**The Challenge**

Your M1 readings included five articles profiling the components of the marketing communications mix: advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, and direct marketing. Healthcare marketers must be very familiar with each category in order to make prudent selections when devising communicative plans for their given establishments. To aid in developing your ability to make good marketing communications choices, this Practitioner Application centers on the selection of components from the marketing communications mix.

Specifically, you are to place yourself in the role of Marketing Director for a soon-to-be-established children's medical clinic based in the city of your choice. *(An actual city must be selected as this assignment calls for formal market research.)*The entity will be known as Ashford Children's Clinic and it will offer the usual and customary array of offerings provided by medical clinics focusing on the healthcare needs of children. *(If you aren't familiar with children's medical clinics, conduct Internet research or visit a local one to gain a proper understanding.)* Noting the competitive nature of the market, the clinic's owner has expressed desires to proficiently reach clients in order to attract their patronage and he has requested a report containing your marketing communications recommendations. *(As the owner indicates that the clinic is in a competitive market, the city you select must mirror this attribute. Smaller municipalities likely will not qualify. As such, moderately-sized or larger municipalities should be selected.)*

Think deeply about the particular product offering (i.e., children's medical services), the city in which the services will be offered, and the various communicative options available for reaching clients (i.e., advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing). After careful background research and reflection, prepare a report indicating the components of the marketing communications mix you would use to market the given children's clinic.

For each component of the marketing communications mix, you must indicate whether you do or do not recommend its use and supply detailed justifications for your associated decision. Additionally, for recommended components, you must supply details regarding how you plan to put these into practice. ***Note that general portrayals will be penalized harshly; specificity is required.*** For example, if you recommend advertising, you must indicate type(s) recommended and the name(s) of media providers selected; if you recommend personal selling, you must communicate your methods of deployment; and so on.

***Note: Advocating the use of an advertising agency or similar marketing communications firm IS NOT permitted. If the owner wanted to delegate this task to an ad agency, he most likely wouldn't have hired you! You must research options and make decisions based on your own findings.***

The end result of your efforts should yield a basic marketing communications plan. *In the real world, of course, much more is required, but as student learners, the parameters of the assignment are, by necessity, scaled back.* As for the associated budget, simply assume that the organization possesses resources sufficient for funding a comprehensive marketing communications campaign.

**The Submission Requirement**

Your submission in its entirety (i.e., all inclusive) must be at least 1200 words. It is to be typed (or pasted) directly into the Moodle posting window, after which you will submit your work. After submission, students are advised to verify that the assignment was submitted successfully by revisiting the submission link in advance of the assignment deadline. *(Warning: After the assignment deadline, do not return to the M1 Practitioner Application to check the status of your submission, as doing so can change the submission date, forcing issuance of penalties for lateness.)* Note that attachments of any kind are prohibited and will carry no points value. Given the length of the submission, it is advised that students prepare it in a word processing program, and when finalized, copy and paste the text into the Moodle posting window. Moodle can be very finicky and often will distort formatting, so care must be taken in preparing your submission. It is understood that Moodle formatting is limited; simply make your submission look as nice as possible.

Your paper must be well referenced, with at least three (3) of the references being from scholarly academic journals. (If you cannot ascertain whether a journal does or does not qualify as scholarly academic, contact the Noel Library and request assistance.) References may be prepared using the style guide of your choice (e.g., APA, MLA); just be sure to consistently use the selected style. As Moodle formatting is limited, style guide requirements apply only to the preparation and presentation of references. Treat this as a formal report, rather than an informal web post. ***Note that references consisting merely of web links are unacceptable and will result in a 30-point deduction. Consult an acceptable style manual and assemble your references properly!***

In presenting your work, identify the title, your name and student ID number, and submission date at the top of your submission **and supply the following headings, exactly as they appear below, placing each in bold text:**

* **Introduction***(In this section, supply a brief introduction, helping the reader grasp the intent of the forthcoming work.)*
* **Background**
  + **City Profile***(In this section, supply a brief overview of the city of focus, noting its name, population, demographic characteristics, and any other helpful background information.)*
  + **Service Profile***(In this section, supply an overview of the area of medicine addressed by the organization: children's medical services. Provide a definition, note major areas of focus, and convey other helpful details, demonstrating your grasp of this particular area of medicine.)*
  + **Competitive Landscape***(In this section, address children's medical clinic competition in the city, noting direct and indirect competitors by name. Also describe services that could be used as substitutes, identifying them by name.)*
* **Marketing Communications Mix Recommendations**
  + **Advertising***(In this section, state whether you do or do not recommend advertising, being sure to supply justifications for your decision. If you recommend advertising, you must describe the media proposed for use, indicate the media companies by name that will be used, and describe related implementation details. In considering alternatives, you might find the following link to be helpful:*[*Advertising Media Selection*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advertising_media_selection)*. Of course, you also must make sure that what you are recommending actually counts as an advertisement! Better read those articles!)*
  + **Personal Selling***(In this section, state whether you do or do not recommend personal selling, being sure to supply justifications for your decision. If you recommend personal selling, you must describe in detail how you plan to deploy this particular component.)*
  + **Sales Promotion***(In this section, state whether you do or do not recommend sales promotion, being sure to supply justifications for your decision. If you recommend sales promotion, you must describe the methods proposed for use, along with associated implementation details.)*
  + **Public Relations***(In this section, state whether you do or do not recommend public relations, being sure to supply justifications for your decision. If you recommend public relations, you must describe the methods proposed for use, along with associated implementation details.)*
  + **Direct Marketing***(In this section, state whether you do or do not recommend direct marketing, being sure to supply justifications for your decision. If you recommend direct marketing, you must describe the methods proposed for use, along with associated implementation details.)*
* **Conclusions***(In this section, summarize the report, being sure to express your expectations regarding how the selected marketing communications components will impact attention and awareness, driving patronage, accordingly.)*
* **References***(In this section, supply a list of references conforming with the instructions listed elsewhere in this communication.)*

**Assessment Criteria**

Your submission will be assessed based on the following:

* Compliance quality: The degree to which your submission complies with noted guidelines, including word count and reference specifications,
* Communication quality: The degree to which your work meets standards expected in business communications, including matters concerning the use of proper grammar and punctuation, and
* Content quality: The quality of the content presented in your work.