

## 11 Steps of a Strategic Message Planner

1. **Advertising goal**
2. **Client: Key Facts** - The basic history of the brand and parent company, and the corporate ownership big picture. Are there any reputational issues that may help or hinder reaching the advertising goal?
3. **Product: Key Features**
  - a. **What is the product?**
  - b. **What is the purpose of the product?**
  - c. **What is the product made of?**
  - d. **Who and what made the product?**
4. **Target Audience (Demographics and Psychographics)**
5. **Product Benefits** - Remember that advertising should seek solutions to three main needs: Control, Companionship and Confidence.
6. **Direct Competitors and Brand Images**
7. **Indirect Competitors and Brand Images**
8. **Product and Brand Image**
  - a. **Current Brand Image**
  - b. **Desired Brand Image**
  - c. **Brand Image Challenge** – The number one problem in moving the target audience from the current brand image to the desired brand image.
9. **Strategic Message: The Promise** - The strategic message should sell this particular brand, not the entire category. State the message and then fill in these blanks: You (describe the target) should buy (this brand) because (it provides you this benefit).  
NOTE: This is not a slogan that will appear in the ad. It is the guiding principle behind the ad.
10. **Supporting Evidence: The Proof** – What are the selling points to be used in the ad?
11. **Bibliography** (We need a page or two of references all in one place at the end, as well as throughout the SMP wherever you need to cite evidence to prove your point.)