

## MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS IN THE ENVIRONMENT AND AWARENESS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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### Abstract

*Environmental marketing communications and awareness-raising for sustainable development, monitoring and data management are interconnected. They cannot be divided and managed independently. The development of a strategy for each of them must take into account their interactions. Communication is therefore a broad spectrum of information exchange. The perception of the transmitted information depends on the subject and its proper presentation. From here, the information in this paper is not a missing tool between a problem and its solution, where what is said does not mean heard, hearing does not mean understood, understood does not mean accepted and accepted does not mean done. For these reasons marketing communication in the environment must be a planned and strategically utilized process of communication of mutual products containing effective policy, public participation and project implementation for sustainable development.*

**Key words:** communications, environment, information, observation, sustainable development

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### Introduction

Strengthening society's capacity to raise awareness of environmental communication in the environment requires answering several questions: why environmental communication, what forms of communication, which are the specific environmental awareness assessments (Nedanoski, 2000) and what is the development and implementation of communication strategies.

Communication in the environment requires constant monitoring and management of data in the interconnection because they cannot be shared and managed independently. Therefore, the development of a modern ecological communication strategy for each of them must take into account their mutual

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integration. Environmental communication is a broad spectrum of information exchange of a tertiary and applicable nature that depends on:

- Serious analysis of the functions of marketing communications and the growing importance of advertising and similar means of promotion in the marketing programs of domestic and foreign companies in the environment.
- Introducing the concept of integrated marketing communications and considering its evolution.
- Exploring the reasons for the increased importance of integrated marketing communications perspectives in the planning and execution of advertising and promotional programs and raising awareness of sustainable development.
- Introducing the different elements in the promotional mix that have a role in an integrated marketing communication program.
- Examining the different marketing and promotional elements, coordinating them and making effective communication.
- Introducing an integrated marketing communications model and planning process, with instructive steps in developing an environmental marketing communications program and raising awareness of sustainable development.

### **The development of marketing communications**

In the development of marketing communication, advertising and promotion are an integral part of our social and economic systems. In our complex society, advertising has evolved into a necessary communication system for both consumers and businesses. The way that advertising and similar promotion methods convey carefully crafted messages to target groups, plays a huge role in the marketing programs of most organizations. All companies, from large multinational corporations to small and medium-sized enterprises, are increasingly relying on advertising and promotion, expecting to help them market their goods and services. In market economies, consumers rely on advertising and similar promotion methods when seeking information to help them make a purchasing decision that is consistent with sustainable development (Dillerup, Stoi, 2016).

Today, most markets are not satisfied with a one-time exchange or transaction with consumers. The focus of market-oriented companies is to develop and maintain relationships with their customers. Successful companies understand that creating, communicating and communicating value to their customers is very important. Value represents the consumer's perception of all the benefits of a product or service, as opposed to the costs of acquiring that product or service, as well as the costs of using it. The benefits can be functional (product capabilities), experiential (what it feels like to use that product) or psychological (a sense of self-esteem or social status that comes from owning a particular brand). Costs include the money paid

for the product or service, as well as other factors such as obtaining information for product/ service, the buying process, training for its use, product maintenance and eventual cancellation (Tripunoski, 2013; Tripunivski, 2019).

The focus on consumer and value relationships has led many companies to focus on relationship marketing which involves creating, maintaining and improving long-term relationships with individual consumers and shareholders for mutual benefit.

The move to relationship marketing is done for several reasons. First, companies have understood that consumers have higher demand. Consumers dictate superior value to the consumer, which includes quality products and services that have competitive prices, are convenient to buy, delivered on time, and backed by excellent customer service. They also want personalized products and services tailored to their specific desires and needs. Advances in information technologies, coupled with flexible production systems and new marketing processes, have brought massive adaptation, whereby a company can make a particular product or service respond to customer demands in a cost-effective way. New technologies make it possible to configure and personalize a range of products and services, including computers, cars, clothing, cosmetics, jewelry and credit.

Another reason why entrepreneurs emphasize relationships is that it is more cost-effective to preserve existing ones than to gain new customers. Entrepreneurs pay more attention to the lifetime value of consumers because surveys show that reduced customer trust by only 5 percent can increase future profits by 30 to 90 percent. As companies increasingly focus on customer retention, many develop Customer Relationship Management (CRM) programs that involve systematically tracking consumer preferences and their behavior, tailoring products and services to the best of their ability to meet individual desires and needs. Information technologies and databases are an integral part of CRM programs because companies must gain access to information about their customers and tailor elements to their marketing programs. Marketing communications are also an important part of customer relationship management, as companies strive to create more personalized and meaningful tête à tête communications and regulate their contact and interaction with consumers (Dimitroski, 2008).

