



IMPACT OF INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION ON MODERN BUSINESS

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Abstract

Integrated Marketing Communication is considered as a strategy for business houses which is used to maximize profits. Usually it is a combination of different promotion mix. Advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relation and direct marketing are the major components of it. Besides that media, message consistency, design consistency, sales alignment are the other tool for it. There are some goals behind the IMC, these goals are related with increased sales volume, effective development of brand image and to achieve competitive advantages. IMC is being used to create a good image of brand in customer memory that customer share positive words of mouth to others., it helps organization to make close relationship with customer by attacking the dimensions of organizational performance. IMC focuses on customer that how greater values can be transferred to customer by organization which is supported by IMC. This review paper examines importance and goals of IMC, how to IMC is developed, IMC impact on organizational performance and brand equity and also some barriers which influence the IMC process. Besides that it also elaborates the major drivers of IMC. Differentiating IMC with the traditional marketing style is also a major aspect of this study. To make IMC impact more efficient, barriers removal is most important.

INTRODUCTION

Communication can be defined as a process of transferring thoughts and sharing the meanings among the individuals or the organizations. Communication is the glue that holds a society together. The ability to communicate enables people to form and maintain personal relationships. And the quality of such relationships depends on the caliber of communication between the parties (Brennan, 1974). Communication is an important aspect of human behavior. It is a dynamic force which gives shape to human behavior. It presents cognitive part of human mind which assist him to take necessary decisions. It is a foundation of all individual/group activity which takes place in every business organization.

Communication in marketing channel can function as the process by which influential information is transmitted (Frazier and Summers, 1984). Though the Marketing literature admits that communication plays a vigorous role in channel functioning (Grabner and Rosenberg, 1969; Stern and El-Ansary, 1988), it provides no integrated theory for channel communication.

DEFINING INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Various definitions of IMC are presented and discussed in this research article. On the basis of the apparent acceptability among academicians and practitioners who have worked intensively on IMC, these definitions are selected.

During the mid-twentieth century, Integration, the attempt to present a consistent message across the available promotional mix elements has always been important for every successful organization. Some researchers believed that the concept of IMC could be traced back to the 1970s (Cornelissen and Lock, 2000; van Riel, 1995).

The first study on IMC was conducted by Caywood, Schultz, and Wang (1991b) at the end of the 1980s, while the first “conceptual ideas” were published in the book “Integrated Marketing Communications” by Schultz, Tannenbaum, and Lauterborn (1993).

Defining IMC by the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4As): “A concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines – general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations – and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communication impact.”

Raman and Naik (2005) defined the IMC in following words, an IMC program plans and executes various marketing activities with consistency so that its total impact exceeds the sum of each activity.

IMC provides new dynamic model that facilitate the business to make marketing communication as consumer oriented (Kitchen, Brignell, Li and Jones, 2004).

IMC is supposed as a key competitive advantage in many organizations (Kitchen and Schultz, 2001; Weilbacher, 2001; Smith, 2002) because sales and profit can be increased while saving the time, money and stress by applying IMC (Smith, 2002). This fact is also recognized by agency executives (Kitchen and Schultz, 1997).



Schultz and Schultz (1998) introduced an important milestone in the conceptual development of IMC where the scholars proposed a shift in focus from marketing communication tactics and operations to viewing IMC as a 'business process'. This perspective covers the present as well as the future scope of IMC.

Thus, we can define IMC as the Integration of all marketing communication tools, avenues and sources within an organization. It maximizes the impact on consumers and other end users at a minimal cost. This integration affects all of a firm's business-to-business, marketing channel, customer focused, and internally directed communications.

DRIVERS OF INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Promotional Mix:

Marketing promotion can be defined, according to Belch and Belch (2004) as the coordination of all seller initiated efforts to set-up channels of information and persuasion in order to sell goods and services or promote an idea. Kallmeyer and Abratt (2001) viewed it as marketing communication mix which, they called it the specific mix of:

- a. Advertising
- b. Personal selling
- c. Sales promotion
- d. Public relations
- e. Direct marketing

This mix is used by the organizations in order to pursue its advertising and marketing objectives.

The above view is also supported by Wright, (2000), Jobber and Fahy, (2003), Belch and Belch, (2004) among others. Chris Fill, (2006) goes further when he says, "marketing communication is a management process through which an organization engages with its various audiences. By understanding an audience's communication environment, organizations seek to develop and present messages for its identified stakeholder groups, before evaluating and acting upon the responses. By conveying messages that are of significance value, audiences are encouraged to offer attitudinal and behavioural responses".

