

# Nudge

## *The ultimate guide to* **writing and sharing effective frontline communications**

*Learn to write clear, creative communications  
– and save time along the way*



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# Learn to write clear, creative communications – and save time along the way

Every frontline organization we work with is after the same things: clearer communication, better information retention, and improved platform engagement. The great news is that it's possible for any communication team to get there.

On behalf of the customer success team at Nudge, welcome to this guide! This is a collection of tried-and-true tips that we use regularly to help our customers get the most out of their digital communication platform.

And trust us, they work! The ability to write creative content and convert business information into something fun, relatable, and engaging is like a muscle. You have to practice and work it out... then suddenly, one day, it will feel natural and effortless.

In the following pages, we will show you not only how to write creatively, but help show why you should. We'll take the most humdrum business memos and transform them into the bite-sized updates your workforce is dreaming of.

We know that creating effective content takes time, but the fundamental aim of this guide is to save you time and effort without having to sacrifice quality. We'll help you create a tried-and-true, repeatable process that helps prevent the risk of creativity burnout. And once you feel comfortable writing creative content, we'll show you how to create a content strategy for sharing it effectively and efficiently.

## So, let's get started.



*Max Lerner*  
Customer Success  
Manager



*Chris Morgan*  
Senior Customer  
Success Manager

The background is a solid dark teal color. In the top right corner, there are two overlapping circles: a light green one on top and a darker teal one on the bottom right. In the bottom left corner, there is a light green rounded rectangle. At the bottom center, there is a yellow semi-circle.

# Why you need to write creatively

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# Why you need to master the art of creative writing

*To some, writing creatively may feel like too much time and effort for little to no return. But that couldn't be further from the truth. Standard business content gives you the information you need with no sugar-coating. But – news flash! – your staff has a sweet tooth.*

After all, your workforce is changing. [Millennials and Generation Z workers comprise an increasing segment of the working population](#), with the Generation X cohort decreasing and Baby Boomers leaving altogether. This means the workforce is starting to be dominated by “[hypercognitive digital natives](#)” that take in and process information very differently than the preceding generations.

When you add a little flair to your writing and boil it down to the key information, you'll save your employees time, and they'll be more likely to retain the information.

Here's a little more on the benefits of creative writing in your internal communications:



## Clearer communication

Writing creatively doesn't mean that the information you're trying to share will become more convoluted – the opposite is true. Creative writing leads to clean, concise copy that's accessible to everyone. We'll give you an example.

Let's say you share this update with your team:



Hey 🙌 team! Are you ✅ ready to get going 🚀 and learn about this week's product promotion? 📢  
Remember 💡 this sale 🛍️ is only on 🔄 for a limited time ⌚ and ends in 5 days!

Is it clear? Is it concise? Can you retain the key message within it? Alas, no to all three. Now, instead of taking standard business content and adding emojis, what if we tried using creative writing to focus on engaging, concise content:



Hey team! The countdown has begun... our weekly promotion is about to blast off! Make sure you're prepped for take-off and remember – this sale ends in only 5 days, so let's get going! 🚀

See the difference a little creative license makes?

## Better information retention

Improved knowledge retention is another benefit to creative writing. The simplest way to look at this is in terms of pure volume. When you condense the information down into the key messages, there's much less to take in. I'm sure you can remember the first three digits of pi a lot better than the first three hundred.

Beyond this, when information is interesting and colorful, we naturally retain it more easily. The more animated and vivid you can make this content (through creative writing, not stuffing in emojis and gifs!) the better. Doing this creates stronger, more novel connections in your memory. Here's how instructional designers Terry Goins and Jane Fisher [explain it in an article for Training Industry](#):



*"The brain quickly prioritizes every new piece of information received: first for safety or survival, second for emotion, and third for meaning. Emotional messages last far longer than strictly informational messages."*

**Terry Goins and Jane Fisher, instructional designers**

In other words, creative communications that drive stronger emotional connections will boost knowledge retention.



## Improved platform engagement

Every communication team wants to drive more interaction and engagement with their communication channels, whether they're using email, an intranet site, or the top-rated digital communication platform on the market 😊.

When employees feel like you're talking to them – straight to them – they're more likely to engage with what you share and respond with their own ideas and advice as well. In order to engage your audience, you need to know who you're talking to.

