Knowing Your Audience

Concrete Construction Insights that Sharpen your Strategy

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Speaker

Drew Burns - Director of Client Strategy, Advancing Organizational Excellence (AOE)

Drew Burns brings over 15 years of experience collaborating with nonprofit organizations, trade associations, and AEC industry groups. He excels in branding, marketing strategy, strategic planning, and event management, helping organizations align their goals with actionable strategies for long-term success. Prior roles include Executive Director of the Slag Cement Association, Great Lakes Cement Promotion Council and the ACI Center of Excellence for Carbon Neutral Concrete (NEU).

In this role at AOE he collaborates closely with account managers to deliver innovative, customized marketing strategies that align with clients' unique goals. Drew also works directly with clients such as the ACPA Foundation, GLCPC, CP Tech Center, and others; providing strategic guidance and supporting their organizational objectives. Additionally, he leads AOE's strategic planning efforts, facilitating impactful planning sessions that empower clients to chart sustainable growth trajectories.



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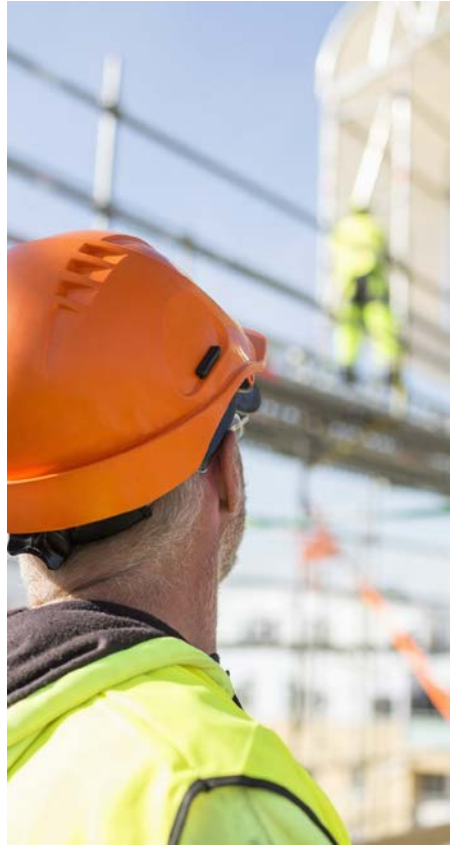






Objectives

- Recognize the defining characteristics, professional motivations, and communication preferences of the concrete construction audience based on observed industry behavior.
- Identify where generic messaging strategies fall short for this audience and how to adjust positioning and tone for greater relevance.
- Apply audience insight to improve the targeting, content, and delivery of marketing campaigns, member programming, or stakeholder communications.
- Develop a more informed engagement strategy that reflects the priorities and decision-making patterns of concrete construction professionals.

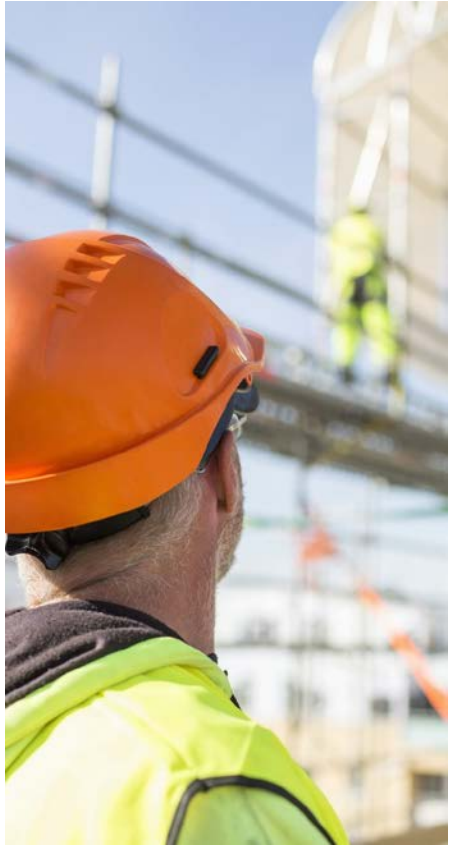






Agenda

- Why Marketing Strategy Matters
- Audience Segmentation and Personas
- Developing Key Messaging
- Delivering the Message: Channels and Tactics
- Q & A







What is Marketing Strategy?

Why Does it Matter?

