

# Media Planning

*Coordinating attention across channels — the discipline that separates strategy from noise*

## LESSON GOAL

By the end of this module, you will understand how to create strategic media plans that coordinate channels, timing, budgets, and messaging into one coherent system — instead of just running ads on whichever platform feels right this week.

WHY PLANS FAIL

WHAT A PLAN DOES

AUDIENCE & CONTEXT

BUDGET & FREQUENCY

TIMING

CHANNEL ROLES

### Parts 1–4 · The Strategic Foundation

- Why most campaigns fail before ads are even created
- What a media plan actually does — the 6 questions it answers
- Why planning starts with behaviour, not platforms
- Why audience context matters more than raw reach

### Parts 5–8 · Execution & Optimisation

- Budget allocation and the frequency trap
- How timing and seasonality change everything
- Channel roles — who does what in the plan
- Media planning as continuous optimisation, not a one-off document

**Media planning is not about  
buying ads.  
It is about orchestrating attention.**

*And you cannot measure what you haven't planned for — which is exactly why Module 4D covers Media Mix Modelling and KPIs next*

**The Complete Picture:** You now have the ecosystem (4B) and the micromoments (4A). Media planning (4C) is how you bring them together into a coordinated, timed, budgeted system. Measurement and MMM (4D) is how you know if it worked.

# Why Campaigns Fail & What a Plan Actually Does

*Most failures happen long before the first ad is written*

Most campaigns don't fail because of bad ads, poor creative, or wrong targeting. They fail because the strategic foundation was never built.

## The Real Reasons Campaigns Fail

- Channels are disconnected — each running independently
- Timing is wrong — right message, wrong moment
- Budgets are misallocated — too thin across too many platforms
- Audiences are misunderstood — reaching the wrong people
- Messaging lacks consistency across touchpoints

## What a Media Plan Solves

- Defines clear roles for every channel
- Maps audience flow through the full journey
- Allocates budget with strategic intention
- Coordinates timing, frequency, and pacing
- Pre-agrees success metrics before spending begins

### THE DEFINITION

*A media plan is the strategic document that orchestrates where the campaign appears, when, to whom, with what message, and with what expected outcomes. It is not an ad booking spreadsheet — it is an attention strategy.*

## THE 6 QUESTIONS A STRONG MEDIA PLAN MUST ANSWER

### Before Any Channel Is Selected

#### 1 Where?

Which channels and platforms should the campaign appear on?

#### 2 When?

What timing, sequence, and pacing should the campaign follow?

#### 3 To Whom?

Which specific audience segments at which stage of the journey?

#### 4 What Message?

What creative and messaging matches each channel, audience, and moment?

#### 5 At What Budget?

How is budget allocated across channels, phases, and audiences?

#### 6 With What Outcomes?

What are the pre-agreed KPIs for each stage — before the campaign launches?

### MY NOTES

# Strategy Before Channels, Audience & Budget

The three decisions that happen before any platform is opened

## PART 3 — START WITH BEHAVIOUR, NOT PLATFORMS

### The Biggest Beginner Mistake

Most beginners immediately ask "TikTok or Meta?" — before defining any strategy. Strong media planning starts with human behaviour, not platform preference. Before selecting any channel, a planner must understand:

#### Business Context

- What are the actual business goals?
- What does success look like in 90 days?
- What stage of growth is this?

#### Customer Behaviour

- Where does the customer research?
- What micromoments do they experience?
- How long is the decision process?

#### Constraints & Context

- What is the realistic budget?
- What seasonality applies?
- What is the competitive landscape?

## PART 4 — AUDIENCE & CONTEXT OVER RAW REACH

### A Channel Is Only Effective When Three Things Align

#### Right Audience

The people you need are actually present on this channel — not just a large volume of the wrong people

#### Right Mindset

Their mindset on this platform matches the moment your message requires — intent, emotion, or attention mode

#### Right Timing

The timing and context make the message relevant — not just technically targeted but actually resonant

#### THE CONTEXT EXAMPLE

A luxury investment advisory and an energy drink can both run Facebook ads — but the audience mindset, trust requirements, and emotional triggers are completely different. One needs authority and slow education. The other needs impulse and lifestyle. Same platform, completely different strategy.

