

Marketing essays - integrated marketing communication



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Integrated Marketing Communication

Necessity is the mother of all inventions, and Integrated Marketing Communication – IMC, is no exception. This new weapon in the lethal arsenal of the marketing strategies of the large global organizations is the latest innovative tool whose conception is rooted in the fiercely competitive nature of the global marketing scenario. It has necessitated the coming together of various promotional functions of an organization. These functions are marketing, sales, advertising and PR. “ Integrated marketing communications is a way of looking at the whole marketing process from the viewpoint of the customer. It involves the coordination of all promotional activities...(REF03). In a conventional setup, these functions are considered separate departments and are accordingly managed separately. But the new-age global marketing model has transformed these functions radically. With the conventional marketing module, the defining areas of these functions often used to overlap with each other, thus creating friction, confusion and inefficiency both internally within the company and externally in the market.

This wasteful and inefficient way of orthodox marketing compelled the companies worldwide to rethink and restructure their promotional communication efforts, and the net result is IMC. Basically, it combines and fuses the inter-departmental marketing operations into a single homogenous function, thus creating a seamless environment where marketing, sales, advertising, PR and other such areas complement each other's functioning rather than contradicting it. As noted in the insightful document titled “ Integrated marketing Communications at Dow Chemical Company – IMC in <https://assignbuster.com/marketing-essays-integrated-marketing-communication/>

Theory and Practice”, “ Marketing integration provides companies with a competitive edge by focusing all of the sales, marketing and operations resources on promoting the same message throughout customer and prospector base and doing everything possible to make sure that sales and marketing promises get consistently delivered” (REF01).

The other unique salient benefits of IMC which are also mentioned in the above referred work are that besides creating functional harmony and enhancing field efficiency, it also greatly helps in two other areas:

1). IMC improves cost-effectiveness of the overall promotional effort in value terms. This has a direct and positive bearing on the expense-per-unit sale parameter, which ultimately reflects well in the balance sheet.

2). IMC gets far better rating on the result-orientation front, both at the boardroom level and field level. Further, since the hitherto separate areas of marketing, sales and advertising now function under the unified umbrella, they are no longer perceived as separate entities like distant cousins from a family tree, the company, but like triplets born of the same mother, the IMC. The keywords here are cohesiveness and coordination, which transform the unified marketing operation into a well-orchestrated symphony.

To put the IMC concept in a nut-shell perspective, it operates as a neat, compact and perfectly coordinated commando unit, whose mission is more often than not ambush marketing, a method that has become highly effective, if controversial, with the more ambitious amongst the contemporary companies.

Role of IMC in this coursework

This coursework has taken IMC as its base and opted for the *modus operandi* of illustration and demonstration to show how IMC produces a nett cohesive output in marketing. Firstly, to exemplify the effectiveness of IMC, an original object or example is created in the form of a print advertisement which is included in the appendix of this work. The simple logic behind this creation is that without an example, one would not be clear what to demonstrate; hence the example is used as a tool to make a point. Secondly, having created this example, the subsequent rationale defends how's, what's and why's of this object.

The example

The print advertisement is supposed to have been prepared by an imaginary group of nursing homes for senior citizens including aged parents, and its target audience is the domesticated children of these aged parents. The backdrop scenario visualized for this work is that the restless, ambitious, go-getter type of son has no place for his parents in his life and family, so he has lodged them in a senior citizen's nursing home since he thinks they are out of sync with his life and lifestyle, and are better off in a care giving center. Since he is the head of the family and is responsible for this conscious decision, the communication in the advertisement is targeted at him in the form of a persuasive, compelling dialogue between him and the care giving center.

The example is a conceptual personification of the broader contemporary scenario where a nuclear family is considered a role model at the cost of the elder family members like the parents.

Choice of subject

From the given choice, I have decided to opt for the above subject.

Effectively, it is more of an issue rather than merely a subject. It concerns the complex nitty-gritty of juxtaposition of family life and work in the contemporary world where survival of the fittest is a stark reality. In this struggle for mere survival, a very crucial component of the family, that of the parents is getting dislodged and is wobbling wildly on the societal trajectory like a rocket gone haywire. Thus, the new-age family, under duress and pressure, has been vertically fissured, and the parents' fragment is left out in the cold. It is to this fragmented nuclear family that the advertisement's message is targeted. It urges in a compelling and evoking tone to fuse the fragments, to bring back the parents in the folds of the family and thus complete the family circle.

