

A promotional image for the TV show 'Lost'. The word 'LOST' is written in large, white, serif capital letters across the top half of the image. The letters are filled with a cloudy sky pattern. Below the letters, the silhouettes of the main cast members are standing on a dark, rocky shore. The background is a dark, cloudy sky with a hint of a sunset or sunrise.

LOST

The Island Wants You

Lost Season 5 | ABC Studios

Public Relations Campaign
Summer 2008

IMC 471 – Principles of Public Relations

Jennifer Cifuentes

Table of Contents

Introduction/Current Situation.....	3
Competition.....	7
Problems/Challenges.....	8
Opportunities.....	9
Current Viewers.....	10
Target Audiences.....	11
Keys Messages.....	12
Goals and Objectives.....	14
Strategies and Tactics.....	15
Timing.....	20
Budget.....	21
Evaluation.....	22
Appendix — Preferred Media List.....	23

Introduction/Current Situation

Lost is an American serial drama television series produced by ABC Studios (formerly Touchstone Television), which is a part of The Walt Disney Company. The show was created by J.J. Abrams, Damon Lindelof and Jeffery Lieber. The 1-hour format show has featured 83 episodes over the course of the last four seasons. Two final seasons (seasons 5 and 6) are planned and will consist of 17 episodes each.

The story line of *Lost* follows the survivors of the crashed Oceanic Airlines Flight 815 as they struggle to stay alive on a mysterious tropical island thought to be somewhere in the South Pacific. The plot is character driven and features development of the main characters through flash-backs and flash-forwards that are set in the past and future respectively in relation to the current story's time line. The island is a constant source of mystery complete with polar bears, abandoned scientific stations and a smoke monster – making the show a combination of the drama, mystery, action and science fiction genres.

Lost's two-part pilot episode debuted on the ABC network on September 22, 2004 and cost an estimated \$14 million to produce – making it the most expensive ever produced in the network's history.

The series went on to become a commercial success for the 2004 television season for ABC, as well as receiving critical praise. The pilot episode received an estimated 18.6 million viewers. An average of 16 million viewers per episode was reported for the first season and the series was ranked #14 in viewership among primetime shows and #15 among the 18 to 49 year old demographic.

Lost's second season experienced continued success, as the show was ranked #14 in viewership with an average of 15.5 million viewers per episode. The second season premiere was even more viewed than the

first, pulling in over 23 million viewers and setting a series record. In addition, the show improved its ranking to #8 for the 18 to 49 year old demographic.

The third season premiere brought in 18.8 million viewers. However, *Lost* saw a significant drop in viewership to 14.5 million with the seventh episode of the third season — after the show returned from a three-month hiatus. The rest of season 3 experienced lower viewership numbers, even going as low as 11 million viewers before recovering to almost 14 million viewers for the season finale. *Lost* officially slipped to #17 in primetime viewership during season 3. However, the ratings drop was partially explained when Nielsen released DVR ratings, showing *Lost* as the most recorded series on television. In spite of slumping ratings, *Lost* still won its timeslot with the 18 to 49 year demographic. The fourth season premiere of *Lost* pulled in 16.1 million viewers. Though by the eighth episode, viewership had decreased to 11.4 million viewers and the show fell in the primetime rankings to #19.

The chart below illustrates the overall decrease in viewership and rankings:

Season	Average Viewers per Episode	Primetime Ranking	Timeslot
1	16.1 million	#14	Wednesdays, 8 pm EDT (September 22, 2004 – May 25, 2005)
2	15.5 million	#14	Wednesdays, 9 pm EDT (September 21, 2005 – May 24, 2006)
3	14.6 million	#17	Wednesdays, 9 pm EDT (October 4, 2006 – November 8, 2006) Wednesdays, 10 pm EDT (February 7, 2007 – May 23, 2007)
4	13.19 million	#19	Thursdays, 9 pm EDT (January 31, 2008 – March 20, 2008) Thursdays, 10 pm EDT (April 24, 2008 – May 29, 2008)

Lost will return for its fifth and penultimate season in late January of 2009. In season 4, six crash survivors, dubbed the Oceanic Six, were rescued from the island. However, known only to the Oceanic Six, many other crash survivors were left behind. Season 5's story line will focus on why the Oceanic Six need to return to the island. Flash-forwards and flash-backs will no longer be used as narrative devices to tell the story in season 5. Instead, the focus will be on island and off-island stories and will take place in different points of time. The meanings and connections of the island and off-island stories will be left up to the audience to determine. This will help the show keep an air of mystery and will keep the audience engaged as significant plot mysteries are answered and story lines start to tie up. Currently, *Lost* is ranked #5 among the top scripted series on television.