Defined: *A plan of action designed to promote and sell a product or service.*

- Marketing strategy aligns your business goals with customer needs.
- A well-defined strategy ensures you're targeting the right people with the right message at the right time.
- In the concrete and construction industry, understanding your audience is critical due to the diversity of stakeholders (e.g., producers, contractors, engineers, vendors).

The 4 P's: product, pricing, place, promotion

User Experience Design: *The ease in which audiences interact with marketing and technology transfer activities (website, webinars, newsletter, social media).*

Strategy Plan Elements

- Brand Goals
- **Audience Segmentation**
- **Content Pillars**
- **Target Channels/Platforms**
- Processes
- **Key Messaging**
- Measurable Outcomes



Break Down

- Demographics
- Needs
- Goals
- Pain Points
- Resonant Messaging
- Preferred Channels
- Behaviors and Motivations

Audience Segmentation and Persona Building

Market Research – Uncover the information you need to get in front of the people that influence your work.

- Use: surveys, focus groups, interviews, secondary research
- Look For: trends, behaviors, decision making factors, common questions, insights from competitors, etc.

Segmentation

- **Demographics:** Age, Gender, Race, Household Income, company size, location, job role, etc.
- **Goals:** What are they trying to accomplish? Project focus, etc.
- **Pain Points:** What challenges are they facing regularly? What barriers exist? What makes it easier for them to purchase? What problems are they trying to solve? What restraints do they need to stay within?
- **Preferred Channels:** in-person, digital, social media types, email, etc.
- **Behaviors and Motivations:** buying patterns, decision making processes, job patterns

Craft Audience Specific Messaging: tone, style, platform preferences, etc.



Prince Charles

- Male
- Born in 1948
- Raised in the UK
- Married twice
- Lives in a castle
- Wealthy & famous



Ozzy Osbourne

- Male
- Born in 1948
- Raised in the UK
- Married twice
- Lives in a castle
- Wealthy & famous

* Personas shouldn't be about demographics. Personas should be about the problems & challenges people face.



Customer Relationships

Equipment Vendors

Material Suppliers

Paving Contractors

Ready Mixed Concrete

Public

Private

DOT

Counties

Cities/Municipal

Legislators

Commercial Construction

Residential Construction

Development Organizations

Citizens

Private Development/Business

Audience Personas

Why do this?

Allows businesses to understand motivations and behaviors of their target audience and tailor strategies accordingly. These fictional representations of customers help marketers personalize messaging, optimize content, and improve campaign performance.

1. Think of an audience segment.
2. Identify pain points, behaviors, etc.
3. How do these things effect how they receive your messaging?

Segments by Job Type (demographic)

DOT and Agency Segment

Demographics: Civil Engineers (Pavement, Materials, Geotechnical), Transportation Planners, City/County Engineers, Public Works Directors, and elected officials.

Goal: Implement cost-effective, safe, durable pavement systems that meet public needs and comply with regulations.

Pain Points:

- Balancing tight budgets with long-lasting infrastructure durability needs.
- Navigating complex regulatory and political environments.
- Evaluating and implementing new or unproven technologies.
- Managing risk linked to new construction practices.

Buying Patterns: Hinging upon state budgets, budget year, forecasted projects, etc. Proven solutions are prioritized. Values making decisions on technical data.

Ready Mixed Concrete Producers

Demographics: Plant Managers, Quality Control Managers and Technicians, Operations Directors, Sales and Marketing Managers, Dispatchers

Goal: Deliver high-quality concrete efficiently and reliably while maintaining profitability, meeting customer demands, and adhering to sustainability and regulatory standards.

Pain Points:

- Ensuring consistent quality control to meet industry standards.
- Managing logistics for timely delivery to job sites.
- Balancing operational efficiency with rising material and transportation costs.
- Addressing sustainability demands and environmental regulations.
- Staying competitive in a crowded market with innovative solutions.

Buying Patterns: Value quality and reliability over price.

Concrete Paving Contractor

Demographics: Paving Contractors, Project Managers, Quality Control/Quality Assurance (QC/QA) Managers, Materials Suppliers (Ready-Mix), Engineering Consultants.

Goal: Execute construction projects, provide design expertise, and supply materials. Focus on efficiency, quality control, and profitability. Enhance operational efficiency, improve product quality, and secure a competitive advantage through innovative technologies.