### **Integrated Marketing Communications**

For many years, the promotion function in most companies was dominated by mass media advertising. Companies relied primarily on their advertising agencies to guide them through almost all areas of marketing communications. Most entrepreneurs used additional promotional and marketing communication tools, but sales and direct marketing agencies as well as product packaging design firms were seen as ancillary services and were used only in a case of need. Public

relations agencies were used to manage the organization's publicity and image as well as their work with the relevant public, but were not seen as integral members of the marketing communication process.

Many entrepreneurs have built strong barriers around the various marketing and promotion functions that they have planned and managed as separate activities, with different budgets, different market views and different goals and objectives. These companies have failed to understand that the wide choice of marketing and promotion tools must be coordinated to communicate effectively and present a consistent picture of targeted markets.

In the last century, many companies have begun to apply a broader perspective to marketing communications and see the need for more strategic integration of their promotion tools. The current decade is characterized by the rapid development of areas such as sales promotion, direct marketing and public relations which have begun to challenge the role of advertising as a dominant form of marketing communication. These firms were moving towards the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) process, which involves coordinating the various elements of promotion and other marketing activities that communicate with the firm's customers. As entrepreneurs embraced the IMC concept, they began asking their advertising agencies to coordinate the use of various promotion tools, rather than relying primarily on media advertising. Many companies have started looking beyond traditional advertising agencies and using other types of promotion specialists to develop and implement the various components of their promotion plans.

Many agencies responded to the call for spreading the promotion tools by working with PR, sales promotion and direct marketing companies and presented themselves as IMC agencies offering a "one-stop shop" system for all their clients' promotional needs. Some agencies have involved in these non-advertising areas to gain control of their clients' promotional programs and budgets, but they found it difficult to offer something that was truly worthwhile apart from creating advertisement. However the advertising industry understood that the IMC is more than just a trend and fashion. The terms like *new advertising*, *orchestration*, and *continuous communication* were used to describe the concept of integration. A special team is being formed by the American Association of Advertising Agencies which developed one of the first definitions of integrated marketing communications: "*The concept of marketing communications planning that embraces the added value of a clear plan evaluates the strategic roles of the various communication disciplines and combines these disciplines "to get clarity, consistency and maximum impact on communication"*".

The definition of AAAA focuses on the process of using all forms of promotion to maximize communication impact. However, some IMC agents fought for an even broader perspective that includes all sources of contact for a brand or

company that a consumer has with a particular product or service. They emphasized that the IMC process requires a “full picture” approach to plan marketing and promotion programs and to coordinate the various communication strategies. That process requires the firm to develop a complete marketing communications strategy which recognizes all marketing activities of a firm. It requires not just promotion and communication with the consumers, but the application of pure technology towards the sustainable development of its social and business entities (Aceski, Naumov, 1994).

Consumer perception of a company or brand is a synthesis of the many messages they receive, i.e. the links they have, such as advertising in: media, price, packaging design, direct marketing efforts, publicity, sales promotions, websites, on-site shopping displays, and the type of store in which the product or service is sold. The IMC approach requires all marketing and promotion activities of the company to project a consistent, unified market image (Gillard, Johansen, 2004). It requires a centralized ordering function, in which everything the company will say and do, communicates a general theme and positioning.

Many companies have adopted this broader perspective of the IMC. They see it as a way to coordinate and manage their marketing communications programs to make sure that they send a consistent message to consumers about the company or brand. For these companies, integration is a breakthrough over the traditional method of treating various elements of marketing and promotion as virtually separate activities. However, this perspective of the IMC is challenged by the fact that it focuses primarily on the tactical coordination of the various communication tools to make them look and sound alike. As the IMC continues to evolve, scientists and businessmen agree that a broader perspective is needed that views this discipline from a more strategic position to sustainable development (Kotler, Armstrong, 2010, p. 289).