Since December of 2005, *Lost* has been available to watch online at ABC.com in the U.S. with new episodes available the day after they were aired on ABC television. Currently seasons 1-4 are available in the online streaming format in standard and HD resolutions. In addition, seasons 1-4 have been released for purchase on iTunes and season 1-3 have been released to DVD. Season 4 will be released to DVD prior to the start of season 5 on December 9, 2008.

To date, *Lost* has been nominated for over 100 different awards and has won 41. These awards include 26 Primetime Emmy Awards (seven wins), 21 Teen Choice Awards, 27 Saturn Awards (9 wins), 9 Golden Reel Awards (2 wins), 8 Satellite Awards (1 win), 6 Golden Globe Awards, (1 win) and 4 Writers Guild of America Awards (1 win), 3 Directors Guild of America Awards, 2 NAACP Image Awards (1 win), 2 Screen Actors Guild Awards (1 win) and a BAFTA Award. The series holds wins of a Primetime Emmy Award for "Outstanding Drama Series", a Golden Globe Award for

"Best Television Series - Drama" and a Screen Actors Guild Award for
"Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series."

Competition

Last season *Lost* aired on Thursdays at 9 pm during the first half of the last season. The show was moved from Wednesday night to avoid competition with Fox's *American Idol*. In its new timeslot, *Lost* ran against NBC's *Celebrity Apprentice*, reruns of CBS's *CSI*, reruns of the CW's *Supernatural* and Fox's *Don't Forget the Lyrics*. The largest ratings challenge came from *CSI* in the all-important 18 to 49 year old demographic. *Lost*'s timeslot was switched to Thursday 10 pm for the second half of last season to allow for the return of *Grey's Anatomy*. This also helped *Lost* break out in the ratings, as there was no real competition in the 10 pm slot.

A timeslot has yet to be confirmed by ABC for season 5, so it cannot be determined which shows will directly compete with *Lost* for viewership. Shows that may compete for viewership because they attract the same types of audiences are *Heroes*, *24*, *Chuck*, *Numb3rs*, *Dexter* and the new J.J. Abrams series *Fringe*, which is set to debut this fall on Fox. *24* is set to debut its seventh season in January 2009 and may run against *Lost*. *Heroes*, *Chuck* and *Numb3rs* are all set to begin their new seasons this September, but may have episodes airing until May of 2009. Likewise, if *Fringe* is successful in its fall run, it may also run into 2009. Season 1 of the Showtime original series *Dexter* is set to run in an edited format on CBS starting in February of 2009. Other dramas, such as *CSI* could possibly pose a competitive threat.

In addition, *Lost* could see competition from cable shows such as *Dexter* (unedited season 3 on Showtime), *Damages* and *True Blood*. *True Blood* and *Dexter* will begin this September and could run into the 2009 year. *Damages* will begin its second season in January of 2009.

Problems/Challenges

Over the last 4 seasons *Lost*'s viewership and ranking has decreased. In order to be successful in season 5, the show will need to reinvigorate former viewers to become active viewers again, while encouraging new viewers to commit to the series. However, because of *Lost*'s complex and confusing story line, a viewer cannot just start watching the show beginning with season 5. This will make it difficult to pick up new viewers. Also, even the show's most dedicated viewers have been known to express frustration at the story line as answered questions only led to more questions in the plot.

In most cases, it will be necessary for a new viewer to start with season 1 and work their way through season 4 before attempting to watch season 5 either by watching the DVDs, the streaming online video offered at ABC.com or by purchasing the seasons from iTunes. At the very least, a new viewer must be brought up-to-date with a comprehensive highlight's show of some type. This was done last year when ABC released an online video called *Lost in 8:15*, which recapped the series quickly in just over 8 minutes. In addition, ABC showed a "catch up" show prior to the season premiere of season 4.

In addition, *Lost* is an expensive show to produce due to its large cast and exotic shooting locations in Hawaii. A significant effort will need to be made to win back former viewers, gain new viewers and keep active viewers engaged. But with large production costs, promotion budgets have grown slim. The promotion of season 5 will need to economize to get the most out of budget dollars.