## PART 5 — BUDGET ALLOCATION & FREQUENCY

### Presence Without Frequency Becomes Invisible Noise

#### The Spreading-Too-Thin Trap

- Budget spread across 6 platforms = weak everywhere
- Low frequency = customers forget between exposures
- No channel reaches the threshold to influence behaviour

#### Strong Budget Strategy

- Concentrate budget on 2-3 channels maximum initially
- Achieve sufficient frequency on each — not just coverage
- Expand channels only when core channels are profitable

# Timing, Channel Roles & The Campaign Timeline

When you appear matters as much as where — and the orchestra needs a score

## PART 6 — TIMING CHANGES EVERYTHING

### Smart Plans Adapt to Human Behaviour Cycles

#### Timing Factors to Plan For

- Seasonality — when does demand peak?
- Competitor activity — when are they most aggressive?
- Cultural moments — events that shift attention
- Product launches — pre-launch vs. launch vs. sustain
- Offline campaign synergy — TV spikes branded search

#### Real Timing Examples

- TV campaign launches → Google Search volume spikes → Search ads must be live and ready
- Gym memberships → January = high intent, July = maintenance messaging
- Travel brands → January inspiration, March booking intent, June urgency

## PART 7 — CHANNEL ROLES & CAMPAIGN TIMELINE

### The Campaign Orchestra — Who Plays When

Channel	Primary Strategic Role	Best For
Google Search	Capture existing intent	High-intent purchase moments
YouTube	Build trust & educate	Consideration stage
Instagram / TikTok	Create emotional attention	Awareness & aspiration
Email	Nurture & retain	Loyalty & repeat purchase
Reviews & UGC	Reduce hesitation	Purchase decision
Display / Retargeting	Maintain presence & remind	Mid-funnel

Channel	Week 1-2	Week 3-4	Week 5-8	Week 9-12
Phase	<b>AWARENESS</b>	<b>CONSIDERATION</b>	<b>CONVERSION</b>	<b>RETENTION</b>
Insta / TikTok	HEAVY	SUSTAIN	LIGHT	ADVOCACY
YouTube	SEED	HEAVY	SUSTAIN	
Google Search		BRAND	HEAVY	SUSTAIN
Retargeting		START	HEAVY	SUSTAIN
Email		NURTURE	CONVERT	HEAVY

Illustrative 12-week campaign timeline — channel intensity varies by phase, not budget split evenly across all weeks.

# Continuous Optimisation & Key Takeaways

*A media plan is a living document — not a one-off document set in stone*

## PART 8 — MEDIA PLANNING IS NEVER FINISHED

### The Continuous Improvement Mindset

Strong media planners treat the plan as a living document. Markets change, performance data arrives, competitors move, and customer behaviour shifts. The plan adapts with it.

1

#### Analyse

Review performance data weekly — not just at the end

2

#### Reallocate

Move budget toward what is working and away from what isn't

3

#### Adapt

Update messaging, creative, and targeting based on real results

**The Bridge to 4D:** Media planning tells you what to do and when. But to know if it worked — and which channels actually drove results — you need Media Mix Modelling and proper KPIs. You cannot measure what you haven't planned for, and you cannot optimise what you cannot measure. Module 4D closes the loop.

### MODULE 4C — CORE LESSONS

- \* Media planning is about orchestrating attention — not booking ad slots on popular platforms
- \* Most campaign failures are strategic: disconnected channels, wrong timing, misallocated budgets
- \* Planning always starts with human behaviour and business goals — never with platform selection
- \* Audience context matters more than raw reach — the right mindset at the right moment beats pure scale
- \* Presence without sufficient frequency becomes invisible noise — concentrate before you expand
- \* Timing is a strategic variable — campaigns must align with human behaviour cycles, not calendar convenience
- \* A media plan is a living document — the best planners adapt continuously based on real performance data

#### Practical Exercise

- 1 Choose an upcoming campaign and answer the 6 planning questions (where, when, to whom, what message, what budget, what outcomes)
- 2 Define the role of each channel and map them to funnel stages
- 3 Sketch a basic timeline — which channels activate in which weeks and at what intensity
- 4 Set frequency targets — how many times should your audience see each message before converting?

**PART A -- THE 6 PLANNING QUESTIONS**

<p><b>Where? -- Channels selected</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 100px;"></div>	<p><b>When? -- Timing &amp; phases</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 100px;"></div>	<p><b>To Whom? -- Audience segments</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 100px;"></div>
<p><b>What Message? -- Creative direction</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 100px;"></div>	<p><b>What Budget? -- Allocation</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 100px;"></div>	<p><b>What Outcomes? -- Pre-agreed KPIs</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 100px;"></div>

**PART B -- MY CHANNEL PLAN**

Channel	Role in This Campaign	Target Audience / Segment	Budget % & Frequency
Google Search			
YouTube			
Instagram / TikTok			
Email			
Reviews & UGC			
Display / Retargeting			

**PART C -- TIMING, SEASONALITY & OPTIMISATION NOTES**

<p><b>Key Timing &amp; Seasonality Factors</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 150px;"></div>	<p><b>Week 1-2 Priority Actions</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 150px;"></div>	<p><b>When &amp; How I Will Review / Optimise</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 150px;"></div>
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Orchestrate attention. Assign roles. Adapt continuously.

You cannot measure what you have not planned for.