General Capabilities
Planetarium specializes in strategic marketing, brand and communication planning and the market research that fuels it.

We’ve worked with global brands across a wide spectrum of industries, including media, automotive, financial services, higher education, healthcare, fast food, consumer electronics and retail.

By helping clients connect with their audiences via various forms of qualitative, quantitative and qual/quant hybrid research, we’re then able to channel the research findings into insight-fueled brand, content and marketing communication plans and briefs. As part of our approach, we apply our skilled facilitation capabilities to lead workshops and working/planning sessions that foster innovation, galvanize teams and fend off lowest-common-denominator thinking.

Ultimately, Planetarium sets the foundation and paves the way for fresh, impactful marketing, branding and communications.
Where We Engage

Planetarium views the brand and communication development process as having four distinct phases — Exploration, Navigation, Inspiration and Activation — where we can help in myriad ways. Additionally, our belief is that smart marketing entails continuous, ongoing brand/campaign Evaluation, another area where we can help. Throughout that continuum, our mission is to connect data points, turn them into insights and create a distinct narrative that translates into audience engagement.

All told, we help clients better understand their audience, develop solid strategy, and then translate that strategy into breakthrough communications and an action plan.

The end-goal is to foster brand and communication ideas that are audience-focused, motivating and effective.

**Exploration**
- Audience “Pulse”
- Quantitative and Qualitative Research
- Customer Journey Research
- In-Environment Explorations (Ethnographies, etc.)
- Spark Multi-Audience Focus Groups
- Connection Sessions
- Co-Creations
- Projector Qual/Quant Hybrid
- Social Media Monitoring

**Navigation**
- Navigator Segmentation Research
- Audience Profile Development
- Listening and Learning Labs
- Positioning, Brand and Communication Narrative Workshops

**Inspiration**
- Brand Inspiration Sessions
- Creative Development and Refinement Research

**Activation**
- Qualitative and Quantitative Communication Testing
- Media/Communication Planning
- Training & Development “Rollout” Planning
- SiteOrbit™ Website Diagnostics

(Continuous) Evaluation

Brand and Communication Tracking Studies
Recent Clients

Spike  tru.tv  CMT  Subway  Samsung  Toshiba

Turner  Skidmore College  Landbeck  Pep  American Laser Skincare

Gen II  Merck  Alere  Covidien  Volkswagen  Primal

WPP  Added Value  Three  Watch Lab  Doner  Media Logic

Bellator Agency  Leo Burnett  C.I.Á.  Edelman  Mills Entertainment

Signa  Emma Willard School  Honda  Parry Branding Group  CHI & Partners

Deutsch  Fingerpaint  Mountain View Group  We tv  Sharp Think Communications

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Video Journaling  Perceptual Mapping  Partner Interviewing  Brand Limericks

Word/Thought Bubbles  Mind Mapping  Day Parting  Facebook Groups  Mad Libs

Draw the User  Brand Party  Pass the Doodle  Hats  Cast the Movie  Metaphoring
Spark Multi-Audience Focus Groups

These sessions are focused on better understanding the “dialogue bridge” and bonds and barriers that occur between different audiences crucial to the brand (sales staff and customers, retailers and wholesalers, physicians and patients, etc.). As their name implies, they’re designed to spark conversations that aren’t achieved in typical focus groups.

The groups start with Party A being interviewed in a traditional focus group facility. Then, Party A is brought “behind the mirror” to observe a subsequent group discussion being conducted with Party B. During the duration of that discussion, there is also a facilitator “behind the mirror,” questioning and probing Party A about Party B comments.

Party A is then brought into the focus group room with Party B for an extended group discussion that is guaranteed to provide insightful dialogue.

Spark Groups are perfectly suited for insight mining and positioning, brand and communication development, etc.
Projector™
Qual/Quant Insight Generation Tool

Projector is a tool that’s perfect for the development of positioning or brand ideas, as well as content themes. It’s also perfect for naming initiatives. A qualitative/quantitative hybrid tool, it can help assess the collective marketing team’s generated themes, topics and ideas, etc. The tool is unique, however, because, in addition to assessing those themes, topics or ideas, research respondents are prompted to contribute their own ideas and, in turn, evaluate the ideas of others. Ultimately, this approach brings together the best qualities of focus group research and the best qualities of quantitative, statistically reliable data.

Also unique is the fact that the client team is able to view findings in real-time, enabling team members to be inspired by the ideas of others and generate additional ideas that could be inserted into the tool for evaluation. Plus, research respondents may participate in the survey as much as they want, thus allowing them to contribute ideas that come to them after their initial participation and after they’ve had time to give the subject more thought.

The result is a crowd-sourced, crowd-filtered and iterative “brainstorm” that has quantitative data behind the output. A rank-ordered “list” would be generated (identifying “star” ideas that have universal appeal, as well as “niche” ideas that might have appeal for a specific segment) of highest potential ideas to lowest. The team is ultimately enabled to “run with” the proven, most powerful positioning, brand and/or content ideas and are able to better understand where and how to distribute their generated content.
Connection Sessions

Whether they follow the output of a Projector™ Qual/Quant Insight Generation Tool or are stand-alone sessions, Connection Sessions are one to two day, professionally facilitated working groups with a varied mix of internal stakeholders and end customers participating.

These “roll up the sleeves and get all parties working together” sessions entail the generation and prioritization of audience wants and needs for information, support and content, etc.

Connection Sessions are the perfect way to crowdsource great ideas from target audience members and to “activate” insight, galvanizing internal team members around an innovative, insight-driven plan, thus efficiently laying the foundation for a succinct, strategic path forward.