### **Contemporary Perspective on Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)**

As entrepreneurs become more sophisticated and develop a greater understanding of IMCs, they recognize that IMCs involve more than coordinating the various elements of their marketing and communications programs in a single approach. As the IMC evolves, it is recognized as a business process that helps companies identify the most appropriate and effective methods of communicating and building relationships with consumers and other stakeholders. Don Schulz of North-Western University developed a definition of IMC that is considered much more relevant: “*Integrated marketing communications are a strategic business process used to plan, develop, execute and evaluate a coordinated,*

*convincing and efficient brand communication program with customers, buyers, employees, associates, and other relevant internal and external audiences. The goal is to generate financial results in the short term and build greater brand and shareholder value in the long run.”*

There are several important aspects to this definition of IMC. First, it views the IMC as an ongoing strategic business process, rather than a tactical integration of various communication activities. Also, the definition recognizes that there are more relevant audiences that are an important part of the process. Externally, this includes consumers, suppliers, investors, interest groups and the general public. It also includes internal audiences such as employees as an important part of the IMC process. Schulz adds that this definition reflects the increasing emphasis placed on the demand to measure the outcome of marketing communications programs, as well as marketing in general.

Many companies have understood that effective communication with consumers and other stakeholders involves more than the tactical use of traditional marketing communication tools. These companies, along with many advertising agencies, have embraced the IMC and incorporated it into their marketing and business habits. However, the truth is that not all companies have gone a step further than simply grouping elements of the promotional mix, while not paying attention to changes in the organization and the investment needed for true integration. Furthermore, some scholars and businessmen suspect that the IMC is another kind of “management fashion” whose influence will be fleeting. Critics say that the IMC is doing nothing but minor changes to existing ideas and concepts, and that their significance for thought and practice in marketing and advertising is uncertain.

Although the analysis of the value and relevance of the IMC is likely to continue, those who support the IMC are in much greater numbers than those who oppose it. The IMCs have also proven to be a constant change that offers significant value to entrepreneurs in an environment of rapidly changing communications, such as the middle of the new millennium. IMCs are described as one of the new generations of marketing approaches used by companies to better focus their efforts on acquiring, retaining and developing links and relationships with consumers and other stakeholders. Some specialists argue that the IMC is undoubtedly the largest development in communications in the last decade of the 20th century, with a strong impact in the 21st century as a period during which sustainable development strategies will have inevitable strategic application (Boneva, 2013).

### **Reasons for the increased importance of the IMC**

The IMC approach to planning and marketing communications strategies has been adopted by both large and small companies, and has become popular among firms which advertise consumer goods and services, as well as among business-to-business entrepreneurs. There are many reasons why entrepreneurs accept the IMC approach. One of the primary reasons is the fact that they understand the value of strategically integrating the various communication functions, rather than letting them work independently (Wieland, 2002, p. 2). By coordinating their marketing communications efforts, companies can avoid duplicates, take advantage of the choice of promotion tools, and develop more efficient and effective marketing communications programs. IMC agents argue that they are one of the easiest ways for a company to maximize return on its investment in marketing and promotion.

Deciding to use the IMC expresses and adapts entrepreneurs in a changing environment, above all in terms of consumers, technology and media. There have been major changes among consumers in terms of demographics, lifestyles, media use and shopping habits. More and more people surf the Internet every day. There are over a billion internet users worldwide, and this number is steadily growing. Entrepreneurs respond by developing websites where they advertise their products and services interactively, as well as make sales.

While new technologies and formats create new ways for entrepreneurs to reach consumers, they also affect more traditional media. Television, radio, magazines and newspapers are increasingly divided and reach a smaller and more selectable audience. In the following analysis we will look at how technology is leading to greater media sharing as the focus of entrepreneur's shifts away from the mass media and goes towards what is called micromarketing.

In addition to shrinking audiences for many media outlets, entrepreneurs also face the problem of less consumer response to traditional advertising. Many consumers get annoyed with ads and are bored by boring sales messages. This has led many entrepreneurs to look for alternative ways to communicate with their target audiences.

Entrepreneurs often hire product placement firms or negotiate directly with major studios and production companies to incorporate their brands into films and TV shows.

Entrepreneurs must consider the 2010 generation – which is very skeptical of traditional advertising. As a generation that grew up in a world that is much more media saturated and aware of their parents' world brands, they respond differently to advertising and prefer to find marketing messages elsewhere and from other sources. Entrepreneurs recognize that in order to break through the skepticism and get the attention of this generation, they must convey their messages in other

ways. Many companies are turning to a strategy known as buzz marketing, while some brands are becoming part of popular culture, and consumers unwittingly spread the message. The positive public opinion gained through buzz marketing campaigns is becoming part of a successful IMC campaign used to launch worldwide brands.