Pain Points:

- Meeting stringent project specifications and quality requirements.
- Training workforce on new technologies and methods.
- Managing material variability, cost and supply chain logistics.
- Equipment downtime and labor shortages
- Remaining competitive in a price-sensitive market.

Buying Patterns: Invest in durable, high-performance materials and equipment

Agency Persona



Name: David Jon, PE
Role: Senior Pavement Design Engineer, State DOT

"My primary objective is to design and specify concrete pavements that will last for decades with minimal maintenance. I need reliable, data-driven solutions that are both cost-effective and compliant with federal standards."

Profile:

David is a 48-year-old Professional Engineer with over twenty years' experience at a state DOT. He oversees a team responsible for pavement design, material specifications, and lifecycle cost analysis for major highway projects. Respected for technical expertise and attention to detail, David is a key decision-maker for adopting new pavement technologies and materials within his agency.

Goals:

- Implement durable, long-life pavement solutions that reduce long-term maintenance costs.
- Ensure project specifications comply with FHWA and state mandates.
- Integrate innovative, sustainable materials and practices while maintaining performance and safety.
- **Mentor junior engineers and facilitate knowledge transfer.**

Challenges:

- Balance budget constraints with the need for resilient infrastructure.
- Manage risk related to new or unproven technologies on large-scale projects.
- Keep the team current with advancements in pavement materials and construction methods.
- Justify higher initial costs to non-technical stakeholders.

Motivations:

- Public service: duty to provide safe, reliable infrastructure.
- Technical excellence: desire to apply advanced engineering.
- Project legacy: contribute to successful, long-lasting infrastructure.
- Efficiency: optimize pavement designs for performance and environmental impact.

Communication and Engagement Preferences:

- Technical guides/manuals for in-depth reference.
- Email newsletters for updates on research and events.
- Webinars for technical sessions and professional development.
- Participation in technical committees.
- Attendance at workshops and conferences.
- Direct technical assistance from Center experts.

Industry Persona



Name: Maria Flores
Role: Quality Control Manager, Regional Paving Contractor

"My team is on the ground every day, turning plans into reality. We need practical, easy-to-implement guidelines and training to meet project specifications efficiently and deliver a high-quality product for our clients."

Profile:

Maria is a 39-year-old Quality Control Manager for a large regional paving company. With a background in construction management and materials science, she ensures all projects meet quality and performance specifications. She manages field technicians, oversees materials testing, and liaises between the company, consultants, and agency inspectors.

Goals:

- Achieve consistent compliance with specifications and minimize rework.
- Improve efficiency and accuracy of field testing and quality control.
- Implement performance-engineered mixtures and emerging technologies.
- Train field staff on modern construction techniques.

Challenges:

- Manage material variability for consistent mix performance.
- Train a frequently changing workforce on technical and new practices.
- Adapt to on-site weather conditions affecting concrete placement and curing.
- Bridge design specifications with field realities.