For example, something as simple as changing your tone can have a huge impact on how your workforce interacts with an update. “To Whom It May Concern” may be fine for an email to department leads at head office, but “Hey Team!” is much more likely to grab the attention of your frontline audience and encourage them to engage with your content.

“People naturally pay attention to things that surprise them. A unique image leaves a lasting impression,” explain Goins and Fisher.





# How to write creatively

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# The first steps in learning to write creatively

*Hopefully, we've convinced you that creative writing can deliver some serious benefits to your internal communication strategy... but where to start? These are our top tips to help get you going.*

One more note before we get started: Your creative content may not look or sound the same as ours, but that's okay. In fact... that's sort of the point! Your unique point of view and audience should shape your content, as well as its tone and rhythm.

That brings us to our first tip...



## Know your audience

As we already mentioned, knowing your audience is the first step in creating a deep connection with your workforce that will drive communication channel engagement and knowledge retention. Your voice should relay a message rooted in a business outcome that resonates with your audience and connects with them in a way that leaves a lasting impression. A narrative without drive behind it will feel flat, and your audience won't connect with the point of your message or understand why they should care.

With an aim of driving engagement, you need to establish who your audience is. Is this message just for corporate users? Or are you writing for the wider associate pool? Most content won't appeal to all demographics at once, so knowing your target audience can help you focus the tone and scope of the message in a way that helps you hit your mark.

This is also a critical component of avoiding information overload. Segmented, targeted communications ensure that you're sending the right information to the right people – and nothing more. For example, Tania Walsh, Manager of Digital Communications Strategy at telecommunications brand TELUS mitigates communication fatigue by targeting associates based on three tenures and knowledge levels – Novice, Average, and Master.

“

Walsh explains:

*“Our reps want to be able to find information fast. They don't want to have to wade through all the weeds to try to find what they need, especially when there's a customer standing right in front of them. So we're really taking a page from marketing – we're targeting our messages to our reps based on their tenure, their performance, and their knowledge. For example, new hires need more detail – they need context and procedural information. Whereas a tenured or a mastered rep really just focuses on the broad strokes: Tell me what the benefits are and how much it is. So we look at individual sales metrics, quiz results, and tenure to craft those tailored messages.”*



## Make sure every communication has a goal

There are so many different ways to position an internal communication. At Nudge, we use a number of different categories: Announcement, Survey, Knowledge, Confidence, and Behavior (more on that later). But beyond that, you need to ask yourself: *why are you writing this communication?*

Are you instructing associates on how to accomplish a task? Are you asking them a question? Are you sharing a good-news story to boost support or change an opinion? Knowing the goal of your communication is critical to guiding your writing as well as a great place to start if you're experiencing a little writer's block. If you're educating your workforce on how to accomplish a task, start by listing the steps. If you're asking a question, write down the key question. If you're sharing good news, ensure it's a story that associates can connect with and has meaning for them.



### SUCCESS TIP

*Think about the action or behavior you want your audience to take after reading the communication you're sending. That way, you can work the goal into your writing as a call to action!*

You'll ultimately want to find a good mix between tactical, strategic, and cultural content to determine the secret sauce for your workforce. Skip ahead to [Building a Campaign](#) for more info on this.

## Types of communications

A great way to get the right mix in your internal communications is to break them down by type. Here's how we organize the different types of information you can share through Nudge:



**Announcement:** used to provide bite-sized updates or remind employees of key dates



**Knowledge:** used to validate the retention of key messages



**Survey:** used to solicit feedback on a given topic



**Behavior:** used to confirm if your frontline is executing on a specific behavior



**Confidence:** used to gauge how confident your frontline is feeling about a specific topic, procedure, or action



**Spark:** used to prompt a discussion by posing a leading question to your employees



**Buzz:** used to provide a larger "content hub" for longer information and resources

## Use literary devices

Now we're really getting creative! Literary devices are an easy way to help you add some extra flair to a communication.

If we're ever stuck, we just try to work in a figure of speech or pun or alliteration that helps make the content feel more lighthearted and engaging. These tactics enhance the sound and rhythm of your words. Don't go overboard, but using this trick can really help push you in the right direction.

