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## **MANAGING INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS**

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is an approach to brand communications where the different modes work together to create a seamless experience for the customer and are presented with a similar tone and style that reinforces the brands core message. Its goal is to make all aspects of marketing communication such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, personal selling, online communications and social media work together as a unified force, rather than permitting each to work in isolation, which maximizes their cost effectiveness.

Companies need to develop strategies to improve brand image and brand awareness. The important aspect of spreading brand awareness and brand image is through communication. Companies need to establish a communication channel to win the new customers and retain existing customer. This communication is not restricted just to customer but also stakeholders in the value network. Communication is achieved through advertisement, sales promotion, public relation exercise, direct marketing and interactive marketing.

The goal of selecting the elements of proposed integrated marketing communications is to create a campaign that is effective and consistent across media platforms. Some marketers may want only ads with greatest breadth of appeal: the executions that, when combined, provide the greatest number of attention-getting, branded, and motivational moments. Others may only want ads with the greatest depth of appeal: the ads with the greatest number of attention-getting, branded, and motivational points within each.

Although integrated marketing communications is more than just an advertising campaign, the bulk of marketing dollars is spent on the creation and distribution of advertisements. Hence, the bulk of the research budget is also spent on these elements of the campaign. Once the key marketing pieces have been tested, the researched elements can then be applied to other contact points: letterhead, packaging, logistics, customer service training, and more, to complete the IMC cycle.

Communication process should not be one way traffic. Companies should look forward to developing communication network in which companies can reach customer but customer also can effectively communicate with companies. Technology has opened up many avenues to carry out effective communication. Companies have traditional tools like newspaper, television, radio, telephone, billboards and modern tools like the internet, emails and wireless devices.

Technology has made the communication process not only faster but also reduced over all communication cost.

There are nine elements, which make the communication process. The two parties are sender-company and receiver-customer. The communication tools are message and media used to communicate the process. The four major communication functions are encoding, decoding, response and feedback. The last element is the noise which is anytime of interference disrupting clarity of the message.

Senders must encode the message as per the target audience and use the right media. The receiver decodes the message, responds to the message and sends feedback to the company. Experience senders are able to garner a more effective response from the right message. Companies have to put effort in developing an effective communication program. The development of the communication program can be charted into eight steps.

The first step is identifying the target audience. The second step is to set specific objectives for the given communication message. The third step is the design of the message. The designing of the message follows the objective of the message. The fourth step is the selection of the communication channel. The fifth step is related with the financial estimates of the whole expenditure. The sixth step is the decision relate to the communication mix. The seventh step measuring results of the communication process. The eight step is managing the integrated marketing process.

Marketing communication cannot be considered in isolation. It is an integral part of any companies overall growth process.