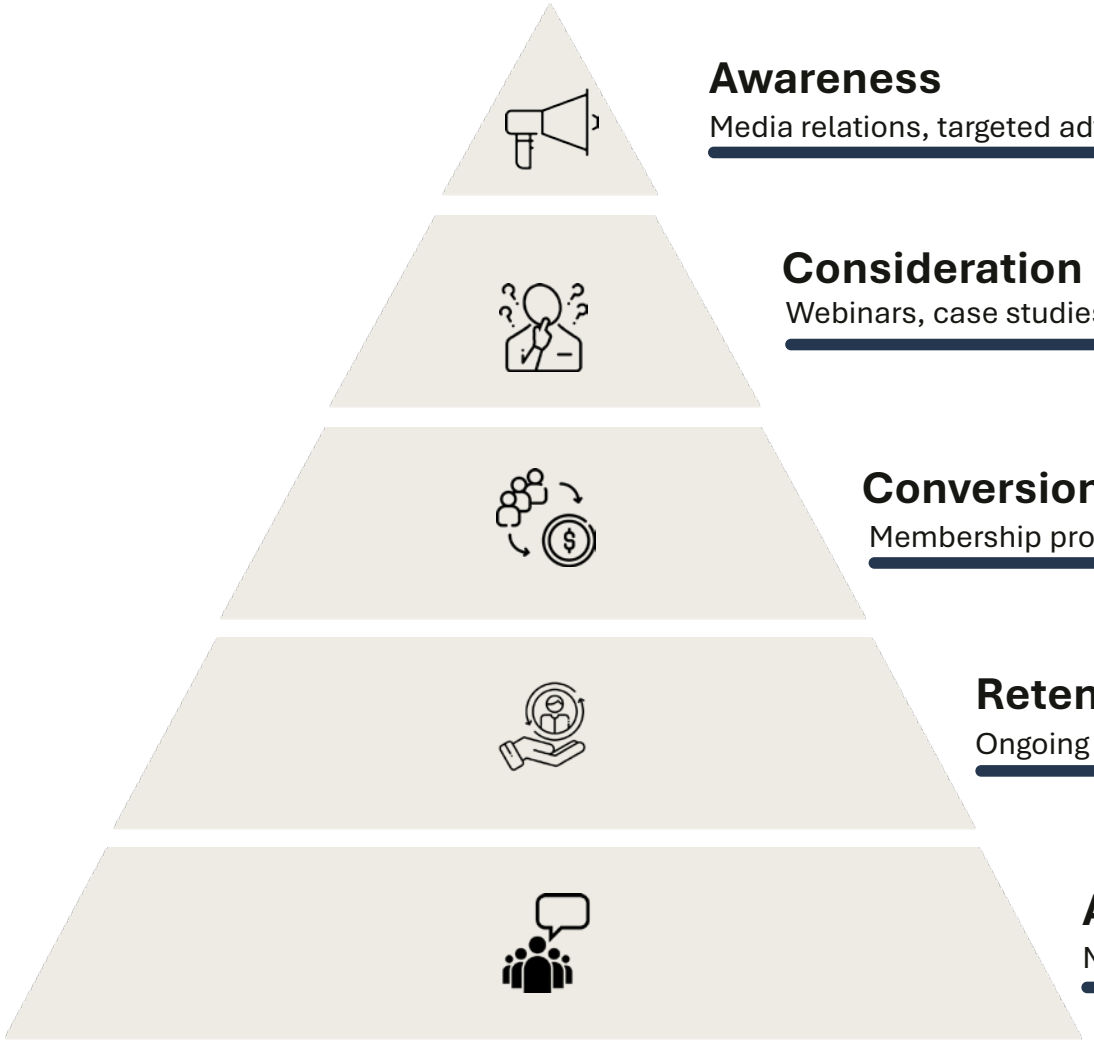
Motivations:

- Project success: on-time, on-budget, and quality delivery.
- Operational efficiency: adopt tools and techniques to save time/resources.
- Company reputation: leadership in quality and innovation.
- Professional development: staying current with industry trends.

Communication and Engagement Preferences:

- Field guides and checklists for on-site tasks.
- How-to videos and webinars demonstrating methods and technologies.
- In-person workshops for hands-on training.
- Case studies of successful technology implementation.
- Podcasts or videos on innovative, applicable ideas that she can listen to in downtime or while doing other work.
- Partnership with CP Tech Center on pilot projects.
- Participation in forums and regional meetings with peers.

Communications and Marketing Team: **Content Strategy**



Awareness

Media relations, targeted advertising, industry partnerships, content marketing, social, SEO

Consideration

Webinars, case studies, white papers, technical resources, blogs, lead gen

Conversion

Membership promotions, event registrations, certification enrollment, publication sales

Retention

Ongoing value delivery, community engagement, exclusive benefits, Resource Centers

Advocacy

Member testimonials, surveys, referral programs, ambassador initiatives

Audience Journey: Industry Segment

	Awareness	Consideration	Engagement/Conversion
Industry	Hears about a new technology field guide or training program through an industry association (e.g., ACPA) or from an agency specification.	Searches for "how-to" resources, such as videos or checklists, to address a specific construction challenge. Reviews case studies of other contractors.	**Attends** an in-person, hands-on workshop to train field staff on a new technique. **Downloads** and uses a field-friendly guide or mobile application.

Collaboration/Retention	Advocacy
Partners with the Center on a pilot project to implement a new technology. Provides feedback on the practicality of a draft specification.	Co-authors a case study with the Center. Shares positive experiences with new methods at a regional paving association meeting.

Key Messaging

The core ideas you want your audience to remember about your brand, product, or service.



1. **Understand the Audience:** Use your segments and personas.

2. **Identify Pain Points:** What problems are you solving for them?

3. **Highlight Benefits:** Focus on outcomes, not just features.

4. **Use Their Language:** Speak in terms they understand.