Opportunities

The largest opportunity will come by reengaging former viewers to make them active viewers again. This group does not require as much work on the part of the viewer to catch up with any part of the series they may have missed.

Now with a clear series end date in sight, *Lost's* writers can start answering questions, solving mysteries and tying up plot lines for viewers. Season 5 will be fast-paced and will give viewers what they've been waiting for – answers to the intriguing island mythology and story mysteries. With only 34 episodes left to resolve an overwhelming amount of loose ends, each episode in seasons 5 and 6 are going to be guaranteed thrill rides for viewers. This excitement can be used to the show's advantage in the promotion of season 5.

Current Viewers

Most current *Lost* viewers fall within the 18 to 49 year old demographic. Viewers are both male and female and have variable household incomes and educational levels. Many of the viewers watch for the drama and character-driven story lines. However, many more are watching because of the mystery, suspense and science fiction aspects of the show.

Lost is aired all over the world and has a dedicated, cult-like international fan community. Many participate in online fan websites, forums, podcasts and conventions. Because of the thick mythology of the show, many fans focus on gathering online and off-line to generate theories about the island's mysteries and the show in general. In the past, ABC has used alternative reality games, tie-in novels, Comic Con International, *Lost* specific fan conventions, mobisodes (*Lost: Missing Pieces*), a video game (*Lost: Via Domus*) and websites, as well as official forums and podcasts to help keep fans engaged.

Fans of the science fiction genre tend to be early adopters to new technology, particularly online. This is evident with *Lost* fans, as there are growing online and podcast communities.

Target Audiences

This public relations campaign will focus on the United States viewership of *Lost*. There are five main target audiences or publics to consider. These publics are:

- 1) Fans – Active Viewers
- 2) Former Viewers
- 3) Non-Viewers
- 4) Traditional Media – printed publications, television, etc.
- 5) New Media – Bloggers, Podcasters, Fan Website Creators and Forum Moderators

Messages

A campaign theme line of “The Island Wants You” will be used in this campaign effort. The island has very much emerged as its own “character” throughout the series. Current and former viewers will connect immediately with this, as the island often seems to have a will of its own throughout the story line. Potential viewers will connect with this message because of its familiarity with the widely known, historical Uncle Sam “I Want You” ads. This theme line also ties in nicely with the story line of season 5, as the Oceanic Six feel compelled to make their way back to the island, as if a supernatural force is somehow drawing them back.

Through this public relations campaign the following key messages will be communicated to the publics:

1) Fans – Active Viewers

This season of *Lost* will be the best yet as you will finally start getting the answers to all of your questions. Only 34 episodes are left until the end. Don't miss a moment of it. The exciting return of *Lost* will have you gasping for more.

2) Former Viewers

It's time to get back to the island. The Oceanic Six have been rescued and will be drawn back – will you dare go back? January 2009 is the time to come back to *Lost*.

3) Non-Viewers

Find out what the critics are raving about. *Lost* is one of the most nominated/awarded shows on television. Catch up on seasons 1 through 4 to get ready for season 5.

- 4) Traditional Media – printed publications, television, etc.
A combination of all messages listed above – plus, some exclusive behind-the-scenes content.

- 5) New Media – Bloggers, Podcasters, Fan Website Creators and Forum Moderators
A combination of all messages listed above – plus, exclusive content to get the diehard fans buzzing and theorizing during the two months prior to the season premiere.

Goals and Objectives

The following are goals and objectives for this public relations campaign:

- Set a viewership record for the season 5 premiere for the series. (Current record is 23 million viewers for the season 2 premiere.)
- Increase the average episode viewership to at least 16 million viewers.
- Receive an overall primetime ranking within the top ten.
- Be the number 1 rated show overall in the 18 to 49 year old demographic.
- Generate awareness for the release of the season 4 DVD set in December.
- Drive online traffic to ABC.com's *Lost* streaming online episodes pages.
- Generate excitement for season 5 among fans.

Strategies and Tactics

This public relations campaign will utilize a variety of traditional and new media strategies and tactics to achieve success.

Strategy #1 – Embrace User-generated Content

ABC Studios will create an uncontrolled public relations buzz online by allowing fans of the show to create a social media profile at www.lostfans.abc.com. Each user will have the ability to customize their own personal *Lost* fan home page that they can share with their friends and use to connect with other *Lost* fans. Each profile will have the functionality for the user to create their own *Lost* blog, upload *Lost* inspired videos and photos and post bulletins that can be distributed to their *Lost* friends list. Users will also have the ability to post comments on each other's profile pages. A typical social media website terms of use agreement will be in place to keep inappropriate and copyrighted content off these user profiles pages.