Let's say you're looking to share safety tips about working with electricity. Here's how you could bring in some literary devices to punch up the content:



Watt off the press, we've got an important safety reminder for you! If your vehicle comes into contact with a downed power line:

- ✓ DO NOT get out of your vehicle
- ✓ Call 911 and your local utility service for help

Don't shock the boat – be sure to follow all the safety steps outlined in the resource hub.

## Make it conversational

You don't want to give associates whiplash! Ensure they're buckled in before you hit them with the facts. Wherever you can, soften your content and ease into it. This isn't a sitcom, so you're not always going to have a punchy opening line with a laugh track to back you up. But sometimes simply adding "Hey team!" before launching into business information can make the entire tone more welcoming and engaging.

## Condense, condense, condense

In today's world, people are much more used to watching 30-second videos and looking at memes on social media than reading lengthy text. Keeping the messaging as short and concise as possible is key. Read through the original collateral and pull out the most important message(s). Just because you have the space and content to write a novel, doesn't mean you should. Imagine you're writing a poem instead. Every word should have meaning and value, so be sure to edit, edit, edit.

### SUCCESS TIP

*Does every part of a 750-word document feel essential? Creating a list from a dense piece of collateral is a great way to parse out the most important steps or information and corral common thoughts together.*





## Putting it into practice

*You now have the basics down pat – congratulations!  
You understand why and how to write creatively.*

But as the omniscient narrators here, we know you're looking for an example of how to put this into practice. You want to see the evidence, and we don't blame you. Let's take some standard business content and walk through how to break it down, little by little, until it's ready to share!

How many times have you received this in your inbox? 📧

**From:** Smith, Jane <jsmith@nudge.co>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 21, 2021 1:23 PM  
**Subject:** 2021 Marketing Calendar - Q3 Initiatives

Dear Managers,

Please find attached the Q3 initiatives for the 2021 Marketing Calendar.

In celebration of National Sandwich Month and essential workers everywhere, we are asking all stores to pick an essential worker group to surprise with a sandwich giveaway during the month of July. All stores can participate and you can celebrate any group you wish that is servicing the needs of others in your community (grocery stores, pharmacies, nursing homes/assisted living, hospitals, doctors' offices, dentists, orthodontist, etc.). Managers – submit your photos and the details of your event to me, and we will give you a 12-sandwich credit. Post pictures for your event on our website and social media to share the moment of fun and appreciation being given to these important groups.

By now everyone should be aware of the 10 sandwich options we've created using the 2021 Ingredient Set. Beginning July 20 through the end of August, we will be promoting these specific sandwiches and the mixing of ingredients in general, so please make sure your staff is familiar with all of the combos, even those you are not promoting specifically at your location in the event a customer asks for one by name. A supporting kit is currently available to order via the Call Center and flyers for each sandwich are available on our intranet. Kits will be shipped out toward the end of June as well for those who have not ordered their kit yet.

In September, we will begin the year-round promotion of the next, new, limited-time ingredient offering only available at your locations. The ingredients haven't been set yet, but our theme is France. Of course, we'll share additional details, including the ingredient list, with future emails specific to this promotion.

Thanks,

Jane

Jane Smith | Director of Marketing

First, find the key topics within the information, and identify what is relevant to different audiences:

1. *In honor of National Sandwich Month, managers are being encouraged to surprise an essential worker group with a sandwich giveaway (relevant to managers)*
2. *10 sandwiches are being promoted in July and August from the 2021 Ingredient Set (relevant to frontline)*
3. *Supporting information kits about the sandwich promotion are available to managers (relevant to managers)*
4. *An upcoming year-end promotion of limited-time ingredients will feature the theme of France (relevant to managers and frontline)*

Now we can start developing the content. Let's start off by taking a look at the first key topic, the National Sandwich Month celebration. This content is mainly targeted toward location managers and requires them to know about the celebration and how to enter.

**Here's an example of how you could distill that information into an update you send only to location managers:**



This month is all about heroes, hoagies, clubs, and more. To celebrate National Sandwich Month and essential workers everywhere, we want YOU to pick an essential worker group to surprise with a sandwich giveaway next month.

Submit the details of your event to the Marketing Department and we'll give you a 12-sandwich credit. And don't forget to submit photos of your event, too – we want to see your smiling faces all over our website and social media!