The choice of this issue is based on two challenging but exciting counts:

- The subject is necessarily a social issue. Through its choice, it is attempted to apply the IMC model, which is largely perceived as a commercial, profit-centric marketing tool, to a non-commercial, non-profit social cause and hence prove that the role of IMC can and should be expanded to reach out to include the satellite marketing areas like social marketing. On this point, it would be apt to quote this

observation by an industry expert, " Social marketing was " born" as a <https://assignbuster.com/marketing-essays-integrated-marketing-communication/>

discipline in the 1970s, when Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman realized that the same marketing principles that were being used to sell products to consumers could be used to "sell" ideas, attitudes and behaviors" (REF02).

- The brief on the subject says that the message should originate from a group of nursing homes for senior citizens and it should target not the elderly inmates, who would apparently seem to be the obvious target audience, but their children, who apparently seem less likely to be the target audience. By this clever positioning of the target audience, one gets to work on two layers, the primary target and the secondary target while crafting the message.

The creative rationale

In order to conceive, device, design and write the exemplified advertisement, in-depth and exhaustive consideration was given to various creative approaches and ultimately a simplistic, direct and uncomplicated communication was found to be the best, in-so-far as the visual and design matters were concerned, while the persuasive, guilt-generating, confrontationist and evoking nature of the communication was left to the textual content, which has emerged as the strength of the work.

Other important factors that were considered and incorporated in the work are:

Concept and catch-line

The concept of the advertisement revolves around two couples – the young couple and the old parental couple. Their merry pictures form the visual language of the work. Both couples are shown engaged in warm togetherness – the young couple during after-hours, probably on a weekend, the old couple during leisure hours. The attire is casual, the expressions genuinely affectionate. On their individual merits, the two snapshots represent ideal marital bliss, as if everything is fine the way it is, one family, two pictures, two couples. *Two separate pictures, two separate couples.* Then, a very simple merging effect is given to the two pictures that connote the profound symbolism of the noble intent of the work to merge the two couples and to complete the family picture. Based on this intent, the catch-line, which is sentenced very simply but very creatively, pronounces that both the couples are a part, not apart.

The couples' age, which has a very crucial bearing on the concept and the evolution of the message, is set at 30+ for the young couple and 60+ for the parental couple, and is captioned prominently in the header, thus positioning the young couple, specially the husband and the son to whom the communication is directed, at exactly the middle of the timeline. This positioning is the soul of the creative concept and is shrewdly exploited to form the crux of the concluding paragraph, in which the son is evoked to travel thirty years back or forth in life and recall/imagine his position then. Could he have made it on his own as an infant, without his parents, and would he be able to make it on his own at 60+, without his children. Either way, he gets the point that the advertisement is trying to make.

The body text

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The body text of the copy is devised in a fully persuasive and partly confrontationist manner. Both direct speech and indirect speech are juxtaposed to create an interesting and intriguing dialogue. The objective of the copy is to make the son realize of his wrongdoing by keeping his parents apart from the family, confront him on the matter, even push him to the wall, and ultimately inject a sense of guilt for his treatment towards his parents. To further the objective, he is reminded of the sacrifices and compromises that his parents would have presumably make in their lives to make his life.

In the second half, the limited role of the nursing home as a facilitator of shelter and service to the aged people is highlighted, and it is strongly put forward that a nursing home can never offer a home to the parents, which only the son can.

Finally, the copy makes an evocative end with the timeline transition idea applied on the son.

Emotionalization - A sure-shot winner

The issue is essentially emotional. It is further strengthened in the catch-line and the copy with top-up doses of a variety of emotions. First, a guilt feeling is induced in the son with queries that corner him and make him go on defensive. Then a sense of self-realization is added to guilt when the dialogue takes a nostalgic turn and urges him to remember how his parents might have braved all sorts of odds to give him a good upbringing and quality education, due to which he is what he is today. In the final part, a measured dose of foreboding is added when the son is asked to visualize his hapless

condition at 60+ if he is left out in the cold by his children, and it may be his turn to get lodged in a nursing home.

This mix of emotions creates a strong, heady appeal in the copy, the kind of appeal that is capable of changing mindsets with its impeccable convincing power.

The design

The design has various imperative visual factors that contribute to the overall effect and impact of the advertisement.