Also, *Lost* character favorites (Jack, Kate, Hurley, Sayid, Sun, Locke, Ben, Faraday, Charlotte, Walt, Miles and Sawyer) will have profiles within this online community and will post their own blog submissions. Character submissions will contain hints about the upcoming season and “Easter Egg” surprises for diehard fans to discover. A fan relations manager/writer will be added to the public relations team to assist with this effort.

In addition to the user message boards found on ABC.com's *Lost* home page (www.lost.abc.com), an official fan-generated wiki will be added to give the devoted fans a chance to help in the creation of a definitive online encyclopedia of the show. This will work two-fold to both engage the diehard fans and serve as a way to increase interest in the

show and act as an information source for former and new viewers to catch up and become involved during season 5.

Many dedicated *Lost* fans are in the habit of creating their own content through fan websites and podcasts. ABC Studios will take advantage of this natural behavior and harness it to become an effective promotional communications channel for the series. For the first time ever in the history of the show, we will reach out to fan websites and podcasts as new media distribution channels to offer exclusive content for each of several key fan website/podcast organizations. Access to the ABC Studios MediaNet website (www.abcstudiosmedianet.com) will be granted to chosen fan organizations. Here they will be able to access a special online media kit that will allow users to download photos, press releases designed specifically for fan websites and podcasts, video clips, audio clips and special *Lost* alerts that will not be released elsewhere. In addition, each fan organization will be granted one interview with a member of the cast or with the executive producers. Each organization will be given a different interview subject, to keep in line with the exclusive nature of this effort. The newly appointed fan relations manager will assist in this effort.

A Twitter (micro blog) account will be set up for each key character of the show that will help drive users of Twitters and “followers” of the character’s “tweets” to the online fans community and series home page. Each “tweet” or micro blog posting will consist or 140 characters of less and will provide hints to season 5 in the content.

Strategy #2 – E! True Hollywood Story (THS) Special

A pitch will be made by ABC Studios to partner with the E! network in the creation of a two-hour *E! THS* special focused on a documentary

style telling of how *Lost* became a worldwide phenomenon. The proposed special will not only include an in-depth look at the *Lost* fandom, but will also document the lives and careers of key actors of the show. A *Lost* A to Z will also be proposed to help former and non-viewers catch up with the storyline. A target run date for the premiere of this special will be within the 30 days prior to the season 5 premiere of *Lost*.

Strategy #3 – Actor Appearances on Talk Show Circuit and as Special Co-Host Guests

Key *Lost* character actors will be available for talk show appearances to help promote season 5 prior to the premiere. Pitches will go out to *Oprah* (full cast interview), *The View* (special guest co-host and/or actor interviews), *Good Morning America* (interviews with one cast member each day during a special *Lost* content blitz week), *Jimmy Kimmel Live* (one to two actor interviews, along with a *Lost*-themed show one night) and *Live With Regis and Kelly* (interview with the show love triangle characters — Kate, Jack and Sawyer).

Strategy #4 – Media Kit Distribution and Media Relations

A media kit will be distributed to approved members of the media through access to the ABC Studios MediaNet website (www.abcstudiosmedianet.com) and mail and email, upon request. This kit will include press releases, photos, video clips, audio clips, cast bios, show FAQs and *Lost* Viewer Guides. Certain media channels will receive special focus as preferred distribution channels because of their demographic and format match with *Lost*. A list of preferred media channels is available in the appendix of this report.

Strategy #5 — Content Pitches to Print Publications

Content pitches will be made to the print *publications* *TV Guide*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *People Magazine* and *Geek Monthly*. Each will be given exclusive content that no other publication will be offered. Proposed content will include *Lost Viewer Guides*, cast interviews and behind-the-scenes sneak peeks to season 5.

Strategy #6 – Partner With Online News Media Channels to Distribute Content and *Lost Viewer Guides*

Content pitches and pitches for a variety of *Lost Viewer Guides* will be made to key online news distribution channels. These include Yahoo! Entertainment (entertainment.yahoo.com), Yahoo! TV (tv.yahoo.com), MSN TV (tv.msn.com), AOL Television (television.aol.com) and *Watch With Kristin*, an E! Online column/blog (www.eonline.com/uberblog/watch_with_kristin).