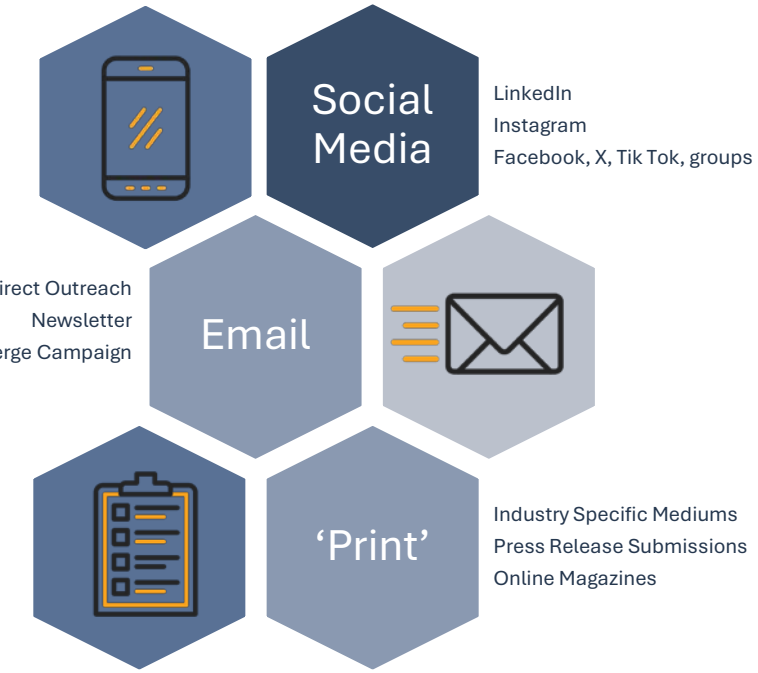
Key Messaging

Segment Being Marketed TO	Key Messaging Examples
Ready-Mixed Concrete Producers	• "Deliver consistent, high-quality concrete with our advanced batching solutions, designed to optimize your operations and reduce waste." • "Maximize profitability with innovative materials that balance cost-efficiency and performance."
Paving Contractors	• "Minimize equipment downtime with our reliable maintenance and support services tailored for contractors." • "Achieve flawless finishes and long-lasting results with our precision-engineered concrete mixes."
DOT Engineers	• "Build infrastructure that stands the test of time with our proven, high-durability concrete solutions." • "Ensure compliance with state and federal regulations using our certified materials and expert support." • "Rely on our technical expertise and data-driven insights to make informed decisions for your projects."
Commercial Real Estate Developers	• "Bring your vision to life with our premium concrete solutions, designed for durability and aesthetic appeal in commercial projects." • "Partner with us for innovative solutions that balance cost-efficiency and the unique demands of commercial real estate."

Marketing Channels

- Dependent on : Type of project, audience, content type, etc.
- Match channels to brand goals
- How is your audience consuming information?
- Test over time







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Marketing Channels

Segment	Channels to Find Them
Ready-Mixed Concrete Producers	Trade publications, industry events, direct sales.
Paving Contractors	Equipment demos, YouTube tutorials, LinkedIn ads.
DOT Engineers and Agency Professionals	Prefer live webinars, and in-person conference options over other segments. Technical whitepapers, email campaigns. Tends to use LinkedIn/social less than others for technical knowledge, but responds well to thought leadership pieces.
Bridge Contractors	Case studies, project showcases, in-person meetings.
Commercial Contractors	Social media, client testimonials, networking events.
Equipment Vendors	Co-branded campaigns, trade shows, product videos.
Testing Consultants	Training workshops, industry certifications, LinkedIn groups.

Additional Channel Insight

- Capitalize on **podcasting** either by launching your own or placing team members as guests to amplify your strategic messaging.
  - Client industry survey: 23% of audience is listening to professional podcasts
- Consider incorporating and testing **digital advertising** opportunities. Boosting content like social media posts, videos, etc. are a low-risk place to start with a ROI that can be measured.
- YouTube ranks second in social media platforms used by industry professionals next to LinkedIn (Client Industry Survey)
- Encouraging your team, business partners and leadership to share your content creates authentic brand **engagement** and amplifies your message.
- Polls generate higher **impressions** and **engagement**
- Comment on your own posts at least 4-8 times/year to encourage **engagement**.
- Thoughtful **video/graphics/image** incorporation.
  - Multi-image posts see the most **engagement**, but are posted the least frequent
  - Videos increase **shareability**

Podcast Example: AOE's podcast, which is targeted to a similar audience, has seen the growth of over 1,500 followers in the last 6 months and our top performing podcast this year has seen over 21,000 views.

