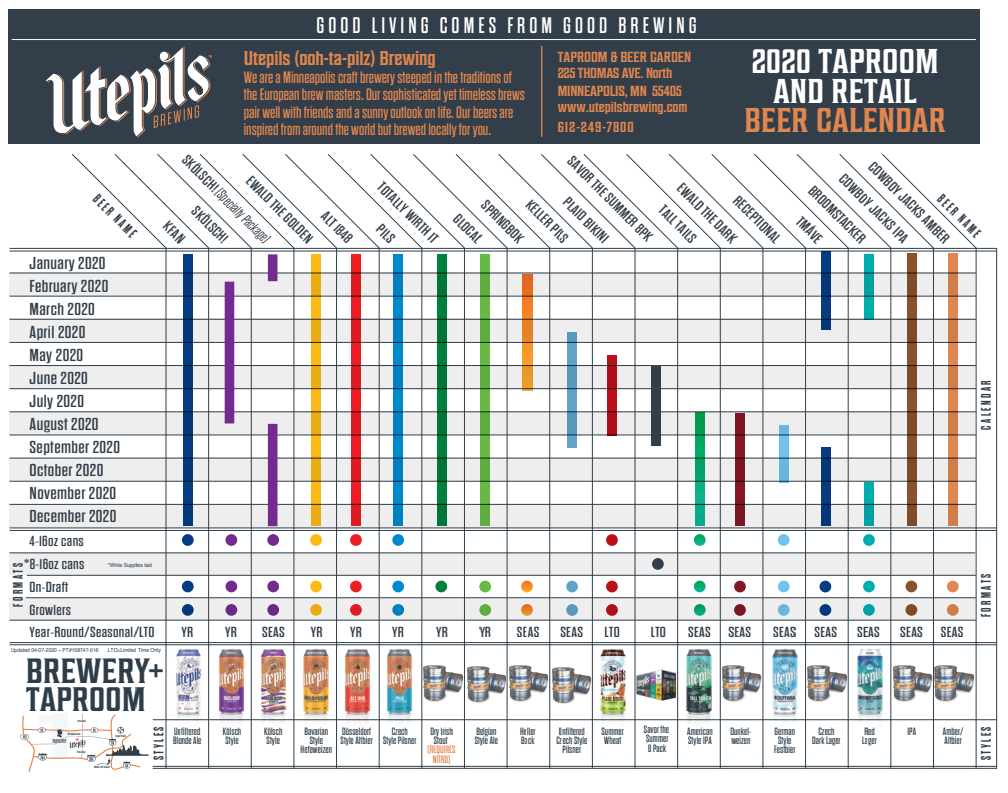
How to leverage influencers.

Utepils brought a great deal of equity to other related brands. Working with them on several co-branded beers for Cowboy Jack's Restaurants, and a one-of-a-kind beer for the popular local sports station, KFAN-Radio. The publicity from these partnerships and their loyal audiences again drove Utepils to new heights of sales.

And then COVID-19.

So much of the Utepils success is based on the expanded experience of the brand – experiencing new beers in the taproom and sharing that experience with friends.

The pandemic caused Utepils to re-think their marketing model. We supported Utepils in their interim focus on canned beers at the retail distribution point and then, when the State of Minnesota allowed for safe re-opening, SOULO was there with a wide range of “Utepils is Open” messaging, both online and in-market.



Results

The results have been nothing short of fantastic.

The measure of a strong brand is consumer loyalty in the face of unprecedented disruption. COVID-19 was certainly that.

Utepils re-opened in late May, after the mandatory shutdowns. Reservations for the limited seating areas in the taproom exceeded capacity and the team managed to configure the space to find a way to make anyone who wanted to experience Utepils to be able to do it – whether in the taproom, the outside dining area, or at retail outlets that continue to see great sales for Utepils. Sales and brewery visits have rebounded nicely. The taproom is seeing steady traffic, and interest in new beers that Utepils has on their planning board has never been higher. The future looks bright.

We are proud to be Utepils' partner in driving their success in happy times and challenging circumstances. Great communications thinking at start-up laid the foundation, and traffic-building, loyalty-driving tactics continue to help the brand grow. Agile and responsive, we customize our strategies and communications to fit the brand's need and circumstances with right message/right time tactics.

- At a friendly visit to the taproom with family or friends.
- With a growler take-out from the taproom, a purchase at your local liquor store, or consumed on premises at many fine restaurants and bars.
- Through the Utepils website and other digital engagement platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and personalized emails, as well as traditional print.
- We are proud to be their partner. Savor the experience!

Meet Shannon

Customer Service Representative

Shannon joined SOULO three years ago and has become an indispensable member of the sales team. As a CSR she performs the essential liaison role among customers, sales staff, and production, ensuring that all essential information about a project is conveyed correctly and completely. Given the diversity of jobs at SOULO – from creative design to print, signs, vehicle wraps, direct mail, and digital marketing, among others – Shannon’s attention to detail, “can do” attitude, and pleasant, helpful demeanor is unparalleled. She is one of our most valuable resources.

Shannon loves the high level of cooperation among the SOULO team members. She also thrives on the challenge of learning about new capabilities, such as our new DUPLO die-cutting machine, and learning new software. We’re glad she’s an extremely quick study.

Shannon lives in a northern Minneapolis suburb with her husband and two children. After busy, sometimes stressful days at SOULO, Shannon loves to simply spend time with her family, especially in the great Minnesota outdoors. Weekend fun times are spent with their “family-sized draft horse,” a Gypsy Cob named Nikko.

We’re glad you’re a member of the SOULO family, Shannon!



Wanda VS. Marketing Automation

Reach out to us at info@soulocom.com
or call us at 612.334.5679.