Head to the resource hub for full details 🥪

Next, let's turn our attention to the 2021 Ingredient Set. The key idea here is that frontline workers need to be aware of the featured sandwiches and how to make them. We'll want to be sure to educate and test associates consistently, reinforcing any knowledge gaps. But first, let's see if they can identify the featured sandwiches by name.

### Here's a skill testing question you could send to frontline workers:



It all comes down to this. The proof is in the... butter. We know you've been reading about, tasting, and building every type of sandwich there is, but now it's time to put it all together.

Which of the following is NOT one of the featured sandwich combos using the 2021 Ingredient Set?

- Grilled Tomato, Chèvre, and Thyme Baguette Sandwich
- Garlic Butter Italian Sausage Sandwich
- Vegan Smoky Tahini Jackfruit Sandwich
- Pesto, Artichoke, and Havarti Grilled Cheese

We hope you didn't (arti)choke under all that pressure... The correct answer was Garlic Butter Italian Sausage. While this sounds absolutely divine, you may need to try it out at home because it's not one of the featured sandwiches this time around.

Head to the resource hub to review the full ingredient list ahead of the July 20 launch!

### Up next, let's ensure location managers have everything they need for this launch!



Hey Managers! Is your location ready to get sandwiches?

July 20 is fast approaching, so be sure that your staff is familiar with all of the combos – even those you are not promoting specifically at your location.

Have you ordered your supporting kit from the Call Center and printed out your flyers?

- Yes - we're dough ready to go!
- Almost - we're on a roll!
- No - I'm grilled you reminded me!

Keep your eyes peeled; kits will be shipped out toward the end of June!

Finally, let's turn our attention to the limited-time promotion mentioned at the end of the memo.

**This communication could go to both managers and their frontline:**



We're only a few months away from the moment you've all been waiting for. No, not National Cheese Pizza Day on September 5.

In September, we'll begin our year-end promotion of the new limited-time ingredient sets. Are you on the edge of your seat? Here's a hint... this year's theme is France!

Stay tuned for more details to come 😊

We hope these examples opened your eyes to how easy creative writing can be when following a few key tips. Be sure to keep it short, keep it light, and use literary devices when possible and appropriate. You can decide for yourself how you frame the information – after all, you know your audience best! – but the foundations always remain the same.



# Building a content strategy

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# How to turn your creative content into an effective strategy

*Sure, the content itself is important, but getting creative with content shouldn't outweigh your strategy. Having engaging content is worth its weight in gold, but that is only half the battle.*

Knowing where and when to share that content with your audience is what will get you to the finish line. We call this mapping content. When you corral content into specific topics, you're building campaigns. And by designing campaign-based communications, you can reach your employees with purpose, driving specific actions or behaviors that are in line with your objectives.

## Understanding communication campaigns

Whether the goal is to drive an increase in sales, ensure a successful product launch, or improve employee engagement and retention, building out the proper campaign will allow you to focus on driving (and easily measuring) business results.

A campaign-based approach to communication also allows you to focus your efforts and avoid information overload, while also boosting retention. As opposed to just sending a pile of information all the time, you're fine-tuning your message to ensure that you're prioritizing the crucial information needed to drive key behaviors.

Building campaigns also allow you to track what works and what doesn't, so that over time, you can create a repeatable process that consistently drives results.

At Nudge, we recommend sticking to one campaign at a time, usually running on a monthly basis. We then break down campaigns further into initiatives or focuses. For example, if you're running a month-long campaign to drive safety awareness, we might further break the campaign down into three focuses: ladder safety, then COVID safety, and then PPE.

## Building a campaign

When building out a communication campaign, your goal is to find the secret sauce that works best for you and your frontline. Like any great recipe, you may need to play with the ratios of ingredients. You ultimately want to ensure your approaches work together and result in the right mix of content for your users.

When we talk about content, we talk about three buckets: tactical, strategic, and cultural. Your strategic content should focus on the “what” and “why” your business chooses to do, while tactical refers to “how” you plan on accomplishing it. Cultural content is what builds your community and often keeps employees with your business – think community, relationships, recognition, and fun.

Remember, not all of your content will be updates. Each of these three buckets should include a mix of updates alongside quizzes, feedback forums, surveys: a range of approaches to really bake knowledge in.