Ultimately, these sessions help a team move from “what could be done” to “what should be done;” the output being a Planetarium Activation Brief.
In-Environment Explorations (Ethnographies, etc.)

Designed around the belief that people are most comfortable and open in their own homes or environments, these sessions allow for relaxed dialogue that is a deeper dive into their wants, needs, hopes, dreams and values. Whether done in-home, as “shop-alongs,” or in another locale where respondents feel most comfortable, these ethnographic sessions are useful for many types of insight gathering. Planetarium has done these sessions for major home electronics manufacturers, media companies, healthcare/pharma companies, retailers, automotive manufacturers and food brands, among others.

An additional approach is to treat these initiatives in a documentary-style fashion — making the accompanying video all the more compelling and engaging — and thus creating a more humanizing and galvanizing “living and breathing” representation of respondents. Our belief is that nothing makes research more useful than when team members want to engage with the findings and not just put them on a shelf or in a file drawer. As such, Planetarium has closely aligned partnerships with two award-winning documentary film companies.

This video footage can also serve as an additional content source for internal and external digital properties.
These workshops bring together all core constituents to help them look at the brand from different angles.

Typically, these sessions are kicked-off with a presentation of key market research findings brought to life for the group (via 3D audience profiles, “day in the life of” customer video footage, etc.), which grounds and immerses the team in the thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values and experiences of their customers.

Then, through proven, best-practice facilitation, brainstorming and consensus-gathering techniques, these sessions focus the team on generating positioning pathways, plus potential Brand Narratives for the given company and/or product.

Additionally, rigorous brand mapping is conducted to generate and vigorously debate and prioritize key brand objectives, strategies and possible tactics that can help in delivering on the positioning and Brand Narrative.

Because of the expert facilitation, clear direction, focus and the fostering of a collaborative approach, constituents feel more vested in how to execute big idea initiatives, and the group is able to fend off watered-down “group think” ideas that often plague organizations.

Ultimately, these workshops help to crowd-source input from participants who have the most at stake in the brand, galvanizing them around the agreed-upon output, while laying the foundation for a solid, succinct path forward.
Planetarium has extensive experience in helping to determine the most impactful communication and messaging approaches. Whether through quantitative research, qualitative research (online or in facility), or a combination of the two, we have techniques and interviewing approaches that gauge what’s working and what’s not. We help choose the best “big idea” for the brand and communications, and we help guide the agency/client team to refine and optimize the content and creative work based on the findings.
Planetarium develops brand and communication tracking studies, pulling from the best practices it has learned from working closely over the years with “giant” research firms such as Millward-Brown and Hall and Partners.

This research assesses classic communication measurements, such as awareness, familiarity, consideration, and trial, but also gauges ambassadorship and commitment, determining people’s willingness to share their opinion of the brand with others. Additionally, our approach gauges ever-important brand perceptions and overall campaign engagement, etc.
Planetarium’s Navigator approach to segmentation research goes beyond mere demographics and product usage patterns. Borrowing from the best practices in consumer segmentation, we dive into psychographics such as motivators, values, perceptions and/or receptivity to given messaging pathways, etc.

This approach can be done with prospective target audiences and/or with existing client databases.

The end result is the development of distinct brand personas to which targeted messaging, content and tactics can be applied.
Planetarium gathers large groups of targeted respondents together (e.g. 20+ per session) and runs classroom-style survey sessions with tablets or laptops. Responses are tracked in real-time, and follow-up breakout focus groups are subdivided and then conducted (multiple at once) based upon previous audience responses.

The result is an efficient quantitative read that then immediately enables more “targeted” qualitative follow-up, deep-dive discussions.
According to 2014 data, there are over 100,000 tweets, 684,478 pieces of content posted to Facebook and 27,778 new Tumblr blog posts published every minute. Now, with the proliferation of content marketing, understanding the digital conversation around a brand is that much harder because there is that much more chatter.

Planetarium’s approach to active web listening efficiently cuts through the noise to offer a real-world glimpse into how people truly feel about a given topic, company or product. Through a partnership with a Cambridge-trained linguist, we offer cutting-edge, cross-channel sentiment analysis. By continuously archiving thousands of terms, we are able to assess exactly how language in the digital space is used and what it means.

Our results are not simply quantitative (i.e., X% of online conversation about Subject A is positive); we also extract the sentiment of what is being said. The proprietary algorithm used reads the seven words before and after the search term and is able to understand what is actually being relayed (e.g. “I love XYZ because it really lets me live my life to the fullest.”).

We aggregate the feelings expressed on social media and within digital content to determine exactly where a given subject, product or company stands with people and what is driving that stance, whether it be a positive or negative perception. From there, we take the findings and create a plan to leverage positive feedback and/or address negative sentiment.
A website today is typically the ultimate portal to a company and a key reflection of its perceived brand, values and quality. Consequently, the functionality and usability of a website is monumentally important. SiteOrbit™ systematically assess websites and brands through the audience’s own experiences.

A website-embedded survey tool, SiteOrbit™ assesses graphical user interface (GUI), usability, brand connectivity and overall satisfaction, among other variables via both behavioral and attitudinal metrics. This allows a deeper dive than standard website analytics, answering critical questions like:

- Does the website support the company mission?
- Are visitors able to efficiently accomplish their goals?
- Where and how, specifically, can the site be improved?
- How can website content become more sharable to build engagement and community?

The result is a clear path for optimization that is based on deep insight around who is visiting the site, why they’re visiting and how effective their experience is in accomplishing their goals and satisfying their rational and emotional needs.
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