The IMC movement is also driven by changes in the way by which companies present their goods and services in the marketplace. One of the main reasons for the growing importance of the IMC approach is the current revolution that changes the marketing rules and the role of the traditional advertising agency. Among the main features of this marketing revolution are:

- *Moving money intended for media advertising to other forms of promotion, primarily consumer-oriented sales promotion and commercial oriented sales promotion.* Many entrepreneurs believe that traditional media advertising has become too expensive and unprofitable. Also, increased price competition in many markets has resulted in increased promotion costs rather than media advertising.
- *Refusal to rely on advertising-oriented approaches, which place emphasis on mass media such as television and magazines, to resolve communication problems.* Many companies in developing their marketing communications strategies use communication tools that are less expensive and more targeted, such as event marketing and sponsorship, direct mail, sales promotion and the Internet.
- *Changing market power from manufacturers to retailers.* Thanks to the reinforcement of the retail industry, these retailers are replacing regional, national and international chains. New technologies, in turn, give retailers information on the effectiveness of a manufacturer's promotional program. This has led many entrepreneurs to shift their focus to promotional tools that produce short-term results, such as sales promotion.
- *The rapid growth and development of database marketing.* Many companies build databases containing customer names; geographical, demographic and psychographic profile; buying habits; credit rating; media preference; and other features. Entrepreneurs use this information to target consumers through various direct marketing methods, such as telemarketing, direct mail and direct response advertising, rather than relying on the mass media. Proponents of this approach argue that database marketing is critical to the development and use of efficient IMCs.
- *The demand for greater competence and responsibility of advertising agencies and a change in the way agencies are paid.* Many companies are moving towards incentive systems, while paying their advertising agencies is based on objective metrics like sales, market share and profitability. The



demand for responsibility motivates many agencies to consider various communication tools and cheaper alternatives to mass media advertising.

- *The rapid growth of the Internet, which changes the nature of how companies conduct business and the way they interact among themselves and interact with consumers.* The so-called internet revolution is everywhere, and the internet audience is growing at a tremendous speed. The Internet is an interactive medium that has become an integral part of the communication strategy as well as the business strategy for many companies.

This marketing revolution affects everyone involved in the marketing and promotion process. Companies have understood that they must change the way by which they promote their goods and services. They can no longer rely on a specific communication tool, such as media advertising; on the contrary, they should use all the connectivity methods that offer the best way to convey the message to the targeted audience. Advertising agencies continue to reform and offer much more than advertising expertise; they try to convince their clients that they can manage all or at least most of the needs for integrated customer communications. Most agencies recognize that their future success depends on their ability to grasp all areas of promotion and to help their clients to develop and implement integrated marketing communications programs.

## **Conclusion**

Advertising and other forms of environmental promotion and awareness-raising for sustainable development are an integral part of the marketing process in most organizations. In the last decade, the money spent on advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing and other forms of marketing communications has increased dramatically. In order to understand the role of advertising and promotion in a marketing program, the role and function of marketing in an organization must be understood. The basic task of marketing is to combine the four elements that can be controlled, known as marketing mix, into a clear and understandable program that enables exchange with the targeted market.

For a long time in history, the promotion function in most companies has been dominated by mass media advertising. However, more and more companies recognize the importance of integrated marketing communications and coordinate different marketing and promotional elements to achieve more efficient and effective communication programs. A number of factors influence the move to IMC by entrepreneurs, as well as advertising agencies and other promoters. Part of the reason for the growing importance of the IMC's perspective is the rapidly changing environment in terms of consumers, technology and the media. The IMC movement is also driven by changes in the way by which companies offer their goods and services on the market. The shift of millions of dollars from

advertising to sales promotion, the rapid growth and development of database marketing and the fragmentation of media markets are among the key changes we are facing.

Promotion is the communication function of marketing. It is won through a promotional mix that includes advertising, personal sales, publicity/PR, sales promotion, direct marketing and interactive/internet marketing. The benefits and disadvantages of each of these elements of the promotional mix influence the role they play in the overall marketing program. When developing an IMC program, the entrepreneur must decide which tools to use and how to combine them to achieve the organization's marketing and communication goals in environmental protection (Harris, 2009).

Promotional management involves coordinating the elements of a promotional mix to develop an integrated program of effective marketing communication. These include: reviewing the marketing plan, promotion program situation analysis, communication process analysis, budgeting, IMC program development, integration and implementation of communication strategies and monitoring, evaluation and control of the promotion program, such as tracking elements in sustainable development.

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