### SUCCESS TIP

*As a general rule, we recommend a mix of 60% tactical, 25% strategic and 15% cultural content for peak campaign effectiveness.*



■ 60% Tactical Content  
■ 25% Strategic Content  
■ 15% Cultural Content

## Scheduling your campaign

You have a mix of content types filling the three buckets... but what should you schedule when? The trick is to spread out your campaign to give information a chance to settle in, but follow up with skill-testing questions and surveys to identify gaps quickly. Aim for a max of two sends a day. This will allow you to get the information across without bombarding your frontline.

Here's an example of how we would schedule a four-week campaign around a new product launch at a retail organization:

### — Week 1

- Share key information about the launch and direct workers to additional information in your resource library or hub
- Send out a poll asking employees how confident they feel about the launch
- Set up a forum for employees to share best practices

### — Week 2–3

- Ask 1–3 knowledge testing questions around the launch
- Ask employees if they feel like they have enough resources on the launch

### — Week 4

- Offer an open-text survey, asking employees what other information they wish they had on the launch
- Ask employees again how confident they feel about the launch

## Tried-and-true tips for next-level campaigns

Here are a few more tips we love sharing to help our customers take their campaigns to the next level:



***Set aside some space in the calendar*** later in the campaign to share highlights from your feedback forums. Sharing great ideas and best practices is a great way to boost engagement and ensure your workforce feels heard.



***Track everything!*** If you know what's working, you'll create a consistent framework to pull from for future campaigns.



***Set aside space to correct low knowledge rates.*** If employees don't get your quiz question correct, follow up with more information and another chance to get it right.



***Template, don't copy-and-paste.*** If you find a tried-and-true campaign format, don't just copy-and-paste it over every time you want to duplicate it. Create a library of templates in your CMS to pull from, ideally organized by goal or campaign type.



# How Nudge makes employee communication easy

*An effective deskless employee communication strategy is all about sending the right information at the right time. That's where Nudge comes in. Nudge empowers workers with the knowledge, tools, and resources they need to execute consistently and confidently every day. Two way, real-time communication connects, empowers, and aligns the entire organization, while guided execution ensures employees are focused on the right tasks, every single time.*



**Centralized  
communication**



**Guided task  
execution**



**Engaging  
feedback channels**



**Insightful  
user analytics**

## Loved by our customers and their employees

"I am excited to finally be able to communicate with every employee who helps make our customers happy."

- Steve Rothenstein, Associate Vice President of Franchising, Dippin' Dots & Doc Popcorn

"Great reads on everything that is going on within the company. Very helpful and to-the-point easy access. I find that very refreshing."

- Patricia C., User



**Apple Store**



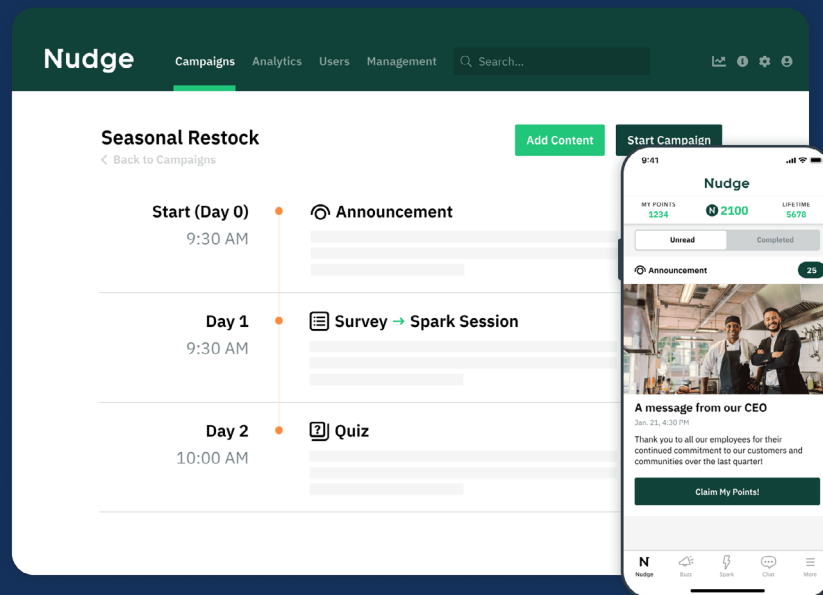
4.7 Stars  
+15k Reviews



**Google Play**



4.7 Stars  
+9k Reviews



# Get the top-rated frontline enablement solution every workforce *needs*.

Want to see how Nudge can help your organization? [Click here](#) to get in touch.

