

IMC: An Effective Tool To Electrify The Consumer Behavior

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Abstract

Marketing in the 21st century is very different from its early beginnings. Marketing in this century is all about delivering the customer experience. Due to LPG of emerging economies the old strategies, beliefs and tactics of marketing and selling a product are now replaced with new techniques. And for survival marketers now are forced to make new effective marketing strategies. IMC is a new customer centric, data driven method of communicating with the customers. This is an approach to achieve the objectives of a marketing campaign through a well coordinated use of different promotional methods that are intended to reinforce each other. IMC is helping companies to develop most suitable and effective methods to contact customers and other interested groups. Integrated marketing communication is an effort on the part of the management to give uniform message about the product or the service across different Medias used for advertising. The main objective of this paper is to study the role and importance of IMC in changing the consumer behavior favorably. This paper discussed the various facets of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) in Indian Business Scenario.

Keywords: IMC, Marketing Communication, Promotional Tools, Uniformity

Full Length Paper

Introduction: In this phase of stiff competition in 21st Century the customer is now demanding more and more. Due to increased awareness and more choices marketers are putting their best efforts to enlighten their customer with extraordinary experience. This century is all about delivering the customer experience. Future generations of consumers will have more discretionary income, less time and more choices, and will display wholly new spending patterns, depending on age, geography and wealth. Due to LPG of emerging economies the old strategies, beliefs and tactics of marketing and selling a product are now replaced with new techniques. And for survival marketers now are forced to make new effective marketing strategies. In this tough time the old strategies, beliefs and tactics of marketing and selling a product are now replaced with new techniques. Now the strategist has need to be proactive and to develop those strategies which makes a powerful impact on target audiences and markets. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is one of the most important communications strategy adopted all over the world. Integrated marketing communication is consumer oriented approach rather than organizational oriented that focuses on organizational needs. It is one such step toward an integrated approach to achieving efficiency by synergy. IMC is a new customer centric, data driven method of communicating with the customers. This is an approach to achieve

the objectives of a marketing campaign through a well coordinated use of different promotional methods that are intended to reinforce each other. IMC is helping companies to develop most suitable and effective methods to contact customers and other interested groups.

The Concept Of IMC: Integrated marketing communication is an effort on the part of the management to give uniform message about the product or the service across different Medias used for advertising. In this approach different Medias like television, movies, newspapers, magazines, internet etc is used to advertise the product/service but the broad content of this message remains the same in order to maintain consistency in these advertisements. Integrated marketing communication is integration of all marketing tools, approaches, and resources within a company which maximizes impact on consumer mind and which results into maximum profit at minimum cost. The objectives of any marketing communication process are to create brand awareness, deliver information, educate the market, and advance a positive image of the product brand. Integrated marketing communication scores over traditional ways of marketing as it focuses on not only winning new customers but also maintaining long term healthy relationship with them. Through integrated marketing communication, similar message goes to customers simultaneously, eventually creating a better impact on them.

Marketing guru Philip Kotler defined IMC, "the concept under which a company carefully integrates and coordinates its many communications channels to deliver a clear, consistent message.

Impact Of IMC: The objectives of integrated marketing communications are to coordinate all of the company's marketing and promotional efforts to project and reinforce a consistent, unified image of the company or its brands of the market-place. The IMC approach is an attempt to improve over the traditional method of treating promotion elements as totally separate activities. Integrated marketing communication is an approach that integrates various marketing resources to impact the consumer mind by creating synergetic effect which results in to maximum response with minimum efforts. The objectives of any marketing communication process are to create brand awareness, deliver information, educate the market, and advance a positive image of the product brand.

Several reasons have caused IMC to develop and being adopted by marketers in India; few of them are given below-

1) Awareness: IMC play an important role in creating awareness of the products with respect to brand name and brand availability. It brings to the notice of the potential customer the new varieties of goods available in the market.

2) Information: Product information is needed when the product is recently launched in the market. Potential customer must know about the product, features. IMC provides this information through various techniques so that the buyer can take correct decision while buying the goods.

3) To Increase Sales. A proper communication mix tends to increase the sales of the organization. This is possible as an increased sale brings economies of large scale production which enables the seller to reduce cost and increase profit.

4) To Inform The Intermediaries. IMC act as a communication channel between the sellers and the intermediaries like dealer and agents. These intermediaries are regularly informed through sales literature, pamphlets, brochures, price list etc.

5) Expansion Of The Market: IMC helps the seller to expand the business from local level to regional level and then to national level.

6) More Specialized Media. It used to be said that mass media was enough to cover any advertiser's needs. But with ever increasing ad clutter, shorter attention spans and greater resistance to advertising, customers now tend to be a lot more selective: they shut out the stuff they feel they don't need, and go with the stuff that they want. Therefore with IMC sellers can retain the attention of customer by diverting their attention through various Communication Mix.