The above definition is a combination of three major themes. The first is concerned with the word 'engages'. By recognizing the needs of the target audience, marketing communications may be used to engage with a variety of audiences in such a way that one-way, two-way and dialogue communications are used. – Fill (2006); Calder and Malthous, 2003 and Dispasquale, (2002).

The second theme concerns with the audience for marketing communications. Traditionally, marketing communications has been used to convey product-related information to customer-based audiences. Today, Wright, (2000) holds that a range of stakeholders has connections and relationships of varying dimensions and marketing communication needs to incorporate this breadth and variety. Stakeholders' audiences including customers are all interested in a range of corporate issues, sometimes product related and sometimes, related to the policies, procedures and values of the organization itself. Jobber and Fahy, (2003) also added that marketing communication should be grounded in the behaviour and information-processing needs and style of the target audience, if such a marketing communication would be successful.

The third theme from the above definition is related with cognitive response. This according to Fill, (2006) refers to the outcomes of the marketing process, and a measure of whether a communication event has been successful. The audience should be regarded as active problem solvers and they use marketing communications to help them in their lives, in purchasing products and services and in managing organization-related activities.

IMC VS TRADITIONAL MARKET COMMUNICATION

Integrated Marketing Communication is different from Traditional Marketing Communication. These differences are considered as competitive advantage of IMC over the Traditional Marketing Communication. Some of the differences are as follows:

Integrated Marketing Communication	Traditional Marketing Communication
Synergy function: Integrated into one	Isolated function: Partitioning
Customer-Oriented: start with the customer needs and wants	Organization-Oriented: start with the goals and product

Coherent communication programs	Breaking communication programs
Brand/Relationship building objective	Short-term sales objective
Targeted to stakeholder segment	Widespread audience

Source: Integrated Marketing Communication
<http://www.v5.books.elsevier.com/booksat/samples/9780750663618/9780750663618.PDF>

BARRIERS TO IMC

It is never been easy to develop and implement a strategy in an organization. Most of the organizations face many barriers while developing and implementing strategy. In the development process of the organization, it is a big obstacle. In the words of Moriarty (1994) cross-disciplinary managerial skills are the biggest barriers to IMC. In the study conducted by Eagle and Kitchen (2000) four groups were recognized as possible obstacles for IMC success. These groups are-

- a. Control Issues
- b. Resources Issues
- c. Cultural Issues
- d. Flexibility Issues

Schultz (2001) considered the concept of campaign as a problem in IMC. He elaborated that IMC focuses on **Long-term**

Relationship Building while campaign is executed by any organization for the **Short-term**.

Tsikirayi, Muchenje and Katsidzira (2012) found budgetary restrictions and poor quality product as barrier in planning and implementing the IMC. With a low budget, promotion can be of poor quality and undermine the sale of elite quality products to the consumers. Any product can be boycotted by the users if the quality is not superior. No matter promotion impact is very good.

MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF IMC

A successful strategy is that which is evaluated and checked prior to its application. After the implementation, every strategy has results whether in the form of success or failure. Not a single organization will develop the strategy keeping failure in the view. All strategies are developed by targeting success. IMC is also considered as successive strategy as it provides information, creates awareness about product/service, changes attitude of consumers, enforces brand loyalty and builds the organization goodwill.

Vantamay (2011) indicated the five factors to measure the effectiveness of IMC program; these factors are,

- **Customer responses:** Customer response includes 5 indicators in it. These indicators are loyalty towards brand, satisfaction of consumer, brand extension, referrals of brand and preference of brand.
- **Market performance:** Marketing Performance is also a mixture of 5 indicators. These indicators include sales growth of the organization, market share growth, premium price commanding ability, profitability and income from sales.
- **Brand exposures:** On the other hand Brand Exposure is composed with 3 major indicators. It includes personal contacts, mass media exposure and contact points exposure.
- **Communication effect:** Communication effects are having 4 indicators such as Knowledge of brand by consumers, attitude towards brand by consumers, awareness of brand and intention to purchase.
- **Channel support:** Lastly, Channel Support is a composition of 1 indicator i.e. level of channel cooperation. Higher the level of all indicators shows the IMC is more effective. The lower indicators raise a question over the effectiveness of IMC program of the organization.

CONCLUSION

In this paper it was tried to explore IMC from different aspects. The major purpose of it was to find out the impact of IMC on modern Indian Business. IMC is being practiced by most of the organizations of the world. It gives positive impact by providing promotional integration. It has an impact over brand equity, brand awareness, changing buying attitudes of consumers and profitability. The major requirement is to manage all the factors which directly or indirectly influence the IMC. IMC strategies should be made considering all those negative aspects which can affect the major objective of the



organization. Expanding the concept of IMC tells us about its impact, factors influencing it and what are barriers. To get the effective impact barriers should be removed by managing the influencing factors.

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