

# ADDING VALUE BY INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION

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## ABSTRACT

*Managing and coordinating the entire communication process requires the increased usage of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). It would be over simplification to assume that the promotional-mix contains the elements of advertising, public relations, sales promotion and personal selling. There are a number of tools available to the marketer, and the borders between the various activities are being eroded to such an extent that the consensus view is that marketing communications should be integrated. IMC helps in producing stronger message consistency and greater sales impact. The present paper discusses the meaning and nature of integrated marketing communication and how the Indian companies are benefiting from its usage through suitable illustrations. IMC helps in improving the company's ability to reach the right customers with the right messages at the right time and in the right place. Thus through integration of various tools of promotion a marketer can provide clarity, consistency and maximum impact.*

## Introduction

In a highly competitive market place companies have to try very hard to get their marketing message noticed. With wide range of communication tools available to the marketer to achieve its communication aims companies have started using Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). The present paper discusses the meaning and nature of integrated marketing communication and how the Indian companies are benefiting from its usage through suitable illustrations.

Communication is the transmission of the message from a sender to a receiver by means of a signal of some sort sent through a channel of some sort. The word 'communication' is

derived from the Latin word 'communis' which means common. If a person affects communication, there should be a common ground of understanding. Thus, communication involves imparting a common idea and covers all types of behavior resulting from it. Communication basically means sharing of meaning. The communication process involves a source, message, channels, audience and feedback.

## Meaning & Nature of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

As defined by the American Association of Advertising Agencies, "IMC is a concept of

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marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan. Such a plan evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communications disciplines for example, general advertising, direct response, sales promotion and public relations and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency and maximum impact through the seamless integration of discrete messages"

It would be over simplification to assume that the promotional-mix contains the elements of advertising, public relations, sales promotion and personal selling. There are a number of tools available to the marketer, and the borders between the various activities are being eroded to such an extent that the consensus view is that marketing communications should be integrated. Thus, the following points need consideration:

- Not all marketing communications can be categorized as advertising, PR, sales promotion or personal selling.
- Creating a good communication-mix is like cooking a meal; ingredients must be added at the right time and in the right quantities.
- Most campaigns contain elements of both push and pull strategies.
- Messages can be consistent without being identical.

In order to manage and coordinate the entire communication process what the companies today need is the increase usage of integrated marketing communication.

### **Benefits of Integrated Marketing Communication**

IMC helps companies to synergise channels in order to create a lasting message, moreover they help in developing a new niche for the

marketer, advertising agencies can also offer a composite package to their client specializing in various fields and it can also help in reducing cost. All these benefits are explained through suitable illustrations how the practice of IMC is benefiting many companies.

### **1. Synergize channels in order to create a lasting message**

IMC is a medium available to marketer where the logical conclusion of one-plus-one is not two but three. The use of synergized marketing communications is explained through two recent examples:

#### ***PepsiCo Holdings (Pepsi)***

Ever since PepsiCO started its operations in India since 28<sup>th</sup> January 1994 the company has not only implemented latest state-of-the-art technology but also has made use of IMC till date. In an attempt to go against its rival Coca Cola, in 1996 when Coca Cola were declared as official sponsors of the one-day cricket match between India and South Africa in Mumbai on December 14, 1996, Pepsi made use of Integrated Marketing Communication to reach the consumers indirectly. Pepsi swamped all communication channels before and after the one day, cricket match with the communication message 'nothing official about it'.

Pepsi used multimedia advertising to focus on cricket-related campaigns to target its young customers. It used promotions on the frequency modulation (FM) radio-involving the customers and gave them free passes for the match. At the trade level, it used its retailers and stockists to promote its brands aggressively by giving them free passes for the match.

During the World Cup 2003, Pepsi made use of various tools of promotion to reach the final consumer. These are:

- Advertising: Pepsi made use of newspapers, magazines, television, radio and outdoor advertising to reach the consumers. The advertisement featured the Indian cricket captain Sourav Ganguly, other players and a lion called "Jock".
- Sales promotion: Pepsi simultaneously came out with the Pepsi Badaa Shikari Hunt Contest in association with Max, Nickelodeon and MTV. Six young lucky winners of the contest were given an opportunity to lead the Indian cricket team onto the ground.
- To attract consumers and encourage participation in various contests Pepsi had put up a spectacular outdoor and attractive shop signs and merchandising based on the World Cup theme across 2500 outlets. Specially designed World Cup trucks also roamed in the streets in various towns and cities.

**Samsung India Electronics (SIEL)**, a leading provider of high tech consumer electronics products in the country, has been operating in India since December 1995. Samsung has taken the services of Mudra Ad Agency to advertise its consumer durables. Currently, the Indian cricket team is the brand ambassador of the whole range of Samsung's consumer durables. The various IMC techniques used by Samsung are:

- It includes advertisements featuring the Indian cricket team with the punch line "Aakhir Hum Bhi To Hain Team Mein" on television, radio FM (98.3 FM) radio.
- Clubbed with these techniques the company uses a variety of print advertising in the leading newspapers together with outdoor advertising on

bus stops and hoardings.