Bilingual resources

- Trade associations and industry information hubs are seeing high downloads of Spanish version resources.
- Translating key technical guides, summaries and web content into other languages, such as Spanish, serves a broader workforce.
- This could look like resource translations, bilingual training programs, videos and on-site support/staff.
- **Potential Audience Reach:** Expands accessibility to a more diverse group of industry professionals and field practitioners.
- Hispanic workers make up **31.1%** of the U.S. construction workforce, with over 3.7 million Hispanic workers employed in the industry as of 2022, compared to 2.5 million in 2010. This group is overrepresented in construction compared to their share across all industries (18.7%).

Bilingual resources: AEC industry impact

Why this is important:

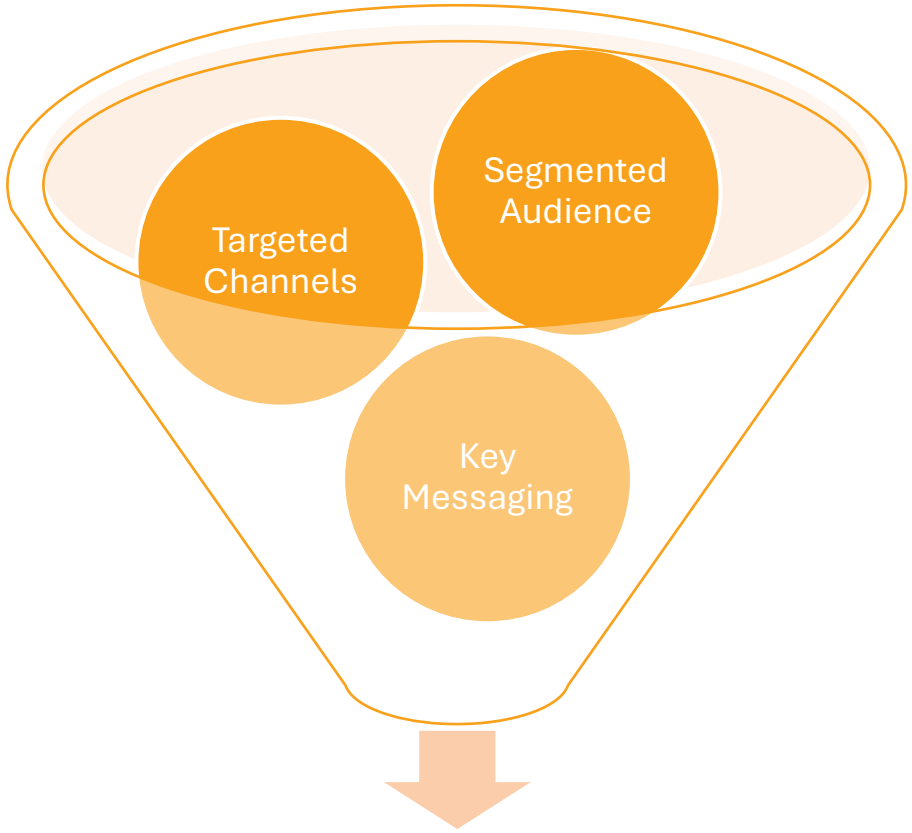
- **Safety Risk Mitigation:** Language barriers are a significant safety concern, as non-native English speakers face higher risks of workplace accidents due to communication breakdowns.
- **Productivity and Efficiency:** Misunderstandings caused by language gaps can lead to delays, rework and increased costs. Projects with robust communication practices are 34% more likely to finish on time.
- **Knowledge Transfer:** Bilingual resources ensure that technical guides, training materials and best practices are accessible to a broader audience, enhancing knowledge retention and application.
- **Workforce Development:** Equipping workers with industry-specific vocabulary and safety terminology in their native language empowers them to contribute more effectively and confidently.

Strategy Plan Elements

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- **Target Channels/Platforms**
- Processes
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Bringing It All Together

1. Start with a clear marketing or brand goals.
2. Segment your audience to understand their unique needs.
3. Develop personas to humanize your audience.
4. Craft key messages that resonate with each segment.
5. Use the right channels to deliver your message effectively



Effective Marketing Strategy

Questions?

Today's Speaker

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AOE Has Answers

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