# Printable

*Use this worksheet to take your communication strategy to the next level.*



WORKSHEET

# Internal Communication Campaign Builder

*Use this worksheet to corral your internal communications into your first campaign! We recommend sticking to one campaign a month to avoid information overload. And don't forget to test out your new creative writing chops in your communications!*

**Communication or business goals**

Use this section to write down the goals your communication team has for the coming months. Think about promotions, company initiatives, sales goals, policy changes, events, contests... you name it!

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| GOAL 1 | <i>e.g. Drive sales of LTO fall menu options</i> |
| GOAL 2 |  |
| GOAL 3 |  |
| GOAL 4 |  |
| GOAL 5 |  |

Campaigns

Use this section to identify the core campaigns you’ll focus on to achieve the above goals. Prioritize them by key dates (like product launches) to decide what campaign should run when. Be sure to include a goal for each campaign.

| Goal   | Campaign                | Month            | Details   |
|--|-------------------------|------------------|---|
| <i>e.g. Drive sales of LTO fall menu options</i> | <i>Fall menu launch</i> | <i>September</i> | <i>Drive knowledge retention and encourage best practices sharing among locations to increase awareness and sales of LTO menu</i> |
|  |                         |                  |   |
|  |                         |                  |   |
|  |                         |                  |   |
|  |                         |                  |   |

Initiatives

Break down campaigns further into specific initiatives. Think of these like milestones to hit to ensure you’re enroute to achieving your goal.

| Campaign                     | Initiatives                  |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>e.g. Fall menu launch</i> | <i>Product information</i>   |
|                              | <i>Product knowledge</i>     |
|                              | <i>Upsell best practices</i> |
|                              |                              |
|                              |                              |
|                              |                              |

Content breakdown

Using your list of initiatives, break down your campaign into content. As you pair your initiatives with content, be sure to find a good mix of content types, and a mix of tactical, strategic, and cultural content buckets.

Here’s a quick cheat sheet:

Content types:

- Announcement: used to provide bite-sized updates or remind employees of key dates
- Knowledge: used to validate the retention of key messages
- Survey: used to solicit feedback on a given topic
- Behavior: used to confirm if your frontline is executing on a specific behavior
- Confidence: used to gauge how confident your frontline is feeling about a specific topic, procedure, or action
- Spark: used to prompt a discussion by posing a leading question to your employees
- Buzz: used to provide a larger “content hub” for longer information and resources

Content buckets:

- Strategic content: the “what” and “why” your business chooses to do
- Tactical content: how you plan on accomplishing your strategy
- Cultural content: community building

| Initiative                      | Content   | Type                | Bucket           |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------------|------------------|
| <i>e.g. Product information</i> | <i>Introduce fall menu theme and link to full menu list in resource hub</i> | <i>Announcement</i> | <i>Strategic</i> |
|                                 |   |                     |                  |
|                                 |   |                     |                  |
|                                 |   |                     |                  |
|                                 |   |                     |                  |
|                                 |   |                     |                  |

Campaign schedule

Now that you have your content outlined, start slotting it into a campaign schedule. Aim for a max of two sends a day, and anchor the must-have content before peak days and times within the business to increase the likelihood of response without causing a distraction. Remember, leave room in your calendar for sharing ideas that arise or addressing knowledge gaps.

|         | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| Week 01 |        |         |           |          |        |
| Week 02 |        |         |           |          |        |
| Week 03 |        |         |           |          |        |
| Week 04 |        |         |           |          |        |

Campaign tracking

Remember to track the effectiveness of your campaigns. Use this chart to compare campaign goals and desired outcomes against results over time.

| Campaign                     | Goal  | Initiatives                | Results                        |
|------------------------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>e.g. Fall menu launch</i> | <i>Drive sales of LTO fall menu options</i> | <i>Product information</i> | <i>85% knowledge retention</i> |
|                              |   |                            |                                |
|                              |   |                            |                                |
|                              |   |                            |                                |