Strategy #7 – “Leak” Dharma Videos on YouTube

ABC Studios will use YouTube (www.youtube.com) to distribute Dharma Initiative videos that will give viewers a sneak peak of some of the mysteries that will be explained in season 5. The Dharma Initiative plays a key part in the *Lost* mythology and has been a constant source of mystery within the story line. The videos will have an unfinished/home made production quality and will appear to be outtakes from official Dharma station videos. A YouTube account will be setup and a brief introductory to each video will be shot using an unknown actor that will pose as the

account holder. The “account holder” will briefly explain that he found the following footage and that he wishes to present the video as evidence of a Hanso Foundation conspiracy. We want the video to initially appear to have been “leaked” by the account holder. However, true *Lost* fans will recognize this right away and busy themselves with searching for clues within the videos. The end of each video will display a url that will direct viewers to the new *Lost* online community (www.lostfans.abc.com).

Timing

Public relations campaign efforts will begin to ramp up in mid November of 2008 to prepare for the December 2008 release of *Lost* season 4 on DVD. Efforts will intensify in December 2008 and January 2009 as the season 5 premiere nears.

Budget

- **Online Community Development** - \$150,000
- **Twitter Character Accounts** - \$0
- **Fan Relations Manager Staff Member Addition** - \$80,000
- **Press/Media Kits**
 - Photography, Video and Audio Production - \$200,000
 - Updates to ABC Studios MediaNet – Absorbed by ABC Studios Public Relations Budget
- **YouTube Videos**
 - Production - \$100,000
 - Account Creation and Posting - \$0
- **Campaign Content Development Support** - \$50,000

Total: \$580,000

All other costs associated with this campaign will be absorbed by the general Lost marketing budget.

Evaluation

The following will be used to measure the success of this public relations campaign:

- Nielson Ratings
 - Number of Viewers for Season 5 Premiere
 - Overall Rankings

- ABC.com
 - Website Traffic for the *Lost* home page
 - Number of Registered Users to *Lost* Online Community
 - Website Traffic for the *Lost* Online Community
 - Website Traffic for Full Episode Viewing Online

- DVD Sales for Season 4 and Seasons 1-3

- Number of Views for YouTube Videos

- Number of Twitter Followers for Each Character Profile

- Number of Article/Content Placements in Media

- Viewership Numbers of *E! THS* Special

Appendix — Media List

Podcasts and Fan Websites

The Lost Podcast With Jay and Jack (www.jayandjack.com)

Jay Glatfelter and Jack Glatfelter (lostpodcast@gmail.com)

Lost Unlocked (lostunlocked.blogspot.com)

Chris and Brian (lostunlocked@gmail.com)

The Dharmalars (www.dharmalars.net)

Ben Johnson and Ralph Apel (dharmalars@gmail.com)

The Transmission (www.hawaiiup.com)

Ryan Osaka and Jenn Osaka (lost@hawaiiup.com)

Broadcast (Television)

E! News

5750 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90036

Entertainment Tonight (ET)

Linda Bell Blue (51 W. 52nd St. New York, NY 10019)

Oprah

press@oprah.com

Live With Regis and Kelly

Michael Gelman (7 Lincoln Square, New York, NY 10023)

Good Morning America (GMA)

77 West 66th Street, New York, NY 10023

The View

Bill Geddie (77 West 66th Street, New York, NY 10023)

Jimmy Kimmel Live

Jason Amick (77 West 66th Street, New York, NY 10023)

E! True Hollywood Story

Jeffrey Shore (5750 Wilshire Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90036)

Print Publications

Entertainment Weekly

Rick Tetzeli (1675 Broadway, 30th Floor, New York, NY 10019)

TV Guide

Carrie Hoffman (carrie.hoffman@tvguide.com)

People Magazine

Julie Trotter (julie_trotter@timeinc.com)

Geek Monthly

Jeff Bond (jeff.bond@geekmonthly.com)

Associated Press

Paul Colford (450 W. 33rd St. New York, NY 0001)

Online

Yahoo! Entertainment (entertainment.yahoo.com)

701 First Ave. Sunnyvale, CA

Yahoo! TV (tv.yahoo.com)

701 First Ave. Sunnyvale, CA

MSN TV (tv.msn.com)

AOL Television (television.aol.com)

E! Online – *Watch With Kristin*

(eonline.com/uberblog/watch_with_kristin)

Kristin Dos Santos (kristendossantoc@eonline.com)