Major Reasons For The Growing Importance Of IMC In India

1. Increased awareness of consumer
2. Changing demographic profile of the customers
3. Availability of multiple forms of communication
4. Improved technology
5. Occupational diversity
6. Adoption of societal marketing approach
7. Growing opportunities due to LPG.

Steps Involved In Designing Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy:

The main steps in designing IMC are:

1) Identification Of Target Audience: IMC designing starts with defining the target audience. This identification includes study about the target group's demographic, lifestyle and psychographic profile.

2) Determining The Communication Objectives: The next step is setting the communication objectives. There may be different communication objectives like increase in sales, brand image and good will, expansion of business. Thus the seller has to evaluate all this objectives and select the one which he intends to achieve to develop the IMC based marketing strategies.

3) Determining The Message: An effective message should get attention, hold interest, arouse desire, & obtain action (AIDA model). In practice, few messages take the consumer all the way from awareness to purchase, but the AIDA framework suggests the desirable qualities of a good message. In putting the message together, the marketing communicator must decide what to say & how to say it. , who should say it. Thus the communicator should focus more on message content, message format and message structure.

4) Selecting The Communication Channel: There are two broad types of communication channels - Personal and Non personal.

a. Personal Communication Channels: In personal Communication channels, two or more people communicate directly with each other. They might communicate face-to-face, over the telephone, through the mail or even through an internet chat. Personal Communication channels are effective because they are allowed for personal addressing the feedback.

b. Non Personal Communication Channels: Non personal communication channels

include:

1. Print media -newspapers, magazines, direct mail etc.
2. Broadcast media-radio, television etc.
3. Electronic media-audiotapes, videotapes, CD-ROM, web page etc.
4. Display media-billboards, signs, posters, banners, hoardings etc.

Most of the non personal messages come through paid media.

5) Determining The Budget: This is one of the most important decisions of IMC process. The effective IMC depends upon the budget set for communication Mix. The marketer prepares the budget taking into nature of the customers, objectives, nature of competitions and also availability of funds.

6) Promotion Mix decision. After determining budget it is essential to determine the promotional mix. Promotional mix is the combination of various tools like advertising, public relation, personnel selling and so on. Because of different marketing environment there has to be variation in communication mix. One medium which is effective in one market may not be equally effective in another market.

7) Implementation Of Promotion Mix: The marketer then makes an arrangement to implement the communication mix. The seller has to select the right media in order to put across the promotion message.

8) Follow Up. Here the advertiser has to review the performance in terms of sales and purchase. If the performance is as per communication objectives there is nothing to worry. On the other hand if the performance falls below the communication objectives then certain corrective step have to be taken.

Once the target marketing process has been completed, marketing program decisions regarding product, price, distribution, and promotions must be made. All of these must be coordinated to provide an integrated marketing communications perspective, in which the positioning strategy is supported by one voice. Thus all product strategies, pricing strategies, and distribution choices must be made with the objective of contributing to the overall image of the product or brand. Advertising and promotion decisions, in turn must be integrated with the other marketing-mix decisions to accomplish this goal.

Objective Of Study: The main objective of this paper is to study the role and importance of IMC in changing the consumer behavior favorably. This paper discussed the various facets of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) in Indian Business Scenario.

The present study is based on secondary data and information is collected from various sources. The data is collected from secondary sources like internet, books and newspapers. An attempt has been made in the present study to make a systematic study in change in size and structure of consumer demographics and their impact on marketing strategies.

Discussions And Conclusion: Due to liberalization, privatization and globalization of emerging economies the integrated marketing communication is becoming important. The primary function of Integrated Marketing communication is to inform, persuade, and remind the target customers about the unique benefits of products and services existing in the market. Promotion plays an important role in an organization's efforts to market its product, service, or ideas to its customers. The promotion model includes a marketing strategy and analysis, target marketing,

program development, and the target market. The marketing process begins with a marketing strategy that is based on a detailed situation analysis and guides for target market selection and development of the firm's marketing program. It also helps to generate awareness regarding existing products thereby inducing trial and building long-term relationships with the present as well as potential customers. It is the judicious and efficient use of the product promotional tools so that a universal, clear, and effective promotional message is communicated amongst the target audience. IMC is an aggressive marketing plan that is based on developing marketing strategy based on customer information. As the IMC program is based on customer information hence there is a need to periodic review of these marketing strategies. The need of the audit of the IMC process should be well understood and measurement and evaluation of the effectiveness should be taken care of. As the demographic profile of Indian customers are changing rapidly, technology is also upgrading very fast hence development and diffusion of IMC program should closely need to be watched and associated with these changes. Objectives and strategies must be flexible enough to accommodate these changes. Integrated Marketing Communication can perform and lead to way to reap the benefits if exercise as a unit in order to attain the common objective of delivering the value to customer.

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