- Samsung had come out with an exchange offer in the month of August 2003. The offers selling point was its low price i.e., the company was inviting consumers to come and exchange their old colored television sets with a new Samsung 'Plano Digital Flat TV' that too at a very nominal price. The offer was valid on four models namely: CZ-21k5, Cz-21S8, Cz-21T3, Cz-21T4 and the exchange prices were Rs. 9,990, Rs. 10,990, Rs. 11990 and Rs. 15,990. Conditions which were set down on this offer was that the old color television should be 51 cms and above, along with a remote control in working condition.
- Samsung had also sales promotion offers on all its brands till November 15, 2003. i. e., 'buy any Samsung product this Diwali, rub the magic card and win amazing gifts'.
- As per its public relation it sponsors various events as a technique to 2003 Samsung sponsored the 'World Cup'. Company achieved a growth of 170% in the first quarter of 2003 as compared to the sales in other previous quarters.
- In September 2003, it sponsored 'HT Pace Samsung Inquizitive Quiz 2003' which was a mega Inter-School quiz. It drew participation from about 300 schools in Delhi and around 900 on all India basis.
- Samsung is the official sponsor of the Indian team to the 2004 Athens Olympics and is also providing scholarships to 5 key performers. When the Olympic torch came to Delhi we could see the Samsung banners all over the place.

- The two current shows which are heavily sponsored by Samsung are "cricket Samsung Show" and "Samsung Star plus Tumse hai Zindagi Contest".
- At the companies website 'www.samsungIndia.com' the consumer can get any information from the product features to product availability.

Thus, the company has chosen entertainment marketing and sports marketing as the key elements of its overall brand strategy and is using integrated marketing communication to reap the benefits.

## 2. Benefits for Innovators

When a new company is entering a new market IMC helps the company to sell the new product concept to the target market. Through IMC the marketer can introduce him to a new lifestyle that would revolve round the product. The marketer can allow him to touch, feel and experience the product and can create a new set of aspirations and value for him. This has been explained through an example:

**Airtel** Airtel launched its services in Delhi in November 14, 1995, since mobile communication was not available as a service until then it brought with it a new concept in the Indian market. Since then its vision has been to make mobile communication a way of life and become the consumer's first choice. How Airtel created a set of values and a new customer base is as follows:

- Through In-The-Marketplace promotions: Airtel makes use of roadshows, mobile vans to educate the customer including holding contests over mobile phones to introduce customers to the experience of mobile communication.
- Through Direct Marketing: Airtel identified three main target segments: the local shopkeeper, the executive and the businessman and addressed them through direct mailers and one-to-one contacts.
- Through the trade: Airtel has been the first operator to revolutionise the concept of retailing with the inauguration of Airtel connect (exclusive showrooms) in 1995. Today it has 20 customer care touch points called 'connects' and over 350 dealers in Delhi and NCR towns. Moreover Airtel has been the first to provide roaming facilities nationally covering about 700 cities as well as providing international roaming in USA, UK, Canada, etc., with 284 partner networks. Airtel has combined with Motrola and is offering a mobile phone at Rs. 499 plus Rs. 271 EMI for 18 months.
- Through Public Relations: Airtel educated the media first and then used it as a channel to target a wide range of customers.
- Through Advertising: Airtel is heavily advertised using celebrities ranging from Sharukh Khan, Karishma Kapoor, A. R. Rehman, Sachin Tendulkar. The latest advertisement 'Express Yourself and Leave Nothing Unsaid' tells people to make most of every moment.
- Through Sales Promotion: The company has started the 'Sachin Se Poocho offer' where the company is inducing consumers to take the post paid service and get free talktime. In its celebration of 8 years it gave free airtime to its prepaid customers.

- Through Sponsorships: Airtel sponsored the MTV music excellence Awards recently. It also sponsors the Thursday movies on Zee Television.

### 3. The Nicher

If the company makes specific products with specific value propositions for specific customers then it does not make sense to go with only a generic set of communications through various channels. Instead the company should try to harmonize various communication channels. This has been explained through two examples:

**HCL Frontline:** When the company launched its home multimedia PC in August 1995, primarily targeted at the growing child in the age group of five and fifteen. Keeping this target audience in mind the company chose the brand name Beanstalk, to bring in resemblance to a popular story to which children associate. How the company extensively made use of IMC is as follows:

- Through advertising: HCL Frontline carried forward the message in its punch line "Tomorrows world will have to be a lot smarter", thus highlighting the need to attain knowledge.
- Capturing the Influencers: HCL Frontline chose 200 strategic schools across India to introduce the concept to its young customers through their teachers and later even sponsored multimedia centers at ten of these schools.
- At the retail level: HCL Frontline outlets had specific Beanstalk features and corners: from the door handle to the table in the shop.
- Through events: HCL Frontline made its presence felt at campus and home exhibitions to capture the attention

of children and their parents.

- Through Direct Mailing: HCL Frontline targeted 20,000 households with children and sent them mailers.

#### ***Standard Chartered Bank's Cricket Card.***

The card was first launched in 1996 to coincide with the World Cup, when it managed to get about 10,000 members. The bank relaunched the card in 1999 during the cricket World Cup heavily using the IMC. Some of the techniques used by the company at that time were:

**Cricket Card XI:** The card was made available in 11 designs, including three card faces with Sachin Tendulkar. The card holder could also have their photograph on the card.

- Dial-a-Match: Card members could book their tickets for matches at selected stadiums, which would be delivered to them and charged on the card.
- Bodyline: for one year the card members could avail a 10% free discount whenever they purchased any Adidas product.
- Ticket To Cricket: Card holders could win trips to world Cup 1999 and win other prizes by predicting which players would obtain the highest Ceat rankings.
- Beyond Boundaries: Exclusive holiday packages to watch cricket matches in India and abroad in partnership with Cox and Kings.
- Through Public Relations: Professional coaching to the cardholder and their children regarding cricket. A certain portion of the card was used in developing all rounders in India with the help of the Board of Control for Cricket in India.

## Conclusion

IMC helps in improving the company's ability to reach the right customers with the right messages at the right time and in the right place. Through integration of various tools of promotion a marketer can provide clarity, consistency and maximum impact in reaching the target audience. Thus, IMC is a cost effective tool in the hands of the marketer.

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