Large Visual area

The layout devotes almost 60% of the space to the visual area. This visual space attempts to achieve several objectives:

- The large, roomy visual area makes the viewer stop, look and notice the advertisement in a clutter. Having noticed it, the viewer turns into a reader and reads the content, thus getting the full message.

Compartmentalization

- To create two distinct vertical visual compartments housing a couple's picture each, symbolizing a divided family.
- Subsequently, to create one unified horizontal visual compartment housing both the couples' pictures in it that symbolizes the intent of the advertisement to unify the two pictures, and the family.

Power of black

Black means darkness, bleakness, lack of light, lack of vision, lack of compassion. Black is predominantly a negative color. According to Native American Cherokee symbolism, black implies problems and death (REF06). By using black as a background color, it is deliberately sought to portray the negativity of a nuclear family; the subtle message that black conveys in this particular work is the selfishness and self-centeredness of the nuclear family in leaving out the elder couple in bleakness by not including them in the concept of a family.

But besides being negative, black is also a very powerful color. It stands out in the crowd. It is precisely due to this characteristic of black that it is used in the work. It grabs attention, it props up the visual area, and it makes the text stand out.

The above chapter concludes and completes the creative rationale which answers the how's, what's and why's of the defense of the creative aspect of the advertisement. Considering that creativity is the soul of a good promotional effort, and unless such a work is creative, it will fail to achieve its objective; the creative rationale is presented in detail in this coursework. Get help with your essay from our expert essay writers...

Linking creative strategy with media strategy

An advertisement is not a painting or a sculpture. It is not art for art's sake. It is not meant to be framed and to adorn the walls, but is expected to go out in the market and slog it out, to perform or to perish. " At some point in the marketing process, the work has to change from research and strategizing to

actually going out and promoting a product or service to potential customers” (REF04).

As an extension of the advertising function of IMC, and also as a sequential next step after the creative stage in the advertising process, a sound media strategy ought to be formulated to bring out the best in the work in terms of exposure.

For this campaign, it is thought fit to recommend its repetitive releasing in uniform and regular bursts in related print medium. The segment would include magazines, periodicals, trade journals, segment-specific publications like newsletters and in-house journals, and the like.

The budget and release schedule should be decided with the consideration that this is an all-season campaign – families do not have a season to remain apart!

Corporate sponsorship

“ Corporate sponsorship is a business relationship in which two entities exchange things of value, including a public display of support” (REF05).

From Nikon to Nike, across the world, being a responsible corporate citizen is the prevailing norm. Today, every large organization worth its salt has a specially earmarked budget for public welfare spending. If Nikon is spending millions on wild life conservation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation spends trillions on philanthropy.

So, it would be worthwhile for this imaginary group of nursing homes to scout for corporate sponsorship for it. Such a move, if successful, would serve several purposes:

- It will spare the group from shelling out money from its limited resources.
- Since corporates can create a liberal budget for the campaign, its demographic and geographic reach will expand, thus giving it more length and breadth.
- Lastly but most importantly, a sponsorship by a large corporate is akin to adoption. This move would immediately put the campaign in impeccable lineage and gift it an air of social elitism. It will be in distinguished company and hence command more respect and attention from its peers.

Extra measures to expand the scope and reach of the campaign

As a sequel to the previous chapter, if the campaign does manage to get a good patron, it can make inroads in the transnational territory. Large corporates hate to do anything at a small level. It is generic to their philosophy to think big in whatever they do. So may be the case with the decision to release this campaign on a pan-European platform.

If such a scenario does materialize, the below mentioned innovative and novel releasing ideas can be incorporated in the media strategy. While doing so, it taken into account that the target base would now shift to the socially conscious corporate elite, like the frequent flier business traveler.

- Release in in-flight reading material of major airlines with concentrated European traffic.
- Publications of major airlines like their magazines
- Publications targeted at and catering to Eurail, Euroloksshop and other such rapid transit systems
- In-house reading material of star rated hotels
- In-house publications of leisure activity entities

Conclusion

No idea or innovation is small enough to become big enough. All it requires is out-of-the-box thinking approach, vision and professionalism. The nursing home group too can think big and achieve big with its promotional effort based on the IMC model. Having done so, it should not find itself in a self-limiting bond and should go all out to scout for corporate sponsorship to promote their campaign. If they hit pay dirt, it would not be far-fetched for them to cross the boundaries of the UK in releasing the campaign to a pan-European target. If it can do so, it will truly become a borderless effort, just like the IMC.

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